

Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee

Wednesday, 29 January 2025

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| Report Title | Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2028 |
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| 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? Our priorities for the future North Northamptonshire Council (northnorthants.gov.uk) | Safe and thriving places |

List of Appendices

- Appendix A** – Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2028
- Appendix B** – Criminal Convictions and Suitability Policy
- Appendix C** – Private Hire Driver & Dual Driver Licence Conditions
- Appendix D** – Private Hire Vehicle Conditions
- Appendix E** – Hackney Carriage Byelaws
- Appendix F** – Hackney Carriage Vehicle Conditions
- Appendix G** – Private Hire Operator Conditions
- Appendix H** – Penalty Points System
- Appendix I** – National Register for Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions (NR3S)
- Appendix J** – Exemptions from Displaying Licence Plates
- Appendix K** – CCTV in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles
- Appendix L** – Executive and Special Occasion Vehicles
- Appendix M** – Consultation Analysis
- Appendix N** – Climate Change Impact Assessment Tool
- Appendix O** – Equality Screening Assessment (ESA)

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The report sets out the proposed updates to be made to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2028 (provided at **Appendix A**) and its 11 appendices (**Appendices B – L**)

following a period of public consultation.

- 1.2. The report presents the results of the consultation (a consultation analysis is provided at **Appendix M**) and sets out the next steps in adopting the draft Policy so that it may take effect on 1 April 2025.
- 1.3. To review the recommendation to the Council and Executive in respect of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2028. The matter has been before the Licensing and Appeals Committee who have recommended that the Policy be adopted

2. Executive Summary

- 2.1. There are several reasons why it is considered necessary to undertake a review of the current hackney carriage and private hire licensing policy (and its 14 appendices), which has effect until 31 March 2028;
 - To ensure the policy reflects the Decision of the Council's Executive of 11 July 2024, to transition to a single hackney carriage zone from 1 April 2025.
 - To consider concerns raised by the trade.
 - To ensure its cognisance of updated guidance issued by the Department for Transport in June 2022 and November 2023 (DfT Guidance).
 - To reflect the updated guidance issued by the Institute of Licensing regarding driver and operator suitability (October 2024).
 - To consider officer operational experience acquired in the intervening period.
- 2.2. The purpose of the Policy is to guide the administration of driver, vehicle and private hire operator licensing activities under taxi and private hire legislation. The policy aims to ensure that an appropriate balance is drawn between the interests of those wishing to obtain or maintain a licence to undertake these activities and the public, particularly those who use taxi or private hire transport, and which support and promote the Council's priorities.
- 2.3. A draft Policy and revised Appendices (11 in total) were presented to Lead Members on 22nd October. Members gave their approval for the draft Policy to be consulted on publicly, with Officers undertaking a consultation exercise between 18 October – 9 December 2024.
- 2.4. The Council received 30 consultation responses (including one collated response from the licensing team), and these are presented at **Appendix M**. Numerous changes are proposed to the draft Policy and its supporting appendices which take into account where possible the responses from the consultation. The proposed changes are shown as tracked changes in both the main Policy document and the appendices.
- 2.5. A report was put before the Licensing and Appeals Committee on 14 January 2025, presenting the findings of the consultation. The Committee determined that they would recommend to Council and the

Executive that the draft policy be adopted. The Policy is to be considered by the Executive on 13 February 2025 and Council on 06 March 2025.

