

CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 20 March 2025

Title: Revision of Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators Policy 2025

Purpose of the report: To consider the amendments to the Council's Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators Policy

For: Decision

Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:

Councillor Matthew Vaux Partnerships, Housing, Legal and Governance and Public Protection

Introduction

Ceredigion County Council's Hackney Carriage (taxi) and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) Licensing Policy is an important document that demonstrates the Council's commitment to securing public safety, provides clarity for applicants and licence holders, assists decision making, facilitates enforcement activities and helps safeguard against legal challenge. The Policy supports the Council's key priorities of protecting the vulnerable, improving the environment and promoting the local economy.

The Licensing Committee received a report on 10 September 2024 which outlined the need to conduct a public consultation on the amendments being proposed to the current Policy to include the recommendations made by the Department for Transport (DfT) 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards' and the Welsh Government's 'Guide to Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales'.

The DfT and Welsh Government agree there is a need for a common core of minimum standards for the hackney carriage (taxi) and private hire vehicle (PHV) trade to improve public safety and standardisation. The Licensing Authority therefore needed to review its current requirements in line with statutory Government Guidance standards and Welsh Government's recommended harmonisation "Taxi" guidance.

Whilst Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows local authorities to adopt their own set of licensing conditions and standards for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, the Welsh Government expects that each local authority adopts the recommended standards in order to gradually begin the process of policy alignment.

Summary of the key changes

Drivers

- Requirement for drivers to join the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Update Service and have a DBS check every 6 months

- Overseas criminal record checks for drivers
- Adopting the Welsh Government's Driver Code of Conduct
- Adopting the Welsh Government's Driver Dress Code
- Updating the Driver Conditions in line with the Welsh Government's Recommendations
- Adopting the "Fit and Proper Test" in line with DfT and Welsh Government Recommendations by adopting the Institute of Licensing's Suitability Guidance (2024)

Vehicle

- New requirement for vehicle proprietors to have an annual DBS check and to meet "Fit and Proper Test"
- To adopt the Welsh Government's policy on CCTV and Video Point of Impact Systems (Dash Cams) in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles on a voluntary basis. For drivers or operators opting to install such equipment they must comply with the new Welsh Government conditions
- Impose the Welsh Government's recommendations for accessibility conditions on vehicle proprietors of taxis and private hire vehicles

Operators / Vehicle Proprietors

- "Fit and Proper Test" will also apply both to operators and vehicle proprietors.
- Revised Operator Conditions in line with recommendations from the Welsh Government

Write Offs

The Licensing Authority will not renew any licence to use a vehicle as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle if the relevant vehicle has been become rated as a Category A, Category B, Category C, Category D or Category S Salvaged vehicle (write-off for insurance purposes) after the date on which the vehicle was first licensed by the Council. However, vehicles rated as a Category N Salvaged vehicle (insurance write-off) may be re-licensed provided the applicant or owner has provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by the Licensing Authority) which verifies the standard of repairs.

General

- To commit to reviewing the Policy every 5 years in accordance with the DfT's Statutory Standards.
- Inclusion of a data handling statement/ privacy notice in line with advice from the Council's Internal Audit Team regarding how data is handled by the Licensing Team.

Consultation

The consultation period ran from 22 October to 27 December 2024. We received six responses to the consultation. 6 responses were received in response to the consultation. The responses to the consultation are attached as Appendix 1.

The Council has a list of mandatory consultees who were invited to respond to the consultation. This included Elected Members of the County Council, Town and Community Councils and other relevant consultees such as Dyfed-Powys Police,

Private hire trade magazine, Porth Gofal. We also directly consulted with the taxi trade by emailing each licensee directly. A total of 319 people/organisations or services were contacted as part of this policy consultation. The consultation was also posted on Ceredigion County Council's website for the general public to access and respond.

It is important to also note that trade and public consultation has already taken place by the DfT and Welsh Government before bringing in the current statutory guidance.

Just as this consultation went live, the Welsh Government had updated its guidance around CCTV use in taxis and private hire vehicles. It provided a template for councils to use when creating a CCTV policy to help improve uniformity across Wales.

Careful consideration was given to the responses to the consultation and the additional information published by Welsh Government, and where relevant, further changes were made to the draft revised policy.

The amendments to the current Policy incorporate, where appropriate, the new set of standards and recommendations, and the format of the policy has also been revised to meet an All Wales "policy" format. Adopting the recommendations will lead to increased public safety, consistency of standards across Wales, harmonised enforcement, increased accessibility of vehicles and better standards of customer service.

A copy of the final draft of the revised policy is attached at Appendix 2.

Wellbeing of Future Generations:

Has an Integrated Impact Assessment been completed? If not, please state why.

Yes – see Appendix 3.

Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:

Long term: The Welsh Government's long term vision is to introduce a modern all-Wales licencing scheme. This policy change is therefore an interim measure and acts as a stepping stone towards this longer vision.

We will continue to monitor the effectiveness of our licensing conditions and review the policy every 5 years. However, we may modify the policy between formal reviews to address emerging issues or legal changes.

Collaboration: The harmonised measures proposed in the Welsh Government guidance will ensure that there is a consistency across local authorities in Wales in relation to how licensing authorities will approach the licensing of drivers, vehicle proprietor and private hire vehicle operators. Furthermore, the adoption of the measures advocated by the DfT will have national reaching ensuring consistency across the whole of the UK.

Involvement: A public consultation was held, and the taxi trade and any interested parties were contacted and invited to respond.

Prevention: There is an emphasis on prevention as the policy and the licensing process ensures that a number of checks and safeguards are in place before a licence is granted and places notification requirements on individuals to report matters affecting their suitability during the currency of a licence.

Integration: We have identified a positive impact on economic wellbeing. There is a positive impact on social wellbeing – provision of a safe taxi service in Ceredigion enables people to get about. There is little positive impact on the other pillars of well-being, but no negative impact.

Recommendation(s):

That the Council resolves to:

1. approve the changes in the revised Policy for Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators, and adopt the policy.

Reason for recommendation:

The revised Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy will provide an appropriate policy in line with Welsh Government and DfT standards and enable compliance with statutory requirements and to ensure proper and effective enforcement of the legislation.

Overview and Scrutiny:

The policy was considered by the Licensing Committee at its last meeting on 19 February 2025.

Policy Framework:

Corporate Strategy 2022-2027

Corporate Well-being Objectives:

Boosting the economy, supporting businesses and enabling employment

Finance and Procurement implications:

Within budget

Legal Implications:

If the authority does not have a policy, decisions could be subject to legal challenge.

Staffing implications:

No additional staff resources required.

Property / asset implications:

N/A

Risk(s):

Legal challenge / Reputational risk if the authority does not operate a policy.

Statutory Powers:

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976; Town and Police Clauses Act 1847, Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022.

Background Papers:

Department for Transport, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Guide: Best Practice Guide
[Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance for licensing authorities in England - GOV.UK](#)

Harmonisation of taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing on Wales

[Written Statement: Launch of 'Guide to Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales' \(22 March 2021\) | GOV.WALES](#)

Ceredigion County Council's current Taxi and PHV policy

[Hackney Carriage / Private Hire - Ceredigion County Council](#)

Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Consultation Responses

Appendix 2 – Draft Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 2025

Appendix 3 – Integrated Impact Assessment

Corporate Lead Officer:

Alun Williams (Policy, Performance and Public Protection)

Reporting Officer:

Anne-Louise Davies (Trading Standards & Licensing Manager)

Date:

11/3/25