

EXECUTIVE

11th July 2024

Report Title	Hackney Carriage De-zoning
Lead Member	Cllr David Brackenbury – Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration
Report Author	George Candler – Executive Director for Place & Economy George.Candler@northnorthants.gov.uk

Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for call-in by Scrutiny?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there public sector equality duty implications?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information (whether in appendices or not)?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Applicable paragraph number/s for exemption from publication under Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972	N/A
Which Corporate Plan priority does the report most closely align with?	Safe and thriving places

List of Appendices

Appendix A – Consultation Responses (Website)

Appendix B – Consultation Responses (Email)

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment tool

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. To present the findings of the consultation process on the potential removal of the Hackney Carriage Zones.
- 1.2. Executive is asked to consider the consultation responses received together with the recommendations of the Licensing and Appeals Committee and the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee in determining whether to remove the hackney carriage zones in North Northamptonshire.

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1 Following vesting day on 1st April 2021, while private hire vehicle licensing reflected the new unitary arrangements, historical legislation meant that

hackney carriage licensing continued to operate in line with the pre-unitary authority areas.

- 2.2 Executive on 14th September 2023 considered a report recommending that a consultation be carried out on removing the hackney carriage zones in North Northamptonshire.
- 2.3 A consultation process was undertaken between 30th October 2023 and 21st January 2024.
- 2.4 On 21st March 2024, a report was considered by the Licensing and Appeals Committee, presenting the findings of the consultation. The Committee resolved to recommend to the Executive that the zones should be removed and that the consequential changes to the hackney carriage bye laws be reviewed.
- 2.5 On 30th April 2024, Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee reviewed the report and noted the recommendation of the Licensing and Appeals Committee from 21st March 2024. ; Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee also invited a further proposal for officers to work together with the trade to formulate a geographical / knowledge test and that this be consulted on, along with the updated policy and new procedures prior to the introduction of a single zone.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Executive:
 - a. Consider the report and consultation responses;
 - b. Agree to replace the current four hackney carriage zones with a single North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) zone from 1st April 2025;
 - c. Agree that officers will consult upon the reviewed geographical / knowledge test prior to the introduction of a single zone; and
 - d. Agree that the Director for Place and Economy and Director for Law and Governance review the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws and present the revised Byelaws to Council.
- 3.2. Reason for Recommendations in relation to the zones - following the alignment of the hackney carriage tariff of fares and implementation of one Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy covering the whole of NNC's area, the retention of four separate zones for hackney carriage licencing needed further consideration. The Licensing and Appeals Committee agreed a proposal to the Executive to replace the current four hackney carriage zones with one NNC zone.

- 3.3 Reason for Recommendations in relation to the byelaws - the review of the zones necessitates a review of the byelaws which govern hackney carriage licensing.
- 3.4 Alternative Options Considered in relation to the zones:
- i) Take no action and retain the current four hackney carriage zones.
 - ii) Determine that the zones should be removed, and the process required to implement this decision immediately begins.
 - iii) Determine that the zones should be removed, but that there should be a delayed implementation date, so that grandfather rights permitted under the existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy have expired, meaning that there are harmonised vehicle standards. This would delay implementation until 1st April 2028.
- 3.5 Alternative Option Considered in relation to the byelaws - the Executive could :
Take no action and retain the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Following vesting day on 1st April 2021, while private hire vehicle licensing reflected the new unitary arrangements, historical legislation meant that hackney carriage licensing continued to operate in line with the pre-unitary authority areas.
- 4.2 On 3rd July 2023 a report was presented to Licensing and Appeals Committee to consider a review of the existing zone arrangements, alongside a proposal to review the hackney carriage byelaws. The Committee resolved to recommend to the Executive:
- that a consultation process be undertaken on the potential removal of the current four hackney carriage zones and replacement with one North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) zone;
 - that the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws be reviewed.
- 4.3 The matter was considered by the Sustainable and Prosperous Executive Advisory Panels jointly on 9th August 2023 prior to the Executive meeting. It was resolved that the proposal to undertake a consultation process on the potential removal of the Hackney Carriage Zones and Hackney Carriage Byelaws, be recommended to the Executive for a decision.
- 4.4 At its meeting on 14th September 2023 the Executive:
- Approved commencement of a consultation process on the potential removal of the current four hackney carriage zones and replacement with one NNC zone;
 - Approved that the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws are reviewed.