Recommendations

- 3.1. It is recommended that the Place and Environment Scrutiny Committee consider the recommendation of the Licensing and Appeals Committee to the Executive and Council that they;
 - a. Adopt the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2028.
 - b. Delegate authority to make any minor corrections to the Policy, to the Executive Director of Place and Economy.
 - c. Delegate authority to postpone the planned commencement date of the Policy of 1 April 2025 to the Executive Director of Place and Economy in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration, if necessary, so that it is implemented in tandem with the effective date of a new set of Hackney Carriage Byelaws (see Appendix E), which are subject to a separate adoption process and approval by Council.
- 3.2 Reasons for recommendations: the draft Policy provides information and clarity to the licensed trade and prospective applicants about how the Council will administer the hackney carriage and private hire driver, vehicle and private hire operator licensing regimes. The Policy also explains how the Council will deliver on its primary and overriding responsibility to protect the public, so that they may travel in safe, well-maintained vehicles, driven by competent drivers.
- 3.3 The draft Policy includes several material differences to the extant Policy, which took effect 1 April 2023, to ensure it reflects the Decision of the Council's Executive of 11 July 2024 to transition to a single hackney carriage zone from 1 April 2025 and to ensure its cognisance of updated guidance issued by the Department for Transport and the Institute of Licensing as well as operational experience and feedback from the licensed trade.
- 3.4 Alternative options considered – the Council could decide not to update the extant Policy, the outcome of which would be that the Policy will not reflect the Decision of the Council's Executive to transition to a single hackney carriage zone. The Policy will also not reflect updated government guidance and learned operational experience. This could leave the Council open to legal challenge in relation to any decisions made under taxi and private hire licensing legislation.

4. Report Background

- 4.1 Members will be aware that on 1 April 2023, the Council adopted an NNC-wide Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy which standardised application and licensing requirements for all drivers and operators, and several requirements in respect of vehicles.
- 4.2 In tandem with the review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire policy and in accordance with the Executive's Decision of 11 July 2024, officers are progressing work integral to the administration of the new single hackney carriage zone, comprising:
- Reviewing the current geographical/knowledge test and securing the services of a third party to deliver this work.
 - Reviewing the current Hackney Carriage Byelaws in accordance with Section 236 of the Local Government Act 1972. Officers will present the new Byelaws to Council for adoption prior to the implementation of the revised taxi policy.
- 4.3 Two further supporting pieces of work are also in progress:
- Reviewing the current hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees and charges for 2025/26 to ensure full cost recovery of the functions and activities involved in administering the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regimes.
 - Reviewing the hackney carriage ranks across the NNC area to ensure they are correct and properly adopted under licensing and highways legislation.
- 4.4 The draft Policy sets out how the Council will deliver its primary and overriding responsibility to protect the public, so that they may travel in safe, well-maintained vehicles driven by competent drivers, as well as providing a fair and reasonable service for the licensed trade within which to operate.
- 4.5 The Council's responsibilities and core functions in respect of the hackney carriage and private hire driver, vehicle and operator regimes can be summarised as:
- Setting the local framework, which includes safeguarding standards, fares, and vehicle standards.
 - How we will consider applications and safeguarding the public by issuing licences, reviewing licences, which may result in suspension or revocation.
 - How we will undertake inspection and enforcement activities to ensure the required standards are being maintained.
- 4.6 A draft Policy was presented to Lead Members and was then subject to a consultation process with the public, the trade and other interested parties. The Policy has undergone numerous changes following this consultation, which are shown as track changes to the documents.

4.7 On 14 January 2025 the Licensing and Appeals Committee heard submissions from interested parties and considered the consultation responses. Members debated the policy content and considered the matters raised during submissions from licence holders.

4.8 One of the speakers raised a concern over the potential impact of the requirements within paragraph 10.67 of the draft Policy;

10.67 No commercial advertising is permitted on Private Hire Vehicles. Proprietors of licensed Private Hire Vehicles must ensure all commercial advertising is removed from the vehicle within 28-days of the date of this Policy having effect.

4.9 Concern was raised by the speakers and some of the Committee Members, that by not allowing Private Hire Companies to add their company details onto the vehicle, this could cause confusion for customers and prevent them from being able to identify the correct vehicle that they have booked. It was felt that this could result in an increased risk of unlicensed drivers illegally plying for hire. It was stated that door signage is more prominent than the identification plates on CCTV footage and would assist the Police and Council officers in their investigations and would assist companies in defending themselves against inaccurate complaints.

4.10 The current Policy states;

16.5 In addition to the two standard door signs, vehicles will be permitted to display one small sign on the rear of the vehicle, stating the company name and telephone number only. The dimensions of this sign must not exceed 10cm by 10cm

16.9 In addition to the prescribed North Northamptonshire Council signage on both front doors, one commercial advertising panel is permitted on each rear passenger door of a licensed vehicle. Each panel must not exceed 45cm in height and 60 cm in width.

