



Agenda

Meeting: Executive

Members: Councillors Carl Les (Chairman), Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Keane Duncan, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Greg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

Date: Tuesday 17 December 2024

Time: 11.00 am

Venue: The Grand, County Hall, Northallerton

Members of the public are entitled to attend this meeting as observers for all those items taken in open session. Please contact the Democratic Services Officer whose contact details are below if you would like to find out more.

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Business

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes of the Meeting held on 19 November 2024**

(Pages 5 - 10)

3. **Declarations of Interest**

4. **Exclusion of the Public**

Members are recommended to exclude the public from the meeting during consideration of each of the items of business listed in Column 1 of the following table on the grounds that they each involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in the paragraph(s) specified in column 2 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 as amended by the Local Government (Access to information)(Variation) Order 2006:-

Item number on the agenda	Paragraph Number
10	3

5. Public Participation

Members of the public may ask questions or make statements at this meeting if they have given notice to Elizabeth Jackson, Principal Democratic Services Officer, and supplied the text by midday on Thursday 12 December 2024, three working days before the day of the meeting. Each speaker should limit themselves to 3 minutes on any item. Members of the public who have given notice will be invited to speak:

- at this point in the meeting if their questions/statements relate to matters which are not otherwise on the Agenda (subject to an overall time limit of 30 minutes);
- when the relevant Agenda item is being considered if they wish to speak on a matter which is on the Agenda for this meeting.

If you are exercising your right to speak at this meeting, but do not wish to be recorded, please inform the Leader who will instruct anyone who may be taking a recording to cease while you speak.

6. Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focussed on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing (Pages 11 - 78)

Recommendations

- 1) To consider the draft Inclusive Service Plan attached at Appendix A and the alternative version recommended by the General Licensing and Registration Committee at Appendix D.
- 2) To approve the content of the draft Inclusive Service Plan attached at Appendix D as a draft for consultation, subject to the removal of the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option in relation to the hackney carriage vehicle specification.
- 3) To approve the commencement of a public consultation to seek views on the draft Inclusive Service Plan and any viable alternatives, including the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option.

7. Adoption of a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (Pages 79 - 268)

Recommendations

- 1) To consider the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix A and the alternative version recommended by the General Licensing and Registration Committee at Appendix D.
- 2) To approve the content of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix D as a draft for consultation, subject to the removal of the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option in relation to the hackney carriage vehicle specification.
- 3) To approve the commencement of a public consultation to seek views on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and any viable alternatives, including the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option.

8. Joint Place Committee with Humber and North Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board (report to follow)

9. Mayoral Investment Fund – Acceptance of funding to deliver priority projects (Pages 269 - 288)

Recommendations

That Executive approves:

- 1) to accept the funding awarded by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority towards the delivery of priority projects and development of business cases for pipeline projects by North Yorkshire Council.
- 2) delegation to the Corporate Director of Community Development in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic to agree and enter into the final terms of the grant agreement with the YNYCA.
- 3) that the funding allocations and responsibility for seeking any necessary further internal project approvals in relation to project delivery are allocated to the lead Project Managers and relevant Directorate/Service as set out in paragraph 2.2 above.

10. Harrogate Convention Centre – Outcome of Soft Market Testing (Pages 289 - 346)

Recommendations

The Executive is recommended to:

- 1) Agree in principle to support the Soft Market Testing recommended Option 3 - the creation of Studio 2 and explore the shift to a more commercial operational approach.

Subject to the approval of the above recommendation, it is further recommended that:-

- 2) Officers scope and tender the most cost-effective construction works to create Studio 2, engaging with NYC Align Property Partners and utilising preparatory work already completed, with cost estimates indicating a budget of £7 million.
- 3) Develop a new Business Plan for HCC including investment in Studio 2, commercial operating models and the future vision for HCC supported by financial, operational, and sustainability plans.
- 4) Delegate to the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Corporate Director Community Development, Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Executive Member for Open to Business, the authority to approve the business case to implement the improvements to Studio 2 to the value of £7m and to undertake any associated decisions.
- 5) Review and define the governance requirements for HCC.
- 6) Actively pursue and secure future funding opportunities, including North Yorkshire Mayoral Investment, government grants, and other sustainability initiatives. As part of the business case, consider rebranding HCC to broaden its market appeal and align with the strategic goals for the wider Yorkshire region.
- 7) Scope and implement immediate sustainability improvements and develop a long-term strategy, including identifying external funding opportunities.

- 8) Prioritise essential property maintenance repairs to ensure the safe management and operation of HCC and explore delivering essential works via a small in-house team utilising existing North Yorkshire procurement frameworks.
- 9) Delegate authority to Officers to continue engaging with potential external operators or buyers of HCC, with further reports as required to be brought back to Members.
- 10) Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic Services, to review and approve specific officer delegations, for the HCC Director, to support commercial operating.

11. Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies (Pages 347 - 348)

Recommendations

That the Executive appoints Councillor Nigel Knapton and John Corden to the Kyle and Upper Ouse Internal Drainage Board.

12. Forward Plan (Pages 349 - 368)

13. Any Other Items

Any other items which the Leader agrees should be considered as a matter of urgency because of special circumstances

14. Date of Next Meeting - 7 January 2025

Members are reminded that in order to expedite business at the meeting and enable Officers to adapt their presentations to address areas causing difficulty, they are encouraged to contact Officers prior to the meeting with questions on technical issues in reports.

Contact Details:

Enquiries relating to this agenda please contact Elizabeth Jackson, Principal Democratic Services Manager

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Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive Legal and Democratic Services

County Hall
Northallerton

Monday 9 December 2024

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 19 November 2024 commencing at 11.00 am.

Councillor Carl Les in the Chair plus Councillors Mark Crane, Gareth Dadd, Keane Duncan, Michael Harrison, Simon Myers, Heather Phillips, Janet Sanderson, Greg White and Annabel Wilkinson.

In attendance: Councillors Alyson Baker, Barbara Brodigan (remote), Caroline Dickinson, Kevin Foster, Sam Gibbs, Paul Haslam (remote), David Hugill, Cliff Lunn, Andrew Murday, Steve Shaw-Wright (remote), David Staveley (remote), Malcolm Taylor, Karin Sedgwick, John Weighell and Andrew Williams

Officers present: Richard Flinton, Gary Fielding, Karl Battersby, Stuart Carlton, Nic Harne, Richard Webb, Barry Khan, St John Harris, Will Boardman, Jennifer Norton, Tony Law and Rachel Joyce (remote)

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

565 Apologies for Absence

There were no apologies for absence.

566 Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 November 2024

Resolved

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2024, having been printed and circulated, be taken as read and confirmed by the Chairman as a correct record.

567 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Gareth Dadd declared an interest in Minute 569 on the basis that he was a Director of a company with holiday cottages. He remained in the meeting for the item as he had previously been granted a dispensation.

Councillor Michael Harrison declared an interest in Minute 569 since his employer was listed within the Treasury Management Quarter 2 report. He remained in the meeting for the item as he had previously been granted a dispensation.

568 Public Participation

There were no public questions or statements.

569 Quarterly Performance and Budget Monitoring Report

Considered a joint report of the Chief Executive and Corporate Director – Resources,

bringing together key aspects of the Council's performance on a quarterly basis.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report which covered the period 1 July to 30 September 2024. In her introduction, the Executive Member highlighted areas of improving performance such as numbers of library visits and reablement packages delivered, and time to process new benefit claims, in contrast to areas of concern such as timeliness of initial Early Help assessments and the number of children entering care.

The Leader welcomed members of the Scrutiny Board to the meeting. In response to questions to Executive Members from Scrutiny Chairs and Member Champions the following was confirmed:

- The Customer Service key performance indicator of the percentage of telephone calls answered in 4 minutes was based on data from the legacy councils. There was no industry standard which could be used and the annual customer satisfaction survey helped establish a baseline. Currently, the average customer waiting time was less than a minute.
- The rise in fly tipping was disappointing, although the council was helping to address the problem through the establishment of local enforcement teams.
- The trend in increasing use of temporary accommodation was a national issue, in part caused by the rising cost and limited availability of private rented housing. The council was addressing this challenge through multi-million pound investment in new temporary accommodation which was of better quality and less costly to the taxpayer.
- In terms of planning key performance indicators and the time taken to determine planning applications, time extensions were currently included in the data. There was no single data set on the time taken to validate planning applications. This information was still disaggregated across the seven legacy councils, but typically it would only take a few days.
- The growth in the number of reablement packages delivered in Quarter 2 reflected the higher number of hospital discharges but was also testament to the success of the service and the resources deployed in supporting people to remain in their own homes.
- As had been discussed at full Council, the impact of the new National Living Wage rate and employer National Insurance contributions on the cost of care home placements was still to be determined.
- The reduction of Living Well referrals was attributable to a number of factors including the changing nature of the service and data recorded elsewhere such as the NHS so the forthcoming review of the service was timely.
- An important outcome of the Addressing Poverty in a School Setting project would be the launch of a new Poverty Proofing Toolkit in the new year.
- The national target for the number of adults accessing a structured drug treatment offer was very challenging and the fact that the council was 10% away from the target and improving was encouraging when compared with similar local authorities.
- The increase in referrals to Children's Social Care and Child Protection Plans remained a cause for concern. This was in line with national trends and was being closely monitored. However, the council's overall rate remained low compared to similar local authorities and a very active Early Help service was deployed to prevent issues escalating.
- The comparatively high youth reoffending rates in the county remained something of a conundrum given the excellent preventative work undertaken by the Youth Offending Team. One factor was that numbers were small and consisted in large part of young people presenting with complex problems at greater risk of reoffending. The way data was recorded was also being examined.
- The vast majority of looked after children were placed with carers within North Yorkshire although the geography of the county and other considerations meant

that it was often not possible nor desirable to place children within 20 miles of their home. In Quarter 2 the percentage figure of looked after children placed within 20 miles of home had dropped from 64.7% to 62.2% compared to the previous year. Placement outside a 20 mile radius did have an impact on transport and associated costs, but not the Home to School Transport budget.

- In respect of the reduction in the timeliness of Early Help assessments, this showed a reduction of 0.9% from an exceedingly high figure of 96.5% over the last year which was within the tolerance range

Revenue Budget, Treasury Management and Capital Plan

Councillor Gareth Dadd, Executive Member for Finance and Resources, introduced each section of the report. In respect of the Revenue Budget he noted with concern the £1.7m net overspend at Quarter 2, a deterioration since Quarter 1. This was attributable in the main to the rising demand for, and increasing cost of the people services of Health and Adult Services and Children and Young People Services (the costs of the market were increasing at rates that were unaffordable) but partially offset by underspends within other directorates, including a significant underspend against energy budgets in both property and street lighting. These were in addition to the £5m saving taken from these areas as part of the 2024/25 budget. These savings would be offered up for inclusion within the 2025/26 budget; however it was highly likely that there would need to be further growth provision in the 2025/2026 budget for Health and Adult Services and Children and Young People Services, thereby increasing the savings gap.

The relevant Executive Members and Corporate Directors then provided further commentary and detail on the Health and Adult Services and Children and Young People Services expenditure and the challenges they faced to deliver services within budget. Councillor Dadd confirmed that the council continued to lobby government through professional bodies and local MPs for a fairer and more sustainable funding model for these services.

In respect of the Capital Budget, Councillor Dadd noted the breadth of activity across the council including the major highways scheme of the Kex Gill realignment, multiple regeneration schemes, and a range of internally inspired schemes to bring services up to standard. Importantly, the Capital Plan paved the way for a series of possible schemes including the Extra Care programme and development of Care and Support Hubs to help address some of the demand issues highlighted in the Revenue Budget report. It was noted that the £126k recommended to support the Whitby Town Hall project was as a contingency to enable the project to be completed. With reference to the Catterick Levelling Up Fund project, timescales set by government around the delivery of the scheme had not changed, although the deadline of March 2026 now pertained to committed expenditure rather than actual expenditure.

Having considered the report and the information provided at the meeting, Executive Members were referred to the recommendations in the report and it was

Resolved (unanimously) that the Executive:

- a. notes the forecast outturn position against the 2024/25 Revenue Budget, as summarised in **paragraph 2.2.1**
- b. approve £1m funding from the LGR reserve to fund replacement devices to support the transition to Windows 11 in **paragraph 2.5.2 and Appendix I**
- c. notes the position on the Council's Treasury Management activities during the second quarter of 2024/25

- d. refers this report to the Audit Committee for their consideration as part of the overall monitoring arrangements for Treasury Management.
- e. approve the refreshed Capital Plan summarised at **paragraph 4.2.3**
- f. approve the allocation of £182.3k from the Capital Receipts Unapplied Reserve to fund the Claro Road Depot Welfare Facilities scheme (**paragraph 4.7.3**)
- g. approve the allocation of £23k from the Harrogate Council investment Reserve to address overspends on the Harrogate Convention Centre redevelopment scheme (**paragraph 4.7.4**)
- h. approve the allocation of £126k from the Strategic Capacity Reserve to fund the works to the Whitby Old Town Hall and Marketplace (**paragraph 4.7.5**)

570 North Yorkshire Council response to the Boundary Commission's consultation of future division boundaries

Considered a report of the Assistant Chief Executive for Community Engagement presenting the proposed Council response to the Boundary Commission's consultation on future division boundaries.

The Executive Member for Corporate Services, Councillor Heather Phillips, introduced the report paying tribute to the work of Councillor John Weighell and the cross-party Member Working Group he chaired which had developed a draft council response to the Boundary Commission's consultation on the future division boundaries of a council of 89 single-member divisions to come into effect from the May 2027 elections. It was noted that members of the Executive had all received representations from both Dacre Parish Council and the Chair of Darley and Menwith Parish Council in respect of the proposed changes to the current Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale division. With the Chair's permission, Councillor Weighell addressed the meeting noting the magnitude and complexity of the task because of the council's geographical size and population and the three criteria set by the Boundary Commission of delivering electoral equality, reflecting the interests and identities of local communities, and providing for effective and convenient local government. For the Member Working Group, these criteria translated into the following principles:

- That, as far as possible, the forecast electorate numbers for each division should start within 10% variance of the average, and that most should be well within this. This meant that each division should ideally represent around 5819 electors, no less than 5237 and no more than 6401.
- That division boundaries should not divide communities which identify as a single area where it is possible to avoid this.
- That it should be possible to access each residence within a division by road without having to leave that division.
- That, as far as possible, urban areas should be in different divisions to rural areas to reflect the different nature of issues and work for the Councillors.

Whilst the proposals identified a model which aligned with the main principles of the review, Councillor Weighell acknowledged that there were inevitably compromises in many areas. The Chair and other members echoed Councillor Phillips' gratitude to Councillor Weighell in devising proposals which had achieved cross party agreement. With the Chair's permission, Councillor Andrew Murday addressed the meeting proposing alternative arrangements for the current Pateley Bridge and Nidderdale division which

were illustrated on a map circulated at the meeting. In response, the Chair and other members commented that it was late in the day for alternative proposals when ideas should have been channelled through group representatives on the Member Working Group. Besides, the complexity of the calculations meant that changes in one area may well have knock on implications for other areas. Further, the Boundary Commission's consultation was open to anyone to make proposals. With the Chair's permission, Councillor Andrew Williams addressed the meeting to suggest alternative names for the proposed new divisions to the east and west of Ripon. It was noted that the report's recommendations included to delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive – Local Engagement to make any further required minor amendments to ensure the accuracy of the split of forecast electorate figures in consultation with the Chair of the Member Working Group prior to submission, and the matter of these names would also be considered as part of this delegation. Finally, Councillor Keane Duncan advised that whilst respecting the council's submission, he would be working with Malton and Norton Town Councils to develop alternative proposals for those areas to try and avoid dividing both towns as proposed.

Resolved (unanimously) that the Executive:

- i) Approve the proposed division patterns at Appendices A-F
- ii) Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive – Local Engagement to submit this proposal, and accompanying background information, to the Boundary Commission's consultation by 9 December.
- iii) Delegate authority to the Assistant Chief Executive – Local Engagement to make any required minor amendments to ensure the accuracy of the split of forecast electorate figures, in consultation with the Chairman of the Member Working Group, prior to submission.

Reason for recommendations

The approval and submission of the proposed division patterns will provide the Boundary Commission with a clear model on behalf of North Yorkshire Council. The model represents the work of the cross-party Member Working Group and seeks to achieve a workable balance across the principles described above. If this were not to be submitted, the Boundary Commission would determine a model to be consulted upon based on their knowledge of the area and other information received during the consultation.

By delegating authority to make minor amendments to the electorate figures associated with each proposed division, it will be possible to ensure that the figures accurately reflect the boundaries proposed as the submission is prepared.

571 Proposal to add provision for Special Educational Needs in the form of Targeted Mainstream Provision at Norton Community Primary School and Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School

Considered a report by the Corporate Director Children and Young People's Service in respect of proposals to add provision for Special Educational Needs in the form of Targeted Mainstream Provision at Norton Community Primary School and Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School.

Resolved (unanimously), having undertaken the required preliminary checks, that:

- i. the four key issues in paragraph 7.3 of the report have been satisfied and there can be a determination of the proposals.
- ii. The following proposal be determined:
 - To add provision for Special Educational Needs in the form of Targeted Mainstream Provision at Norton Community Primary School.

- To add provision for Special Educational Needs in the form of Targeted Mainstream Provision at Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School.

Reason for recommendations

In 2020 the Local Authority launched the first phase of Targeted Mainstream Provisions. The focus for each being either Communication and Interaction (C&I) or Social and Emotional Mental Health (SEMH). The provision at Norton Community Primary School will support up to 8 full time pupils with communication and interaction (C&I) needs. The provision at Dishforth Airfield Community Primary School will support up to 8 full time pupils with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs.

The Council's SEND Strategic Plan, adopted in September 2018, set out the model of targeted SEN provision to be commissioned by the council in mainstream schools. This model remains part of more recent plans including the SEND Capital Investment Programme agreed in 2023. The implementation will have an impact upon the identified gap between mainstream and special school provision and provide families with an additional option.

572 Forward Plan

Considered

The Forward Plan for the period 11 November 2024 to 30 November 2025 was presented.

Resolved that the Forward Plan be noted.

573 Date of Next Meeting - 17 December 2024

The meeting concluded at 12.48 pm.

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

17 December 2024

Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focused on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

Report of the Corporate Director - Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on the proposed adoption of a new Inclusive Service Plan in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, North Yorkshire Council must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.2 On 21 February 2023, the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council resolved to adopt a new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and committed to developing a new Inclusive Service Plan with a view to making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.
- 2.3 In November 2023, the Department for Transport published its new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance, which recommends that licensing authorities develop and maintain an Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) to describe:
- the demand for accessible services in their area;
 - the authority's strategy for making transport more inclusive;
 - the steps that the authority will take to improve the inclusivity of the taxi and private hire vehicle services; and
 - the courses or assessments authorities require applicants to undertake.
- 2.4 In line with the commitment made by the Executive in February 2023, and in accordance with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance published in November 2023, a draft Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) has been produced and is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 INCLUSIVE SERVICE PLAN

- 3.1 The draft ISP sets out the proposed strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.
- 3.2 The draft ISP focuses on the needs of people whose access requirements are apparent when using public transport (such as wheelchair users and assistance dog owners) but also on the needs of people with less-visible disabilities, including autistic people or those with mental illness.

- 3.3 The draft ISP identifies and acknowledges the arrangements already in place to promote an inclusive hackney carriage and private hire regime in North Yorkshire. Those arrangements include:
- ensuring compliance with the duties of drivers and operators under the Equality Act 2010;
 - requiring all licensed drivers to undergo disability awareness training every three years;
 - requiring all drivers of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) to complete a practical assessment;
 - displaying information in licensed vehicles to advise passengers how to make a complaint to the licensing authority;
 - publishing a list of WAVs on the Council's website in accordance with the Equality Act 2010; and
 - committing to exercise powers where appropriate in the event of any non-compliance.
- 3.4 The objectives of the ISP are:
- to improve the access and availability of licensed vehicles sufficiently to satisfy the demand for accessible services from wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users;
 - to promote passenger rights by providing information in formats that all passengers can access in relation to the service that can be expected when travelling in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles;
 - to deliver effective enforcement to ensure that users of licensed vehicles can be confident that any reports of non-compliance will be appropriately addressed; and
 - to enhance the understanding of all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators in relation to the needs and legal rights of disabled people.
- 3.5 In September 2023, North Yorkshire Council commissioned a research project into wheelchair accessibility to support the development of an Inclusive Service Plan. The research revealed a likely shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles based on anecdotal evidence and supported by comparisons with national data.
- 3.6 At present, the Council licenses approximately 70 wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, which represents one for every 9,000 people in its population. Although WAV provision is typically lower in rural authorities than in urban areas, the best performing rural authorities in this regard make provision for one WAV for every 2,000 to 3,000 people. North Yorkshire Council would need to license around 200 more WAV taxis to reach a similar ratio.
- 3.7 Although imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles would be likely to achieve the desired outcome, the Council must have regard to the Regulators' Code (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Better Regulation Delivery Office) and avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens where the desired outcomes could be achieved by less burdensome means.
- 3.8 The Council has previously attempted to encourage more wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed in North Yorkshire by waiving the licence fee and relaxing the age limits on WAVs. This approach is in line with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance (November 2023), which recommends that licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible vehicles where mandating them would be inappropriate. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low and there is no reasonable expectation that this will change without further intervention.
- 3.9 The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. It is recognised that WAVs are still predominantly petrol and diesel powered and will have an impact on emissions. There is a need to enhance the number of WAVs available in North Yorkshire whilst mitigating any potential adverse effects on climate change and air quality.

- 3.10 Officers originally drafted an ISP (Appendix A), which recommended introducing a new requirement for all hackney carriage vehicles to be either wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) or zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). It was also proposed to apply the new hackney carriage vehicle specification requirements on implementation of the revised policy but, in order to give existing licence holders sufficient time to make arrangements for replacement vehicles, existing licences could be renewed until 31 December 2029.
- 3.11 This draft ISP does not currently recommend applying the WAV/ZEV requirement to private hire vehicles. Unlike hackney carriage vehicles, private hire vehicles are restricted to fulfilling pre-booked journeys only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator, and therefore any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking. The draft ISP recommends introducing new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided wherever possible.
- 3.12 Hackney carriage vehicle proprietors unwilling or unable to acquire a suitable WAV would therefore have the option of acquiring a ZEV or, alternatively, to adapt their service to a private hire operation with no such restrictions on the vehicle type. It is anticipated that this approach will support the delivery of a mixed WAV and non-WAV fleet across hackney carriage and private hire services in accordance with Best Practice Guidance.
- 3.13 Further recommendations are made in the draft ISP including:
- to explore any opportunities to attract external funding to subsidise the provision of WAV services;
 - to consult with disabled passengers regularly on their experience of using hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services and to consult representatives of the hackney carriage and private hire trade in this regard;
 - to require Licensing staff to complete regular disability awareness training to ensure that decisions are informed by the lived experiences of disabled people;
 - to retain the requirement to undertake mandatory disability awareness training for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers every three years;
 - to retain the mandatory practical assessment requirement for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers using WAVs;
 - to retain the policy requirement for all non-WAV hackney carriage vehicles to have means for carrying a "reference wheelchair";
 - to review the information contained in the Council's published list of designated WAVs (as required by section 167 of the Equality Act 2010) in accordance with the statutory guidance;
 - to provide further information relating to passenger rights and how to make complaints via social media, on the Council's website, in licensed vehicles and at hackney carriage ranks wherever possible;
 - to address complaints in a robust and efficient manner to ensure that disabled people can have confidence that they will be able to travel by hackney carriage or private hire vehicle free from the fear of discrimination and that appropriate action will be taken against licensed drivers and operators in the event of any non-compliance;
 - to work with transport station operators and other location managers where large numbers of passengers use hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services to ensure disabled passengers can always access and exit vehicles safely and easily;
 - to maintain engagement with disability action groups by attending regular meetings, giving appropriate attention to any feedback;
 - to facilitate dialogue between the licensed trade and end-users with a view to matching the supply of wheelchair accessible vehicles with the demand;
 - to provide information to the licensed trade about the business benefits of a wheelchair accessible service;
 - to convey consistent messages to the licensed trade via a regular newsletter with a dedicated space for equality provisions with input from Disability Action Groups and other interested parties; and

- to allocate adequate Licensing resources to ensure that the ISP objectives can be met.
- 3.14 In September 2024, a Task and Finish Group (comprising six Members of the General Licensing and Registration Committee) was established to consider the original draft ISP and policy in further detail. The findings of the Task and Finish Group are attached at Appendix B and their recommendations were approved by the General Licensing and Registration Committee on 11 November 2024. The minutes of the General Licensing and Registration Committee meeting are attached at Appendix C.
- 3.15 In general, the Task and Finish Group and, subsequently, the General Licensing and Registration Committee supported officers' proposals but recommended two notable amendments to the Draft ISP as follows:
- The original proposed vehicle specification (identifying only WAVs and ZEVs within the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles) was considered too narrow, which raised concerns from Members that it may have an impact on the trade both in terms of cost and in terms of proprietors' willingness to continue providing a hackney carriage service. Accordingly, hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) were included within the scope of suitable vehicles.
 - The original proposal to prohibit hackney carriage vehicle licence renewals beyond December 2029 in instances where the vehicle did not comply with the new vehicle specification was considered disproportionate. Members noted that many proprietors would have purchased their vehicles with a reasonable expectation that they could be retained in accordance with the existing policy and therefore the implementation schedule was revised to ensure that all existing vehicles would retain 'grandfather rights' until they are no longer fit for purpose. The revised vehicle specification now applies only to new applications.
- 3.16 A draft ISP incorporating these recommendations from the General Licensing and Registration Committee (highlighted in green) is attached at Appendix D.
- 3.17 It is proposed to consult with the public and the licensed trade for a period of 12 weeks before returning this matter to the Executive to make a decision in light of any responses received.