- 4.6 Between 30th October 2023 and 21st January 2024 a consultation on the proposal to remove the hackney carriage zones in North Northamptonshire was carried out. The consultation was on the North Northamptonshire Council Website during this period and media releases were sent out. All hackney carriage proprietors and driver licence holders were directly emailed at the commencement of the consultation and prior to the closure of the consultation.
- 4.7 On 21st March 2024 the Licensing and Appeals Committee heard submissions from interested parties and considered the consultation responses and resolved that the Committee:
- Considered the report and consultation responses;
 - Agreed to make a proposal to the Executive to replace the current four hackney carriage zones with one North Northamptonshire Council (NNC) zone; and
 - Agreed to make a proposal to the Executive to review the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws.
- 4.8 On 30th April 2024 the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee heard submissions from interested parties and considered the consultation responses and resolved that the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee:
- note the recommendation of the Licensing and Appeals Committee to the Executive to remove the existing hackney carriage zones and review the Byelaws;
 - propose that officers work together with the trade to formulate a geographical / knowledge test and that this be consulted on, along with the updated policy and new procedures be produced prior to the introduction of a single zone, expected to be 1st April 2025, for the whole of North Northamptonshire.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 Senior Officers from Regulatory Services met with trade representatives at meetings in Corby and Wellingborough.
- 5.2 During the meeting with representatives from the Corby trade on 2nd January 2024, the following key points were raised by the trade:
- It was stated that the current policy requirement that vehicles must be no older than four years from the first day of registration on initial application to the Council, is resulting in significant financial challenges which are making the trade un-viable. Although this comment relates to the policy, rather than the decision over whether zones should be removed, it was considered that the two issues are related.
 - The removal of zones would mean that saloon hackney carriage vehicles licensed by the Council (due to them holding grandfather rights under the policy) would be permitted to use the ranks in Corby. Since there are no licensed saloon hackney carriage vehicles within the Corby zone, it was

considered that this would reduce the standard of service within the Corby zone and increase the number of non-accessible vehicles plying for hire within Corby.

- Increasing the geographical size of the zone by forming one new North Northamptonshire zone, would result in licensed drivers using the ranks who lack geographical knowledge of the area. This would reduce service provision for customers who may not be transported via the shortest route available. It was claimed that this also creates a safety issue, since vulnerable passengers are reliant upon the driver knowing the area. It was claimed that this could result in chaos and confusion.
- It is believed that removing the zones would increase the number of licensed hackney carriage vehicles in Corby town centre, resulting in congestion on George Street.
- It was stated that Corby has more cabs per capita than any other town within North Northants and there is no significant unmet demand. It was stated that other areas do not have the same number of taxis available, and they have an unmet demand. It was acknowledged that there has been no unmet demand survey in the other towns.

5.3 During the meeting with representatives from the East and Wellingborough trade on 3rd January 2024, the following key points were raised by the trade:

- Concerns were raised in relation to policy requirements for hackney carriage vehicles to be wheelchair accessible and for vehicles to be no older than four years from the first day of registration on initial application. It was claimed that this is adversely impacting the trade. This comment relates to policy requirement concerns rather than the decision over whether zones should be removed, however given the impact upon the trade it was considered that the issue was still relevant.
- It was stated that by de-zoning the Council would be 'moving the goalposts', since the policy provided 5-year grandfather rights for existing licensed vehicles to continue to be used. It was therefore felt that no further significant change should be made which may further impact the trade within this time period.
- Representatives felt that drivers would move to where the work is, so there will be a shortage of vehicles available for hire in certain areas, impacting customers within those towns.
- It was stated that drivers are using different fares across the four zones and allowing drivers to ply for hire across the whole North Northamptonshire area would create variations in the fare charged, resulting in conflict for drivers.
- There was a concern that the knowledge test may be too difficult, due to the need for it to cover the whole of the North Northamptonshire area. This may result in a number of drivers being unable to pass the test, which would reduce the number of hackney carriage vehicles available for hire, which would be detrimental to the public.
- There was a feeling that the trade wanted to continue to serve the same community they have always served, and de-zoning would reduce the number of vehicles available for them to service their existing customer base, meaning a reduced service.
- Creating one new North Northamptonshire zone would result in drivers not having a good knowledge of the area, which would mean that they could inadvertently fall foul of legislation by not using the quickest route, which could result in enforcement action being taken against them.