4.11 The draft updated Policy that went out to consultation, removed the option for private hire vehicles to display commercial advertising containing their company details. This change was made to comply with the DfT Guidance - 'Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England', which states;

8.12 Vehicle identification and signage

Members of the public can often confuse private hire vehicles with taxis, failing to realise that they are not available for immediate hire and that a private hire vehicle driver can only fulfil pre-booked requests. Greater differentiation in signage will help the public to distinguish between the two elements of the trade. To achieve this, licensing authorities should seek to differentiate the profile of private hire

vehicles as these can only be legally engaged through a booking with a licensed operator.

Licensing authorities should not permit roof signs of any kind on private hire vehicles and should require all taxis to display a 'taxi' roof sign/box that can be illuminated when available for hire. Roof signs must comply with the Road Vehicles Lighting Regulations 1989. Permitting any sign/box on a private hire vehicle, regardless of the wording on such a sign, is likely to increase awareness of the vehicle and the likelihood of being mistaken for a taxi.

This increases the success of those illegally standing or plying for hire and may lead to confrontation when private hire vehicle drivers refuse a request for a journey that has not been pre-booked. Having an illuminated sign on taxis and prohibiting them from private hire vehicles will provide a simple way for the public to differentiate between the two services and we encourage all licensing authorities to promote this difference to raise public awareness.

Licensing authorities' private hire vehicle signage requirements should be limited to the authority licence plate or disc and a "pre-booked only" door sign.

This approach enables passengers to be given the clear and consistent message that you should only get in a vehicle that 'has a taxi sign on the roof' unless you have pre-booked a private hire vehicle and have received information from the operator to identify it.

A private hire vehicle driver and proprietor are free to work with more than one operator and licensing conditions or requirements that effectively tie a vehicle or driver into an exclusive relationship with an operator should not be implemented or should be discontinued where these are currently imposed. Examples of such policies are a requirement for the private hire vehicle to display the name of the operator under which it is operating by means of a permanent or semi-permanent sign, or to require a driver to advise the licensing authority of the operator who they intend to work for and require notification in advance of any change.

Where an exclusive relationship exists between the vehicle proprietor, driver and operator, a licensing authority should consider permitting the display of operator details in a discreet manner to not undermine the overall objective of enabling the public to differentiate easily between taxis and private hire vehicles. This might, for example, be through small branding on the rear of the vehicle.

Restrictions on the use of terms which might lead to confusion among the public are detailed in section 64 of The Transport Act 1980 in respect of roof-signs; to assist the public in differentiating taxis from private hire vehicles, similar restrictions should be applied to all signage on private hire vehicles. Signs which include the word "taxi" or "cab", whether singular or plural, or any word of similar meaning or

appearance to any of those words, whether alone or as part of another word should not be permitted.

- 4.12 No consultation responses were received from the trade on this matter during the consultation period and as such no changes were considered in relation to the draft Policy. Members may however view this issue to be one that requires further consideration.

5. Issues and Choices

- 5.1 A summary of the proposed key inclusions and changes to the draft Policy are set out below (and includes reference to the corresponding section of the Policy or Appendix). Information about whether these matters were challenged or supported during the consultation period is explained and options are set out for Members to consider.
- 5.2 All changes made to the draft Policy, which was subject to public consultation, are detailed at Appendix M.
- 5.3 **Inclusion of Licensing Objectives** (see *Section 4*)
- With reference to more recent licensing legislation (e.g. Alcohol and entertainment and gambling), Officers propose adopting new licensing objectives to help frame and underpin decision-making.
- 5.4 **Transitional Arrangements** (see *Section 5*)
- Recognising that vehicle owner and operators have made significant investment in their vehicles, the transition arrangement regarding vehicle age and type contained in the current Policy is maintained to 1 April 2028, except for the new advertising requirement for private hire vehicles, which has effect from 1 April 2025. This means that holders of vehicle licences which were in effect as of 1 April 2023 can continue to operate the vehicles connected to the vehicle licence under most of the age and vehicle type terms and conditions until 31 March 2028. Vehicles must however be continuously licensed and meet the predecessor terms and conditions applicable as of 1 April 2023.
 - All other policy requirements and terms and conditions relating to vehicles will apply from 1 April 2025. The effect is that aside from some minor legacy arrangements conferred on existing vehicle licence holders, all driver, operator and vehicle requirements and terms and conditions are aligned and will have application across North Northamptonshire.
- 5.5 **Driver Licensing Requirements** (see *Section 7*)
- Inclusion of requirement for driver application renewals to be made no later than 12 weeks in advance of the licence expiry date. The lead-in period accounts for the paperwork applicants must produce to the Council, some of which is issued by external parties.

