

NEATH PORT TALBOT COUNCIL

Registration and Licensing Committee

6th March 2023

Report of the Head of Legal and Democratic Services – Craig Griffiths

Matter for Decision

Wards Affected

All Wards

Taxi Licensing Policy Amendment - Electric Vehicles

Purpose of the Report

1. To consider an amendment to the Taxi Licensing Policy following the end of the consultation period.

Executive Summary

2. This report seeks to make an amendment to the existing Taxi Licensing Policy ("the policy") which requires all new hackney carriage proprietor licences to be for vehicles which are wheelchair accessible vehicles.
3. It is proposed that zero-emission vehicles be excepted from the requirement that all new hackney carriage proprietor licences be for wheelchair accessible vehicles.
4. A consultation exercise with the existing hackney carriage and private hire trade was carried out between November 2022 and January 2023. There were 6 responses to the consultation.
5. Members are now being asked to consider whether to implement the change in policy after considering the consultation responses.

Background

6. The Registration and Licensing Committee adopted the latest version of the Taxi Licensing Policy on 10th February 2020 which contains the procedures, specifications and conditions which all prospective and existing licence holders need to be aware of.
7. The policy currently in place requires that all new hackney carriage proprietor licences are for vehicles that are wheelchair accessible. Non-wheelchair accessible vehicles can only be licensed, where the vehicle is replacing an existing non-wheelchair accessible vehicle.
8. The policy is designed to ensure that there is an adequate supply of both non-wheelchair accessible and wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed within Neath Port Talbot.
9. Welsh Government's "Wales Transport Strategy 2021" states that by 2040 all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles will be zero-emission.
10. To ensure that the authority maintains as far as possible the current proportion of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, it is proposed that officers undertake a monthly review to look for any pattern of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles being replaced by zero-emission non-wheelchair accessible vehicles.
11. Where such a pattern is observed, a report to review the policy will be brought back before members.
12. A report was considered by the Registration and Licensing Committee on the 17th October 2022 and members determined to commence a consultation exercise with the existing trade

Officer Report

13. A consultation exercise with the existing hackney carriage and private hire trade, which included; the various registered taxi associations; RMT Union; and all drivers proprietors and operators, was carried out between November 2022 and January 2023.
14. There were 6 responses to the consultation, 3 in support, 1 against and 2 that provided additional comments. The consultation responses numbered 1 - 6 are attached at appendix 1.

15. Consultation responses 1, 2 and 3 support the proposal.
16. Consultation response 4 - this respondent is initially against the proposal, although later suggests that he would support a change in policy if it applied to all vehicles i.e. not just fully electric vehicles.
17. Consultation response 5 - this respondent refers to the lack of charging infrastructure and cost of the vehicles. However, the proposal for the change in policy is simply to encourage the uptake of electric vehicles for those that wish to do so. The proposed change in policy does not place an obligation on any person to change to an electric vehicle.
18. Consultation response 6 - this respondent asks a number of questions for clarification purposes and suggests that a move to electric vehicles is premature. As with the response to consultation response 5 above, the policy amendment is for any operators that wish to voluntarily licence a fully electric vehicle. Officers have responded to the questions posed by this respondent to reassure him that the existing arrangements for diesel and petrol vehicles are not being changed.
19. Following the completion of the consultation exercise and consideration of the 6 responses. Members are now being asked to consider implementing the proposed policy change.

Financial Impacts

No implications

Integrated Impact Assessment

20. A first stage impact assessment has been undertaken to assist the Council in discharging its legislative duties (under the Equality Act 2010, the Welsh Language Standards (No.1) Regulations 2015, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Environment (Wales) Act 2016. The first stage assessment has indicated that a more in-depth assessment is not required.

Valleys Communities Assessment

21. No implications

Workforce Impacts

22. No implications

Legal Impacts

23. No implications

Risk Management Impacts

24. No implications

Consultation

25. A consultation exercise with the existing hackney carriage and private hire trade was carried out between November 2022 and January 2023.

Recommendation

26. It is recommended that having due regard to the integrated impact screening assessment, members approve an amendment to the taxi Licensing Policy as follows:
27. Appendix E Specification 8 - to read "Non-wheelchair accessible vehicles shall only be considered for licensing as a replacement for an existing non-wheelchair accessible vehicle, with the exception of fully electric vehicles i.e., vehicles that are powered solely by battery and do not also have an internal combustion engine.
28. Appendix E Specification 10 - to read "New vehicle licences will only be issued to wheelchair accessible vehicles and fully electric vehicles i.e., vehicles that are powered solely by battery and do not also have an internal combustion engine.

Reasons for Proposed Decision

29. There was no strong opposition to the proposed policy amendment following a consultation exercise with the existing trade. The amendment in policy will encourage the uptake of fully electric hackney carriage vehicles.

Implementation of Decision

30. The decision is proposed for immediate implementation.

Appendices

31. Appendix 1 - Consultation Responses
32. Appendix 2 - First Stage Impact Assessment

List of Background Papers

33. Existing Taxi Licensing Policy

www.npt.gov.uk/media/4270/taxi_licensing_policy.pdf

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