

Place and Resources Overview Committee

19 October 2021

Taxi Licensing Policy

For Recommendation to Licensing Committee

Portfolio Holder: Non-Executive Function

Local Councillor(s): Relevant to all Dorset Council Members

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Recommendation:

- 1) To review the draft Taxi Licensing Policy and provide any comments to the Licensing Committee.

Reason for Recommendation:

- 1) To ensure openness and transparency in the Council's decision making, and
- 2) To ensure that those persons affected by the policy are given the opportunity to have an input into it.

1. Executive Summary

The Council, as Licensing Authority under the Town Police Clause Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, requires a single policy to provide consistency across the whole Council area. The purpose of the policy is to define how the Council will exercise its responsibilities under both Acts. The draft policy has been prepared by officers after consideration of responses from several focus groups. The draft policy has been considered by the Licensing Committee and published, in draft format, for a period of public consultation, which ran for

12 weeks, starting on Monday 28 June and closing on Sunday 19 September 2021.

2. Financial Implications

The funding for the preparation and consultation of the draft statement of licensing policy came from existing budgets and there are no further financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

3. Health and Well-being Implications

The Taxi trade performs an important role in the health and wellbeing of Dorset residents, providing essential transport, particularly for disabled persons and children with special educational needs who do not have access to other forms of public transport and these matters are addressed within the draft policy.

4. Climate implications

Encouragement of electric and low emission vehicles have an important role to play in the Council's climate emergency aspirations and both are addressed within the draft policy. There are therefore no negative implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of meeting the Council's climate change obligations.

5. Other Implications

There are no implications arising from the recommendations contained within this report in terms of impacts on other service areas within the Council.

6. Risk Assessment

Having considered the risks associated with this decision, the level of risk has been identified as:
Current Risk: Low
Residual Risk: Low

7. Equalities Impact Assessment

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been prepared and is attached as Appendix B to this report.

8. Appendices

Appendix A Draft Taxi Policy January 2022
Appendix B Draft Equalities Impact Assessment

9. Background Papers

[Town Police Clauses Act 1847](#)

[Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976](#)

[Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Guidance \(July 2020\)](#)

[Institute of Licensing - Safe and Suitable](#)

[Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Best Practice Guidance \(March 2010\)](#)

[FTA National Inspection Standards \(August 2012\)](#)

Footnote:

Issues relating to financial, legal, environmental, economic and equalities implications have been considered and any information relevant to the decision is included within the report.

10. Background

10.1 The Department for Transport (DfT) recommends that Licensing Authorities have a publicly available document that brings together all the procedures on taxi and private hire licensing.

10.2 The overriding objective of the policy is to protect the public.

10.3 The DfT recommends that taxi policies are reviewed every five years, with interim reviews carried out if significant issues arise during the five years.

10.4 The activities that are regulated cover the licensing of: -

- Hackney carriage vehicles
- Hackney carriage drivers
- Private hire vehicles
- Private hire drivers
- Private hire operators

10.5 The taxi policy has been prepared with regard to, and sought to integrate with, the following Council strategies:

- Dorset Council Plan
- Dorset Council Community Safety Plan
- Dorset Council's Economic Growth Strategy
- Dorset Council's Enforcement Policy

10.6 This is Dorset Council's first Taxi Licensing Policy and Officers have prepared the draft policy with reference to the predecessor council policies

and also through engagement with key stakeholders and interested parties through focus groups carried out through March 2021.

- 10.7 Prior to the formation of Dorset Council, each of the predecessor District and Borough Councils had their own Taxi Licensing Policies setting out how they would process hackney carriage and private hire matters. Due consideration of these policies has been taken when drafting the Dorset Council Taxi Policy and areas of good practice have been retained and developed.
- 10.8 The new policy will be supported by a new fee structure for applications that will look to consolidate the current fees to ensure the income raised covers the cost of the taxi licensing function.
- 10.9 The public consultation ran for a period of 12 weeks, starting on Monday 28 June and closing on Sunday 19 September 2021. The consultation included consulting with and considering the views of a wide range of individuals and organisations including:
- All current licence holders
 - Local residents
 - Local Councillors
 - Parish and town councils
 - Local members of parliament
 - Dorset Police
 - Dorset Council – Adults Services
 - Dorset Council – School Contracts Service
 - Dorset Council – Highways
 - Dorset Council – Children’s Services
 - Dorset Council – Legal Services
 - Dorset Council - Fleet
 - Neighbouring Authorities
 - Dorset Disability Forum
- 10.10 The consultation team are currently preparing a report containing all of the responses received as part of the consultation and a summary of the responses received will be given verbally by officers at the meeting. Officers will analyse each of the responses and recommend amendments to the draft policy, where appropriate, or give reasons why suggested alterations are not made and prepare a report for the Licensing Committee with a final draft policy for committee to consider for adoption.
- 10.11 The draft policy is before the committee today for review and consideration with a recommendation that any observations, concerns or areas for clarification are passed on to the Licensing Committee for consideration prior to approval of the policy.