- Updated information is provided regarding proof of entitlement requirements to work in the UK, in line with Government advice and guidance.
- Inclusion of a requirement that applications will not be considered where the applicant has 7 or more points on their DVLA licence. The draft Policy includes an explanation of the process to be followed where applicants have up to 6 points which are the result of speeding offences only.
- Inclusion of a new requirement that applicants with/or drivers who develop Type 2 Diabetes, where the condition is managed by medication carrying hypoglycaemic risks, must inform the Council.
- Changes are proposed to the driver knowledge test for hackney carriage drivers, to account for the new single (and much larger) zone. The driver test is subject to a separate review and consultation. The draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy indicates that all drivers will be tested on their general knowledge of key locations across North Northamptonshire and that an additional test applies to drivers of hackney carriages and those who hold a dual driver licence. The draft policy provides an overview of the requirements only - once arrangements for the new driver test are in place, officers will add this information to our website and communicate to licensed drivers in separate correspondence. See Section 8.

5.6 Vehicle Age and Environmental Considerations (See *Section 10*) In response to feedback received from the licensed trade during the de-zoning consultation, concerning the financial challenges of acquiring wheelchair accessible vehicles, it is proposed that the maximum age limit of 4 years in respect of vehicles presented for first licensing is removed. This will apply to purpose-built wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles and fully wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles. From 1 January 2030, only Zero Emissions Vehicles (ZEV) may be presented for first licensing.

- In recognition of environmental considerations and to encourage the purchase of low emission vehicles, it is proposed that the maximum age limit of 4 years for vehicles presented for licensing for the first time is removed for private hire ZEVs or ultra-low emissions vehicles (ULEV). From 1 January 2030, only ZEVs may be presented for first licensing.
- Officers propose relaxing the maximum age at which vehicles may remain licensed as below:
 - Permit private hire vehicles which are fully wheelchair accessible to remain licensed until they reach 15 years of age (current age limit is 10 years), or until 31 December 2034 where they are not ZEVs (whichever comes sooner).

- Permit all hackney carriages (all of which will be wheelchair accessible) to remain licensed until they reach 15 years of age (current age limit is 10 years, unless of a certain build type e.g. TX type), or until 31 December 2034 where they are not ZEVs (whichever comes sooner).
- Officers do not propose to relax the maximum age limit beyond which the Council will not license private hire vehicles (10 years), even where these are ZEV or ULEVs, because such vehicles are not built for commercial use.
- Officers propose to postpone the prohibition of petrol or diesel fuelled vehicles for licensing purposes until 1 January 2030 (for first licensing) and 31 December 2035 (for renewals), as below. The decision to delay reflects the Government's revised pathway towards vehicles being zero emission by 2035, which is now law¹. Officers hope the postponement will allow time for supporting charging infrastructure to be in place and for the licensed trade to plan for the change to ZEVs (and for such vehicles to be available). The revised draft Policy makes clear that where national standards are introduced regarding the fuel type of vehicles, the Policy will be reviewed to ensure that licensed vehicles meet these new standards in good time.
 - All vehicles presented for first licensing from 1 January 2030 must be zero emission vehicles (*current Policy requirement is from 1 April 2025*).
 - Non-zero emissions vehicles (of any type) will not be renewed after 31 December 2034 and must come off the road by the same date (*current policy says no vehicles fuelled by petrol or diesel only will be renewed after 31 December 2030 and that all PHVs fuelled by diesel or petrol will expire on 31 December 2030*).