- 5.4 There was no request for a meeting from hackney carriage proprietors or drivers currently working in the Kettering zone.
- 5.5 The responses received during the consultation period are included at **Appendices A** and **B**. In total there were 256 responses received, of which 221 were received through the Council's website and 35 were received via email.
- 5.6 **Appendix A** lists the consultation responses received through the Council's website during the consultation period. There were 221 responses, of which 153 have completed the consultation questionnaire in full and 68 have partially completed the questionnaire. The responses can be summarised as:
- 34 strongly agree
 - 18 agree
 - 8 disagree
 - 102 strongly disagree
 - 6 neither agree nor disagree
 - 53 didn't answer.
- 5.7 **Appendix B** contains 35 responses, all received directly to the Licensing team from the trade and the inclusions are direct copies of the email representations received. 33 of the responses were against the potential removal of the zones and two were in favour.
- 5.8 If the decision is taken to introduce one hackney carriage zone for North Northamptonshire, then the Authority has already identified that a new set of Byelaws will be required for the area, and it will be necessary to complete both central and local government processes to achieve this. This will need to be aligned with the introduction of the new zone.
- 5.9 If the decision is taken to continue with the existing zones, then it will still be necessary to introduce new Byelaws for the 4 zones as the current sets are old and outdated. The Department for Transport (DfT) issued a new set of model byelaws for local authorities to adopt in November 2023. The model Byelaws would need to be introduced separately in each of the four zones to ensure commonality of approach.
- 5.10 At the request of the Licensing and Appeals Committee further research was undertaken with unitary authorities in England to understand their current position on hackney carriage zones. Where possible telephone conversations were had with licensing officers in those authorities. The feedback from those conversations is below.
- 5.11 Of the 16 councils identified that gained unitary status or became a single district level council (in the case of West Suffolk), nine have retained their taxi zones and seven have de-zoned.
- a) Of the nine councils which have retained their zones, contact was made with seven of the licensing teams - a summary of responses is provided below. Responses are anonymised at the request of some respondents. Where direct contact could not be made, an internet search was undertaken to try to establish the current position.

- i) Four councils are actively considering de-zoning and have committed publicly to reviewing their zoning policy in the coming few years. Some have, or are in the process of, reviewing their taxi policies and explained that in readiness to de-zone, they are harmonising driver and vehicle standards (e.g. age and emissions policies, with some ensuring all Hackney Carriage Vehicles will be wheelchair accessible going forwards) as well as considering tariff structures, reviewing their own fees and charges, and the practicalities of undertaking vehicle inspections.
 - ii) One council has not yet considered the matter.
 - iii) Four councils are not considering de-zoning currently. One council had consulted publicly on the matter some years prior but mainly due to differences in vehicle standards and tariffs, had chosen not to do so. One council reported that one of the key reasons why it had not de-zoned was because of their geographical size – were licensing to be centralised, they were concerned about vehicles needing to travel significant distances for inspections and to collect taxi plates.
- b) Of the seven councils which have de-zoned, an Officer made direct contact with four licensing teams to find out what their experience has been – responses are summarised below and are anonymised at the request of some respondents.
- i) Little evidence of licence holders applying to neighbouring authorities because of de-zoning (usually because of age or emissions policy requirements or because hackney carriage vehicles had to be wheelchair accessible from a certain date). One council reported that this had happened shortly after de-zoning but that over time, licence holders had chosen to come back and license with them.
 - i) Little evidence that the local taxi trade migrated to other areas within the new single zone – experience was that businesses continued to operate in the towns and villages they'd always operated in, though they now have freedom to accept fares if travelling back from a drop-off. One council had a different experience regarding the migration of operators to a busier zone, but this was due to the specific geography of the area. Councils reported that those areas which had been underserved remained underserved and that de-zoning did not exacerbate this issue.
 - ii) Overall, councils have seen an increase in their private hire vehicle numbers – a proportion of this increase is because there has been a trend for proprietors to transition from operating hackney carriage vehicles to private hire.
 - iii) Only one council reported experiencing some over-ranking.