4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

- 4.1 The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. The draft ISP seeks to improve the access, availability and quality of hackney carriage and private hire services in North Yorkshire.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The Council must have regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance and therefore there is an expectation that an ISP is adopted. The recommendations in the ISP, however, are at the Council's discretion and therefore alternative options may be considered.
- 5.2 Alternative options have already been explored to encourage more wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed in North Yorkshire by waiving the licence fee and relaxing the age limits on WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low and there is no reasonable expectation that this will change without further intervention.
- 5.3 Alternative options have subsequently been considered to address the shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (including imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles). The current proposal, however, is considered a more reasonable and proportionate measure to satisfy the Council's public sector equality duty

and its air quality obligations without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens on businesses.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Service (IPT) is responsible for arranging and managing school transport for children across North Yorkshire. The availability of additional wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles would be likely to facilitate these arrangements.
- 6.2 The Council's Environmental Health Service is responsible for monitoring and safeguarding air quality. The relevant officers have been consulted and support the proposals in this regard.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The vast majority of the licensing authority's service costs (including the proposed consultation and any subsequent meetings) are recovered by way of licence fees and the service will continue to operate on the same cost-recovery basis in future.
- 7.2 The Council must ensure that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public. The additional cost burden on proprietors has been acknowledged in formulating the proposed policy revisions.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any legal implications have been considered and addressed within the draft ISP.
- 8.2 Licensing authorities are expected to consult with any interested parties before making strategic decisions. The consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; it must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals; and the responses must be conscientiously taken into account when the decision is taken.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Disability is a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not, the Council must endeavour to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and take steps to meet their needs.
- 9.2 A balance must be sought to allow the licensed trade to make a reasonable living from their business whilst also removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who have relevant protected characteristics. The draft ISP is considered a reasonable and proportionate approach to ensure that wheelchair users can access taxi services in North Yorkshire.
- 9.3 An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix E.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The draft ISP takes account of government guidance in respect of emission standards and the need to transition to zero emission vehicles.
- 10.2 A Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix F.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Any policy implications have been considered and addressed within the draft ISP.

12.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Hackney carriage and private hire services play an important role in transporting members of the public safely. Any community safety implications have been considered and addressed within the draft ISP.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Council has committed to developing and maintaining an Inclusive Service Plan and must have regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION

14.1 To consider the draft Inclusive Service Plan attached at Appendix A and the alternative version recommended by the General Licensing and Registration Committee at Appendix D.

14.2 To approve the content of the draft Inclusive Service Plan attached at Appendix D as a draft for consultation, subject to the removal of the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option in relation to the hackney carriage vehicle specification.

14.3 To approve the commencement of a public consultation to seek views on the draft Inclusive Service Plan and any viable alternatives, including the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Draft Inclusive Service Plan

Appendix B – Task and Finish Group Findings

Appendix C – Minutes of General Licensing and Registration Committee

Appendix D – Draft Inclusive Service Plan with committee recommendations applied

Appendix E – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix F – Climate Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance (Department for Transport)

Air Quality Strategy (DEFRA)

Regulators' Code (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Better Regulation Delivery Office)

Karl Battersby

Corporate Director – Environment

County Hall

Northallerton

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Presenters: Simon Fisher, Licensing Service Development Lead and Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.



Inclusive Service Plan

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

With effect from [insert date]

Version Control

- 1.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council on [insert date] with effect from [insert date]

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Introduction

This Inclusive Service Plan sets out the Council's strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)¹, average taxi or PHV usage accounts for 3% of all trips for those with mobility difficulties, compared to just 1% for those without mobility difficulties.

Licensed vehicles are among the most popular modes of transport for disabled people as they provide a door-to-door service with scope for individual assistance with the particular needs of a disabled passenger.

Many disabled people are particularly reliant on hackney carriage and private hire services and therefore the Council is committed to ensuring the availability of an accessible, affordable service.

In formulating the Plan, we have considered the needs of people whose access requirements are apparent when using public transport, such as wheelchair users and assistance dog owners. We have also considered the needs of people with less-visible disabilities, including autistic people or those with mental illness.

Disability in the UK and in North Yorkshire

According to the Office of National Statistics' Census 2021 results, 17.7% of the population of England were disabled.

The proportion of disabled people varied across North Yorkshire as follows:

Craven 15.2%
 Hambleton 15.4%
 Harrogate 14.9%
 Richmondshire 15.5%
 Ryedale 15.6%
 Selby 16.1%
 Scarborough 20%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021²

According to more recent estimates, around 20% of the UK population is disabled and the proportion is expected to rise as the average age of the population increases³.

Wheelchair users in the UK and in North Yorkshire

There is a lack of robust evidence to indicate how many wheelchair users there are in North Yorkshire, or indeed across the country. However, in 2018-2019, a report commissioned by Motability and The Wheelchair Alliance estimated that there were up to 1.37 million users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters in England⁴.

¹ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

² [Disability - England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

³ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2023\)](#)

⁴ This estimate was based on 5.7 million people with a mobility disability in England (Family Resources Survey). Of all those having difficulty going out on foot unaided, 3% use a powered wheelchair, 12%

1.37 million users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters represents approximately 2.4% of the population in England. Applying these same proportions to the population of North Yorkshire would indicate that there are approximately 15,000 users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters in the area.

North Yorkshire Council

As the licensing authority with responsibility for hackney carriage and private hire licensing functions, North Yorkshire Council has a duty to ensure that the public is adequately protected from any risks associated with hackney carriage and private hire services.

In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, North Yorkshire Council must also have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Licensing authorities are required under section 22(2) of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 to have regard to the Regulators' Code. In accordance with the Regulators' Code, the Council must seek to reduce regulatory burdens and support compliant business growth by ensuring that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

The Council must therefore balance its responsibilities and deliver licensing services in a fair, safe and legal way.

In accordance with the Council Plan (2023-2027), to demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as an organisation, show leadership across the county and work in partnership to improve equality, diversity and inclusion, the Council will:

- demonstrate political and officer leadership;
- work in partnership to achieve shared priorities;
- use equality impact assessment as part of the decision-making process; and
- monitor, review and scrutinise performance against our objectives

One of the key commitments in North Yorkshire Council's Local Transport Plan is to "consider our duties under transport and equalities legislation to decide whether the commercial network caters sufficiently for the needs of the community having regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled. We will consider whether there is a need to procure additional services and what funding is available to deliver these".

use a manual wheelchair and 9% use a powered mobility scooter (National Travel Survey data on use of mobility aids by NatCen Social Research, 2020). However, it should be noted that these three groups of users are not mutually exclusive, because NTS respondents could select more than one answer to the question on the type of mobility aid used. It is not known to what extent these three groups overlap each other and therefore only estimated figures are available.

Objectives

In implementing this Inclusive Service Plan, the licensing authority's objectives are:

- To improve the access and availability of licensed vehicles sufficiently to satisfy the demand for accessible services from wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users.
- To promote passenger rights by providing information in formats that all passengers can access in relation to the service that can be expected when travelling in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- To deliver effective enforcement to ensure that users of licensed vehicles can be confident that any reports of non-compliance will be appropriately addressed.
- To enhance the understanding of all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators in relation to the needs and legal rights of disabled people.

Consultation

In preparing this Inclusive Service Plan, the Council has consulted with the following stakeholders:

- Licence holders
- Passenger Transport
- North Yorkshire Police
- Disability action groups
- Other Council departments
- Service users

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Driver duties

The Equality Act 2010 places the following duties on licensed drivers to protect the rights of disabled people to access hackney carriage and private hire services:

The driver of a non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must accept the carriage of any disabled person and must not charge extra for doing so⁵. This applies to any disabled passenger, including wheelchair users (with the assumption that the wheelchair user transfers to a passenger seat to travel).

The driver of any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must provide reasonable assistance to any disabled passenger⁶. This requirement does not apply to any driver who has been granted an exemption from the mobility assistance duties on medical grounds.

The driver of any pre-booked hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must assist any disabled person to identify and find the vehicle and to refrain from charging them extra for doing so, provided the driver is made aware that the passenger requires such assistance⁷.

The driver of any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must accept the carriage of an assistance dog and must not charge extra for doing so⁸. This requirement does not apply to any driver who has been granted an exemption on medical grounds.

The driver of a designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must, when requested to do so, carry a wheelchair user whilst seated in their wheelchair without charging extra. If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat, the driver must carry the passenger and the wheelchair in safety and in reasonable comfort. The driver must also provide reasonable assistance to any wheelchair user unless they have been granted an exemption from the mobility assistance duties on medical grounds⁹.

Driver training

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)¹⁰, 67% of all licensing authorities require taxi drivers to undergo disability awareness training.

The Council acknowledges the need to ensure that licensed drivers have a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles, and that they know how to assist people with a range of visible and less visible

⁵ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

⁶ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

⁷ Section 165A of the Equality Act 2010

⁸ Section 168 of the Equality Act 2010

⁹ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁰ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

impairments. Accordingly, every applicant for a hackney carriage and private hire driver licence must undergo suitable disability awareness training prior to being granted a licence by North Yorkshire Council. Appropriate training must be repeated by all licensed drivers every three years.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, licensed drivers are not authorised to drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle unless the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons. Furthermore, the driver must pass an appropriate practical assessment before driving a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Private hire operators

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed private hire operator is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In instances where the private hire operator is a company or partnership, the licensing authority applies the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Private hire operator duties

The Equality Act 2010 places the following duties on licensed private hire operators to protect the rights of disabled people to access private hire services:

Service providers must make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled passengers to access their services¹¹.

A private hire operator cannot refuse or fail to provide a booking for a disabled person if the reason for the refusal or failure is that the person is disabled¹².

A private hire operator cannot refuse or fail to provide a booking if the reason for the refusal or failure is that the passenger will be accompanied by an assistance dog¹³.

A private hire operator cannot make any additional charge for the carrying out of any duty imposed on the driver of the private hire vehicle¹⁴.

Complaints to private hire operators

In accordance with the conditions attached to a private hire operator's licence, the operator must notify the licensing authority in writing of any complaints concerning a driver's conduct or about a vehicle's suitability. This includes complaints of any failure to comply with the above duties.

Bookings and dispatch staff

Individuals responsible for taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on behalf of a private hire operator do not require a licence. However, in accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, all private hire operators are required to formulate a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role.

The licensing authority has produced a template policy for these purposes, which includes guidelines for assessing staff. The template policy recommends that private hire operators do not employ any individual with a conviction relating to discrimination in any form until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

If a private hire operator fails to adopt an appropriate policy for the assessment of staff, it may raise serious doubts about their own suitability to hold a licence.

¹¹ Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010

¹² Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

¹³ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁴ Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles

A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a private hire operator.

Vehicle specification

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, all licensed hackney carriage vehicles must have means for carrying a "reference wheelchair" and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. This requirement ensures that drivers of hackney carriage vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council cannot, in most cases, refuse fares on the grounds that it would not have been possible for the wheelchair or mobility aids to be carried safely in the vehicle. The "reference wheelchair" is defined as 700mm in width, 1200mm in length, and 1350mm in height. Private hire vehicles, on the other hand, are not available for public hire and therefore any luggage or accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking.

In accordance with the Council's current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, licensed vehicles are generally required to be no more than 10 years old at the time of a grant or renewal application. However, in order to ensure that this requirement does not have an adverse effect on the number of wheelchair accessible licensed in North Yorkshire, the age limits do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles.

The vehicle specification is subject to review as a proposed outcome of this Inclusive Service Plan.

Complaints

The provision of a clear, simple and well-publicised process for the public to make comments and complaints about drivers, vehicles and operators will enable officers to target compliance and enforcement activity. Complaints provide a further source of intelligence when considering applications and identifying any additional training that may be required.

Accordingly, all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council are required to display at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

Further information about how to complain is published on the Council's website.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)¹⁵, 37.6% of all licensed hackney carriage vehicles outside London are wheelchair accessible. The proportion of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles remains very low, at about 3.2% outside London.

¹⁵ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

According to the DfT Statistics report, metropolitan areas tended to have higher proportions of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

North Yorkshire is classified by DEFRA as 'largely rural', meaning that between 50% and 79% of the population resides in rural areas.

13.5% of hackney carriage vehicles are wheelchair accessible across all 'largely rural' areas in England and Wales but only 9% of hackney carriage vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible.

7.2% of private hire vehicles are wheelchair accessible across all 'largely rural' areas in England and Wales whereas 4.7% of private hire vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible.

The Council recognises that a reduction in the number of non-WAVs would raise the proportion of WAVs despite not having any positive impact on availability. On that basis, measuring the number of WAVs as a percentage of the total fleet is not considered the most effective method of assessing availability. The ratio of WAVs:population is believed to be a more meaningful metric.

There is one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 1,877 people of the population in England. Across all rural or largely rural areas, however, there is only one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 8,150 people.

At the time of drafting this Plan, North Yorkshire Council licensed 67 wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, which represents one WAV for every 9,185 people.

For context, some licensing authorities have excellent provision of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles (14 urban local authority areas have at least one WAV for every 1,000 people).

The best ratios in rural areas are approximately one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 2,000 to 3,000 people but this has only been achieved where licensing authorities have imposed a requirement for all or part of the hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible. In order to achieve a similar ratio for its population of 615,400, North Yorkshire would need between 200 and 300 WAVs (roughly three to four times the current number).

64.5% of all licensing authorities in England and Wales require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible while 57.5% of largely rural authorities require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

Only 4.8% of licensing authorities in England and Wales require all or a part of their private hire fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

There are 17 largely rural authorities (including North Yorkshire Council) with no requirement for all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible. Only one of these areas provides a slightly better hackney carriage WAV:population ratio than North Yorkshire. This suggests that there can be little expectation of any significant improvement without introducing a mandatory requirement.

Between September 2023 and November 2023, interviews conducted on behalf of the Council revealed some of the lived experiences of wheelchair users and Disability Action Groups in relation to accessible transport (and taxis in particular) across North Yorkshire. Extracts from those interviews are attached at Appendix 1.

The Council acknowledges that, as is the case in many parts of the country, the demand for wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles is not currently being met by the trade in North Yorkshire.

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance¹⁶, licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible vehicles where mandating them would be inappropriate. The Council has previously introduced incentives by waiving the licence fee and by relaxing the age limits in respect of WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains low.

The Council is therefore satisfied that it must take further action to significantly improve the access and availability of licensed WAVs to satisfy the demand from wheelchair users.

The Council acknowledges the view of the Department for Transport that the licensing authority should understand the demand for mixed fleets in its area and ensure that, when issuing licences, it has the right mix of vehicles. Furthermore, some designs of wheelchair accessible vehicles may not be suitable for some ambulant disabled passengers¹⁷.

Many journeys in North Yorkshire are in rural areas involving longer journeys over local roads and the Council recognises that saloon cars tend to give a smoother and more economical ride. However, WAVs are essential for wheelchair users who are unable to transfer from their wheelchair to the vehicle and for those who prefer to travel in their wheelchair.

The Council has a wide discretion over the types of vehicle that it may license. Without limiting the hackney carriage vehicle specification further, the demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles is unlikely to be met by the hackney carriage trade.

The costs associated with purchasing and maintaining a WAV are often higher than for saloon vehicles. Furthermore, the time taken to fulfil a WAV booking can often take longer than it would for a non-WAV to find a safe place to park, load and secure the wheelchair, offer reasonable assistance etc. With no scope to be able to make an additional charge for the service, the provision of a WAV is not perceived as economically viable for many licensed drivers and proprietors.

However, recent research has revealed that service providers may not appreciate the scale of the demand for accessible transport across North Yorkshire. On that basis, the provision of a WAV (even at greater cost) may be beneficial to service providers and service users alike.

Overcoming the barriers to providing wheelchair accessible services

The Council is satisfied that there is a demand for WAV services not being fulfilled, particularly in the more rural parts of North Yorkshire. The anecdotal evidence obtained from disability action groups and wheelchair users is supported by data, which indicates that the availability of WAVs in North Yorkshire is low. It is therefore crucial to understand the barriers faced by the hackney carriage and private hire trade when considering the provision of wheelchair accessible services.

¹⁶ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

¹⁷ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

The Council is aware of a pervading misconception among operators that there are few wheelchair users in need of accessible transport across North Yorkshire. The Council will therefore endeavour to communicate with the trade in relation to the business opportunities associated with operating WAV services.

It is widely understood that the purchase and running costs of a WAV are often higher than that of a non-WAV. However, recent research has revealed that some WAV operators have purchased and maintained WAVs at low cost with good fuel economy and with no problems or significant time or effort required to deliver the service, particularly as many of their passengers use powered wheelchairs and therefore boarding and alighting is far quicker than some may expect.

Some operators have also indicated that they have secured a good level of WAV-related business and established a clientele that would not otherwise have been available to them.

With comparably fewer competitors, there are clear business benefits to offering WAV services. The costs involved in delivering such a service can be outweighed by the additional income from fares that cannot be secured by non-WAV service providers. Drivers and operators currently providing WAV services have reported that the work is both rewarding and enjoyable.

The Council is confident that there is a general willingness among operators to provide a service for wheelchair users if a critical level of such work can be achieved. The Council therefore acknowledges the need to match the supply with the demand and this may be achieved to some extent by facilitating dialogue between the licensed trade and the end-users.

It is widely understood that vehicle manufacturers have faced a number of challenges in recent years, and this has led to delays in the supply chain. While the licensing authority cannot have any influence on the availability of new and used WAVs, it may be able to provide some useful information to drivers and operators who are interested in purchasing a WAV or converting a vehicle for wheelchair accessible purposes.

List of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles

In accordance with section 167 of the Equality Act 2010, the licensing authority maintains and publishes a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a "reference wheelchair" to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

In accordance with statutory guidance issued under section 167(6) of the Equality Act 2010, the list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles should provide the following information:

- the make and model of the vehicle
- the licence number of the vehicle
- whether the vehicle is a taxi or private hire vehicle
- where it is easily accessible for the licensing authority to gather and the operator has given consent, the name of the vehicle's operator(s)
- their contact telephone number and email and/or website address

information about the size and weight of wheelchairs that can be accommodated, including whether the vehicle can accommodate wheelchairs which are larger than the “reference wheelchair” standard
the number of passengers that can be carried whilst seated in their wheelchairs

The licensing authority maintains and publishes its list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicle on the Council website. In the event of any requests for the information in other formats, officers will communicate with the requestor to understand their specific needs and to identify how the information could be tailored where applicable.

Where any of the above information can be published but has not yet been included on the list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, officers will endeavour to obtain further details and amend the list accordingly.

Non-compliance

In accordance with the Department for Transport's statutory guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users¹⁸, the government expects licensing authorities to take tough action where drivers or operators breach their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has committed to using its available powers to ensure that drivers or operators who discriminate against disabled passengers are held accountable.

According to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, the licensing authority will consider the suitability of any driver or operator who receives a conviction for breaching their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The licensing authority may also consider the suspension, revocation or refusal of a licence where no prosecution proceeds, but the authority is satisfied that the driver or operator has treated a disabled passenger unreasonably. A driver or operator who wilfully fails to comply with their duties in this regard would be unlikely to remain a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

¹⁸ [DfT statutory guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users](#)

Next steps

The Council is committed to ensuring that any companies and individuals delivering hackney carriage and private hire services not only satisfy all legal requirements but also raise standards to meet the needs of passengers more consistently.

The Council acknowledges its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers preventing disabled people from accessing hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services.

Ultimately, the Council acknowledges the need to enable disabled people to travel easily, confidently and at a fair and reasonable cost. The Council recognises the importance of all transport services playing their part in making this a reality.

Proposed measures to satisfy the ISP objectives

The Council proposes to revise its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to specify that any new hackney carriage vehicle licence must be in respect of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV).

The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. The proposed hackney carriage vehicle specification is intended to enhance the number of WAVs available in North Yorkshire whilst mitigating any potential adverse effects on climate change and air quality. The proposal facilitates compliance with the Council's equality duty and its air quality obligations, giving vehicle proprietors multiple options with wider social benefits.

The Council proposes to allow any existing licensed hackney carriage vehicles to retain 'grandfather rights' until 31st December 2029, after which, only WAVs and ZEVs may be licensed as hackney carriages.

The Council recognises that ZEVs will not be appropriate for all drivers and proprietors (depending on the nature of their business) due to varying factors including range, cost, typical journey length and electric charging capabilities. Although ZEVs would represent the only alternative option to a WAV, the Council is satisfied that the proposal is reasonable and proportionate with a view to achieving legitimate aims.

A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator. On that basis, any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking a private hire vehicle, which will not necessarily be the case for hackney carriage vehicles.

It is therefore not considered necessary to also apply the WAV/ZEV requirement to private hire vehicles at present. However, it is proposed to introduce new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.

Hackney carriage vehicle proprietors unwilling or unable to acquire a suitable WAV or ZEV may consider adapting their service to a private hire operation with no such WAV or ZEV restriction. It is anticipated that this approach will support the delivery of a mixed WAV and non-WAV fleet across hackney carriage and private hire services in accordance with Best Practice Guidance.

Any opportunities to attract external funding to subsidise the provision of WAV services will continue to be explored, although the Council recognises the need to be realistic about any expectations of large-scale public funding being made available.

The licensing authority will consult with disabled passengers regularly on their experience of using hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services. The licensing authority will also continue to consult representatives of the hackney carriage and private hire trade in this regard.

All members of the licensing team will continue to complete regular disability awareness training to ensure that decisions are informed by the lived experiences of disabled people. The Council acknowledges the value in licensing staff possessing a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles.

Disability awareness training will remain a mandatory requirement for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers and the training must be repeated every three years. The Council recognises the need to ensure that licensed drivers have a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles, and that they know how to provide reasonable assistance when called upon to do so.

A practical assessment will remain a mandatory requirement for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers using WAVs. The Council recognises the need to ensure that WAV drivers understand how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The Council will retain the policy requirement for all non-WAV hackney carriage vehicles to have means for carrying a “reference wheelchair” and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. The Council acknowledges that the Equality Act 2010 provides a defence for licensed drivers who refuse to carry a disabled passenger and their mobility aids in instances where it would not have been possible to do so safely. The policy requirements ensure that the carriage of any mobility aids will be possible in the vast majority of instances.

The licensing authority will review the information contained on its list of designated WAVs (as required by section 167 of the Equality Act 2010) in accordance with the statutory guidance. Further information will be published where it can be obtained. The licensing authority will also review the relevant web pages to establish whether or not the list of designated WAVs should be accompanied by any further information that may be of benefit to visitors.

The Council will review the information displayed in licensed vehicles and provide further information via social media, at hackney carriage ranks wherever possible and on the Council’s website. The Council recognises the need for stronger signposting not only for complaints and suggestions to be made in relation to hackney carriage and private hire services but also to raise awareness of passenger rights.

Information relating to passenger rights will therefore be made more readily accessible via social media, the Council’s website and any other appropriate means. The Council acknowledges that many disabled people may have had negative experiences in the past that might affect their confidence to use hackney carriage and private hire services. The duties placed on drivers and operators of all licensed vehicles by the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 remain relatively new and the Council

recognises that some members of the public may be unaware of these new requirements.

The Council is committed to addressing complaints in a robust and efficient manner to ensure that disabled people can have confidence that they will be able to travel by hackney carriage or private hire vehicle free from the fear of discrimination and that appropriate action will be taken against licensed drivers and operators in the event of any non-compliance.

The Council will work with station operators and other location managers where large numbers of passengers use hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services to ensure disabled passengers can always access and exit vehicles safely and easily.