5.7 **Vehicle Specifications and Legacy Terms and Conditions** (See Section 10)

- The requirements in relation to wheelchair accessible vehicles has been updated and strengthened and will apply to vehicles presented for first licensing from 1 April 2025. Existing licence holders can continue to renew the licence attached to such vehicles under transition arrangements until 31 March 2028.
- The specifications relating to the colour of private hire vehicles which may be presented for licensing is modified. The current policy requires that private hire vehicles should not be yellow (due to Wellingborough having some yellow hackney carriage vehicles).
- Recognising vehicles may be older when presented for first licensing and may remain licensed for a longer period, officers

have strengthened the Exceptional Age Requirements. A council officer will inspect vehicles subject to an application under the requirements (a fee is payable for this inspection).

- Harmonised vehicle standards and removal of all policy requirements and terms and conditions previously conferred by grandfather rights (to holders of existing licences) in the current Policy, aside from those relating to vehicle type and age, which discontinue as of 1 April 2028.

5.8 **Vehicle Signage and Vehicle Advertising** (See *Section 10*)

- Inclusion of a new requirement to display signage in vehicles prohibiting vaping.
- In accordance with DfT Guidance, the revised Policy prohibits any commercial advertising on private hire vehicles and instead, signage on such vehicles is limited to signage and badging required by the Council. The revised Policy also prohibits roof signs and roof lights on vehicles used, or to be used, for private hire work.

5.9 **Vehicle Testing and Inspections** (See *Section 11*)

- A new requirement has been included that all vehicles put forward for first licensing must first be presented to a council officer so that the vehicle can be assessed against the revised age and condition requirements. There is a proposed fee for each assessment.
- The frequency of vehicle mechanical testing at a nominated garage is amended, to account for relaxations in the vehicle age policy. Vehicles which pass the exceptional age assessment will be subject to more frequent MOTs and mechanical inspections.
- Clarification is provided that where vehicles fail an inspection test, that re-tests must be undertaken at the garage that conducted the original inspection.

5.10 **Transfer of Ownership** (See *Section 12*)

- A fee and process has been introduced for notifying of a change in vehicle ownership and insertion of a reminder that the Council cannot transfer a vehicle unless the new owner can prove the vehicle is legally in their possession.

5.11 **Accessibility** (See *Section 15*)

- The draft policy sets out the updated requirements on driver and operators in respect of carrying assistance dogs and providing mobility assistance to disabled passengers.

5.12 **Fees and Charges** (See *Section 16*)

- The draft policy sets out how licence fees are constructed and the circumstances under which a refund may be requested.

5.13 Appeals (See Section 18)

- The draft policy summarises the appeals framework provided in law.

5.14 Hackney Carriage Byelaws (See Appendix E)

- Removal of separate fares which were previously applicable to each of the four legacy zones.
 - Each of the legacy zonal byelaws are removed and superseded by a single set of new draft Byelaws (which reflect the Department for Transport's model byelaws of November 2023). The byelaws are subject to a public consultation exercise, adoption by Council, and approval by the Secretary of State of the Department for Transport.

5.15 Key changes to other Appendices to the Policy

- Updates have been made to requirements in respect of lost property and application across Private Hire/Dual Driver and Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicle and Operator Conditions. (see *Appendices C, D, F & G to the Policy*).
- New convictions and suitability baseline has been set for vehicle proprietors and private hire operators to ensure all elements of their operations are of an acceptable standard and to safeguard, where possible, against licensed vehicles being used in connection with criminality. (see *Appendix B to this Report*).
- Removal of the requirement to carry a fire extinguisher in licensed vehicles in accordance with advice issued by the National Fire Chief Council. (see *Appendices D & F to this Report*).
- Update to National Register of Revocations, Refusals and Suspensions information regarding suspensions and appeals. (see *Appendix I to this Report*).
- Update to the Penalty Point System to include a penalty for disregarding traffic regulations e.g. parking in disabled bays and on single and double yellow lines etc. Inclusion of a penalty for refusing to carry a disabled person/providing mobility assistance. (see *Appendix H to this Report*)

6. Next Steps

- 6.1 A report will be presented to the Executive on 13 February 2025 and to Council on 6 March 2025, requesting approval of the draft Policy. If approved the new Policy will be implemented on 1 April 2025.
- 6.2 The Policy implementation date will need to align with the introduction of the updated Byelaws and the removal of the four separate Hackney Carriage zones and introduction of the one zone. If these are delayed, the implementation date for the updated Policy will also need to be delayed.