5.12 During the Licensing and Appeals Committee meeting and the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee meeting, representations were received from the trade on a number of matters including concerns over the appropriateness of introducing a new geographical / knowledge test covering the whole of North

Northamptonshire and the costs involved in purchasing vehicles which meet the Council policy in terms of age requirements and the impact that this is having on the trade.

- 5.13 The Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee recognised the concerns raised by the trade over the potential complexity of a reviewed geography test covering the whole of North Northamptonshire and the impact that this could have upon drivers needing to pass the test. As a result, the Committee recommended that officers work together with the trade to formulate a geographical / knowledge test and that this is consulted on prior to the introduction of a single zone.
- 5.14 The Council will, in due course, be consulting the trade on proposed updates to its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. This is in response to representations from the trade against the age requirements for licensed vehicles and receipt of the Department for Transport best practice guidance update in November 2023.

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 If the decision of the Executive is to remove the four zones currently in place and create one new North Northamptonshire zone, an action plan will be formulated for agreement to ensure that the correct democratic processes are undertaken to execute this decision. In addition administrative processes will be redesigned to reflect the decision. This will include the creation of new knowledge tests for Hackney Carriage drivers, review of administrative processes and a review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to ensure that it reflects the change. It is anticipated that to allow for these processes to be fully implemented the earliest implementation date would be 1st April 2025.
- 6.2 The decision over de-zoning will determine if 4 new sets of model Byelaws are required or one for the whole of North Northamptonshire. Beyond this point the process will be the same. The proposed Byelaws will need to be agreed. A new set of model byelaws were introduced by DfT in November 2023 which may be adopted as the new Byelaws.
- 6.3 If the zones are to be removed, this will need to be reflected in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. This policy is currently being reviewed by officers to take account of the latest Department for Transport taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance published in November 2023. This review will also take account of concerns raised by the trade over the age restriction and climate change requirements. Once the review is complete the policy will be consulted upon.
- 6.4 Once the draft new Byelaws are agreed, they will need to be approved by the Secretary of State for Transport and a date of introduction agreed. The new model Byelaws contain a revocation Byelaw to deal with existing Byelaws.

- 6.5 If the decision of the Executive is to retain the four zones currently in place, the byelaws and Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy would continue to be reviewed, to ensure that they reflect best practice guidance.

7 Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources, Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1 There are no significant resource or financial implications from de-zoning. If introduced it would streamline the licensing process for the licensing of hackney carriages. The costs of issuing new plates, licences and badges can be met within existing budgets and it would be proposed to reduce these costs by issuing these when renewals were due or on new application rather than immediately replacing all at the time a decision to de-zone was taken.
- 7.1.2 The removal of the four local zones will remove the requirements for unmet demand surveys for hackney carriages in the Corby area, removing the need to pass the costs onto the trade. This will also remove the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences currently identified as being the number sufficient to meet demand.
- 7.1.3 There is concern that if the zones are removed this will leave some of the smaller towns with a reduced number of Hackney Carriage vehicles available for hire, due to the drivers moving to the towns where there is more work. This would have a negative impact upon service provision in these areas. The extent to which the trade will change the way that they operate and how long it would take for the market to even out is unknown.
- 7.1.4 It is anticipated that over time the existing taxi trade and new businesses entering the market will develop to meet the opportunities that a decision to remove zones might offer. With one licence being required for a driver and for a vehicle to operate across North Northamptonshire rather than the current four, one for each zone, the option for area wide operations is available. As a result it will be necessary to review current taxi rank availability both in terms of locations and capacity to ensure that customer service requirements continue to be met.
- 7.1.5 New application processes will need to be developed to meet the requirements of the new area including a new “knowledge test” to reflect the modern demands on taxi drivers in North Northamptonshire.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 Should the Authority wish to remove hackney carriage zones from its area then there is a legal process to follow. This process is laid out in Schedule 14 to the Local Government Act 1972, Part II, para 25, detailed below.

