

Equality Impact Assessment

Service Area: Licensing

Head of Service: Jeremy Mann

Lead Officer: Katy Nicholls

Date of Assessment: 25/07/2022

Person responsible for completing the assessment: Katy Nicholls

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Name of policy/function/project/service area to be assessed:

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy Amendments

Brief description of proposal to be assessed: The report is intended to consult the Licensing and Community Safety Committee on possible amendments to the Driver Qualification Standards found within the North Devon Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. A benchmarking exercise with other Devon Authorities and South West Somerset has been undertaken, and it has been observed that the training requirements for Taxi and Private Hire drivers licenced by North Devon Council are in excess of those required by the majority of other Authorities surveyed. Training requirements have been highlighted in a recent letter to the Licensing Team as a barrier to new drivers entering the taxi profession. The report therefore outlines a number of potential options for amendment of the training requirements of the Policy to try and address the issues raised.

Proposed implementation date of project/proposal: If the recommendation for Policy amendment is approved by the Licensing and Community Safety Committee they will recommend the matter is approved by Strategy and Resources Committee at their meeting on 3rd October 2022.

Brief description of the anticipated outcomes of the proposal:

Provision	Current Arrangement	Proposed Arrangement	Comment
Several options proposed for amendment of the training requirement of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy	Vocationally recognised qualification (BTEC/ NVQ), prior to obtaining a licence.	Options presented in the report include removal of the VRQ requirement and replacement with either a new driver training course, or specific safeguarding and also disability awareness training sessions. Options also involve keeping the current qualification but allowing this to be undertaken in the first year after obtaining a licence.	Equally applicable to all persons/ groups. Largely neutral impact expected across all protected characteristic groups. Possible positive benefit to groups who rely more on taxis (young persons, older persons, disabled persons), due to more new taxi drivers entering the profession (improved availability of services).

Impact:

Summarise any positive impacts or benefits, any negative impacts (i.e. potential for discrimination, disadvantage or disproportionate treatment) and any neutral impacts and the evidence you have taken into account to reach this conclusion. Be aware that there may be positive, negative and neutral impacts within each characteristic. (NOTE: please refer to the Equality Strategy for the characteristics) Where an impact is unknown, state so, and identify what steps will be taken to address any gaps in data:

Neutral impact largely perceived due to the nature of the above policy proposal.

Consideration of Alternatives:

Describe what alternatives have been considered and/or what actions will be taken to remove or minimise any potential negative effect identified above (attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data, reports, etc):

The Licensing and Community Safety Committee have the option to reject the proposed options for amendment and instead retain the current qualification standard. No negative effects identified requiring mitigation.

Consultation:

Brief description of any consultation with stakeholders and summarise how it has influenced the proposal. Please attach evidence or provide link to appropriate data or reports:

A benchmarking exercise has been undertaken against other neighbouring Authorities training requirements for new taxi drivers. The Licensing Team have also been contacted directly by a local Private Hire Operator setting out recent problems with the length of time for a new driver licence applicant to obtain a licence.

Funding Considerations:

No funding considerations relevant in terms of the proposals.

Date approved by Head of Service: 01/08/2022

Reporting and Publication:

Equality Impact Assessments will be published on North Devon Council's website.

The completion of an Equality Impact Assessment is an ongoing process. Impacts will be continually reviewed during projects and the decision making process and the Assessment will be updated accordingly and published.

A further assessment will also be undertaken between 6 to 12 months following the implementation of the policy, project, decision or service change has been implemented.

Please also confirm the date on which you will be re-considering the project/report and submitting a further EIA if applicable.

12 months after initiation of this tranche of policy changes, on date to be confirmed. We are at an early stage in this project.

Monitoring Arrangements:

Briefly describe the monitoring arrangements/systems that will be put in place to monitor the effects of this proposal.

Monitoring of new taxi driver applications, and of overall licence holder numbers.

Date approved by Head of Service: 01/08/2022

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