

Licensing Committee

11 October 2023

Amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy

For Decision

Portfolio Holder: Cllr L Beddow, Culture and Communities

Local Councillor(s): All Councillors

Executive Director: J Sellgren, Executive Director of Place

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Report Status: Public

Brief Summary: To consider proposed minor amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy.

Recommendations:

- i. Insert a paragraph 2.51 under a heading “Meters” to read; -
All Hackney Carriages will be expected to have a functioning meter set to the Dorset Council Tariff (or a lesser Tariff). If the meter is not a mechanical meter, then that alternative system will need to be approved by a Licensing Officer and procedures must be in place to prevent any tampering to tariffs by either drivers or operators that could set the fare displayed to be higher than the Dorset Council Tariff.
- ii. Amend paragraphs 2.43, 3.37, 3.47 and 3.56 to include suspensions and refusals to reflect changes to the law.
- iii. Paragraph 3.27 is amended to read; -
Driver’s licences issued for a Combined Driver Licence that will incorporate licences to drive both types of vehicles, a Private Hire Driver Licence or a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence. Licences will be granted for a period of three years. Dorset Council may grant licences for a lesser period if necessary.

- iv. Adding the following wording to paragraph 3.27; -
Should a driver need to change the type of licence he has, and they have undertaken the relevant knowledge and suitability test, the type of licence can be swapped at any time for the cost of a replacement badge and will be subject to the same dates for renewal etc as the original licence.
- v. Amend paragraph 3.32 to read;-
Any application where more than one relevant offence is revealed will be referred to a Sub-Committee for a decision.

Reason for Recommendations: Making these minor corrections will ensure the policy is as clear and correct as it can be.

1. Background

- 1.1 The current Taxi Policy came into effect in April 2022. It has been in force now for over a year and has been extremely helpful when dealing with taxi licensing in general. It was always intended to keep the policy under review and to make adjustments as required. This report contains a number of suggestions for insertions and clarifications that are required for various reasons, set out below. The current Policy is attached at Appendix 1.

2. Amendments Required

- 2.1 **Meters** - Changes in the way that devices can display tariffs mean that where all Hackney Carriages used to have mechanical meters that were attached to their speedometers, there are now software/location solutions available that can do a similar job and which can be linked in to booking and dispatch systems that operators use. It is therefore recommended that a paragraph is inserted into the policy to clarify what can be used in Hackney Carriages.
- 2.2 **Recommendation** – insert a paragraph 2.51 under a heading “Meters” to read; -

All Hackney Carriages will be expected to have a functioning meter set to the Dorset Council Tariff (or a lesser Tariff). If the meter is not a mechanical meter, then that alternative system will need to be approved by a Licensing Officer and procedures must be in place to prevent any tampering to tariffs by either drivers or operators that could set the fare displayed to be higher than the maximum Dorset Council Tariff.

- 2.3 **Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safety and Road Safety) Act 2022** -
From 31st March 2022 we have been required under the legislation to

include suspensions and refusals as well as revocations on the National database of taxi and private hire drivers (NR3).

2.4 **Recommendation** – Amend paragraphs 2.43, 3.37, 3.47 and 3.56 to include suspensions and refusals to reflect this change to the law.

2.5 **Driver Licences** - When the Taxi Policy was introduced it was intended to issue Combined Licences to all drivers. During the consultation changes were made and paragraph 2.21 was amended to state that whatever type of licence was applied for should be granted. Paragraph 3.27 was not similarly updated.

2.6 **Recommendation** – Paragraph 3.27 is amended to read; -

Driver's licences issued for a Combined Driver Licence that will incorporate licences to drive both types of vehicles, a Private Hire Driver Licence or a Hackney Carriage Driver Licence. Licences will be granted for a period of three years. Dorset Council may grant licences for a lesser period if necessary.

2.7 Furthermore - because driver's licences last for three years, drivers may from time to time wish to drive a different type of vehicle. Officers recommend adding the following to Paragraph 3.27 to include a statement that should drivers wish to change the type of licence they can for the cost of a new badge.

2.8 **Recommendation** – adding the following wording to paragraph 3.27; -

Should a driver need to change the type of licence he has, and they have undertaken the relevant knowledge and suitability test, the type of licence can be swapped at any time for the cost of a replacement badge and will be subject to the same dates for renewal etc as the original licence.

2.9 **Motoring Offences** - Paragraph 3.32 is incorrect as it refers to licences being referred to a Sub-Committee if there is more than 1 current motoring offence. The criminal record policy gives different levels to this with either a serious motoring offence, or minor motoring offences where the points awarded amount to seven or more being referred.

2.10 **Recommendation** – amend paragraph 3.32 to read;-

Any application where more than one relevant offence is revealed will be referred to a Sub-Committee for a decision.

3. Financial Implications

None

4. Natural Environment, Climate & Ecology Implications

None

5. Well-being and Health Implications

None

6. Other Implications

None

7. Risk Assessment

HAVING CONSIDERED: the risks associated with this decision; the level of risk has been identified as:

Current Risk: Low

Residual Risk: Low

8. Equalities Impact Assessment

An EQIA was carried out when the Policy was written and not affected by any of the recommended amendments.

9. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Dorset Council Taxi Licensing Policy

10. Background Papers

[Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles \(Safeguarding and Road Safety\) Act 2022](#)