25 (1) Subject to sub-paragraph (2) below, a local authority may after giving the requisite notice resolve that any of the enactments mentioned in paragraph 24 above shall apply throughout their area or shall cease to

apply throughout their area (whether or not, in either case, the enactment applies only to part of their area).

- (2) A resolution under this paragraph disapplying—
 - (a) section 171(4) of the Public Health Act 1875;*
 - (b)*
 - (c) section 82, 83 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907; or*
 - (d) section 76 of the Public Health Act 1925;*
*must be passed before 1st April 1975, but any other resolution under this paragraph may be passed at any time.**
- (3) A resolution under this paragraph applying either of the following provisions, that is to say, section 21 of the said Act of 1907 or section 18 of the said Act of 1925, throughout an area shall have effect as a resolution disapplying the other provision throughout that area and a resolution under this paragraph applying either of the following provisions, that is to say, the original street-naming enactment or section 19 of the said Act of 1925, throughout an area shall have effect as a resolution disapplying the other provision throughout that area.*
- (4)*
- (5) The notice which is requisite for a resolution given under sub-paragraph (1) above is a notice—
 - (a) given by the local authority in question of their intention to pass the resolution given by advertisement in two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper circulating in their area; and*
 - (b) served, not later than the date on which the advertisement is first published, on the council of every parish or community whose area, or part of whose area, is affected by the resolution or, in the case of a parish so affected but not having a parish council (whether separate or common), on the chairman of the parish meeting.**
- (6) The date on which a resolution under this paragraph is to take effect shall—
 - (a) be a date specified therein, being not earlier than one month after the date of the resolution; .**
- (7) A copy of a resolution of a local authority under this paragraph, certified in writing to be a true copy by the proper officer of the authority, shall in all legal proceedings be received as evidence of the resolution having been passed by the authority.*

7.2.2 Previously approval for a resolution under this Section required the approval of the Secretary of State but this was removed by a Legislative Reform Order and therefore, provided the above process is followed, the Authority can remove its Hackney Carriage zones.

7.2.3 Should the Authority wish to introduce a byelaw or byelaws which deviate from the model ones, the DfT expects the Authority to take a rigorous approach in drafting to ensure that the tests of legal validity are met. These are set out in *Kruse v Johnson* [1898 2 QB 91] as comprising four elements essential to validity:

- byelaws must be within the powers of the local authority which makes them;
- byelaws must not be repugnant to the general law;
- byelaws must be certain and positive in their terms; and