The licensing authority will maintain engagement with disability action groups by attending regular meetings. Any feedback relating to the provision of hackney carriage and private hire services will be given appropriate attention

The Council will take active steps to facilitate dialogue between the licensed trade and end-users with a view to matching the supply of wheelchair accessible vehicles with the demand. The Council will also make arrangements for the business benefits of a wheelchair accessible service to be communicated to drivers and operators of hackney carriage and private hire services with specific focus on refuting the misconception that there are few wheelchair users in need of accessible transport across North Yorkshire.

The licensing authority will implement new arrangements to convey consistent messages to all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators via a regular newsletter. The newsletter will update drivers and proprietors on relevant licensing matters and will also include a dedicated space for equality provisions, feedback from disabled passengers and any business opportunities or promotions on new WAVs and/or vehicle conversions. Disability Action Groups and other interested parties will be invited to submit ideas for newsletter content.

Adequate resources from Licensing and any other services (including those with responsibility for business engagement and community engagement) will be allocated to ensure that the objectives of this Inclusive Service Plan can be met. The Council recognises that it will be necessary to deploy officers appropriately to deliver on the proposed measures.

Evaluation and review

The Council is committed to monitoring the delivery of this Inclusive Service Plan and evaluating its impact.

Within 12 months of publishing this Inclusive Service Plan, the licensing authority will evaluate the impact of any proposed action through consultation with the licensed trade, disability action groups and end-users.

A full review of the Inclusive Service Plan will be undertaken where appropriate (and, in any case, at least once every five years) to assess whether any amendments are required taking into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.

Minor and inconsequential amendments may be made to the Inclusive Service Plan from time-to-time by a senior officer to reflect legislative changes or to correct any inaccuracies. In

all other cases, the licensing authority will consult with stakeholders prior to implementation to ensure that the Inclusive Service Plan continues to meet its objectives.

Appendix 1 – Feedback from accessible transport users

Extracts from interviews with wheelchair users September 2023 to November 2023

“There’s such a lack of provision. You have to hire a taxi a few days in advance, and even then, it’s difficult. It’s a constant battle. Availability has been a constant issue for the past ten years. That isn’t good enough for a county the size of North Yorkshire. I know it’s not a quick fix, but we have spent years talking about this”.

“Whitby is a popular seaside town, and to have only one accessible vehicle available is unacceptable”.

“When my son is sixteen, I know he won’t be able to live life independently and go and see friends easily, the way I did when I was his age”.

“One WAV refused to take any more than one other person in addition to the wheelchair user, even though there was space. So my sister, who was with us, had to get a separate taxi. We were also told there would be a surcharge of 50% for the inconvenience of having a wheelchair onboard. But we were so desperate as there were no alternatives. OK, there may be additional costs, but is it fair that a disabled person is footing them?”

“I tend not to venture that far out. Even if we get somewhere, the chances of getting back are slim”.

“If you were going to the pub for a night out, you wouldn’t just be able to call a taxi when you need it. Even if you get one one way, you probably won’t get back. Then what? You’re stuck”.

“I would love to be able to be a bit spontaneous, and go out with friends, but that is not an option for a wheelchair user”.

“I needed to go to the dentist but got a call half an hour beforehand to cancel, with no reason given”.

“Most companies don’t have accessible taxis. Only two companies in my area have accessible vehicles”.

“People are having to reschedule hospital appointments because they can’t get there”.

“I have heard stories in the past of people trying to book a WAV taxi in advance and having a lot of trouble. This should not be the case”.

“I can’t go to the dentist, I can’t go to the pantomime for my birthday, the buses are few and far between. I feel quite stranded really”.

“If you’re lucky enough to get a WAV taxi, they charge half as much again”.

“If they are losing money by taking a disabled customer, of course they’ll take the easy option”.

“It’s another way of telling disabled people, ‘I’m sorry, but you don’t count in our community’”.

“I feel I’m a nuisance when it comes to transport. I feel not even like a second-class citizen, but not a citizen at all. It could all get quite upsetting. It doesn’t seem anybody wants to listen”.

“I’m missing out on activities such as swim class and craft group. I do volunteer, but I hate always relying on friends for transport, but I know there is the risk of isolation if I stay at home”.

“People often forget that disabled people will go out and spend money in local businesses. We would dine out a lot more if we were able to get around”.

“It’s not about the money. Even if it costs us more, if it is reliable, we are happy to pay. Knowing you can get to and from your destination without anxiety and stress is worth a lot. There is a misconception around what disabled people want – that they want cheap or free transport – but most of us just want a reliable service”.

“It’s about trying to make people see that we are individuals, who too need to go out, even if it’s raining. Having a disability isn’t a life choice. It will happen in our lifetimes to someone we know, if not to ourselves. It’s important for people to understand the need for accessible transport”.

“Disabled people can bring a lot of money to taxi companies. People think there aren’t many disabled users because they aren’t booking taxis, but we don’t book them because there aren’t any available. There are loads of us”.

Extracts from interviews with Disability Action Groups September 2023 to November 2023

“With key services not located in Whitby, people have to travel to different areas, which only leaves them with the choice of travelling by taxi. However, there is also a lack of WAV taxis”.

“The lack of availability of taxis that can incorporate mobility scooters increases isolation and takes away peoples’ independence. People rely on these services that public transport cannot always provide”.

“The loneliness and isolation really impact peoples’ health and wellbeing. There is anxiety over how to get there and back”.

“Only 1 wheelchair accessible taxi in the whole of Whitby and villages = additional cost”.

“Consistent issues to do with taxis have been raised. For example, there are difficulties in obtaining accessible taxis at certain times of the day, in the early morning (9am) and around 3pm-4pm. Taxi companies may already have contracts with schools, where they make consistent money to be a profitable business, so are unavailable at certain times of the day”.

“More wheelchair accessible vehicles need to be provided by taxi companies”.

“People book a local taxi, which charges for waiting time, which, if you're going to a hospital appointment, will add up to £100. That wracks up and causes more stress and worry”.

“A wheelchair user with hidden disabilities took himself by bus to A & E in Scarborough but was unable to obtain a wheelchair taxi to get home late into the evening. He had no option but to stay in his wheelchair, in the hospital until 6am the following morning when he caught the first bus to Whitby”.

“An elderly lady in Sleights near Whitby being unable to book a wheelchair taxi in advance of dental appointments in Whitby. Across the whole of the NYC area, there will be many similar examples of patients being unable to attend essential appointments due to their inability to travel”.

“People just accept that they aren’t going to be able to get public, private or NHS transport and either don’t go to appointments or find other ways”.

“I don’t drive but I do use buses 4 or 5 times a week and trains 2 or 3 times a month. I would love to be able to rely on a local taxi operator with a WAV but the only one in town is mainly used for school contracts. The call handlers for the business use several reasons why a local wheelchair user cannot use their WAV and, if they do quote, they quote a 50% surcharge on the meter rate”.

“Increases isolation, it takes away peoples’ independence, people rely on these services and public transport cannot always provide. Ryedale is very rural. Scarborough is also quite rural. If these are not connected, then they cannot get around and do what they want to do. It’s not the disability, it’s the environment”.

“Some can drive and are autonomous, but others need taxis”.

“Not many companies allow for pre-booking after 5pm-5.30pm. For example, a young woman wanted to go out over Christmas, but knew it was nearly impossible to find a taxi to go home”.

“Not all older people want to stay at home but are made to. They work with several younger people who can’t be spontaneous”.

“Availability and frequency - it would be ideal if every taxi to be wheelchair accessible”.

“Some taxis do have WAV’s but there needs to be more, nationally, a lot of people are affected, and having so few vehicles is not fulfilling the need”.

Task and Finish Group

Draft Inclusive Service Plan (ISP)

Members of the Group considered some of the additional data and analysis of the availability and demand for wheelchair accessible taxis in North Yorkshire. Members acknowledged the need to take active steps to enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire. Members also noted that officers will evaluate the impact of the ISP within 12 months and therefore further recommendations may be made in due course to ensure that the ISP meets its objectives.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to make no recommendations to amend the Inclusive Service Plan, except where required to accommodate any amendments to the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles

Members considered the proposal to limit the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles to WAVs and zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Members were concerned that the scope was too narrow, which may have a significant impact on the trade both in terms of cost and in terms of their willingness to continue providing a hackney carriage service. The Group considered the obligations on the Council to support businesses by ensuring that each regulatory requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

Members acknowledged the benefits of ZEVs in terms of the wider social benefits relating to air quality and climate change and, on that basis, considered it appropriate to include ZEVs within the scope of suitable vehicles alongside WAVs. However, Members were also satisfied that similar benefits could be derived from hybrid vehicles, albeit to a lesser extent.

Members acknowledged that widening the scope of suitable vehicles may impact on the number of additional WAVs that would become available. However, the Group recognised that, even with the inclusion of hybrids, it would still represent a significant limitation on vehicle suitability compared against the current arrangements. Members were therefore satisfied that such an amendment would still be likely to stimulate an increase in WAVs whilst affording more options to the hackney carriage trade, thereby mitigating the impact in terms of cost.

Members of the Group were not convinced that the proposed vehicle specification should apply to existing licensed vehicles from January 2030. Members noted that many proprietors would have purchased their vehicles with a reasonable expectation that they could be retained in accordance with the existing policy and therefore the Group considered the proposed implementation schedule to be disproportionate. Members were satisfied that the vehicle specification should be applied only to new applications and that existing licensed vehicles should retain grandfather rights until such time as they are no longer suitable (i.e. where the appearance, condition or mechanical fitness fails to reach the necessary standard).

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that hybrid vehicles (as identified by the vehicle registration certificate or via a DVLA vehicle enquiry) be included within the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that the revised hackney carriage vehicle specification should only apply to new applications submitted after implementation of the new policy.

Wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles

The Task and Finish Group acknowledged the likelihood that some proprietors may choose to operate a private hire service in future if new restrictions on vehicle suitability were only applied to hackney carriage vehicles. Members considered the possibility of applying a similar vehicle specification to private hire vehicles.

Members recognised that private hire vehicles must be booked in advance through an operator and therefore any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking, which is not necessarily the case for hackney carriage vehicles. Although hackney carriage vehicles may be pre-booked, they can also be made available for immediate hire at taxi ranks, transport stations or at the roadside.

Members also recognised that a switch from a hackney carriage service to a private hire service is not entirely straightforward (due to the need for a private hire operator's licence, a private hire operator's base within North Yorkshire, comprehensive booking records and suitability checks on dispatch staff) and therefore the private hire option would not be viable for everyone. Furthermore, any hackney carriage drivers and proprietors switching to a private hire service would not be able to stand or ply for hire at any time (this includes waiting on a rank or responding to flag downs at the roadside or at train stations etc) and, for many, this would represent a fundamental business transformation.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude on the balance of probability that a significant number of hackney carriage drivers and proprietors would seek to retain their existing public hire service and continue to be available for immediate hire – Members noted that there is clearly a market for such activities, evidenced by the fact that hackney carriage services continue to thrive elsewhere (even where 100% wheelchair accessible taxi policies are in effect).

Members also noted common practices elsewhere in England Wales whereby 64.5% of all licensing authorities require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible while only 4.8% of licensing authorities require all or a part of their private hire fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

The Group acknowledged that the proposed approach would effectively give hackney carriage proprietors a third possible alternative to WAVs (along with ZEVs and hybrid vehicles) and, whilst this would inevitably lead to some hackney carriage vehicles being replaced by private hire vehicles, the number of wheelchair accessible taxis would still be expected to rise (along with the number of ZEVs and hybrid vehicles). Members noted that 82% of all licensed vehicles in England are private hire vehicles (and 18% hackney carriage). In contrast, 53% of all licensed vehicles in North Yorkshire are private hire vehicles (and 47% hackney carriage). On that basis, a shift to some extent from hackney carriage to private hire would not be problematic.

Members were therefore satisfied that the proposed vehicle specification for hackney carriage vehicles should not be extended to private hire vehicles. Members also acknowledged that this matter may be revisited in future if the objectives of the Inclusive Service Plan are not being met.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to make no recommendations to further limit the scope of suitable private hire vehicles.

Executive hire vehicles

Members of the Group considered the circumstances under which exemptions from displaying licence plates should be issued. At present, exemptions are applied in respect of executive vehicles, limousines and other novelty vehicles only in instances where the proprietor can demonstrate that a contract for hire is in place at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey and the vehicle will not be used to undertake standard private hire work.

Members considered the possibility of allowing exemptions to be applied on an occasional basis in order to support businesses that undertake both executive hire work and standard private hire work. Members noted that these businesses are currently entitled to operate in this manner but they would not qualify for an exemption from displaying licence plates.

Members of the Group acknowledged the practical difficulties associated with temporary exemptions as many private hire operators will undertake occasional work that might be considered 'executive hire' but the requirement to display plates for all other types of journeys would be likely to lead to confusion and non-compliance.

Members also noted that the introduction of temporary exemptions would require the removal of the existing requirement for plates to be securely and permanently affixed to the vehicle and, again, this was considered a risk from both an enforcement and public safety perspective.

Members were, however, satisfied that the existing requirement for executive hire contracts to be in place at least 24 hours in advance of the journey was overly restrictive.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend the removal of the requirement for executive hire contracts to be in place at least 24 hours before the commencement of a journey.

Vehicle testing frequency

Members of the Group considered the existing vehicle testing arrangements in light of the proposal to remove vehicle age limits.

Members noted that the existing policy requires vehicles to be tested once-a-year up to the age of 5 years, twice-a-year from 5 to 10 years and three-times-a-year for any vehicle over the age of 10 years. Members acknowledged that the triannual requirement was applied to ensure that vehicles licensed beyond the existing policy age limits were subject to additional control. However, the draft policy proposes to remove age limits altogether in favour of Euro emission standards and therefore the triannual testing requirements were considered overly burdensome in the context of the draft policy.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that vehicles remain subject to an annual test up to the age of 5 years and subject to biannual tests thereafter (with no additional requirement to be applied to vehicles over the age of 10 years).

North Yorkshire Council

General Licensing and Registration Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 11 November 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Councillor Tim Grogan in the Chair plus Councillors Kevin Foster, Joy Andrews, Alyson Baker, Derek Bastiman, Philip Broadbank, Barbara Brodigan, John Cattanach, Felicity Cunliffe-Lister, Stephanie Duckett, Richard Foster, Robert Heseltine, Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee, Andy Paraskos, Jack Proud, Subash Sharma, Andy Solloway (remote), Malcolm Taylor, Angus Thompson and Andrew Timothy (as a substitute for Councillor Roberta Swiers)

Officers present: Gareth Bentley, Fiona Casson, Simon Fisher and St John Harris

Apologies: Councillors John Mann and Roberta Swiers

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

14 Apologies for absence

Apologies noted (see above)

15 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

16 Declarations of interests

It was noted that all members of the committee had been lobbied by certain individuals in respect of the Inclusive Service Plan but retained an open mind before the proposals in the report.

17 Public participation

The following two public statements had been submitted to the committee and were presented at the next agenda item.

Jackie Snape (Chief Executive of Disability Action Yorkshire)

Current Situation:

In the UK, 1.85% of the population depends on a wheelchair for daily mobility—a statistic that translates to around 11,200 wheelchair users in North Yorkshire, given its population of 604,900. Currently, of the 777 licensed hackney carriage vehicles, only 69 are wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs), while just 40 of the 836 private hire vehicles (PHVs) are WAVs. This equates to only one wheelchair-accessible hackney carriage for every 162 people in need and an astonishing 280 people per WAV PHV. These numbers highlight a significant gap in accessible transport for wheelchair users across the region.

While we appreciate that this proposal focuses solely on hackney carriage wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs), it is important to highlight the major concern that even when

disabled individuals manage to secure a wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicle (PHV)—which is increasingly challenging—they remain vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. Without fare regulation by NYC, these passengers face unpredictable and often inflated charges.

Barriers from the Taxi Trade:

We have been informed, directly by the taxi trade, that several licensed WAVs remain inactive due to drivers' concerns, including:

- Lower earnings compared to non-WAV drivers
- Reluctance to assist wheelchair users due to the risk of getting wet, injury, or inconvenience

In Harrogate, for instance, after 5 pm only a single WAV is available, and it is reserved for NHS purposes.

In the event of a mandate requiring a specified number of WAVs in a hackney fleet, drivers have threatened to switch to private hire to avoid compliance.

Experiences of Disabled People:

Disabled residents report consistent, distressing challenges in accessing WAV taxis:

Medical Appointments: Last week, a resident who booked a WAV taxi a week in advance was repeatedly told none were available.

Exorbitant Costs: Another resident had to pay **£87 for a 2-mile journey** to their GP, needing to book a WAV from Leeds due to local unavailability.

Social Isolation: A young disabled woman shared that she no longer goes out at night, unable to secure accessible transportation and feeling unsafe to go into town in the dark. She states 'even if I can get into town I know there is no way I can get back in a taxi, I am being penalised for being disabled'

Equal Access is a Basic Right:

Disabled people have the same rights as anyone else to participate in daily life—work, social activities, appointments, and education. They deserve reliable, safe, and affordable access to transport without incurring additional costs or barriers.

A Call to Action:

While many local authorities have moved toward 100% wheelchair-accessible taxi fleets or set a reasonable quota, North Yorkshire Council seems to have disregarded the needs of its disabled residents, prioritising the convenience of the taxi trade instead.

We urge you to reconsider North Yorkshire's approach to WAV accessibility, recognising the fundamental rights of disabled people to move freely within their communities. A balanced solution would respect and support both disabled residents and the taxi trade, fostering a community where accessible transportation is a shared priority.

Ian Lawson (Chair of Accessible Transport Group)

I believe that the recommendations from the Task & Finish group do not align with the vision within the NYC Council Plan for a good quality of life for all. The Plan emphasises your PSED to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. Wheelchair using residents of North Yorkshire do not believe that the proposals from this committee will satisfy that duty.

The Government has issued Best Practice Guidance to promote the provision of safe, accessible, available and affordable taxi and PHV services since 2006, yet here we are in 2024 when the council's own Review of the Licensing Policy confirms the need for 200 more wheelchair accessible taxis. Despite the fact that wheelchair users have been lobbying the 7 Borough & District councils for many, many years for more wheelchair taxis, we believe that the licensing committee still does not understand how much the lack of wheelchair taxis impacts negatively on the lives of wheelchair users. The lack of frequent and accessible bus services across North Yorkshire adds to the isolation of wheelchair

users.

The Guidance warns against policy changes that result in unfair competition and have unintended consequences. We believe that imposing restrictions on taxis, but not on equally polluting PHVs, distorts the choice of taxi drivers towards more PHVs. Given the ending of the 10 year age limit for taxis and the option to operate a ZEV or hybrid taxi well into the 2030s why does the committee believe their proposals will result in any more wheelchair taxis in the next 10 years? We also challenge the unevidenced belief of the NYC licensing officers that taxi drivers will not apply to become PHV drivers. Online reports from the USA and Canada make it clear that PHV operators do not provide an equitable service for wheelchair users, when compared with non-WAV operators.

The Guidance also states that licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of WAVs where mandating them would be inappropriate. The council did include incentives at the start of the current 5-year Policy which have not worked so why not mandate for more wheelchair taxis now? The EIA in the Proposals does not provide evidence why a mandate now in NYC will not work. For comparison, Exeter Council will only consider an application for a ULEV or hybrid taxi once half the taxi fleet is wheelchair accessible. After that, licences will only be issued on a one-to-one basis.

We believe that the Proposals have been influenced disproportionately in favour of taxi & PHV operators, as opposed to the benefit of wheelchair users. No targets or KPIs are included in the Proposals so how will the Committee judge the success of their proposals going forward?

18 Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focused on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

Considered

The report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of a new Inclusive Service Plan in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

Introducing the report, the Head of Licensing advised that in response to the committee's comments the draft Inclusive Service Plan had been expanded to include further information about wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, and wheelchair users and their views and experiences of using taxis. The findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group established by the committee at its last meeting were appended to this and the next report and were referred to in both covering reports, since if accepted by the committee, they would impact on the wording of both the draft Inclusive Plan and the new draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Members of the committee then discussed the report and asked questions. Key points made were as follows:

- Euro 6 emission standards were introduced some ten years ago for new vehicles, so by the licensing authority adhering to the 10 year age limit on both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles Euro 6 had effectively been adopted by default for most of these vehicles
- The council's own vehicle fleet were also required to adhere to Euro 6
- In response to the representations made by Mr Lawson and Ms Snape, Councillor Kevin Foster commented that the view of the Task and Finish Group was their recommendations were a step in the right direction to form the basis of a public consultation on a draft Inclusive Service Plan. He was disappointed by the low percentage of taxis which were wheelchair accessible and the high charges; however he did not believe that mandating wheelchair accessible vehicles was the way forward at this stage, but instead the draft ISP sought to incentivise the trade

to do so whilst mitigating the cost of their introduction

It was proposed that instead of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations being presented as a series of further amendments to the draft Inclusive Service Plan appended to the report, that the recommendations be adopted by the committee and the draft Inclusive Service Plan amended accordingly into a single version for consideration by the Executive.

Resolved that the committee:

Recommend to the Executive that the Inclusive Service Plan contained in Appendix A, subject to the amendments proposed by the Task and Finish Group, is the subject of public consultation

19 Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Considered

The report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of a proposal to revise the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Since the Inclusive Service Plan formed a large part of the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and the Task and Finish Group's recommendations also encompassed other aspects of the revised policy, it was proposed that instead of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations being presented as a series of further amendments to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy appended to the report, that the recommendations be adopted by the committee and the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy amended accordingly into a single version for consideration by the Executive.

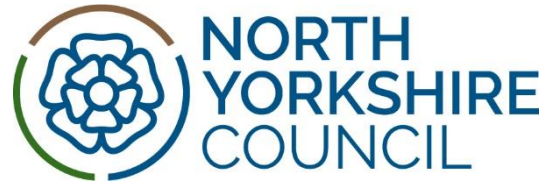
Resolved that the committee:

Recommend to the Executive that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy contained in Appendix B, subject to the amendments proposed by the Task and Finish Group, is the subject of public consultation

20 Any other items

There were no urgent items of business.

The meeting concluded at 2.50 pm.



Inclusive Service Plan

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

With effect from [insert date]

Version Control

- 1.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council on [insert date] with effect from [insert date]

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Introduction

This Inclusive Service Plan sets out the Council's strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)¹⁹, average taxi or PHV usage accounts for 3% of all trips for those with mobility difficulties, compared to just 1% for those without mobility difficulties.

Licensed vehicles are among the most popular modes of transport for disabled people as they provide a door-to-door service with scope for individual assistance with the particular needs of a disabled passenger.

Many disabled people are particularly reliant on hackney carriage and private hire services and therefore the Council is committed to ensuring the availability of an accessible, affordable service.

In formulating the Plan, we have considered the needs of people whose access requirements are apparent when using public transport, such as wheelchair users and assistance dog owners. We have also considered the needs of people with less-visible disabilities, including autistic people or those with mental illness.

Disability in the UK and in North Yorkshire

According to the Office of National Statistics' Census 2021 results, 17.7% of the population of England were disabled.

The proportion of disabled people varied across North Yorkshire as follows:

Craven 15.2%
 Hambleton 15.4%
 Harrogate 14.9%
 Richmondshire 15.5%
 Ryedale 15.6%
 Selby 16.1%
 Scarborough 20%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Census 2021²⁰

According to more recent estimates, around 20% of the UK population is disabled and the proportion is expected to rise as the average age of the population increases²¹.

Wheelchair users in the UK and in North Yorkshire

There is a lack of robust evidence to indicate how many wheelchair users there are in North Yorkshire, or indeed across the country. However, in 2018-2019, a report commissioned by Motability and The Wheelchair Alliance estimated that there were up to 1.37 million users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters in England²².

¹⁹ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

²⁰ [Disability - England and Wales: Census 2021](#)

²¹ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2023\)](#)

²² This estimate was based on 5.7 million people with a mobility disability in England (Family Resources Survey). Of all those having difficulty going out on foot unaided, 3% use a powered wheelchair, 12%

1.37 million users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters represents approximately 2.4% of the population in England. Applying these same proportions to the population of North Yorkshire would indicate that there are approximately 15,000 users of wheelchairs and powered mobility scooters in the area.

North Yorkshire Council

As the licensing authority with responsibility for hackney carriage and private hire licensing functions, North Yorkshire Council has a duty to ensure that the public is adequately protected from any risks associated with hackney carriage and private hire services.

In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, North Yorkshire Council must also have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Licensing authorities are required under section 22(2) of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006 to have regard to the Regulators' Code. In accordance with the Regulators' Code, the Council must seek to reduce regulatory burdens and support compliant business growth by ensuring that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

The Council must therefore balance its responsibilities and deliver licensing services in a fair, safe and legal way.

