

Bath & North East Somerset Council	
MEETING	Licensing Committee
MEETING	8 January 2020
TITLE:	Amendment to Policy on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Standards for Drivers, Vehicles and Operators
WARD:	All
AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM	
List of attachments to this report: None	

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 The Council's Policy on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Standards for Drivers, Vehicles and Operators ('the Policy') was agreed by Cabinet in December 2018. In light of the proposed Clean Air Zone ('the CAZ') for Bath, which includes charging non-compliant licenced vehicles to enter the CAZ, the Policy required licensed vehicles to be compliant with the terms of the CAZ.
- 1.2 Since the adoption of the Policy, however, concessions and exemptions have been introduced to the proposed CAZ scheme resulting in a need to amend the Policy to ensure it reflects the concession where non-compliant wheelchair accessible licensed vehicles are exempt from charges until 31 December 2022.

2 THE RECOMMENDATION

The Committee is asked to;

- 2.1 Endorse the proposed amendment to the Policy which reflects the concession that wheelchair accessible licensed vehicles are except from charges for entering the CAZ until 31 December 2022.
- 2.2 Recommend that the amended Policy, together with any responses to a further period of consultation with the taxi trade, be referred to Cabinet for ratification thereby ensuring the Policy and the CAZ scheme are in alignment.

3 THE REPORT

- 3.1 In revising the Policy in December 2018, the Council included provisions to ensure that licenced vehicles were compliant with the terms of any future CAZ. The Policy also encourages the use of alternative fuels, such as the use of electric powered vehicles. The aim of this was to ensure that the taxi trade contributed fully towards reducing the levels of nitrogen dioxide levels throughout Bath.
- 3.2 Since the adoption of the Policy, the Council has decided upon its preferred scheme option of a charging Class C CAZ with traffic management.
- 3.3 Further public consultation on this option has taken place with stakeholder groups including the taxi trade and thinking around exemptions and concessions has evolved. There have been specific events where members of the taxi trade have been encouraged to learn more about the scheme and the assistance available. These include:
- The Taxi Forum held on 19 August 2019
 - Events during the public consultation on the Charging Order held between 20 October and 23 November 2019
 - Specific consultation events for the taxi trade held on 18 October and 4 November 2019 respectively

A further short period of consultation with the taxi trade on the proposed amendment to align the Policy and the CAZ scheme will follow and any responses presented to Cabinet for consideration.

- 3.4 As a result of the ongoing development of the Equalities Impact Assessment (EqIA) associated with the CAZ and consultation with the taxi trade and public, a need for a concession for wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles emerged. This is to ensure that vulnerable persons who rely on this method of transport can continue to access facilities and attend medical appointments whilst not being detrimentally impacted by the introduction of the CAZ.
- 3.5 The Full Business Case ('the FBC') for the CAZ is being presented to Cabinet on 16 January 2020 prior to submission to the Joint Air Quality Unit (JAQU) for formal approval. The FBC contains a concession for wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles and there is a need to amend the Policy to accommodate this concession and ensure the Policy and the CAZ are in alignment.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The Equalities Act 2010 requires public bodies to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different people carrying out their activities. The proposed concession relating to wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles supports the EqIA for the CAZ to ensure that vulnerable groups are not detrimentally impacted.

5 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 5.1 The public consultation and ongoing engagement regarding the CAZ, has been funded by central government.
- 5.2 There are no financial impacts to the Licensing Service through the introduction of this concession for wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles.

6 RISK MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

7 CLIMATE CHANGE

- 7.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency in March 2019, committing it to providing the leadership necessary to enable Bath and North East Somerset to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030. Research undertaken since March 2019 has recommended three immediate priority areas for action which includes the need for a major shift to mass transport, walking and cycling to reduce transport emissions i.e. implementing policies to enable a 25% cut in car and van mileage per person per year by 2030, coupled with a 76% switch to fully electric cars and 14% to petrol/electric hybrid, leaving just 10% petrol/diesel cars on the road by 2030. Full electrification of passenger rail is also proposed by 2030.
- 7.2 The Policy supports the aim of reducing transport emissions through allowing the use of alternative fuels. Whilst the concession for non-compliant wheelchair accessible vehicles does allow the use of non-compliant vehicles within the CAZ, it is time limited and the number of these vehicles is likely to be very small with any negative impact outweighed by the benefits brought to vulnerable groups who rely on this method of transport.

8 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 None.

9 CONSULTATION

- 9.1 The Council's Monitoring Officer and Section 151 Officer have had the opportunity to input to this report and have cleared it for publication.

Contact person	<i>Cathryn Brown 01225 477645</i>
Background papers	<i>Bath's Clean Air Plan- Cabinet report March 2019</i> <i>Policy on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Standards for Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Policy- Cabinet report December 2018</i> <i>www.bathnes.gov.uk/bathbreathes</i>
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