- byelaws must be reasonable.
- 7.2.4 If a local authority identifies a policy objective which it wishes to reflect in byelaws, the onus will be on the local authority to draft a suitable byelaw to put to the Department for provisional approval. The onus will also be on the local authority to satisfy itself as to the validity of any proposed byelaw which it submits to the Department for approval. It is expected that the Authority will have sought their own legal advice and to provide an explanation as to why they consider that any proposed byelaw is valid.
- 7.2.5 Confirmation by the Secretary of State does not endow the byelaws with legal validity - only the courts can determine whether a byelaw is valid. To this extent, it is crucial that any draft byelaws are seen and approved by the Council's legal advisers. Any request for provisional approval of byelaws which deviate from the model should be accompanied by an explanation of the policy objective, a justification of their validity and confirmation that the byelaws have been approved by legal advisers.
- 7.2.6 Should the Authority decide to implement new byelaws, there is a need to follow the process laid down in Section 236 of the Local Government Act 1972 for the adoption of byelaws:
- (1) *Subject to subsection (2) below, the following provisions of this section shall apply to byelaws to be made by a local authority in England under this Act and to byelaws made by a local authority in England, the Greater London Authority, Transport for London, an Integrated Transport Authority for an integrated transport area in England or a combined authority under any other enactment and conferring on the authority a power to make byelaws and for which specific provision is not otherwise made.*
 - (2) *This section shall not apply to*
 - (a) *byelaws of a class prescribed by regulations under section 236A, or*
 - (b) *byelaws made by the Civil Aviation Authority under section 29 of the Civil Aviation Act 1982.*
 - (3) *Subject to subsection (3A) below, the byelaws shall be made under the common seal of the authority, or, in the case of byelaws made by a parish council not having a seal, under the hands and seals of two members of the council, and shall not have effect until they are confirmed by the confirming authority.*
 - (3A) *Byelaws made by the Greater London Authority shall be made under the hand of the mayor and shall not have effect until they are confirmed by the confirming authority.*
 - (4) *At least one month before application for confirmation of the byelaws is made, notice of the intention to apply for confirmation shall be given in one or more local newspapers circulating in the area to which the byelaws are to apply.*
 - (5) *For at least one month before application for confirmation is made, a copy of the byelaws shall be deposited at the offices of the authority by whom*

the byelaws are made and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.

- (6) The authority by whom the byelaws are made shall, on application, furnish to any person a copy of the byelaws, or of any part thereof, on payment of such sum, not exceeding 10p for every hundred words contained in the copy, as the authority may determine.*
- (7) The confirming authority may confirm, or refuse to confirm, any byelaw submitted under this section for confirmation, and may fix the date on which the byelaw is to come into operation and if no date is so fixed the byelaw shall come into operation at the expiration of one month from the date of its confirmation.*
- (8) A copy of the byelaws, when confirmed, shall be printed and deposited at the offices of the authority by whom the byelaws are made, and shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment, and a copy thereof shall, on application, be furnished to any person on payment of such sum, not exceeding 20p for every copy, as the authority may determine.*
- (9) The proper officer of a district council shall send a copy of every byelaw made by the council, and confirmed, to the proper officer of the council, whether separate or common, of every parish to which they apply or, in the case of a parish not having a council, to the chairman of the parish meeting, and the proper officer of the parish council or chairman of the parish meeting, as the case may be, shall cause a copy to be deposited with the public documents of the parish. A copy so deposited shall at all reasonable hours be open to public inspection without payment.*
- (10) The proper officer of a county council shall send a copy of every byelaw made by the council, and confirmed, to the council of every district in the county, and the proper officer of the council of a district shall send a copy of every byelaw made by the council, and confirmed, to the council of the county.*

In this section the expression “the confirming authority” means the authority or person, if any, specified in the enactment (including any enactment in this Act) under which the byelaws are made, or in any enactment incorporated therein or applied thereby, as the authority or person by whom the byelaws are to be confirmed, or if no authority or person is so specified means the Secretary of State.

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

- 7.3.1 The implementation of one zone will remove the barriers which currently exist to licensed hackney carriages to trade across North Northamptonshire. It will allow hackney carriages to ply for hire across the area in line with the Safe and thriving places priority to enable people to travel across North Northamptonshire, and beyond.

7.3.2 As the Hackney Carriage and private Hire policy requirements come on-line, it will also meet the greener, sustainable environment priority as it will open up access to sustainable forms of transport for the population to use across the area.

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 A 12 week consultation was carried out via the Council's website between 30th October 2023 and 21st January 2024.

7.5.2 Two meetings were held between senior managers and the taxi trade to discuss the option of removing the hackney carriage zones.

7.5.3 The consultation responses are included within the appendices to this report.

7.6 Consideration by the Executive

7.6.1 The recommendations from the Licensing and Appeals Committee and the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee are to be presented to the Executive on 6th June 2024.

7.7 Equality Implications

7.7.1 An equality impact screening assessment has been carried out. The impact of this proposal is generally neutral with the exception of potential positive impact with regards to disability.