In accordance with the Council Plan (2023-2027), to demonstrate commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion as an organisation, show leadership across the county and work in partnership to improve equality, diversity and inclusion, the Council will:

- demonstrate political and officer leadership;
- work in partnership to achieve shared priorities;
- use equality impact assessment as part of the decision-making process; and
- monitor, review and scrutinise performance against our objectives

One of the key commitments in North Yorkshire Council's Local Transport Plan is to "consider our duties under transport and equalities legislation to decide whether the commercial network caters sufficiently for the needs of the community having regard to the transport needs of members of the public who are elderly or disabled. We will consider whether there is a need to procure additional services and what funding is available to deliver these".

use a manual wheelchair and 9% use a powered mobility scooter (National Travel Survey data on use of mobility aids by NatCen Social Research, 2020). However, it should be noted that these three groups of users are not mutually exclusive, because NTS respondents could select more than one answer to the question on the type of mobility aid used. It is not known to what extent these three groups overlap each other and therefore only estimated figures are available.

Objectives

In implementing this Inclusive Service Plan, the licensing authority's objectives are:

- To improve the access and availability of licensed vehicles sufficiently to satisfy the demand for accessible services from wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users.
- To promote passenger rights by providing information in formats that all passengers can access in relation to the service that can be expected when travelling in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- To deliver effective enforcement to ensure that users of licensed vehicles can be confident that any reports of non-compliance will be appropriately addressed.
- To enhance the understanding of all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators in relation to the needs and legal rights of disabled people.

Consultation

In preparing this Inclusive Service Plan, the Council has consulted with the following stakeholders:

- Licence holders
- Passenger Transport
- North Yorkshire Police
- Disability action groups
- Other Council departments
- Service users

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Driver duties

The Equality Act 2010 places the following duties on licensed drivers to protect the rights of disabled people to access hackney carriage and private hire services:

The driver of a non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must accept the carriage of any disabled person and must not charge extra for doing so²³. This applies to any disabled passenger, including wheelchair users (with the assumption that the wheelchair user transfers to a passenger seat to travel).

The driver of any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must provide reasonable assistance to any disabled passenger²⁴. This requirement does not apply to any driver who has been granted an exemption from the mobility assistance duties on medical grounds.

The driver of any pre-booked hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must assist any disabled person to identify and find the vehicle and to refrain from charging them extra for doing so, provided the driver is made aware that the passenger requires such assistance²⁵.

The driver of any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must accept the carriage of an assistance dog and must not charge extra for doing so²⁶. This requirement does not apply to any driver who has been granted an exemption on medical grounds.

The driver of a designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage or private hire vehicle must, when requested to do so, carry a wheelchair user whilst seated in their wheelchair without charging extra. If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat, the driver must carry the passenger and the wheelchair in safety and in reasonable comfort. The driver must also provide reasonable assistance to any wheelchair user unless they have been granted an exemption from the mobility assistance duties on medical grounds²⁷.

Driver training

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)²⁸, 67% of all licensing authorities require taxi drivers to undergo disability awareness training.

The Council acknowledges the need to ensure that licensed drivers have a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles, and that they know how to assist people with a range of visible and less visible

²³ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

²⁴ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

²⁵ Section 165A of the Equality Act 2010

²⁶ Section 168 of the Equality Act 2010

²⁷ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

²⁸ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

impairments. Accordingly, every applicant for a hackney carriage and private hire driver licence must undergo suitable disability awareness training prior to being granted a licence by North Yorkshire Council. Appropriate training must be repeated by all licensed drivers every three years.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, licensed drivers are not authorised to drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle unless the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons. Furthermore, the driver must pass an appropriate practical assessment before driving a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

Private hire operators

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed private hire operator is a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In instances where the private hire operator is a company or partnership, the licensing authority applies the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership.

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Private hire operator duties

The Equality Act 2010 places the following duties on licensed private hire operators to protect the rights of disabled people to access private hire services:

Service providers must make reasonable adjustments to enable disabled passengers to access their services²⁹.

A private hire operator cannot refuse or fail to provide a booking for a disabled person if the reason for the refusal or failure is that the person is disabled³⁰.

A private hire operator cannot refuse or fail to provide a booking if the reason for the refusal or failure is that the passenger will be accompanied by an assistance dog³¹.

A private hire operator cannot make any additional charge for the carrying out of any duty imposed on the driver of the private hire vehicle³².

Complaints to private hire operators

In accordance with the conditions attached to a private hire operator's licence, the operator must notify the licensing authority in writing of any complaints concerning a driver's conduct or about a vehicle's suitability. This includes complaints of any failure to comply with the above duties.

Bookings and dispatch staff

Individuals responsible for taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on behalf of a private hire operator do not require a licence. However, in accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, all private hire operators are required to formulate a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role.

The licensing authority has produced a template policy for these purposes, which includes guidelines for assessing staff. The template policy recommends that private hire operators do not employ any individual with a conviction relating to discrimination in any form until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

If a private hire operator fails to adopt an appropriate policy for the assessment of staff, it may raise serious doubts about their own suitability to hold a licence.

²⁹ Section 20 of the Equality Act 2010

³⁰ Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

³¹ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

³² Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles

A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a private hire operator.

Vehicle specification

In accordance with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, all licensed hackney carriage vehicles must have means for carrying a "reference wheelchair" and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. This requirement ensures that drivers of hackney carriage vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council cannot, in most cases, refuse fares on the grounds that it would not have been possible for the wheelchair or mobility aids to be carried safely in the vehicle. The "reference wheelchair" is defined as 700mm in width, 1200mm in length, and 1350mm in height. Private hire vehicles, on the other hand, are not available for public hire and therefore any luggage or accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking.

In accordance with the Council's current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, licensed vehicles are generally required to be no more than 10 years old at the time of a grant or renewal application. However, in order to ensure that this requirement does not have an adverse effect on the number of wheelchair accessible licensed in North Yorkshire, the age limits do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles.

The vehicle specification is subject to review as a proposed outcome of this Inclusive Service Plan.

Complaints

The provision of a clear, simple and well-publicised process for the public to make comments and complaints about drivers, vehicles and operators will enable officers to target compliance and enforcement activity. Complaints provide a further source of intelligence when considering applications and identifying any additional training that may be required.

Accordingly, all hackney carriage and private hire vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council are required to display at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

Further information about how to complain is published on the Council's website.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England (2024)³³, 37.6% of all licensed hackney carriage vehicles outside London are wheelchair accessible. The proportion of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles remains very low, at about 3.2% outside London.

³³ [Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Statistics, England \(2024\)](#)

According to the DfT Statistics report, metropolitan areas tended to have higher proportions of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

North Yorkshire is classified by DEFRA as 'largely rural', meaning that between 50% and 79% of the population resides in rural areas.

13.5% of hackney carriage vehicles are wheelchair accessible across all 'largely rural' areas in England and Wales but only 9% of hackney carriage vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible.

7.2% of private hire vehicles are wheelchair accessible across all 'largely rural' areas in England and Wales whereas 4.7% of private hire vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible.

The Council recognises that a reduction in the number of non-WAVs would raise the proportion of WAVs despite not having any positive impact on availability. On that basis, measuring the number of WAVs as a percentage of the total fleet is not considered the most effective method of assessing availability. The ratio of WAVs:population is believed to be a more meaningful metric.

There is one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 1,877 people of the population in England. Across all rural or largely rural areas, however, there is only one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 8,150 people.

At the time of drafting this Plan, North Yorkshire Council licensed 67 wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, which represents one WAV for every 9,185 people.

For context, some licensing authorities have excellent provision of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles (14 urban local authority areas have at least one WAV for every 1,000 people).

The best ratios in rural areas are approximately one wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle for every 2,000 to 3,000 people but this has only been achieved where licensing authorities have imposed a requirement for all or part of the hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible. In order to achieve a similar ratio for its population of 615,400, North Yorkshire would need between 200 and 300 WAVs (roughly three to four times the current number).

64.5% of all licensing authorities in England and Wales require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible while 57.5% of largely rural authorities require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

Only 4.8% of licensing authorities in England and Wales require all or a part of their private hire fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

There are 17 largely rural authorities (including North Yorkshire Council) with no requirement for all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible. Only one of these areas provides a slightly better hackney carriage WAV:population ratio than North Yorkshire. This suggests that there can be little expectation of any significant improvement without introducing a mandatory requirement.

Between September 2023 and November 2023, interviews conducted on behalf of the Council revealed some of the lived experiences of wheelchair users and Disability Action Groups in relation to accessible transport (and taxis in particular) across North Yorkshire. Extracts from those interviews are attached at Appendix 1.

The Council acknowledges that, as is the case in many parts of the country, the demand for wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles is not currently being met by the trade in North Yorkshire.

According to the Department for Transport's Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance³⁴, licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible vehicles where mandating them would be inappropriate. The Council has previously introduced incentives by waiving the licence fee and by relaxing the age limits in respect of WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains low.

The Council is therefore satisfied that it must take further action to significantly improve the access and availability of licensed WAVs to satisfy the demand from wheelchair users.

The Council acknowledges the view of the Department for Transport that the licensing authority should understand the demand for mixed fleets in its area and ensure that, when issuing licences, it has the right mix of vehicles. Furthermore, some designs of wheelchair accessible vehicles may not be suitable for some ambulant disabled passengers³⁵.

Many journeys in North Yorkshire are in rural areas involving longer journeys over local roads and the Council recognises that saloon cars tend to give a smoother and more economical ride. However, WAVs are essential for wheelchair users who are unable to transfer from their wheelchair to the vehicle and for those who prefer to travel in their wheelchair.

The Council has a wide discretion over the types of vehicle that it may license. Without limiting the hackney carriage vehicle specification further, the demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles is unlikely to be met by the hackney carriage trade.

The costs associated with purchasing and maintaining a WAV are often higher than for saloon vehicles. Furthermore, the time taken to fulfil a WAV booking can often take longer than it would for a non-WAV to find a safe place to park, load and secure the wheelchair, offer reasonable assistance etc. With no scope to be able to make an additional charge for the service, the provision of a WAV is not perceived as economically viable for many licensed drivers and proprietors.

However, recent research has revealed that service providers may not appreciate the scale of the demand for accessible transport across North Yorkshire. On that basis, the provision of a WAV (even at greater cost) may be beneficial to service providers and service users alike.

Overcoming the barriers to providing wheelchair accessible services

The Council is satisfied that there is a demand for WAV services not being fulfilled, particularly in the more rural parts of North Yorkshire. The anecdotal evidence obtained from disability action groups and wheelchair users is supported by data, which indicates that the availability of WAVs in North Yorkshire is low. It is therefore crucial to understand the barriers faced by the hackney carriage and private hire trade when considering the provision of wheelchair accessible services.

³⁴ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

³⁵ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

The Council is aware of a pervading misconception among operators that there are few wheelchair users in need of accessible transport across North Yorkshire. The Council will therefore endeavour to communicate with the trade in relation to the business opportunities associated with operating WAV services.

It is widely understood that the purchase and running costs of a WAV are often higher than that of a non-WAV. However, recent research has revealed that some WAV operators have purchased and maintained WAVs at low cost with good fuel economy and with no problems or significant time or effort required to deliver the service, particularly as many of their passengers use powered wheelchairs and therefore boarding and alighting is far quicker than some may expect.

Some operators have also indicated that they have secured a good level of WAV-related business and established a clientele that would not otherwise have been available to them.

With comparably fewer competitors, there are clear business benefits to offering WAV services. The costs involved in delivering such a service can be outweighed by the additional income from fares that cannot be secured by non-WAV service providers. Drivers and operators currently providing WAV services have reported that the work is both rewarding and enjoyable.

The Council is confident that there is a general willingness among operators to provide a service for wheelchair users if a critical level of such work can be achieved. The Council therefore acknowledges the need to match the supply with the demand and this may be achieved to some extent by facilitating dialogue between the licensed trade and the end-users.

It is widely understood that vehicle manufacturers have faced a number of challenges in recent years, and this has led to delays in the supply chain. While the licensing authority cannot have any influence on the availability of new and used WAVs, it may be able to provide some useful information to drivers and operators who are interested in purchasing a WAV or converting a vehicle for wheelchair accessible purposes.

List of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles

In accordance with section 167 of the Equality Act 2010, the licensing authority maintains and publishes a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a "reference wheelchair" to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

In accordance with statutory guidance issued under section 167(6) of the Equality Act 2010, the list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles should provide the following information:

- the make and model of the vehicle
- the licence number of the vehicle
- whether the vehicle is a taxi or private hire vehicle
- where it is easily accessible for the licensing authority to gather and the operator has given consent, the name of the vehicle's operator(s)
- their contact telephone number and email and/or website address

information about the size and weight of wheelchairs that can be accommodated, including whether the vehicle can accommodate wheelchairs which are larger than the “reference wheelchair” standard
the number of passengers that can be carried whilst seated in their wheelchairs

The licensing authority maintains and publishes its list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicle on the Council website. In the event of any requests for the information in other formats, officers will communicate with the requestor to understand their specific needs and to identify how the information could be tailored where applicable.

Where any of the above information can be published but has not yet been included on the list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, officers will endeavour to obtain further details and amend the list accordingly.

Non-compliance

In accordance with the Department for Transport's statutory guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users³⁶, the government expects licensing authorities to take tough action where drivers or operators breach their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The Council has committed to using its available powers to ensure that drivers or operators who discriminate against disabled passengers are held accountable.

According to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, the licensing authority will consider the suitability of any driver or operator who receives a conviction for breaching their duties under the Equality Act 2010.

The licensing authority may also consider the suspension, revocation or refusal of a licence where no prosecution proceeds, but the authority is satisfied that the driver or operator has treated a disabled passenger unreasonably. A driver or operator who wilfully fails to comply with their duties in this regard would be unlikely to remain a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

³⁶ [DfT statutory guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users](#)

Next steps

The Council is committed to ensuring that any companies and individuals delivering hackney carriage and private hire services not only satisfy all legal requirements but also raise standards to meet the needs of passengers more consistently.

The Council acknowledges its responsibility to make reasonable adjustments to remove barriers preventing disabled people from accessing hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services.

Ultimately, the Council acknowledges the need to enable disabled people to travel easily, confidently and at a fair and reasonable cost. The Council recognises the importance of all transport services playing their part in making this a reality.

Proposed measures to satisfy the ISP objectives

The Council proposes to revise its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy to specify that any new hackney carriage vehicle licence must be in respect of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV), ~~or~~ a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV) **or a hybrid electric vehicle (HEV).**

The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. The proposed hackney carriage vehicle specification is intended to enhance the number of WAVs available in North Yorkshire whilst mitigating any potential adverse effects on climate change and air quality. The proposal facilitates compliance with the Council's equality duty and its air quality obligations, giving vehicle proprietors multiple options with wider social benefits.

The Council proposes to allow any existing licensed hackney carriage vehicles to retain 'grandfather rights' ~~until 31st December 2029, after which, only WAVs and ZEVs may be licensed as hackney carriages~~ **until they are no longer fit for purpose, but new hackney carriage vehicle licences will only be granted in respect of WAVs, ZEVs and HEVs.**

The Council recognises that ZEVs **and HEVs** will not be appropriate for all drivers and proprietors (depending on the nature of their business) due to varying factors including range, cost, typical journey length and electric charging capabilities. Although ZEVs **and HEVs** would represent the only alternative option to a WAV, the Council is satisfied that the proposal is reasonable and proportionate with a view to achieving legitimate aims.

A hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers and it can be pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator. On that basis, any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking a private hire vehicle, which will not necessarily be the case for hackney carriage vehicles.

It is therefore not considered necessary to also apply the WAV/ZEV/**HEV** requirement to private hire vehicles at present. However, it is proposed to introduce new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.

Hackney carriage vehicle proprietors unwilling or unable to acquire a suitable WAV, ZEV **or HEV** may consider adapting their service to a private hire operation with no such restriction on the vehicle type. It is anticipated that this approach will support the delivery

of a mixed WAV and non-WAV fleet across hackney carriage and private hire services in accordance with Best Practice Guidance.

Any opportunities to attract external funding to subsidise the provision of WAV services will continue to be explored, although the Council recognises the need to be realistic about any expectations of large-scale public funding being made available.

The licensing authority will consult with disabled passengers regularly on their experience of using hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services. The licensing authority will also continue to consult representatives of the hackney carriage and private hire trade in this regard.

All members of the licensing team will continue to complete regular disability awareness training to ensure that decisions are informed by the lived experiences of disabled people. The Council acknowledges the value in licensing staff possessing a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles.

Disability awareness training will remain a mandatory requirement for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers and the training must be repeated every three years. The Council recognises the need to ensure that licensed drivers have a reasonable understanding of the barriers that disabled people may face when using licensed vehicles, and that they know how to provide reasonable assistance when called upon to do so.

A practical assessment will remain a mandatory requirement for all hackney carriage and private hire drivers using WAVs. The Council recognises the need to ensure that WAV drivers understand how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The Council will retain the policy requirement for all non-WAV hackney carriage vehicles to have means for carrying a “reference wheelchair” and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. The Council acknowledges that the Equality Act 2010 provides a defence for licensed drivers who refuse to carry a disabled passenger and their mobility aids in instances where it would not have been possible to do so safely. The policy requirements ensure that the carriage of any mobility aids will be possible in the vast majority of instances.

The licensing authority will review the information contained on its list of designated WAVs (as required by section 167 of the Equality Act 2010) in accordance with the statutory guidance. Further information will be published where it can be obtained. The licensing authority will also review the relevant web pages to establish whether the list of designated WAVs should be accompanied by any further information that may be of benefit to residents and visitors.

The Council will review the information displayed in licensed vehicles and provide further information via social media, at hackney carriage ranks wherever possible and on the Council’s website. The Council recognises the need for stronger signposting not only for complaints and suggestions to be made in relation to hackney carriage and private hire services but also to raise awareness of passenger rights.

Information relating to passenger rights will therefore be made more readily accessible via social media, the Council’s website and any other appropriate means. The Council acknowledges that many disabled people may have had negative experiences in the past that might affect their confidence to use hackney carriage and private hire services. The

duties placed on drivers and operators of all licensed vehicles by the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 remain relatively new and the Council recognises that some members of the public may be unaware of these new requirements.

The Council is committed to addressing complaints in a robust and efficient manner to ensure that disabled people can have confidence that they will be able to travel by hackney carriage or private hire vehicle free from the fear of discrimination and that appropriate action will be taken against licensed drivers and operators in the event of any non-compliance.

The Council will work with station operators and other location managers where large numbers of passengers use hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services to ensure disabled passengers can always access and exit vehicles safely and easily.

The licensing authority will maintain engagement with disability action groups by attending regular meetings. Any feedback relating to the provision of hackney carriage and private hire services will be given appropriate attention.

The Council will take active steps to facilitate dialogue between the licensed trade and end-users with a view to matching the supply of wheelchair accessible vehicles with the demand. The Council will also make arrangements for the business benefits of a wheelchair accessible service to be communicated to drivers and operators of hackney carriage and private hire services with specific focus on refuting the misconception that there are few wheelchair users in need of accessible transport across North Yorkshire.

The licensing authority will implement new arrangements to convey consistent messages to all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators via a regular newsletter. The newsletter will update drivers and proprietors on relevant licensing matters and will also include a dedicated space for equality provisions, feedback from disabled passengers and any business opportunities or promotions on new WAVs and/or vehicle conversions. Disability Action Groups and other interested parties will be invited to submit ideas for newsletter content.

Adequate resources from Licensing and any other services (including those with responsibility for business engagement and community engagement) will be allocated to ensure that the objectives of this Inclusive Service Plan can be met. The Council recognises that it will be necessary to deploy officers appropriately to deliver on the proposed measures.

Evaluation and review

The Council is committed to monitoring the delivery of this Inclusive Service Plan and evaluating its impact.

Within 12 months of publishing this Inclusive Service Plan, the licensing authority will evaluate the impact of any proposed action through consultation with the licensed trade, disability action groups and end-users.

A full review of the Inclusive Service Plan will be undertaken where appropriate (and, in any case, at least once every five years) to assess whether any amendments are required taking into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.

Minor and inconsequential amendments may be made to the Inclusive Service Plan from time-to-time by a senior officer to reflect legislative changes or to correct any inaccuracies. In all other cases, the licensing authority will consult with stakeholders prior to implementation to ensure that the Inclusive Service Plan continues to meet its objectives.

Appendix 1 – Feedback from accessible transport users

Extracts from interviews with wheelchair users September 2023 to November 2023

“There’s such a lack of provision. You have to hire a taxi a few days in advance, and even then, it’s difficult. It’s a constant battle. Availability has been a constant issue for the past ten years. That isn’t good enough for a county the size of North Yorkshire. I know it’s not a quick fix, but we have spent years talking about this”.

“Whitby is a popular seaside town, and to have only one accessible vehicle available is unacceptable”.

“When my son is sixteen, I know he won’t be able to live life independently and go and see friends easily, the way I did when I was his age”.

“One WAV refused to take any more than one other person in addition to the wheelchair user, even though there was space. So my sister, who was with us, had to get a separate taxi. We were also told there would be a surcharge of 50% for the inconvenience of having a wheelchair onboard. But we were so desperate as there were no alternatives. OK, there may be additional costs, but is it fair that a disabled person is footing them?”

“I tend not to venture that far out. Even if we get somewhere, the chances of getting back are slim”.

“If you were going to the pub for a night out, you wouldn’t just be able to call a taxi when you need it. Even if you get one one way, you probably won’t get back. Then what? You’re stuck”.

“I would love to be able to be a bit spontaneous, and go out with friends, but that is not an option for a wheelchair user”.

“I needed to go to the dentist but got a call half an hour beforehand to cancel, with no reason given”.

“Most companies don’t have accessible taxis. Only two companies in my area have accessible vehicles”.

“People are having to reschedule hospital appointments because they can’t get there”.

“I have heard stories in the past of people trying to book a WAV taxi in advance and having a lot of trouble. This should not be the case”.

“I can’t go to the dentist, I can’t go to the pantomime for my birthday, the buses are few and far between. I feel quite stranded really”.

“If you’re lucky enough to get a WAV taxi, they charge half as much again”.

“If they are losing money by taking a disabled customer, of course they’ll take the easy option”.

“It’s another way of telling disabled people, ‘I’m sorry, but you don’t count in our community’”.

“I feel I’m a nuisance when it comes to transport. I feel not even like a second-class citizen, but not a citizen at all. It could all get quite upsetting. It doesn’t seem anybody wants to listen”.

“I’m missing out on activities such as swim class and craft group. I do volunteer, but I hate always relying on friends for transport, but I know there is the risk of isolation if I stay at home”.

“People often forget that disabled people will go out and spend money in local businesses. We would dine out a lot more if we were able to get around”.

“It’s not about the money. Even if it costs us more, if it is reliable, we are happy to pay. Knowing you can get to and from your destination without anxiety and stress is worth a lot. There is a misconception around what disabled people want – that they want cheap or free transport – but most of us just want a reliable service”.

“It’s about trying to make people see that we are individuals, who too need to go out, even if it’s raining. Having a disability isn’t a life choice. It will happen in our lifetimes to someone we know, if not to ourselves. It’s important for people to understand the need for accessible transport”.

“Disabled people can bring a lot of money to taxi companies. People think there aren’t many disabled users because they aren’t booking taxis, but we don’t book them because there aren’t any available. There are loads of us”.

Extracts from interviews with Disability Action Groups September 2023 to November 2023

“With key services not located in Whitby, people have to travel to different areas, which only leaves them with the choice of travelling by taxi. However, there is also a lack of WAV taxis”.

“The lack of availability of taxis that can incorporate mobility scooters increases isolation and takes away peoples’ independence. People rely on these services that public transport cannot always provide”.

“The loneliness and isolation really impact peoples’ health and wellbeing. There is anxiety over how to get there and back”.

“Only 1 wheelchair accessible taxi in the whole of Whitby and villages = additional cost”.

“Consistent issues to do with taxis have been raised. For example, there are difficulties in obtaining accessible taxis at certain times of the day, in the early morning (9am) and around 3pm-4pm. Taxi companies may already have contracts with schools, where they make consistent money to be a profitable business, so are unavailable at certain times of the day”.

“More wheelchair accessible vehicles need to be provided by taxi companies”.

“People book a local taxi, which charges for waiting time, which, if you're going to a hospital appointment, will add up to £100. That wracks up and causes more stress and worry”.

“A wheelchair user with hidden disabilities took himself by bus to A & E in Scarborough but was unable to obtain a wheelchair taxi to get home late into the evening. He had no option but to stay in his wheelchair, in the hospital until 6am the following morning when he caught the first bus to Whitby”.

“An elderly lady in Sleights near Whitby being unable to book a wheelchair taxi in advance of dental appointments in Whitby. Across the whole of the NYC area, there will be many similar

examples of patients being unable to attend essential appointments due to their inability to travel”.

“People just accept that they aren’t going to be able to get public, private or NHS transport and either don’t go to appointments or find other ways”.

“I don’t drive but I do use buses 4 or 5 times a week and trains 2 or 3 times a month. I would love to be able to rely on a local taxi operator with a WAV but the only one in town is mainly used for school contracts. The call handlers for the business use several reasons why a local wheelchair user cannot use their WAV and, if they do quote, they quote a 50% surcharge on the meter rate”.