7. Implications (including financial implications)

7.1 Resources and Financial and Transformation

- 7.1.1. There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposals. All resource costs and other expenditure connected to the operational delivery of the hackney carriage and private hire licensing regimes, and the significant development work involved in supporting operational delivery, will be recovered from hackney carriage and private hire licensing fees.

7.2 Legal and Governance

- 7.2.1 The Council is responsible for the licensing of Hackney Carriages, Private Hire Vehicles, Operators and Drivers primarily through the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 7.2.2 Section 177 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017 enables the Secretary of State for Transport to issue statutory guidance on exercising hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licensing functions to protect children and vulnerable individuals who are over 18 from harm when using these services. The Council is required to implement the core minimum standards contained within the Guidance unless there are compelling reasons not to do so and is required to publish its consideration of the measures contained in the statutory hackney carriage and private hire vehicle standards, and its policy stemming from this. The draft Policy has regard to this statutory guidance.
- 7.2.3 The Council's Executive determined that the current four hackney carriage zones should be removed and that there should be a transition to a single hackney carriage zone from 1 April 2025. If the draft Policy is not adopted, elements of the extant licensing framework which is expressed via the Council's Policy regarding hackney carriage vehicle standards, hackney carriage byelaws and hackney carriage vehicle conditions will be at odds with this Decision and impact negatively on the Council's ability to enforce against non-compliance and to deliver effective decision-making.
- 7.2.4 In deciding to remove the extant four hackney carriage zones, the Council is required to adopt new Hackney Carriage Byelaws which will have application across North Northamptonshire. The process to adopt new Byelaws is being undertaken separately and in consultation with the Council's Legal Team. Should the Byelaws not be adopted in time for the proposed commencement date of the new Policy, Officers have recommended that authority be given to the Executive Director of Place and Economy in consultation with the Executive Member for Growth and Regeneration to postpone the commencement date. In the interim period, the Council's extant Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2023-2028 will have effect.

7.2.5 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing is largely a non-executive function of the Council and instead is administered by the Licensing & Appeals Committee and, in certain instances, Full Council, as detailed in [The Local Authorities \(Functions and Responsibilities\) \(England\) Regulations 2000 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#).

7.3 Relevant Policies and Plans

7.3.1 The Policy includes requirements that assist in the safety of children and vulnerable adults as passengers, the wider public, licensed drivers and other road users. Additionally, the Policy encourages the provision of reliable, comfortable, and accessible vehicles and encourages and promotes environmental sustainability. The Policy will assist the Council in meeting stated commitments within the [Corporate Plan 2021/25](#). Relevant sections of the Corporate Plan include:

- Creating safe and thriving places by enabling people to travel across North Northamptonshire, and beyond.
- Green, sustainable environment by embedding low carbon technology and sustainable forms of transport fit for the future.
- Providing modern public services by providing good quality and efficient services valued by our customers.

7.4 Risk

7.4.1 There are no significant risks arising from the recommendations in this report. Mitigation measures are proposed in relation to the risk connected to the delay in adopting new Hackney Carriage Byelaws.

7.4.2 If the draft Policy is not adopted, there are reputational risks to the Council in failing to consider Government guidance.

7.5 Consultation

7.5.1 The Policy and Appendices were subject to consultation between 28.10.24 to 09.12.24. Details of who this was shared with is given below:

- Advertised on the Council's website (an online survey was provided to aid respondents) but email responses were also accepted - [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy review - North Northamptonshire Council - Citizen Space](#).
- Circulated to all town and parish councils
- Circulated to current licence holders
- Advertised via a Council Press Release
- Notified to the NNC' Staff Disability Network and Day Services Lead and Supported Employment Manager
- Notified to the following organisations/agencies:
 - North Northamptonshire Police
 - Age UK Northants
 - Support Northamptonshire
 - Northamptonshire Carers Association.