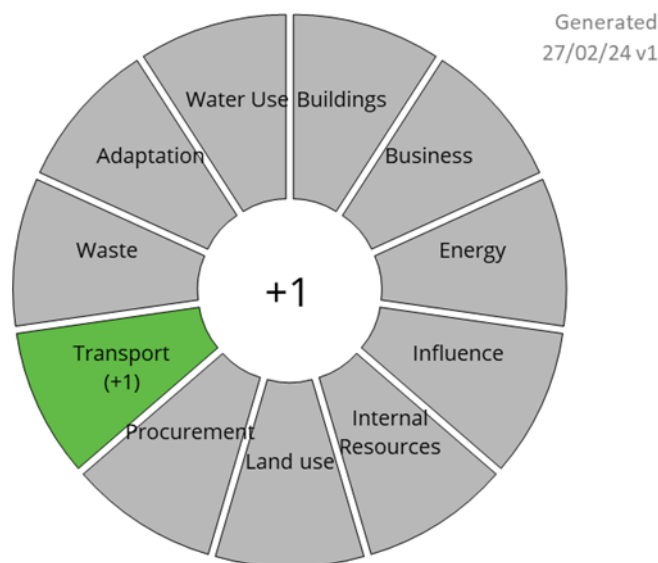
7.7.2 While the Authority's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy requires that all newly licensed hackney carriages are wheelchair accessible vehicles, this will take some time to filter through to the whole fleet.

7.7.3 In the meantime there are no licensed wheelchair Accessible Hackney Carriages in the East Northamptonshire area and only three in the Wellingborough area. Corby and Kettering have a fully wheelchair accessible hackney carriage fleet.

7.7.4 Removing the zones means that these vehicles could service the ranks in the areas with no or minimal wheelchair accessible vehicle provision as well as no zones meaning more business opportunity to provide WAV service to all of these areas.

7.8 Climate Impact

- 7.8.1 The Council declared a climate change emergency in June 2021 and is committed to reducing its climate impact both within its own Council buildings and in working with businesses and the wider community to achieve net zero energy emissions.
- 7.8.2 The North Northamptonshire Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy will continue to drive standards in the licensed vehicle trade to manage climate impact from this sector. Implementation of emission standards on hackney carriages should see diminished impact from this sector even if a decision is taken to remove zones and potentially increase miles travelled.
- 7.8.3 This proposal removes the restrictions on hackney carriages plying for hire and working on taxi ranks in the four former legacy authority areas . It would allow a North Northamptonshire Council licensed hackney carriage to ply for hire and wait at ranks anywhere within the Authority's area. Linked to the Authority's hackney carriage and private hire vehicle policy which requires wheelchair accessible hackney carriages and a move towards low/zero emission vehicles in the coming years, this should offer an improved and greener public transport service.
- 7.8.4 A Climate Change Impact Assessment has been undertaken with the overall assessment indicating that this particular decision will have no significant impact on climate change.



North Northamptonshire Council has committed to being a carbon neutral organisation by 2030, 5 yrs & 10 mos away.

7.9 Community Impact

- 7.9.1 The implementation of this proposal should, with time, provide access to an accessible fleet of vehicles across the Authority area which are low or zero emissions.

7.10 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1 There are no identified crime and disorder implications from this proposal.

8 Background Papers

- 8.1 Licensing and Appeals Committee Report, 3rd July 2023
[Agenda for Licensing and Appeals Committee on Monday 3rd July, 2023, 7.00 pm - North Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 8.2 Sustainable and Prosperous Executive Advisory Panel Report, 9th August 2023
[Agenda for EAP Sustainable Communities on Wednesday 9th August, 2023, 9.30 am - North Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)
- 8.3 Executive Report, 14th September 2023
<https://northnorthants.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=386&MId=1584&Ver=4>
- 8.4 Licensing and Appeals Committee Report, 21st March 2024
[Agenda for Licensing and Appeals Committee on Thursday 21st March, 2024, 7.00 pm - North Northamptonshire Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)