“Increases isolation, it takes away peoples’ independence, people rely on these services and public transport cannot always provide. Ryedale is very rural. Scarborough is also quite rural. If these are not connected, then they cannot get around and do what they want to do. It’s not the disability, it’s the environment”.

“Some can drive and are autonomous, but others need taxis”.

“Not many companies allow for pre-booking after 5pm-5.30pm. For example, a young woman wanted to go out over Christmas, but knew it was nearly impossible to find a taxi to go home”.

“Not all older people want to stay at home but are made to. They work with several younger people who can’t be spontaneous”.

“Availability and frequency - it would be ideal if every taxi to be wheelchair accessible”.

“Some taxis do have WAV’s but there needs to be more, nationally, a lot of people are affected, and having so few vehicles is not fulfilling the need”.



Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2023)

Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Communications Unit on 01609 53 2013 or email communications@northyorks.gov.uk.



যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Environment, Licensing
Lead Officer and contact details	Simon Fisher, Service Development Lead simon.fisher@northyorks.gov.uk
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing gareth.bentley@northyorks.gov.uk
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Individual officers
When did the due regard process start?	January 2024

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

It is proposed to adopt a new Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing in accordance with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance.

The draft ISP sets out the proposed strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.

Among the recommendations in the draft ISP is to introduce a new requirement for all hackney carriage vehicles to be either wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) or zero emission vehicles (ZEVs).

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

On 21 February 2023, the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council committed to developing a new ISP with a view to making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.

In November 2023, the Department for Transport published its new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance, which recommends that licensing authorities develop and maintain an ISP to describe:

- the demand for accessible services in their area;
- the authority's strategy for making transport more inclusive;
- the steps that the authority will take to improve the inclusivity of the taxi and private hire vehicle services; and
- the courses or assessments authorities require applicants to undertake.

The objectives of the draft ISP are:

- to improve the access and availability of licensed vehicles sufficiently to satisfy the demand for accessible services from wheelchair users and non-wheelchair users;
- to promote passenger rights by providing information in formats that all passengers can access in relation to the service that can be expected when travelling in hackney carriage and private hire vehicles;
- to deliver effective enforcement to ensure that users of licensed vehicles can be confident that any reports of non-compliance will be appropriately addressed; and
- to enhance the understanding of all licensed drivers, proprietors and operators in relation to the needs and legal rights of disabled people.

The Council has previously attempted to encourage more wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) to be licensed in North Yorkshire by waiving the licence fee and relaxing the age limits. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low and there is no reasonable expectation that this will change without further intervention.

Alternative options have subsequently been considered to address the shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (including imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles). The current proposal, however, is considered a more reasonable and proportionate measure to satisfy the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations without imposing an unnecessary regulatory burden on businesses.

Further measures (including provision of information relating to passengers' rights and the Council's approach to dealing with complaints) are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to all passengers with or without disabilities.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

If the ISP recommendations are implemented into the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy following consultation, all applications for new hackney carriage vehicle licences from 1 April 2025 must be in respect of either a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV). All hackney carriage vehicle licence renewal applications from 1 January 2030 must be in respect of either a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV).

The proposed revision will narrow the scope of vehicles that may be licensed as hackney carriages in North Yorkshire and therefore may have cost implications on proprietors of licensed vehicles.

The proposal is intended to ensure that all customers are able to utilise hackney carriage services in future and an improved service will be offered to all passengers.

Customers will also have more access to information on passengers' rights and the Council's approach to dealing with complaints.

There will be minor changes for staff who will be advising the public and trade of the ISP and implementing any changes in their day-to-day procedures.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

Subject to Executive approval, the draft ISP will be consulted on for a period of 12 weeks to gauge the views of the public, the licensed trade and any other interested parties, including wheelchair users and their representatives. The Communications Team will be fully engaged in delivering the consultation. Any responses to the consultation will be considered by the Executive in due course prior to a decision being made.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The proposals are cost neutral. The vast majority of the licensing authority's service costs (including the proposed consultation and any subsequent meetings) are recovered by way of licence fees and the service will continue to operate on the same cost-recovery basis in future.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or

				service user data or demographic information etc.
Age		✓		Mobility difficulties and accessibility needs are often more prominent with age. The draft ISP seeks to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users. Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to ambulant passengers with mobility difficulties and accessibility needs.
Disability		✓		The draft ISP seeks to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users. Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to wheelchair users and ambulant disabled passengers.
Sex	✓			
Race	✓			
Gender reassignment	✓			
Sexual orientation	✓			
Religion or belief	✓			
Pregnancy or maternity	✓			
Marriage or civil partnership	✓			
Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

..live in a rural area?	✓			
...have a low income?	✓			
...are carers (unpaid family or friend)?		✓		The draft ISP seeks to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users, which should assist carers. Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to wheelchair users, ambulant disabled passengers and their carers, family and friends.
..... are from the Armed Forces Community	✓			

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)

North Yorkshire wide	✓
Craven	
Hambleton	
Harrogate	
Richmondshire	
Ryedale	
Scarborough	
Selby	

If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.

--

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

People of advanced age and with a disability will benefit more because of the improved access to wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen.

Tick option chosen

(Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)	
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	✓
2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	
3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)	
4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.	
Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)	
The draft ISP is designed to enhance access for wheelchair users and to improve the service for all people with disabilities. The impact can only be a positive one.	

Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)
The draft ISP makes arrangements for evaluation and review 12 months from implementation. Ongoing dialogue with the trade and disabled passengers (including wheelchair users). Monitoring the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.				
Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
Evaluation and review 12 months from implementation.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	1 April 2026		Head of Licensing / Service Plan / quarterly KPIs
Ongoing dialogue with the trade and wheelchair users.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	Ongoing and by 1 April 2026		Head of Licensing

Monitoring the number of wheelchair and fully electric vehicles.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	Ongoing and by 1 April 2026		Head of Licensing / quarterly KPIs
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Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Research indicates that there is a shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire, and this is supported by comparisons with national data. The draft ISP is designed to enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles in the area.

The recommendation is to consult on the proposals and consider any responses in due course with a view to implementing the new ISP, with or without further amendments, from 1 April 2025.

Legal Services have been involved in the drafting of the ISP and in the preparation of the report.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Gareth Bentley

Job title: Head of Licensing

Directorate: Environment

Signature: Gareth Bentley

Completion date: 23/10/2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Callum McKeon

Date: 04/12/2024

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

Title of proposal	Consultation on the adoption of new Inclusive Service Plan and review of existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
Brief description of proposal	Adopt / review policy with a focus on how the Council will promote inclusivity and climate change impact in its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing service.
Directorate	Environment
Service area	Licensing
Lead officer	Gareth Bentley
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Simon Fisher
Date impact assessment started	June 2024

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

Options are detailed in the report. The following options are being considered:

Stay the same, introduce Euro 6 standards for petrol / diesel vehicles, introduce a limited requirement to provide fully electric vehicles and to include hybrid vehicles as an additional choice.

At this stage, the proposal is to consult on available options. A further report will analyse the consultation responses and recommend final policy detail.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

There will be no impact on Council budgets. Any costs associated with the review will be recovered through licence fees.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>		
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">D 2025 75</p>	Emissions from travel	√			<p>It is proposed to reduce emissions from licensed vehicles with phased implementation beginning in summer 2025.</p>		<p>See the report for detail.</p>	
	Emissions from construction	√						
	Emissions from running of buildings	√						
	Emissions from data storage	√						
	Other	√						
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		√						
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>		√						

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where relevant)</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>	√			<p>See above.</p>		
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>	√			<p>The proposals will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.</p>		
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		√				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		√				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		√				

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

There are no specific recognised standards in this area.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The draft policy takes account of general government guidance in respect of emission standards and the need to transition to zero emission vehicles.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Gareth Bentley
Job title	Head of Licensing
Service area	Licensing
Directorate	Environment
Signature	
Completion date	9 December 2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Callum McKeon

Date: 09 December 2024

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North Yorkshire Council

Executive

17 December 2024

Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Report of the Corporate Director - Environment

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval to consult on a revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance published in November 2023 recognises that licensing authorities need policies to set the standards for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators. The guidance seeks to assist licensing authorities when reviewing their policies.
- 2.2 North Yorkshire Council implemented its first Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy on 01 April 2023. This policy is now in need of review following the updated Best Practice Guidance and in order to take account of matters arising since that time.
- 2.3 In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, North Yorkshire Council must have due regard to the need to:
- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by the Act;
 - advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it; and
 - foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 2.4 On 21 February 2023, the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council resolved to adopt a new Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and committed to developing a new Inclusive Service Plan with a view to making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle provision in North Yorkshire.
- 2.5 In line with the commitment made by the Executive in February 2023, and in accordance with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance published in November 2023, a draft Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) has been produced and is subject to separate consideration.
- 2.6 A draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy has been produced to take account of the draft ISP, and due consideration has been given to the latest version of the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance. The draft policy is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 PROPOSALS

Wheelchair accessible vehicles and air quality

- 3.1 Research indicates that there is a shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire, and this is supported by comparisons with national data. At present, the Council licenses approximately 70 wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, which represents one for every 9,000 people in its population. Although WAV provision is typically lower in rural authorities than in urban areas, the best performing rural authorities in this regard make provision for one WAV for every 2,000 to 3,000 people. North Yorkshire Council would need to license around 200 more WAV taxis to reach a similar ratio.
- 3.2 In accordance with the Regulators' Code (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Better Regulation Delivery Office), regulators should avoid imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens through their regulatory activities and should assess whether similar social, environmental and economic outcomes could be achieved by less burdensome means. Rather than imposing a mandatory WAV requirement on licensed vehicles, the Council previously introduced incentives by waiving the licence fee and by relaxing the age limits in respect of WAVs. This approach is in line with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance (November 2023), which recommends that licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of wheelchair accessible vehicles where mandating them would be inappropriate. To some extent, this has encouraged the retention of existing WAVs but the total remains very low and this is unlikely to change without further intervention.
- 3.3 The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. It is recognised that WAVs are still predominantly petrol and diesel powered and will have an impact on emissions. There is a need to enhance the number of WAVs available in North Yorkshire whilst mitigating any potential adverse effects on climate change and air quality.
- 3.4 Officers originally drafted a revised policy (Appendix A), which proposed to introduce a requirement for all new hackney carriage vehicle licence applications to be in respect of either a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV). This proposal facilitates compliance with the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations, giving vehicle proprietors multiple options with wider social benefits.
- 3.5 It is acknowledged that wheelchair users will often pre-book licensed vehicles and therefore an adequate supply of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles will also be beneficial. However, a hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, and it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers in addition to being pre-booked by telephone. In contrast, private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which must be obtained through a licensed private hire operator.
- 3.6 On that basis, any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking a private hire vehicle, which will not necessarily be the case for hackney carriage vehicles. It is therefore not considered necessary to also apply the WAV/ZEV requirement to private hire vehicles at present. However, it is proposed to introduce new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided wherever possible. Further measures are also proposed to encourage (without mandatory requirements) more wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles to be licensed.
- 3.7 According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, licensing authorities should understand the demand for mixed fleets in its area and ensure that, when issuing licences, it has the right mix of vehicles. They should recognise that some designs of wheelchair accessible vehicles may not be suitable for some ambulant disabled passengers.

- 3.8 It is therefore not considered appropriate at present to require all licensed vehicles to be wheelchair accessible. The ZEV option widens the scope of vehicles that may be licensed and, as is the case currently, proprietors may choose to license their vehicles solely for private hire purposes instead, which would not be subject to the WAV/ZEV requirement.
- 3.9 It is proposed to apply the revised vehicle specification requirements to all new hackney carriage vehicle licence applications from the implementation date but, in order to give existing licence holders sufficient time to make arrangements for replacement vehicles, it was proposed to allow all existing licences to be renewed until 31st December 2029.

Other general matters

- 3.10 Further amendments to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy are proposed as follows:
- To remove the 10-year age limit on both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in accordance with Best Practice Guidance and to replace it with a requirement to meet the Euro 6 emission standards. Any vehicles licensed prior to implementation would effectively retain grandfather rights.
 - To remove the requirement for vehicles under the age of three months to undergo a mechanical test.
 - To make provision for issuing restricted private hire driver licences. This measure is designed to facilitate the application process for those who drive licensed vehicles for the sole purpose of fulfilling school or social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council. Such applicants would no longer need to possess licensing knowledge of unrelated matters such as taxi ranks, meters and fares.
 - To reduce the frequency of driver medical assessments in line with Best Practice Guidance. The proposed arrangements would be consistent with drivers of Large Goods Vehicles (LGVs) and Public Service Vehicles (PSVs).
 - To quantify the minimum luggage space requirements in hackney carriage vehicles for consistency and to remove the minimum luggage space requirements for private hire vehicles subject to the requirement that private hire operators must identify any accessibility, or luggage needs at the time of booking.
 - To make minor alterations as required for accuracy and consistency.
- 3.11 In September 2024, a Task and Finish Group (comprising six Members of the General Licensing and Registration Committee) was established to consider the original draft policy in further detail. The findings of the Task and Finish Group are attached at Appendix B and their recommendations were approved by the General Licensing and Registration Committee on 11 November 2024. The minutes of the General Licensing and Registration Committee meeting are attached at Appendix C.
- 3.12 In general, the Task and Finish Group and, subsequently, the General Licensing and Registration Committee supported officers' proposals but made the following revisions to the draft policy as follows:
- The original proposed vehicle specification (identifying only WAVs and ZEVs within the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles) was considered too narrow, which raised concerns from Members that it may have an impact on the trade both in terms of cost and in terms of proprietors' willingness to continue providing a hackney carriage service. Accordingly, hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs) were included within the scope of suitable vehicles.
 - The original proposal to prohibit hackney carriage vehicle licence renewals beyond December 2029 in instances where the vehicle did not comply with the new vehicle specification was considered disproportionate. Members noted that many proprietors would have purchased their vehicles with a reasonable expectation that they could be retained in accordance with the existing policy and therefore the implementation schedule was revised to ensure that all existing vehicles would retain 'grandfather

rights' until they are no longer fit for purpose. The revised vehicle specification now applies only to new applications.

- Members were satisfied that the existing requirement for an executive hire contract to be in place at least 24 hours prior to a hiring was overly onerous and therefore recommended its removal to reduce any unnecessary regulatory burdens in this regard.
- Members were satisfied, in light of the proposal to remove the 10-year age limit on licensed vehicles, that a requirement for three mechanical inspections per year in some circumstances was no longer necessary, particularly given that officers would retain the power to require further inspections in individual cases if required.

3.13 A draft policy incorporating these recommendations from the General Licensing and Registration Committee (highlighted in green) is attached at Appendix D.

3.14 Further analysis of the proposed policy revision is attached at Appendix E.

3.15 It is proposed to consult with the public and the licensed trade for a period of 12 weeks before returning this matter to the Executive to make a decision in light of any responses received.

3.16 The Council is also expected to consult the relevant authorities and interested parties to identify if there are local circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in licensed vehicles would have a positive or adverse net effect on public safety, taking into account any potential privacy issues. The current policy review focuses primarily on delivering the commitments made by the Executive in relation to inclusive services and on implementing the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance. However, subsequent research and consultation will take place to assess the need for CCTV to be installed on a mandatory basis. This matter will be considered and consulted upon separately in due course once the necessary data has been compiled and analysed with input from all relevant parties.

4.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

4.1 The Council is committed to protecting communities, safeguarding children and ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the public. The draft policy delivers significant public protection benefits.

4.2 The Council is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion. The draft policy seeks to improve the access and availability of licensed vehicles in North Yorkshire.

4.3 The Council is committed to ensuring that North Yorkshire is a clean, environmentally sustainable and attractive place to live, work and visit. The draft policy seeks to mitigate any potential adverse impacts arising from hackney carriage and private hire vehicles on air quality.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 The Council may consider retaining the existing policy. However, the current shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles would be highly unlikely to change and any outstanding items from the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance would not be implemented.

- 5.2 Alternative options have already been explored to encourage more wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed in North Yorkshire by waiving the licence fee and relaxing the age limits on WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low and there is no reasonable expectation that this will change without further intervention.
- 5.3 Alternative options have subsequently been considered to address the shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (including imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles). The current proposal, however, is considered a more reasonable and proportionate measure to satisfy the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations without imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens on businesses.

6.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The Council's Integrated Passenger Transport Service (IPT) is responsible for arranging and managing school transport for children across North Yorkshire. The availability of additional wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles would be likely to facilitate these arrangements.
- 6.2 The Council's Environmental Health Service is responsible for monitoring and safeguarding air quality. The relevant officers have been consulted and support the proposals in this regard.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The vast majority of the licensing authority's service costs (including the proposed consultation and any subsequent meetings) are recovered by way of licence fees and the service will continue to operate on the same cost-recovery basis in future.
- 7.2 The Council must ensure that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public. The additional cost burden on proprietors has been acknowledged in formulating the proposed policy revisions.
- 7.3 Further proposals (including the reduced frequency of medical assessments, the reduced frequency of vehicle inspections, and the removal of the 10-year age limit on licensed vehicles) are likely to reduce the cost burden currently imposed on licensed drivers and proprietors.

8.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 Any legal implications have been considered and addressed within the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.
- 8.2 Licensing authorities are expected to consult with any interested parties before making policy decisions. The consultation must be undertaken at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; it must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals; and the responses must be conscientiously taken into account when the decision is taken.

9.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Disability is a protected characteristic within the meaning of the Equality Act 2010. Having due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not, the Council must endeavour to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and take steps to meet their needs.

9.2 A balance must be sought to allow the licensed trade to make a reasonable living from their business whilst also removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by persons who have relevant protected characteristics. The draft policy is considered a reasonable and proportionate approach to ensure that wheelchair users can access taxi services in North Yorkshire.

9.3 An Equality Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix F.

10.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The draft policy takes account of government guidance in respect of emission standards and the need to transition to zero emission vehicles.

10.2 A Climate Change Impact Assessment is attached at Appendix G.

11.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Any policy implications have been considered and addressed within the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

12.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

12.1 Hackney carriage and private hire services play an important role in transporting members of the public safely. Any community safety implications have been considered and addressed within the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

13.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

13.1 The Council has committed to reviewing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy with a view to making hackney carriage and private hire services more inclusive and the Council must have regard to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance.

14.0 RECOMMENDATION

14.1 To consider the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix A and the alternative version recommended by the General Licensing and Registration Committee at Appendix D.

14.2 To approve the content of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix D as a draft for consultation, subject to the removal of the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option in relation to the hackney carriage vehicle specification.

14.3 To approve the commencement of a public consultation to seek views on the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and any viable alternatives, including the hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) option.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Appendix B – Task and Finish Group Findings

Appendix C – Minutes of General Licensing and Registration Committee

Appendix D – Draft policy with committee recommendations applied

Appendix E – Analysis of proposed revisions

Appendix F – Equality Impact Assessment

Appendix G – Climate Impact Assessment

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS:

Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance (Department for Transport)

Air Quality Strategy (DEFRA)

Regulators' Code (Department for Business Innovation & Skills, Better Regulation Delivery Office)

Karl Battersby

Corporate Director – Environment

County Hall

Northallerton

Report Author: Simon Fisher, Licensing Service Development Lead; and
Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing

Presenter of Report: Simon Fisher, Licensing Service Development Lead; and
Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

With effect from *insert date*

Version Control

- 1.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council on 21 February 2023 with effect from 1 April 2023
- 2.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire Council on *insert date* with effect from *insert date*

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General policy

North Yorkshire Council serves a diverse and dispersed population across 3,103 square miles stretching from Scarborough on the North Sea coast to Bentham in the west and from the edge of Teesside to south of the M62. Ninety eight percent of the county is either sparsely (13%) or super-sparsely (85%) populated with just over a third of the population living in these areas.

The licensing authority issues the following licences:

- Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver licence
- Hackney carriage vehicle licence
- Private hire vehicle licence
- Private hire operator licence

Legislation

The principal legislation under which functions are undertaken is contained in:

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

North Yorkshire Council adopted the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 by a resolution on 21 February 2023.

Policy considerations

In accordance with section 22(2) of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, the Regulators' Code¹ has been considered in order to promote proportionate, consistent and targeted regulatory activity through the development of transparent and effective dialogue and understanding between the licensing authority and the trade.

The council aims to reduce regulatory burdens and supporting compliant business growth by ensuring that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

In formulating this policy, the licensing authority has considered the advice contained in the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards² and the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance³.

Objectives

The licensing authority's objectives are:

- to encourage the provision of high quality and accessible hackney carriage and private hire services;
- to ensure the safety and comfort of users of hackney carriage and private hire services;
- to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public affected by the operation of hackney carriage and private hire services; and
- to facilitate access to an efficient and effective public transport service.

Consultation and partnership working

In preparing this policy, the Council has consulted with the following stakeholders:

Licence holders

¹ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills – Better Regulation Delivery Office – April 2014

² Department for Transport – July 2020

³ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

North Yorkshire Police
Equality groups
Disability groups
Highways Authority
Passenger Transport
North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
Other Council departments
Service users

To promote the policy objectives the licensing authority will work in partnership with the stakeholders detailed above, along with other agencies such as:

Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
HM Revenue and Customs
Department of Works and Pensions
Home Office Immigration Services
Disclosure and Barring Service

Applying the policy

This document sets out the policy that the licensing authority will apply when making decisions about applications and licences.

Any guidance contained within this policy is to be treated as a guide only and final interpretation of the law will ultimately rest with the courts.

Any obligation in this policy not to do any act or thing shall be deemed to include an obligation not to cause or permit that act or thing to be done.

Any reference to any statute or subordinate legislation shall be deemed to include a reference to any amendment or re-enactment.

The policy will be applied in the majority of cases when considering licence applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to the general policy.

It will be necessary to consider, in relation to any particular application, whether the specific circumstances justify allowing an exception.

It will be up to the applicant to show that an exception should be made to the policy⁴ and, if the objectives can still be met, the licensing authority may exercise its discretion to depart from the general policy. Where exceptions are made, reasons will be given.

⁴ R v Crown Court at Sheffield, ex p Consterdine (1998)

Policy review

The implications and effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored.

This policy will be reviewed where appropriate (and, in any case at least once every five years) to assess whether any amendments are required taking into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.

Minor and inconsequential amendments may be made to the policy from time-to-time by a senior officer to reflect legislative changes or to correct any inaccuracies. In all other cases, the licensing authority will consult with stakeholders, interested parties and neighbouring authorities prior to implementation to ensure that the policy continues to meet its objectives.

Personal data

The council will hold personal data (about applicants, licensees, complainants etc) in connection with its licensing function.

The council will comply with its obligations under data protection legislation.

The council's aim is to minimise the unnecessary disclosure of personal data.

Personal data will only be obtained, kept or used as authorised by statute.

Personal data may be shared where it is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.

Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual. It includes information relating to persons who can be identified indirectly from that information in combination with other information. For example, the Information Commissioner considers that vehicle registration marks are personal data (especially when combined with other information).

Equality and diversity

An equality impact assessment has been conducted to assess the potential impact of this policy on any individuals with protected characteristics. Appropriate measures have been implemented in the relevant parts of this policy to ensure that all individuals are represented and have their interests protected.

The Council has published an Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) setting out the Council's strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services in North Yorkshire. The impact of any amendments made to the ISP will be considered in the context of this policy and the contents will be revised accordingly.

The council's policies and procedures will be applied fairly to all irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. This will apply to applicants, licence holders, customers and complainants.

The licensing authority will take a very serious view of any complaints of discrimination by licensees based on these factors or of any similar incidents involving licensees and other licensees.

Safeguarding

The council has a duty of care to children and vulnerable persons who use licensed vehicles within North Yorkshire.

The council recognises that all children and vulnerable persons have a right to be safe and protected from abuse and harm. It is also acknowledged that promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable persons is everyone's responsibility.

The licensing authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles pose no risk of harm to children or vulnerable persons.

The licensing authority has the power to refuse, revoke or suspend licences after convictions for various offences or any other reasonable cause. A suspension or revocation can be given immediate effect where it is in the interests of public safety.

Any allegations made against licence holders suspected of inflicting harm on children or vulnerable adults will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or a Deputy Officer within 24 hours of the allegation being known. They will ensure that appropriate action is taken in line with the council's Safeguarding Policy both in regard to the subject of the alleged abuse and the perpetrator. A decision will also be made in relation to any necessary action to be taken against the licence, which could include suspension or revocation.

Any decision to refuse or revoke a licence on the basis that the individual is thought to have harmed or presents a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult will be referred to the DBS under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The DBS will then determine if the individual should be barred from working with adults and / or children, this will enable other licensing authorities to consider such information should further applications be made.