7.5.2 All consultation responses are presented at **Appendix M** and have been analysed and used to inform the draft Policy and its supporting Appendices at **Appendix A to L** of this Report.

7.6 **Consideration by the Executive**

7.6.1 The recommendations from the Licensing and Appeals Committee and this Committee are to be presented to the Executive on 3 February 2025 and to Council on 6 March 2025.

7.7 **Equality Implications**

7.7.1 An Equality Screening Assessment (ESA) has been undertaken and is attached within **Appendix O**.

7.7.2 The proposals are generally neutral, with potential positive impacts concerning age, disability and health and wellbeing

- To help safeguard children travelling in licensed vehicles, the Council will continue to require that drivers undertake Child Sexual Exploitation (CES) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and county lines training.
- Wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles can operate across the single North Northamptonshire hackney carriage zone from 1 April 2025 and the removal of the minimum age requirement should encourage owners/operators to invest in this vehicle type.
- The age relaxation in the minimum and maximum age requirement in respect of fully wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles, will, Officers hope, increase provision over time.
- The transition to a single hackney carriage zone means that more vehicles are available for booking in more rural areas. The provision of a wider fleet of vehicles across the whole NNC area will mean more choice for all customers.

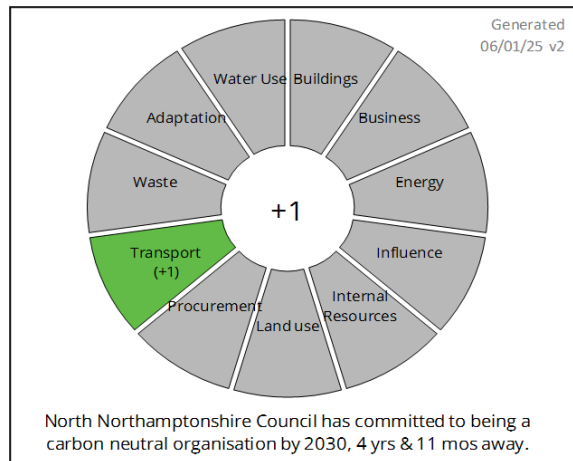
7.7.3 The Policy is subject to regular review at least every 5 years and we welcome feedback from the trade and the travelling public.

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 revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing policy continues to drive standards in the licensed vehicle trade to manage climate impact from this sector. The phasing out of non-zero emission vehicles from 2030-2035 and the incentive for owner/operators to invest in EVs, ULEV and ZEVs in the interim period should lead to a diminished impact from this sector even accounting for the potential for hackney carriage vehicles to operate across a wider geographical area.

7.8.3 The Climate Change Impact Assessment Tool is attached within Appendix N.



7.9 Community Impact

7.9.1 The Policy is the primary vehicle for setting out the Council's approach to hackney carriage and private hire regulation and operational practice having considered local circumstances. It provides clarity of expectation for licence holders and prospective applicants. Further, the Policy provides scope for the Council to work in partnership with local businesses, communities, and internal and external organisations and agencies to identify and mitigate concerns relating to the Policy's underpinning Licensing Objectives, as below.

- The personal safety of children and vulnerable adults as passengers, the wider public, licensed drivers and other road users.
- That reliable, comfortable, and accessible vehicles are available to all who require them.
- The maintenance of a professional and respected hackney carriage and private hire trade.
- To take all such reasonable action to prevent crime and disorder.
- To encourage and promote environmental sustainability.

7.9.2 There are no specific community impacts.

7.10 Crime and Disorder Impact

7.10.1 Under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the Council has equal statutory responsibility with the Police to exercise its various functions with 'due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area'.

7.10.2 The licensing objectives set out in the Policy and the licensing requirements in respect of ensuring drivers are fit and proper persons to hold a licence; ensuring vehicles meet the Council's standards and complete regular testing; and undertaking enforcement action where there is non-compliance or breach of conditions or licensing law, are

tangible measures the Council will continue to take, and which are designed to prevent crime and disorder.

8. Background Papers

- 8.1 [1Pathway for zero emission vehicle transition by 2035 becomes law - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.2 [Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- 8.3 [Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)