For these purposes, the licensing authority may consult with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the North Yorkshire Children Safeguarding Children Partnership. The licensing authority will also have regard to statutory guidance (*Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018*) and the Care Act 2014.

Air quality

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are currently in place across areas of North Yorkshire following elevated levels of pollutants measured within the AQMA areas. An up-to-date list of local authorities with AQMAs is available from <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/>

The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. According to the Strategy, the government expects all local authorities to effectively use their powers to reduce emissions from the sources which are within their control.

In formulating this policy, the Council has also had due regard to the government's *Environmental Improvement Plan 2023* (DEFRA, updated 7 February 2023), the *Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy* (Department for Transport, updated 12 September 2018) and the relevant provisions of the Environment Act 2021.

Vehicles, including hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, are identified as a contributor to poor air quality, but the Council also recognises the importance of their availability to provide transport for North Yorkshire residents.

Appropriate measures have therefore been implemented in this policy to support the delivery of national targets by taking action to reduce emissions.

Emissions standards for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles will be subject to review, taking into consideration up-to-date emission monitoring results to determine whether sufficient progress is being made towards achieving the health-based air quality objectives and improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Frequent maintenance of vehicles is also recommended, and emissions may also be further reduced by switching off engines whilst stationary or idling, particularly at ranks and standing in traffic.

The Council will look further at the impact of taxi emissions via the introduction of low-emission and hybrid vehicle use and the possibility to provide grant incentives and schemes to promote the uptake of low-emission, hybrid and electric vehicles in the fleet. In addition, these types of vehicles tend to carry much cheaper road tax, fuel and insurance costs.

This policy is part of the Council's responsibility to review and assess air quality and meeting national air quality objectives to benefit people's health and create a more pleasant environment for residents and visitors of North Yorkshire.

Hackney carriages

A hackney carriage is a public transport vehicle which is licensed to ply for hire. It is unlawful for a vehicle to be used for the carriage of passengers for immediate hire until such time as a hackney carriage licence is issued in respect of the vehicle⁵.

The maximum number of passengers that can be carried in a vehicle for it to be capable of being licensed as a hackney carriage is eight⁶.

A vehicle licensed as a hackney carriage continues to be a hackney carriage at all times and anyone driving the vehicle needs a hackney carriage driver licence⁷. The only exception to this general rule is for a person driving a hackney carriage in connection with any test of the mechanical condition of the vehicle or its meter⁸.

All hackney carriages must be intended for use predominantly, or entirely, within North Yorkshire⁹.

Hackney carriage vehicle specification

The licensing authority will only generally issue a licence in respect of a hackney carriage vehicle if:

- It is fit for its purpose, safe and comfortable for its users and any members of the public;
- It is either zero emission at the tailpipe or it is a wheelchair accessible vehicle that meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions (a wheelchair accessible vehicle must be capable of carrying at least one passenger seated in a reference size wheelchair);
- It has not been subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off;
- ~~It is less than 10 years old (the age of the vehicle shall be taken from the date of first registration shown on the vehicle registration document, V5C). The policy with regards to vehicle specification shall be applied in the majority of cases when considering licensing applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to this policy. Where exceptions are made in this regard, vehicles shall be subject to three mechanical inspections each year;~~
- It has
 - a front nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear offside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle; and
 - a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.
- The front windscreen allows at least 75% of light through and the front side windows allow at least 70% of light through¹⁰;
- It has nearside and offside exterior rear-view mirrors;
- A spare wheel conforming to legal requirements has been provided and properly fitted in the vehicle along with a jack and wheelbrace, unless a manufacturer's alternative is provided;
- It is equipped with a minimum of four road wheels fitted with manufacturers' recommended size tyres;
- It has a clean and smart appearance, both externally and internally;
- It is right hand drive;

⁵ Section 45 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

⁶ Paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 to the Transport Act 1985

⁷ Yates v Gates [1970] 1 All ER 754

⁸ Paragraph 3 of Schedule 7 to the Transport Act 1985

⁹ R (on the application of Newcastle City Council) v Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council [2008] EWHC 2369 (Admin)

¹⁰ Regulation 32(10) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

- It has a permanent roof which is watertight – standard sunroof allowed (i.e. sunroof fitted when new by manufacturer);
- It has seating arrangements in accordance with the current Construction and Use Regulations¹¹ and the manufacturer's specification (unless the modification has been approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme);
- It has rear seat belts (irrespective of age);
- It has a separate locking luggage area or in the case of an estate vehicle, a permanent grille, luggage bar(s) or manufacturer's recommended device fitted sufficiently to prevent luggage carried in the rear compartment from coming into contact with persons using the rear seat;
- It has ~~means~~ a minimum boot capacity of 400 cubic decimetres in the case of any vehicle licensed to carry up to 4 passengers and 600 cubic decimetres in all other cases for carrying a reference wheelchair¹² and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. For these purposes, reliance on trailers or other luggage carrying devices will not be considered. If seats are located within the luggage space, the vehicle may be licensed to carry a lower number of passengers in order to comply with the luggage space requirement;
- There are sufficient means by which a passenger can communicate with the driver; and
- In the case of a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it satisfies the requirements of the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport wheelchair accessible vehicle specification in relation to tracking, anchorage, wheelchair tie-downs, restraints, spacing, doorways, direction of travel, lifts, ramps, winches and storage of equipment. Guidance is available on request.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Selby District Council or North Yorkshire Council prior to [date of publication] ~~4th April 2023~~ may remain licensed on renewal in respect of any application received on or before 31st December 2029 ~~until such time as it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023~~. The vehicle specification in the preceding paragraph will apply to any renewal application submitted after 31st December 2029.

Hackney carriage vehicle proprietorship

A person applying for a hackney carriage vehicle licence must be the proprietor of the vehicle to which the application relates. If the applicant is not the sole proprietor, he/she must name all joint proprietors including anyone involved in the day-to-day usage of the vehicle.

Unless the applicant's name is the only name on the Vehicle Registration Document, the application should include on the application form the details of any person (or company) involved in the keeping, employing or letting for hire the vehicle.

Process for new hackney carriage vehicle licence applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee; and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name. If neither is available, verifiable proof of ownership may be accepted (i.e. a bill of sale from a reputable firm).

¹¹ Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

¹² As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

All applicants will be required to sign a declaration as part of their application, stating that the vehicle will be used predominantly within North Yorkshire.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application (note: a vehicle test is not required if the application is made within three months of the date of first registration)**;
- a certificate confirming that the meter has been calibrated by an authorised agent to the table of fares;
- an appropriate engineer's report (only for vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off) verifying the standard of repairs;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the application meets all criteria laid down in the policy, a licence will normally be granted.

The licence and plates will be issued directly to the applicant unless the applicant has provided authorisation in writing for an alternative representative to take possession on their behalf.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application for the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a hackney carriage licence lies to the Crown Court¹³.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for hackney carriage vehicle licence renewal applications

Applications for renewal should be made no more than six weeks and no less than two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the vehicle will cease to be a licensed vehicle until such time as a new application for this vehicle is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

¹³ By virtue of section 7 of the Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1907

- a fully completed application form; and
- the appropriate fee.

Licences will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application**;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application to renew a licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to renew a hackney carriage vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁴. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

¹⁴ By virtue of section 60 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Transfer of hackney carriage vehicle licence

If a proprietor transfers his/her interest in a vehicle to somebody else he/she must give notice of the transfer in writing to the licensing authority within 14 days, giving the name and address of the person to whom the interest in the vehicle has been transferred¹⁵.

The new owner must then make an application to transfer the licence into his/her name.

The application must be accompanied by:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record> in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners);
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application); and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name.

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Changing a hackney carriage vehicle

There is no legal mechanism to transfer a hackney carriage vehicle licence from one vehicle to another. A new hackney carriage vehicle licence must therefore be obtained in this scenario.

The licensing authority may exercise its discretion to reduce the licence fee in respect of the replacement vehicle provided the existing licence is surrendered. Any fee reduction will be based on the number of full months remaining on the surrendered licence. Applicants should make enquiries in this regard with the Licensing Team.

Hackney carriage vehicle plates, signs and side panels

At all times whilst licensed, a hackney carriage vehicle shall display:

- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the rear of the vehicle;
- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the front of the vehicle;
- a self-adhesive side panel provided by the licensing authority permanently affixed centrally and squarely on each of the front doors of the vehicle;
- an internal plate provided by the licensing authority facing into the vehicle and visible to all passengers;
- a sign, capable of being illuminated, bearing the word "TAXI" facing towards the front of the vehicle mounted on the roof of the vehicle. The only other text on the sign shall be the firm's name and/or telephone number; and
- at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

¹⁵ Section 49 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

The licensing authority must be informed in writing should any of the above plates, signs or panels become lost, stolen, damaged or defaced. The damaged or defaced plate, sign or panel must be returned immediately to the licensing authority along with a report of the damage and a request for a replacement.

No vehicle shall be used for public hire purposes without the required plates, signs and panels.

The plates and panels are the property of the council and shall be returned to the licensing authority forthwith upon the suspension, surrender, revocation or expiry of the licence. It is an offence to fail to comply with a request to return a licence plate¹⁶.

No additional signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except:

- the registration plate;
- any sign required by statute or subordinate legislation;
- any sign indicating membership of a national motoring organisation;
- any sign requesting passengers not to smoke; and
- any sign specifically approved by an authorised officer or department of the Council.

The proprietor of a licensed hackney carriage vehicle may apply to display any additional signage on the vehicle by submitting a written request to the licensing authority along with a full-colour copy of the proposed signage or advertisement.

Each request will be considered on its individual merits, but advertisements will not be approved if they:

- contain political, ethnic, religious, sexual or controversial texts;
- display nude or semi-nude figures;
- advertise tobacco products;
- are likely to offend public taste;
- depict or refer to indecency or obscenity;
- use obscene or distasteful language;
- depict men, women or children as sex objects;
- depict direct and immediate violence to anyone shown in the advertisement or advertise any racist group or organisation which intends to promote the group/organisation and/or any of its activities;
- are proposed to be displayed on any of the windows of the vehicle.

Irrespective of any consent which may have been given by the licensing authority, it remains the responsibility of the proprietor to comply with The British Code of Advertising Practice issued by the Advertising Standards Authority.

Hackney carriage vehicle testing arrangements

Subject to acceptance of a completed application, the vehicle, in respect of which an application has been made, will be required to meet approved standards of roadworthiness.

Before a licence can be issued, the vehicle must be presented to a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area ~~one of North Yorkshire Council's appointed garages~~ for inspection.

All vehicles must be maintained to no less than the standards set out in the DVSA's MOT Inspection Manual. In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

¹⁶ Section 58(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Lights inoperable, damaged, mis-aligned or of insufficient intensity
 Spare wheel, jack and wheelbrace (or manufacturers' alternative) not provided and secured
 Insufficient, damaged or worn seatbelts
 Loose, damaged, missing or defective mirrors
 Leaks, excessive wear, damaged or insecure pipes
 Excessive smoke emission
 Excessive corrosion/damage, unsightly appearance, poor repair/paint match staining, sharp edges
 Visible rusting
 Significant dents or scratches
 No separation of luggage space from passenger seating area
 Meter not linked to roof sign
 Meter not sealed
 Damaged/illegible/insecure plate
 Insecure roof sign, inconsistent/insufficient illumination or excessive damage to wiring
 Defective locks, windows, door lights or damaged/missing door seals
 Excessive dirt, stains, holes or tears
 Any other reasonable cause

In the case of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the test will also be failed if any of the following apply:

Wheelchair restraints/seatbelts missing
 Anchorage insecure
 Webbing frayed
 Locking ineffective
 Inappropriate/insufficient ramps
 Non-slip provision worn
 Risk of obstruction or trip hazard
 Wiring defects
 Insufficient safety barriers
 Safe working load not displayed

No licence application will be granted unless the vehicle has passed the test to the satisfaction of the appointed garage.

6-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of five years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed). 4-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of 10 years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed).

An authorised officer may also require any vehicle to be presented for inspection at any time. It is an offence to fail to attend for inspection as requested¹⁷. If the authorised officer is not satisfied as to the mechanical fitness of the vehicle, the licence may be suspended or revoked.

Failure to attend an inspection may lead to suspension or revocation of the licence.

Hackney carriage vehicle insurance

All proprietors are required to ensure that a valid insurance policy which includes the carriage of passengers or goods for public hire or reward is kept in force in respect of any hackney carriage vehicle and in relation to its use by any drivers employed by the proprietor.

On being required by an authorised officer of the council or a police officer, the original certificate of insurance shall be made available for examination, provided that, if the driver fails to

¹⁷ Section 50(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

provide such certificate on request, he/she shall within seven days of such request produce it to the licensing authority at the offices of the council¹⁸.

Hackney carriage proprietor criminal record checks

Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All proprietors are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that proprietors pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity.

In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any proprietors who are already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver licence or a private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. ~~A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process.~~ If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the **Crown Court in the case of a new application and to the Magistrates' Court in the case of a renewal application.**

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed **or returned to the applicant where possible.** Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined ~~and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.~~

Hackney carriage vehicle accidents and damage

¹⁸ Section 50(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Any vehicle damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle shall be reported in writing to the licensing authority by the proprietor as soon as practicable and in any event within 72 hours of its occurrence¹⁹.

If any damage is considered by the authorised officer to be extensive enough to affect the safety or general appearance of the vehicle, a notice of suspension will be issued.

Vehicles subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off will not be licensed as hackney carriages.

Vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off may be licensed as hackney carriages provided the applicant or proprietor has provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by an authorised officer of the council) verifying the standard of repairs.

Notwithstanding the vehicle damage reporting obligations in the previous paragraphs, any accident or collision involving any passenger or member of the public must be reported in writing to the licensing authority within 24 hours.

Dual hackney carriage plating

No hackney carriage vehicle will be granted a licence if it is licensed in another district due to the problems of meeting the variance in conditions applied in different districts and the enforcement of those conditions in cases of non-compliance (i.e. signs, meters, suspensions or revocations).

Mechanical breakdown of hackney carriage vehicle

If, during a hiring, any vehicle becomes unfit to complete a journey:

- the driver shall be entitled to demand the fare for the distance already travelled;
- the driver shall secure alternative transport without delay to complete the journey if the hirer so wishes;
- if the original vehicle is repaired and completes the hiring, the driver shall be entitled to the full fare with the exception of any time that the hirer waited for the repair to be executed; and
- any such incident must be reported to the licensing authority within one working day.

Complaints to hackney carriage proprietors

The proprietor of any hackney carriage who receives a complaint concerning the driver's conduct or about the vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

Hackney carriage proprietor convictions and other sanctions

The proprietor of a licensed hackney carriage vehicle must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her (or in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners). The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the proprietor's suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

¹⁹ Section 50(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Hackney carriage vehicle first aid equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for hire a suitable first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings and appliances for use in an emergency.

CCTV in hackney carriage vehicles

No CCTV system shall be installed in a hackney carriage vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. If authorisation is obtained, the proprietor will be required to ensure compliance with all licence conditions relating to CCTV to ensure that the CCTV system is appropriately installed and maintained so as not to interfere with the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as ensuring the integrity of any images captured.

No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

This policy details the minimum standards that will normally be expected to be met.

Each case will be determined on its own merits and exceptions may be made at the discretion of an authorised officer if the circumstances justify making such an exception.

The licensing authority has specified minimum criteria that it would expect a CCTV system to satisfy in order for the system to be installed in licensed vehicles.

The proprietor must meet the current Information Commissioner data protection requirements.

The CCTV system shall:

- be capable of date and time system identification stamping;
- be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of 14 days;
- be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, are of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and of such quality that they can be used for prosecution purposes;
- provide that cameras are capable of being fitted in locations that do not affect the safety of any person travelling in the vehicle, and located as securely and discreetly as possible to avoid passengers travelling in the vehicle from tampering with them;
- provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock; and
- be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification), which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

Any audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary).

Audio recording must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of any audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

The licence holder must provide evidence that the CCTV system complies with the licensing authority's minimum recommended specification.

The licence holder shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner's Office to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

Notices informing passengers of the CCTV must be displayed inside the vehicle where they can be easily viewed by passengers.

The licence holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no unauthorised access to data recorded by the CCTV.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any CCTV system installed in a vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council or Selby District Council prior to 1st April 2023 may remain in use until 31st March 2025 provided it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Trailers and roof racks on hackney carriage vehicles

No licensed vehicle may tow any trailer unless permission has been granted by the licensing authority and a further licence plate has subsequently been issued.

No such permission will be given unless evidence of valid insurance to cover such use for hire has been produced.

The vehicle licence plate giving the licence number must be clearly displayed on the rear of any trailer used, this sign being in addition to that on the rear of the vehicle.

The contents of any such trailer must be secured and covered in a proper manner.

Trailers must not be used on hackney carriage vehicles when plying for hire on a hackney carriage stand (rank).

The use of any trailer used must comply with regulations in all respects.

No hackney carriage vehicle shall be fitted with a roof rack, roof box or any other device on or above the roof of the vehicle.

Smoking and vaping in hackney carriage vehicles

All hackney carriage vehicles are required to be smoke-free at all times and 'No smoking' signage must be displayed in the vehicle²⁰. Failure to comply with this may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued or a criminal prosecution.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

Hackney carriage proprietor change of address

All hackney carriage proprietors are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place²¹.

Hackney carriage proprietor change of directors or partners

²⁰ Regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2012

²¹ Section 44 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

Where a hackney carriage vehicle licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Hackney carriage stands (ranks)

It is an offence to leave a hackney carriage vehicle unattended on a taxi rank²². Hackney carriages can only wait on a rank whilst standing for hire.

A list of the hackney carriage stands which have been appointed for public hire purposes in accordance with section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 are available on the Council's website.

The number of vehicles standing at any rank must not exceed the number for which the rank is appointed at any time.

It is not acceptable to make bookings to pick up from the rank. Ranks are to be used exclusively to stand for public hire – not to pick up bookings and not to park whilst looking for customers. If any member of the public approaches a vehicle on the rank, they are entitled to expect to be offered a public hire service.

Hackney carriage meters

The licensing authority requires all hackney carriages to be fitted with a calendar-controlled taxi meter. The meter must be maintained in good working order at all times and must be sealed and calibrated to the correct tariff by an authorised agent.

All meters must meet any statutory requirements and the accuracy of any meter must be maintained.

Roof signs should be wired through the meter ensuring that when the meter is activated, the illuminated roof sign is extinguished when the fare commences.

The meter must be engaged for every journey from the point at which the hirer commences his/her journey. The meter must be engaged whether the vehicle has been pre-booked or not.

Hackney carriage fares

The hackney carriage table of fares is set by the licensing authority and is a maximum fare that can be charged by hackney carriage drivers.

It is an offence to charge in excess of the council's table of fares for any journey within North Yorkshire²³. If the hiring takes the journey outside the boundary of North Yorkshire, the driver cannot charge any more than this table of fares allows unless a fare has been agreed with the hirer before the commencement of the journey²⁴.

The table of fares shows the maximum charge and drivers are permitted to negotiate a fare provided they do not charge any more than the table of fares allows²⁵.

Calculation of hackney carriage licence fees

²² Section 62 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and *Rodgers v Taylor* [1987] RTR 86

²³ Section 58 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

²⁴ Section 66 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

²⁵ Section 54 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

The costs associated with vehicle inspections, administration, the provision of hackney carriage stands and the table of fares will be recovered via the licence fees for hackney carriage licences²⁶.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of the hackney carriage stands and the table of fares must be recovered only from hackney carriage vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to mechanical tests, insurance etc.

Hackney carriage vehicle accessibility

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles²⁷. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a “reference wheelchair²⁸” to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

The drivers of any designated vehicles must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger’s luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge²⁹.

Prior to publishing a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, the licensing authority will confirm the designation in writing to each proprietor of any such vehicle.

The proprietor of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle may appeal against the decision of the licensing authority to include their vehicles on the designated list³⁰. The appeal should be made to the Magistrates’ Court and must be made within 28 days of the vehicle in question being included on the authority’s published list.

Any wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle must have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA). This will be shown on either the vehicle’s V5 registration document, additional chassis number on the vehicle or by a ‘Certificate of Conformity’ (COC),

²⁶ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

²⁷ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

²⁸ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

²⁹ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

³⁰ Section 172 of the Equality Act 2010

which shows that the vehicles have been produced to a very high and vigorous standard. The COC should show the number of passengers the vehicle is able to carry with the wheelchair conversion. Any subsequent modifications must be approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.

Approved anchorages must be provided for the wheelchair and the wheelchair user. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. Anchorage must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. They must be designed so as not to cause injury within the passenger compartment.

A ramp or ramps for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramps do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.

If the vehicle has a purpose designed wheelchair lift, then a 'LOLER' certificate must be produced with the initial application, and this must be renewed annually. The onus will be on the vehicle proprietor to ensure this is kept up to date and the certificate can be requested at any time by an authorised officer.

Hackney carriages are an essential mode of transport for disabled and elderly persons. The combination of the personal service they offer, their wide availability and their door-to-door operations enable them to respond particularly well to the travel needs of people with mobility difficulties.

The licensing authority is committed to ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to those with mobility difficulties. For this reason, the licensing authority considers it important that people with impairments have access to all forms of public transportation.

The licensing authority intends to encourage proprietors to invest in wheelchair accessible vehicles, thus improving the accessibility of vehicles to disabled customers. ~~For this reason, the age limits outlined in paragraph 47 do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles.~~ Furthermore, North Yorkshire Council will continue to review its options in terms of encouraging more proprietors to obtain licences in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Horse-drawn carriages

Proprietors of horse-drawn carriages will be subject to any hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions excluding those specifically relating to vehicle design.

A Veterinary Certificate signed by a veterinary surgeon stating that each horse is fit to carry out the work required of it shall be submitted to the licensing authority as part of the application process.

A competent person nominated by the council (and representing the British Driving Society, the British Horse Society, the Heavy Horse Society or other body able to assess the competence of drivers) shall assess and provide a report stating that the driver is competent to drive the carriage as part of the application process.

The location of the stables in which the horses are normally housed shall be notified to the licensing authority as part of the application process. Access to the stables shall be granted to authorised officers and their advisers at any time.

Should the council receive a report from the RSPCA, a veterinary surgeon or other qualified person that the conditions under which the horses are being kept are not in the interests of the health of the animal and its capacity to pull a carriage, the licence shall be suspended by officers until satisfied that the horses are being kept in a satisfactory manner. In the event that the stables do not satisfy the fire safety requirements for stables by Fire & Rescue Service, the licence will be suspended until adequate fire precautions have been made.

The proprietor/driver shall be limited to routes specified in writing by the licensing authority following appropriate consultation.

Hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary³¹.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all hackney carriage vehicle licences:

The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle complies in all respects with the requirements of any Act and Regulation in relation to the use of motor vehicle and any Code of Practice or policy implemented by the council.

The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle is subject to a daily visual safety check of all lights, oil, water, tyres, mirrors and seat belts. A written record of each safety check must be made including the details of any faults and remedial action taken. The record must be signed and kept for a minimum period of six months to be produced to an authorised officer on request.

The licence plates, side panels and roof sign shall be properly fixed in the positions required by the licensing authority at all times in accordance with the reasonable instructions of the authorised officer of the council. Any defects must be reported to the licensing authority for repair immediately.

The holder of this licence shall cause to be affixed and maintained in a conspicuous position, in accordance with the directions of the licensing authority, any sign or notice as required from time to time by the licensing authority.

All wheelchair accessible vehicles shall display the recognised disability symbol.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment, including, where applicable, any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The vehicle, including all fittings and specialist equipment, must be well maintained and kept in good working order.

The interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition and all body work shall be sound and reasonably well maintained, free from dents and other distortions/damage. Any repairs and cosmetic improvements shall be of a reasonable quality and a good paint match achieved. Doors, door locks, boot/tail gate and locks, bonnet, hinges and catches, windows, sunroofs and hoods shall operate correctly and all upholstery shall be reasonably well maintained and free from unsightly repairs, stains and burns.

Where the vehicle is converted to be propelled by Liquid Petroleum Gas the holder of the licence shall produce to the licensing authority a certificate showing that the vehicle has been examined by a person approved by the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association and that the installation is safe, well maintained and in good working order.

The holder of this licence shall provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring.

The holder of this licence shall cause the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and watertight.

³¹ Section 47(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- The holder of this licence shall provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment.
- The holder of this licence shall ensure that glass in all windows shall be kept clean and clear of obstruction to ensure that there is a clear view, both into and out of the vehicle.
- The holder of this licence shall cause the seats in the passenger compartment to be properly cushioned and covered.
- The holder of this licence shall ensure that all seating is fitted and maintained in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification and any Construction and Use Regulations applicable to the type of vehicle and seats shall not face sideways to the direction of travel unless approved in writing by the licensing authority.
- The holder of this licence shall cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.
- The holder of this licence shall ensure that provision is made for carrying luggage sufficient for the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed and provision is made to protect the luggage from inclement weather.
- The holder of this licence shall not allow the specification of the vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the licensing authority.
- No signs, notices, advertisements, marks or other devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except as may be required by statutory provisions or authorised by the licensing authority.
- The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).
- Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.
- The holder of this licence shall only permit the vehicle to be driven by a driver who understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.
- Seat belts shall be properly and securely fitted for each passenger authorised to be carried in the vehicle and shall be maintained in a safe condition.
- The proprietor shall ensure the vehicle is fitted with a suitable, calendar-controlled taximeter, locked and sealed by the manufacturer/supplier so that tariff rates change automatically and cannot be changed or tampered with manually by the driver.
- The taximeter shall be calibrated to a level no greater than the current maximum tariff agreed by the licensing authority and sealed to prevent unauthorised adjustment. A calibration certificate signed by the meter installer shall be provided to the licensing authority to verify the tariff at which the meter has been set.
- The proprietor shall ensure that a copy of the current maximum fare table supplied by the licensing authority is on display inside the hackney carriage at all times and that the table is clearly visible to passengers when the vehicle is for hire. In cases where the meter has been calibrated to a tariff lower than the Council's maximum rates, this table of fares must also be on display and clearly visible to passengers.
- Taximeters shall be positioned so that passengers can easily read the display.
- The proprietor shall cause the taximeter to be maintained in a sound mechanical condition at all times.
- Except as provided for in this condition, no cameras or CCTV systems shall be installed in the vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.
- An advisory notice relating to the use of CCTV, approved by the licensing authority, shall be displayed inside the vehicle on each of the rear side passenger windows. The notice shall

be positioned in a prominent (though not obstructive) position where they can be easily read by persons both inside and outside of the vehicle. The proprietor shall ensure that all notices are maintained in a clean and legible condition.

The proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is maintained and fully operative in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Upon request for image retrieval by an officer of the licensing authority or a police officer the proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is made available to the officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of the request.

The proprietor of the vehicle shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any driver of the vehicle is made aware of every condition in relation to any installed CCTV system and has been given adequate instruction regarding the need for the system to be made available as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of any authorised request for any image retrieval.

The proprietor shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

An appeal against conditions attached to a hackney carriage vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court³². Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

³² By virtue of section 47(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicles

Private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which is obtained through a private hire operator. Private hire vehicles cannot “ply for hire” or wait on a hackney carriage stand.

A vehicle licensed as a private hire vehicle continues to be a private hire vehicle at all times and anyone driving the vehicle needs a private hire driver licence³³.

Private hire vehicle specification

The licensing authority will only generally issue a licence in respect of a private hire vehicle if:

- It is fit for its purpose, safe and comfortable for its users and any members of the public;
- **It meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions;**
- It has not been subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off;
- ~~It is less than 10 years old (the age of the vehicle shall be taken from the date of first registration shown on the vehicle registration document, V5C). The policy with regards to vehicle specification shall be applied in the majority of cases when considering licensing applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to this policy. Where exceptions are made in this regard, vehicles shall be subject to three mechanical inspections each year;~~
- It has
 - a front nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear offside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle; and
 - a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.
- The front windscreen allows at least 75% of light through and the front side windows allow at least 70% of light through³⁴;
- It has nearside and offside exterior rear-view mirrors;
- A spare wheel conforming to legal requirements has been provided and properly fitted in the vehicle along with a jack and wheelbrace, unless a manufacturer’s alternative is provided;
- It is equipped with a minimum of four road wheels fitted with manufacturers’ recommended size tyres;
- It has a clean and smart appearance, both externally and internally;
- It is right hand drive;
- It has a permanent roof which is watertight – standard sunroof allowed (i.e. sunroof fitted when new by manufacturer);
- It has seating arrangements in accordance with the current Construction and Use Regulations³⁵ and the manufacturer’s specification (unless the modification has been approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme);
- It has rear seat belts (irrespective of age);
- It has a separate locking luggage area or in the case of an estate vehicle, a permanent grille, luggage bar(s) or manufacturer’s recommended device fitted sufficiently to prevent luggage carried in the rear compartment from coming into contact with persons using the rear seat;
- ~~It has means for carrying a reference wheelchair³⁶ and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. If seats are located within the luggage space, the vehicle may be licensed to carry a lower number of passengers in order to comply with the luggage space requirement;~~

³³ *Benson v Boyce* [1997] RTR 226

³⁴ Regulation 32(10) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

³⁵ Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

³⁶ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

- There are sufficient means by which a passenger can communicate with the driver; and
- In the case of a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it satisfies the requirements of the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport wheelchair accessible vehicle specification in relation to tracking, anchorage, wheelchair tie-downs, restraints, spacing, doorways, direction of travel, lifts, ramps, winches and storage of equipment. Guidance is available on request.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Selby District Council or North Yorkshire Council prior to [date of publication] 4th April 2023 may remain licensed on renewal until such time as it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Private hire vehicle proprietorship

A person applying for a private hire vehicle licence must be the proprietor of the vehicle to which the application relates. If the applicant is not the sole proprietor, he/she must name all joint proprietors including anyone involved in the day-to-day usage of the vehicle.

Unless the applicant's name is the only name on the Vehicle Registration Document, the application should include on the application form the details any person (or company) involved in the keeping, employing or letting for hire the vehicle.

Process for new private hire vehicle licence applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee; and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name. If neither is available, verifiable proof of ownership may be accepted (i.e. a bill of sale from a reputable firm).

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied no more than one month prior to the date of application (note: a vehicle test is not required if the application is made within three months of the date of first registration);
- an appropriate engineer's report (only for vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off) verifying the standard of repairs;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the application meets all criteria laid down in the policy, a licence will normally be granted.

The licence and plates will be issued directly to the applicant unless the applicant has provided authorisation in writing for an alternative representative to take possession on their behalf.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application for the grant of a private hire vehicle licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court³⁷.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for private hire vehicle licence renewal applications

Applications for renewal should be made no more than six weeks and no less than two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the vehicle will cease to be a licensed vehicle until such time as a new application for this vehicle is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form; and
- the appropriate fee.

Licences will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application**;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application to renew a licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

³⁷ By virtue of section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

An appeal against a refusal to renew a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court³⁸. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Transfer of private hire vehicle licence

If a proprietor transfers his/her interest in a vehicle to somebody else he/she must give notice of the transfer in writing to the licensing authority within 14 days, giving the name and address of the person to whom the interest in the vehicle has been transferred³⁹.

The new owner must then make an application to transfer the licence into his/her name.

The application must be accompanied by:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record> in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application); and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name.

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Changing a private hire vehicle

There is no legal mechanism to transfer a private hire vehicle licence from one vehicle to another. A new private hire vehicle licence must therefore be obtained in this scenario.

The licensing authority may exercise its discretion to reduce the licence fee in respect of the replacement vehicle provided the existing licence is surrendered. Any fee reduction will be based on the number of full months remaining on the surrendered licence. Applicants should make enquiries in this regard with the Licensing Team.

Private hire vehicle plates, signs and side panels

At all times whilst licensed, a private hire vehicle shall display:

- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the rear of the vehicle;
- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the front of the vehicle;
- a self-adhesive side panel provided by the licensing authority permanently affixed centrally and squarely on each of the front doors of the vehicle;
- an internal plate provided by the licensing authority facing into the vehicle and visible to all passengers; and

³⁸ By virtue of section 60 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

³⁹ Section 49 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

The licensing authority must be informed in writing should any of the above plates, signs or panels become lost, stolen, damaged or defaced. The damaged or defaced plate, sign or panel must be returned immediately to the licensing authority along with a report of the damage and a request for a replacement.

No vehicle shall be used for private hire purposes without the required plates, signs and panels.

The plates and panels are the property of the council and shall be returned to the licensing authority forthwith upon the suspension, surrender, revocation or expiry of the licence. It is an offence to fail to comply with a request to return the rear licence plate⁴⁰.

No additional signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except:

- the registration plate;
- any sign required by statute or subordinate legislation;
- any sign indicating membership of a national motoring organisation;
- any sign requesting passengers not to smoke; and
- any sign specifically approved by an authorised officer or department of the Council.

At no time will the word "taxi" or "cab" or "for hire" or any word or words of similar meaning or appearances, whether alone or as part of another word be displayed on or in the vehicle.

The proprietor of a licensed private hire vehicle may apply to display any additional signage on the vehicle by submitting a written request to the licensing authority along with a full-colour copy of the proposed signage or advertisement.

Each request will be considered on its individual merits, but advertisements will not be approved if they:

- contain political, ethnic, religious, sexual or controversial texts;
- display nude or semi-nude figures;
- advertise tobacco products;
- are likely to offend public taste;
- depict or refer to indecency or obscenity;
- use obscene or distasteful language;
- depict men, women or children as sex objects;
- depict direct and immediate violence to anyone shown in the advertisement or advertise any racist group or organisation which intends to promote the group/organisation and/or any of its activities;
- are proposed to be displayed on any of the windows of the vehicle.

Irrespective of any consent which may have been given by the licensing authority, it remains the responsibility of the proprietor to comply with The British Code of Advertising Practice issued by the Advertising Standards Authority.

Private hire vehicle testing arrangements

Subject to acceptance of a completed application, the vehicle, in respect of which an application has been made, will be required to meet approved standards of roadworthiness.

⁴⁰ Section 58(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Before a licence can be issued, the vehicle must be presented to a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area ~~one of North Yorkshire Council's appointed garages~~ for inspection.

All vehicles must be maintained to no less than the standards set out in the DVSA's MOT Inspection Manual. In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

- Lights inoperable/damaged, mis-aligned or of insufficient intensity
- Spare wheel, jack and wheelbrace (or manufacturers' alternative) not provided and secured
- Insufficient, damaged or worn seatbelts
- Loose, damaged, missing or defective mirrors
- Leaks, excessive wear, damaged or insecure pipes
- Excessive smoke emission
- Excessive corrosion/damage, unsightly appearance, poor repair/paint match staining, sharp edges
- Visible rusting
- Significant dents or scratches
- No separation of luggage space from passenger seating area
- Meter not sealed (where applicable)
- Damaged/illegible/insecure plate
- Defective locks, windows, door lights or damaged/missing door seals
- Excessive dirt, stains, holes or tears
- Any other reasonable cause

In the case of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the test will also be failed if any of the following apply:

- Wheelchair restraints/seatbelts missing
- Anchorage insecure
- Webbing frayed
- Locking ineffective
- Inappropriate/insufficient ramps
- Non-slip provision worn,
- Risk of obstruction or trip hazard
- Wiring defects
- Insufficient safety barriers
- Safe working load not displayed.

No licence application will be granted unless the vehicle has passed the test to the satisfaction of the appointed garage.

6-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of five years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed). 4-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of 10 years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed).

An authorised officer may also require any vehicle to be presented for inspection at any time. It is an offence to fail to attend for inspection as requested⁴¹. If the authorised officer is not satisfied as to the mechanical fitness of the vehicle, the licence may be suspended or revoked.

Failure to attend an inspection may lead to suspension or revocation of the licence.

Private hire vehicle insurance

⁴¹ Section 50(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

All proprietors are required to ensure that a valid insurance policy which includes the carriage of passengers or goods for private hire or reward is kept in force in respect of any private hire vehicle and in relation to its use by any drivers employed by the proprietor.

On being required by an authorised officer of the council or a police officer, the original certificate of insurance shall be made available for examination, provided that, if the driver fails to provide such certificate on request, he/she shall within seven days of such request produce it to the licensing authority at the offices of the council⁴².

Private hire vehicle proprietor criminal record checks

Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All proprietors are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that proprietors pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity.

In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any proprietors who are already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence or a private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. ~~A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process.~~ If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries

⁴² Section 50(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

Private hire vehicle accidents and damage

Any vehicle damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle shall be reported in writing to the licensing authority by the proprietor as soon as practicable and in any event within 72 hours of its occurrence⁴³.

If any damage is considered by the authorised officer to be extensive enough to affect the safety or general appearance of the vehicle, a notice of suspension will be issued.

Vehicles subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off will not be licensed as private hire vehicles.

Vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off may be licensed as private hire vehicles provided the applicant or proprietor has provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by an authorised officer of the council) verifying the standard of repairs.

Notwithstanding the vehicle damage reporting obligations in the previous paragraphs, any accident or collision involving any passenger or member of the public must be reported in writing to the licensing authority within 24 hours.

Dual private hire vehicle plating

No private hire vehicle will be granted a licence if it is licensed in another district due to the problems of meeting the variance in conditions applied in different districts and the enforcement of those conditions in cases of non-compliance (i.e. signs, suspensions or revocations).

Mechanical breakdown of private hire vehicle

If, during a hiring, any vehicle becomes unfit to complete a journey:

- the driver shall be entitled to demand the fare for the distance already travelled;
- the driver shall secure alternative transport without delay to complete the journey if the hirer so wishes;
- if the original vehicle is repaired and completes the hiring, the driver shall be entitled to the full fare with the exception of any time that the hirer waited for the repair to be executed; and
- any such incident must be reported to the licensing authority within one working day.

Complaints to private hire vehicle proprietors

The proprietor of any private hire vehicle who receives a complaint concerning the driver's conduct or about the vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

⁴³ Section 50(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicle proprietor convictions and other sanctions

The proprietor of a licensed private hire vehicle must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her (or in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners). The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the proprietor's suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Private hire vehicle first aid equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for hire a suitable first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings and appliances for use in an emergency.

CCTV in private hire vehicles

No CCTV system shall be installed in a private hire vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. If authorisation is obtained, the proprietor will be required to ensure compliance with all licence conditions relating to CCTV to ensure that the CCTV system is appropriately installed and maintained so as not to interfere with the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as ensuring the integrity of any images captured.

No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

This policy details the minimum standards that will normally be expected to be met.

Each case will be determined on its own merits and exceptions may be made at the discretion of an authorised officer if the circumstances justify making such an exception.

The licensing authority has specified minimum criteria that it would expect a CCTV system to satisfy in order for the system to be installed in licensed vehicles.

The proprietor must meet the current Information Commissioner data protection requirements.

The CCTV system shall:

- be capable of date and time system identification stamping;
- be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of 14 days;
- be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, are of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and of such quality that they can be used for prosecution purposes;
- provide that cameras are capable of being fitted in locations that do not affect the safety of any person travelling in the vehicle, and located as securely and discreetly as possible to avoid passengers travelling in the vehicle from tampering with them;
- provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock; and
- be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification), which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

Any audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary).

Audio recording must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of any audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

The licence holder must provide evidence that the CCTV system complies with the licensing authority's minimum recommended specification.

The licence holder shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner's Office to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

Notices informing passengers of the CCTV must be displayed inside the vehicle where they can be easily viewed by passengers.

The licence holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no unauthorised access to data recorded by the CCTV.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any CCTV system installed in a vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council or Selby District Council prior to 1st April 2023 may remain in use until 31st March 2025 provided it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Trailers on private hire vehicles

No private hire vehicle may tow any trailer unless permission has been granted by the licensing authority and a further licence plate has subsequently been issued.

No such permission will be given unless evidence of valid insurance to cover such use for hire has been produced.

The vehicle licence plate giving the licence number must be clearly displayed on the rear of any trailer used, this sign being in addition to that on the rear of the vehicle.

The contents of any such trailer must be secured and covered in a proper manner.

The use of any trailer used must comply with regulations in all respects.

Smoking and vaping in private hire vehicles

All private hire vehicles are required to be smoke-free at all times and 'No smoking' signage must be displayed in the vehicle⁴⁴. Failure to comply with this may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued or a criminal prosecution.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

Private hire vehicle proprietor change of address

All private hire vehicle proprietors are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

Private hire vehicle proprietor change of directors or partners

Where a private hire vehicle licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Private hire meters

Operators and proprietors of private hire vehicles are not required to install a meter. However, if a meter is in use, it must be maintained in good working order at all times.

All meters must meet any statutory requirements and the accuracy of any meter must be maintained.

Where a private hire operator uses a table of fares to assist customers and drivers in determining the cost of a journey, it must be prominently displayed in the vehicle.

Calculation of private hire vehicle licence fees

The costs associated with vehicle inspection and administration will be recovered via the licence fees for private hire vehicle licences⁴⁵.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of hackney carriage stands and the table of fares cannot be recovered from private hire vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to mechanical tests, insurance etc.

⁴⁴ Regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2012

⁴⁵ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicle accessibility

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles⁴⁶. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a “reference wheelchair⁴⁷” to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

The drivers of any designated vehicles must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger’s luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge⁴⁸.

Prior to publishing a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, the licensing authority will confirm the designation in writing to each proprietor of any such vehicle.

The proprietor of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle may appeal against the decision of the licensing authority to include their vehicles on the designated list⁴⁹. The appeal should be made to the Magistrates’ Court and must be made within 28 days of the vehicle in question being included on the authority’s published list.

Any wheelchair accessible private hire vehicle must have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA). This will be shown on either the vehicle’s V5 registration document, additional chassis number on the vehicle or by a ‘Certificate of Conformity’ (COC), which shows that the vehicles have been produced to a very high and vigorous standard. The COC should show the number of passengers the vehicle is able to carry with the wheelchair conversion. Any subsequent modifications must be approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.

Approved anchorages must be provided for the wheelchair and the wheelchair user. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. Anchorage must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. They must be designed so as not to cause injury within the passenger compartment.

A ramp or ramps for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramps do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.

If the vehicle has a purpose designed wheelchair lift, then a ‘LOLER’ certificate must be produced with the initial application, and this must be renewed annually. The onus will be on the vehicle proprietor to ensure this is kept up to date and the certificate can be requested at any time by an authorised officer.

⁴⁶ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

⁴⁷ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

⁴⁸ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

⁴⁹ Section 172 of the Equality Act 2010

Private hire vehicles are an essential mode of transport for disabled and elderly persons. The combination of the personal service they offer, their wide availability and their door-to-door operations enable them to respond particularly well to the travel needs of people with mobility difficulties.

The licensing authority is committed to ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to those with mobility difficulties. For this reason, the licensing authority considers it important that people with impairments have access to all forms of public transportation.

The licensing authority intends to encourage proprietors to invest in wheelchair accessible vehicles, thus improving the accessibility of vehicles to disabled customers. ~~For this reason, the age limits outlined in paragraph 173 do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles. Furthermore,~~ North Yorkshire Council will continue to review its options in terms of encouraging more proprietors to obtain licences in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Executive and novelty vehicles

An executive vehicle, limousine or other novelty vehicle is, in essence, a private hire vehicle, and all other interpretations, policies and conditions relevant to licensed private hire vehicles also apply, except where described below.

There is no legal definition of executive vehicle. However, there is common acceptance that an executive vehicle would be a relatively expensive vehicle that includes additional features designed to increase the comfort of the driver and passengers, which exhibits the qualities of luxury, prestige, and refinement. A classic car could be an executive vehicle. Vehicles qualifying for executive status must be of a high-end vehicle specification.

Executive vehicles usually place more emphasis on comfort, appearance, and amenities such as technological upgrades and higher quality materials than on performance, economy, or utility. They are often built in smaller numbers than more affordable mass-market vehicles. Luxury vehicles are historically 5 or 6 passenger four-door saloons. The term was coined in the 1960s to describe cars targeted at successful professionals and middle to senior managers, often as a company car but retaining enough performance and comfort to be desirable in their own right.

Executive cars could be luxury versions of family saloons; at the higher end, they are often larger models by mainstream manufacturers or the entry-level models by companies specialising in larger luxury vehicles.

Proprietors of companies wishing to license such vehicles would not normally be mainstream private hire companies but would be offering chauffeur driven contracts, airports runs and other similar services where the driver would be expected to observe a strict dress code. Chauffeur driven contracts for the undertaking of a journey in an executive vehicle would generally be made by way of a written contract.

For the purposes of this policy, a stretched limousine is regarded as a luxurious vehicle that has been modified (stretched) to extend the length of the vehicle. The stretch shall not exceed 120 inches [3048 millimetres]. The vehicle shall be capable of carrying up to, but not exceeding eight passengers. Each passenger seating area will be at least 400mm wide.

For the purposes of this policy, a novelty vehicle is defined as follows:

- a vehicle that has been specially constructed, adapted or converted by a low volume specialist vehicle manufacture or modifier;
- a vehicle that has been specially modified from its original design or specification;

- a vehicle that is capable of carrying up to but not exceeding 8 passengers;
- a vehicle that is intended for the carriage of fare paying passengers that, prior to the introduction of this policy, would not be licensed by the Authority as a private hire vehicle because they did not comply with one or more of the standard conditions relating to private hire vehicles; and
- any vehicle that, in the opinion of an authorised officer, because of its specialist design/styling or origin, requires it to be classed as a novelty vehicle.

Exemptions and standards for executive/novelty vehicles

It would be expected that a contract for the hire of an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle would normally be in place no less than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey. The vehicles would not be used to undertake standard private hire work.

There are no age restrictions relating to executive vehicles, stretched limousines and other novelty vehicles but all such vehicles must be exceptionally well-maintained.

The licensing authority has the power to disapply the general requirement to display a licence plate where the circumstances justify it⁵⁰. Accordingly, an authorised officer may give an exemption notice to the proprietor of an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle.

Any applicant seeking an exemption from displaying plates must submit an application form to the licensing authority confirming the details of their executive/novelty arrangements. An exemption notice will only be issued to the applicant if the authorised officer is satisfied that:

- the vehicle will be in immaculate condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim;
- no meter or data head shall be fitted to the vehicle;
- a written contract will be in place from any hirer wishing to employ the services of an executive private hire vehicle. Any such contracts will be in place at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey;
- the vehicle will not be used for standard private hire work or school contracts.
- any driver of the vehicle will follow a formal dress code, suit or smart jacket and trousers and collared shirt;
- no advertising or identification (including company logos) will be displayed on or in the vehicle at any time; and
- the hirer will be invoiced separately for the pre-agreed fare and no payments will be taken in the vehicle.

The licensing authority may withdraw the exemption in the event that an authorised officer is no longer satisfied that the above arrangements are being made.

Where an exemption has been granted, the exemption notice and the licence plates must be kept inside the vehicle at all times whilst the vehicle is licensed as a private hire vehicle. The notice and the plates must be made available for inspection to a police officer or authorised officer of the council upon request.

Whilst driving an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle in accordance with an exemption, the driver of the vehicle will also be exempt from the general requirement to wear his/her driver badge. In these instances, the badge must be kept inside the vehicle at all times whilst the driver is using the vehicle for private hire purposes and it must be made available for inspection to any passenger, police officer or authorised officer of the council upon request.

⁵⁰ Section 75(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicle licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary⁵¹.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all private hire vehicle licences:

- 1) The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle complies in all respects with the requirements of any Act and Regulation in relation to the use of motor vehicle and any Code of Practice or policy implemented by the council.
- 2) The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle is subject to a daily visual safety check of all lights, oil, water, tyres, mirrors and seat belts. A written record of each safety check must be made including the details of any faults and remedial action taken. The record must be signed and kept for a minimum period of six months to be produced to an authorised officer on request.

The licence plates and side panels shall be properly fixed in the positions required by the licensing authority at all times in accordance with the reasonable instructions of the authorised officer of the council. Any defects must be reported to the licensing authority for repair immediately.

The holder of this licence shall cause to be affixed and maintained in a conspicuous position, in accordance with the directions of the licensing authority, any sign or notice as required from time to time by the licensing authority.

All wheelchair accessible vehicles shall display the recognised disability symbol.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment, including, where applicable, any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The vehicle, including all fittings and specialist equipment, must be well maintained and kept in good working order.

The interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition and all body work shall be sound and reasonably well maintained, free from dents and other distortions/damage. Any repairs and cosmetic improvements shall be of a reasonable quality and a good paint match achieved. Doors, door locks, boot/tail gate and locks, bonnet, hinges and catches, windows, sunroofs and hoods shall operate correctly and all upholstery shall be reasonably well maintained and free from unsightly repairs, stains and burns.

Where the vehicle is converted to be propelled by Liquid Petroleum Gas the holder of the licence shall produce to the licensing authority a certificate showing that the vehicle has been examined by a person approved by the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association and that the installation is safe, well maintained and in good working order.

The holder of this licence shall provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring.

The holder of this licence shall cause the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and watertight.

The holder of this licence shall provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that glass in all windows shall be kept clean and clear of obstruction to ensure that there is a clear view, both into and out of the vehicle.

The holder of this licence shall cause the seats in the passenger compartment to be properly cushioned and covered.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that all seating is fitted and maintained in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification and any Construction and Use Regulations applicable to the type of vehicle and seats shall not face sideways to the direction of travel unless approved in writing by the licensing authority.

⁵¹ Section 48(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

The holder of this licence shall cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.

~~The holder of this licence shall ensure that provision is made for carrying luggage sufficient for the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed and provision is made to protect the luggage from inclement weather.~~

The holder of this licence shall not allow the specification of the vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the licensing authority.

No signs, notices, advertisements, marks or other devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except as may be required by statutory provisions or authorised by the licensing authority.

The word "taxi" or "cab" or any similar word which, in the opinion of the licensing authority, may imply that the vehicle is a hackney carriage shall not appear on the vehicle.

Where the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter, the meter must be maintained in good working order at all times.

The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).

Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

The holder of this licence shall only permit the vehicle to be driven by a driver who understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

Seat belts shall be properly and securely fitted for each passenger authorised to be carried in the vehicle and shall be maintained in a safe condition.

Except as provided for in this condition, no cameras or CCTV systems shall be installed in the vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

An advisory notice relating to the use of CCTV, approved by the licensing authority, shall be displayed inside the vehicle on each of the rear side passenger windows. The notice shall be positioned in a prominent (though not obstructive) position where they can be easily read by persons both inside and outside of the vehicle. The proprietor shall ensure that all notices are maintained in a clean and legible condition.

The proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is maintained and fully operative in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Upon request for image retrieval by an officer of the licensing authority or a police officer the proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is made available to the officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of the request.

The proprietor of the vehicle shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any driver of the vehicle is made aware of every condition in relation to any installed CCTV system and has been given adequate instruction regarding the need for the system to be made available as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of any authorised request for any image retrieval.

The proprietor shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

An appeal against conditions attached to a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁵².

⁵² By virtue of section 48(7) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers

The licensing authority issues combined hackney carriage and private hire driver licences. An application for a single hackney carriage or private hire driver licence will be considered if requested.

A restricted private hire driver licence is also available for individuals seeking to drive private hire vehicles for the sole purpose of fulfilling school and social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council.

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

The licensing regime should therefore ensure that licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers are safe drivers with good driving records and adequate experience, sober, mentally and physically fit, honest, and not persons who would take advantage of their employment to abuse or assault passengers⁵³.

There is no judicially approved test of fitness and propriety but, if there is any concern that granting a licence to an individual may have an adverse effect on the public, further consideration will be given as to whether or not the individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage and/or a private hire driver licence.

When establishing whether or not an individual is a fit and proper person, the licensing authority will consider the relevance of any criminal convictions and it may take into account any other relevant information relating to:

- the applicant's character;
- the applicant's experience as an employed driver or hackney carriage or private hire driver;
- the applicant's criminal record;
- the applicant's driving ability;
- the applicant's knowledge of spoken/written English, the locality and rules governing licensees;
- the applicant's medical condition;
- any other matter that the licensing authority considers relevant.

In determining suitability, the licensing authority is entitled to take into account all matters concerning an applicant or licensee. It is not simply concerned with the individual's behaviour whilst working in the hackney carriage or private hire trade. This consideration is far wider than simply criminal convictions or other evidence of unacceptable behaviour, and the entire character of the individual will be considered. This can include, but is not limited to, the individual's attitude and temperament.

The assessment as to whether or not a person is a fit and proper person to hold a licence requires a much broader approach to the mere consideration of any alleged misconduct at any given time. The assessment requires a prospective consideration of any action that may be warranted in the public interest, having regard to the impact of the licence holder's character on passengers and other members of the public.

⁵³ *McCool v Rushcliffe Borough Council* [1998] 3 All E.R. 889

Process for new driver applications

An application will not be processed unless the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee;
- the applicant's full driving licence issued by the DVLA;
- a suitable digital photograph of the applicant (taken or approved by a member of the licensing authority); and
- prescribed documentation to confirm that the applicant has a right to work in the UK.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- an enhanced criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (if the licence has not been determined within four months of the issue date shown on the disclosure certificate, a further criminal record check must be obtained);
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has passed a practical driving assessment approved by an authorised officer (a standard assessment is acceptable for most drivers but anyone wishing to drive wheelchair accessible vehicles must undergo a suitable enhanced/upgrade assessment);
- a medical assessment carried out to the appropriate standard no more than one month prior to the date of application (if the licence has not been determined within four months of the date shown on the medical assessment, a further assessment must be obtained);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has undertaken appropriate safeguarding training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has undertaken appropriate disability awareness training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer);
- a record of passing a written test delivered by North Yorkshire Council on the applicant's knowledge of the locality, the rules governing licensees and the applicant's understanding of the English language. A modified test will be available for any applicant seeking to obtain a restricted private hire driver for the sole purpose of fulfilling school and social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁵⁴.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for driver renewal applications

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the driver will cease to be a licensed driver until such a time as a new application is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed unless the licensing authority is in receipt of a fully completed application form and the appropriate fee.

An applicant who wishes to renew a licence will need to carry out a check on tax registration (a tax check). The licensing authority will need to obtain confirmation from HMRC that the check has been completed before considering the application⁵⁵.

⁵⁴ By virtue of section 59(2) and section 52 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 respectively

⁵⁵ Schedule 33 to the Finance Act 2021 and The Finance Act 2021, Schedule 33 (Licensing Authorities: Tax Information) Regulations 2022

An appeal against a refusal to renew a hackney carriage and/or private hire driver licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁵⁶.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Duration of driver licences

All hackney carriage and private hire driver licences will expire three years from the date of the grant of the licence **unless:**

The applicant specifically requests a one-year licence; or

The specific circumstances of a case require a shorter licence period⁵⁷; or

The applicant's immigration permission is time-limited, in which case, the licence will expire when the applicant's period of permission to work in the UK is due to lapse⁵⁸.

A licence may be granted for a period of less than three years in the circumstances of an individual case but not because of a blanket policy⁵⁹.

DVLA driving licence

An applicant for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence must hold a valid UK driving licence issued by the DVLA.

An applicant for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence must have held a driving licence for at least 12 months. For this purpose only, full driving licences issued by EEA states will be taken into account⁶⁰.

All applicants are required to provide a DVLA check code (obtained via www.gov.uk/check-driving-information or by calling 0300 083 0013) to allow the licensing authority to view the applicant's driving record. The code must be provided on application and at 12-month intervals thereafter.

⁵⁶ By virtue of section 61(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

⁵⁷ Section 53(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(2) of the Deregulation Act 2015

⁵⁸ Section 53A(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

⁵⁹ Section 53(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(2) of the Deregulation Act 2015

⁶⁰ Sections 51 and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by the Driving Licences (Community Driving Licence) Regulations 1996

Medicals

The licensing authority considers it appropriate for hackney carriage and private hire drivers to have more stringent medical standards than those applicable to normal car drivers because they:

- carry members of the general public who have expectations of a safe journey;
- are on the road for longer hours than most car drivers; and
- may have to assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

All medical assessments are to be to the standard of the Group 2 medical standards applied by DVLA in relation to bus and lorry drivers.

A medical form obtained from North Yorkshire Council must be completed by the applicant's GP or by another doctor with access to the applicant's medical history.

Further medical assessments are required every ~~three years~~ five years from the age of 45 until the applicant has reached the age of 65 years, **at which point, an annual medical assessment is required**⁶¹ ~~and annually once the applicant has attained the age of 65 years~~⁶².

The driver shall notify the licensing authority in writing as soon as practicable and in any event within seven days of his/her becoming aware of any medical condition suffered by him/her which may affect his/her ability to drive and operate a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

Driver safeguarding training

The hackney carriage and private hire industry can be a valuable asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if the individuals working within the industry are aware of, and alert to, the signs of potential abuse and they know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

Licensed drivers are required to undertake safeguarding training in order to help:

- provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
- recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
- understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

No licence will be granted to any new applicant unless a certificate has been produced to the licensing authority confirming that the applicant has undertaken appropriate training as approved by an authorised officer.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed drivers every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

⁶¹ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

⁶² In line with the Group 2 medical standards applied by DVLA

Disability awareness training

All drivers are required to undergo disability awareness training prior to being granted a licence to drive hackney carriages and/or private hire vehicles.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed drivers every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

Duty to carry passengers in wheelchairs

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles⁶³.

The driver of any designated vehicle must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger's luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge⁶⁴.

The licensing authority may exempt drivers from the duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs if it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so on medical or physical grounds⁶⁵.

Any person wishing to apply for an exemption certificate must make a request in writing and should provide evidence in the form of a letter or report from a general practitioner.

Where a driver has been exempted from these duties, they must display at all times the exemption certificate in the designated vehicle they are driving.

Duty to carry and assist any disabled person

The driver of any non-wheelchair accessible vehicle (i.e. a vehicle that is not included on the Council's designated list) must carry and assist disabled passengers without making an extra charge for doing so⁶⁶. This applies to any disabled passenger, including wheelchair users (with the assumption that the wheelchair user transfers to a passenger seat to travel).

The duty to assist disabled passengers could include, but may not be limited to:

- opening the passenger door
- folding manual wheelchairs and placing them in the luggage compartment
- installing a boarding ramp
- securing a mobility aid within the passenger compartment

In instances where hackney carriages and private hire vehicles have been pre-booked, the driver has a duty to assist any disabled passenger to find or locate the vehicle without making an additional charge for doing so⁶⁷. In order to help fulfil these duties, drivers should consider:

⁶³ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

⁶⁴ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

⁶⁵ Section 166 of the Equality Act 2010

⁶⁶ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

⁶⁷ Section 165A of the Equality Act 2010

- giving audio directions for a visually impaired passenger (calling the passenger once at the pick-up point)
- giving visual directions (for example, the colour and registration of the vehicle) for a hearing-impaired passenger
- repeating key information for a passenger with mental or cognitive impairments

The requirement not to charge a disabled person extra means that a meter should not be left running while the driver performs duties required by the Equality Act 2010.

In accordance with the Department for Transport's Statutory Guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users, the government expects licensing authorities to take tough action where drivers or operators breach their duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council will use its available powers to ensure that drivers or operators who discriminate against disabled passengers are held accountable.

If a driver receives a conviction for breaching their duties under the Equality Act 2010, the licensing authority will review whether or not the driver remains a fit and proper person to hold a driver's licence. A driver who wilfully fails to comply with their duties would be unlikely to remain a "fit and proper person". The licensing authority may also consider suspension, revocation or refusal of a licence where no prosecution proceeds but the authority is satisfied that the driver has treated a disabled passenger unreasonably.

Duty to carry assistance dogs

Guide dogs are working animals (not pets) and their owners rely on them for both independence and mobility. Guide dogs have up to two years of intensive training and are monitored closely throughout their working lives. In addition, guide dog owners are given training on how to maintain the extremely high standards of grooming which the dogs require, and the dogs are regularly checked by vets. In terms of travel, guide dogs are trained to sit at their owner's feet at all times, not to bother other people and not to climb on seats.

Licensed hackney carriage drivers are under a duty to carry guide, hearing and other assistance dogs in their taxis without additional charge⁶⁸. Similar rules apply to drivers and operators of private hire vehicles⁶⁹.

Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the licensing authority for an exemption from this duty on medical grounds. A notice of any exemption granted by the licensing authority must be displayed in the vehicle while the exempted driver is using it.

If any other driver fails to comply with these duties, they will be guilty of a criminal offence and, on conviction, will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 (level 3 on the standard scale). **The licensing authority will investigate any alleged breaches and will seek to prosecute offenders where sufficient evidence is identified.**

Licensed drivers are also encouraged to accept the carriage of trainee assistance dogs, which can benefit service accessibility by familiarising drivers with the role of assistance dogs and by helping the dogs to learn to behave appropriately when travelling in licensed vehicles.

Driver criminal record checks

⁶⁸ Section 168 of the Equality Act 2010

⁶⁹ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

A criminal record check is an important safety measure, particularly for those working closely with children and vulnerable adults. Drivers are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The licensing authority requires criminal record checks to be carried out every six months. Any licensed driver's failure to obtain a criminal record check as required will generally result in the licence being suspended or revoked.

The disclosure may include details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions and any other information held in police records that is considered relevant by the police (e.g. details of minor offences, non-conviction information on the Police National Computer such as Fixed Penalty Notices and, in some cases, allegations).

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

Applications are determined in accordance with any relevant legislation and the council's policies relating to hackney carriage and private hire drivers. Applicants for hackney carriage and private hire driver licences are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that "spent" cautions and convictions may be considered.

A criminal record does not, however, mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits.

The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

DBS update service

The DBS allows applicants to subscribe to its Update Service in order for their DBS Certificate to be kept up to date. More information is available via www.gov.uk/dbs

Once subscribed, applicants will be able to give prospective employers (within the same workforce) or licensing authorities permission to access a web portal, which allows a check to be carried out as to whether or not there have been any changes to the data listed on the most recent disclosure certificate.

If there is no change to the data, the licensing authority can make a decision based on the information contained on the existing disclosure certificate. If, however, the web portal indicates a change to the data, a new certificate would need to be obtained.

All licensed drivers must evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months.

If an applicant has lived overseas in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, he/she must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

Language proficiency

The Council recognises that a lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents such as policies and guidance relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Any such misunderstanding could lead to a failure to identify and act on relevant matters (including, for example, signs of exploitation).

The licensing authority is satisfied that the application criteria (including training, practical assessments and knowledge tests) provide a reasonable test of an applicant's language proficiency and therefore any individual with inadequate English language skills would be unable to meet the requirements to obtain a licence.

If any concerns are raised in relation to a driver's ability to understand and comply with communications from the Licensing Team, an authorised officer may require the driver to undergo a language proficiency test at the driver's expense. In the event of any failure to satisfy such a requirement, or in the event of any persisting concerns in this regard, the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee may be asked to consider the suitability of the applicant or licence holder.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in a workplace under the Health Act 2006. A licensed vehicle is regarded as a workplace for these purposes and therefore drivers must not smoke or permit passengers to smoke in the vehicle. Failure to comply with this may lead to a criminal prosecution, fixed penalty and/or a referral to the Licensing Committee.

Display of driver badges

One driver's badge issued by the licensing authority shall be displayed on the driver's person at all times when the vehicle is available for hire so that it is visible. A second badge issued by the licensing authority shall be prominently displayed at all times in a position visible to passengers in the front and rear passenger seats.

Return of driver badge

The driver shall upon the expiry (without immediate renewal), revocation or suspension of this licence forthwith return to the licensing authority the driver's badges issued to him/her by the licensing authority when granting this licence.

Dress code

Whilst the licensing authority does not wish to impose a dress code by way of conditions to any licence, it expects a high standard will be maintained at all times. Licensed drivers will be expected to dress appropriately and to pay particular attention to their personal hygiene.

Driver conduct

All licensed drivers are expected to:

- comply with all licence conditions, byelaws and the requirements in this policy;
- drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians; and
- not consume alcohol before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

Licensed drivers are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all times, whether in the context of their work or otherwise. Licensees should be courteous, avoid confrontation, not be abusive or exhibit prejudice in any way.

Under no circumstances should licensed drivers take the law into their own hands.

Drivers are expected to act with integrity and demonstrate conduct befitting the trust that is placed in them.

Licensed drivers are expected to work cooperatively with officers of the licensing authority and North Yorkshire Police. Any failure to behave in a civil and respectful manner towards officers who are carrying out their duties may raise serious concerns over a driver's suitability to act as a hackney carriage and/or private hire driver.

Licensed drivers must not have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger. Similarly, licensed drivers must not have any form of communication with a passenger which could be regarded as sexually inappropriate.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the driver's status as a fit and proper person, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration

A hearing of the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee can take a number of weeks to arrange and therefore the licensing authority has made alternative arrangements for the consideration of urgent matters in the interests of public safety. Where the relevant officer is satisfied that there is an immediate risk to public safety and an immediate revocation might be considered appropriate, the matter may be referred to a senior officer for urgent review.

Section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to revoke or refuse to renew a hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence for any reasonable cause and the power can be given immediate effect in the interests of public safety. This applies to decisions made by the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee and/or by a senior officer with delegated powers.

Driver convictions and other sanctions

Any licensed driver must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her. The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to disclose such information may raise doubts over the driver's honesty and suitability to hold a licence, regardless of the outcome. Any failure to comply may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Seat belts

The law relating to the use of seatbelts differs slightly in connection with private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

There is no legal requirement for the driver of a hackney carriage vehicle to wear a seat belt whilst using the vehicle for public hire purposes (i.e. whilst plying/standing for hire or carrying passengers).

There is no legal requirements for the driver of a private hire vehicle to wear a seat belt whilst carrying passengers but seat belts must be worn at all other times.

Although exemptions apply to both hackney carriage and private hire drivers at certain times, all drivers are advised to wear a seat belt even when there is no legal obligation to do so.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under the age of 14 years are restrained correctly⁷⁰.

⁷⁰ Section 15 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Meters and fares (hackney carriage only)

The licensing authority requires all hackney carriages to be fitted with a calendar-controlled taxi meter.

The meter must be engaged for every journey from the point at which the hirer commences his/her journey. The meter must be engaged whether the vehicle has been pre-booked or not.

The driver cannot charge in excess of the council's table of fares for any journey within North Yorkshire. If the hiring takes the journey outside North Yorkshire, the driver cannot charge any more than the table of fares allows unless a fare has been agreed with the hirer before the commencement of the journey.

The table of fares represents the maximum charge but drivers are permitted to negotiate a fare provided they do not charge any more than the table of fares allows.

Driver change of address

All licensed drivers are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of their address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

Calculation of driver licence fees

The costs associated with the issue and administration of hackney carriage and private hire driver licences can be recovered via the licence fee⁷¹.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of the hackney carriage stands and the table of fares must be recovered only from hackney carriage vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to criminal record checks, medicals or knowledge tests.

National register for revocations, refusals and suspensions (NR3S)

A National Register of taxi licence revocations, refusals and suspensions (NR3S) is held allowing all licensing authorities to record details of where a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence has been revoked, refused or suspended. This enables licensing authorities to gather vital intelligence about an applicant's past behaviour.

North Yorkshire Council provides information for the national register and carries out searches of NR3S in order to assess whether an individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence.

⁷¹ Section 53(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Where a driver licence has been revoked, refused or suspended, the council will record this decision on NR3S.

The licensing authority must conduct a search of the register for all applicants and further details will be sought from the relevant authority if any information is recorded⁷².

Any request from another authority for information held by North Yorkshire Council will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the data subject's rights and the responsibilities of a taxi driver. A record of every decision in this regard will be made to detail:

- the date of the request;
- the name(s) searched;
- whether any information was provided;
- if information was provided, why it was provided;
- if information was not provided, why it was not provided; and
- how and when the decision (and any information) was communicated to the requesting authority.

Driver licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire driver licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary⁷³.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will be imposed on all **combined** driver licences:

1) The driver shall give all reasonable assistance with passengers' luggage.

The driver shall at all times be clean, respectable in his/her dress and person and behave in a civil and orderly manner.

The driver shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers conveyed in, entering or leaving the vehicle driven by him/her.

The driver shall not without the express consent of the hirer, drink or eat in the vehicle.

The driver shall not without the express consent of the hirer, play any radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the vehicle other than for the purpose of sending or receiving messages in connection with the operation of the vehicle.

The driver shall at no time cause or permit the noise emitted by any radio or other previously mentioned equipment in the vehicle while he/she is driving to be a source of nuisance or annoyance to any person, whether inside or outside the vehicle.

The driver shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in a vehicle a greater number of persons than that prescribed in the licence for the vehicle.

The driver shall not without the consent of the hirer of the vehicle convey or permit to be conveyed any other person in that vehicle.

The driver shall immediately after the termination of any hiring of a vehicle or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left there.

If any property accidentally left in a vehicle by any person who may have been conveyed therein is found by or handed to the driver, he/she shall take all reasonable steps to return the item to its owner or to make arrangements for its collection on request.

The driver shall if requested by the hirer of a vehicle provide a written receipt for the fare paid.

The driver shall not convey in a vehicle any animal in their custody and shall ensure that any animal in the custody of any passenger is conveyed in the rear of the vehicle. This requirement does not apply to assistance dogs.

⁷² Section 2 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

⁷³ Section 51(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

The driver of a vehicle shall, if he/she is aware that the vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place or he/she has otherwise been instructed by the operator or proprietor of the vehicle to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, punctually attend at that appointed time and place, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause.

The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her.

The holder of this licence shall evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service along with any necessary consent to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months during the period of the licence.

Where a vehicle is fitted with a taxi meter, the driver shall not cause the fare recorded thereon to be cancelled or concealed until the hirer has had a reasonable opportunity of examining it and has paid the fare (unless credit is to be given).

The driver shall not demand from any hirer of a vehicle, a fare in excess of any previously agreed fare for that hiring between the hirer and operator, or if the vehicle is fitted with a taxi meter, and there has been no previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taxi meter.

The driver shall not drive a vehicle in such a manner as to be dangerous or potentially dangerous to passengers, other road users or the public.

One driver's badge issued by the licensing authority shall be displayed on the driver's person at all times when the vehicle is available for hire so that it is visible. A second badge issued by the licensing authority shall be prominently displayed at all times in a position visible to passengers in the front and rear passenger seats.

The driver shall notify the licensing authority in writing as soon as practicable and in any event within seven days of his/her becoming aware of any medical condition suffered by him/her which may affect his/her ability to drive and operate a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

The licensee shall notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of their address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

The driver shall not drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle unless he/she understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The licence does not authorise the driver to drive any wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council unless an appropriate practical assessment (approved by an authorised officer) has been passed and a certificate has been obtained and submitted to an authorised officer.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

In the case of a restricted private hire driver licence (i.e. where the applicant has specifically requested one), the following condition will also be imposed:

The holder of this licence shall not drive any private hire vehicle for the purposes of hire and reward unless the booking has been made under the terms of a school or social care contract with North Yorkshire Council.

An appeal against conditions attached to a driver's licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁷⁴. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

⁷⁴ By virtue of section 52(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire operators

A private hire vehicle can only be despatched to a customer by a licensed private hire operator.

Although private hire operators will not necessarily drive members of the public, they will be in possession of information about the whereabouts of some members of the public and therefore the licensing authority must be satisfied that every private hire operator is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

When establishing whether or not an individual is a fit and proper person, the licensing authority will consider the relevance of any criminal convictions and it may take into account any other relevant information relating to:

- the applicant's character;
- the applicant's experience as a private hire operator;
- the applicant's criminal record;
- the applicant's knowledge of spoken/written English, the locality and rules governing licensees; and
- any other matter that the licensing authority considers relevant.

In instances where the private hire operator is a company or partnership, the licensing authority will apply the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership.

Process for new private hire operator applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of a fully completed application form, the appropriate fee and, in the case of any individual applicants, prescribed documentation to confirm that they have a right to work in the UK.

The private hire operator's base (i.e. the location from which provision is made for the invitation and acceptance of bookings) must be within North Yorkshire.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- A copy of the private hire operator's policy on employing ex-offenders involved with taking bookings and dispatching vehicles;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all individual applicants or, in the case of a company or partnership, any director or partner; and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application). No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council; and
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant, including any director or partner, has undertaken appropriate safeguarding training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer).

An appeal against a refusal to grant a private hire operator licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁷⁵. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for private hire operator renewal applications

⁷⁵ By virtue of section 55(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Applications for renewal should be made at least two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the operator licence will cease to have effect until such a time as a new application is received and subsequently granted.

All renewal applications must be accompanied by the appropriate fee.

An applicant who wishes to renew a licence will need to carry out a check on tax registration (a tax check). The licensing authority will need to obtain confirmation from HMRC that the check has been completed before considering the application⁷⁶.

A licence will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application in respect of all individual applicants or, in the case of a company or partnership, any director or partner. A criminal record check will not be required for any applicant who is already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Duration of private hire operator licence

All private hire operator licences will expire five years from the date of the grant of the licence unless:

- The applicant specifically requests a one-year licence; or
- The specific circumstances of a case require a shorter licence period⁷⁷; or
- The applicant's immigration permission is time-limited, in which case, the licence will expire when the applicant's period of permission to work in the UK is due to lapse⁷⁸.

A licence may be granted for a period of less than five years but only in the circumstances of an individual case, not because of a blanket policy⁷⁹.

Private hire operator safeguarding training

The hackney carriage and private hire industry can be a valuable asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if the individuals working within the industry are aware of, and alert to, the signs of potential abuse and they know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

Private hire operators are required to undertake safeguarding training in order to help:

- provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
- recognise what makes a person vulnerable;
- understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice; and
- provide advice to drivers in relation to safeguarding issues.

⁷⁶ Schedule 33 to the Finance Act 2021 and The Finance Act 2021, Schedule 33 (Licensing Authorities: Tax Information) Regulations 2022

⁷⁷ Section 55(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(3) of the Deregulation Act 2015

⁷⁸ Section 55ZA(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

⁷⁹ Section 55(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(3) of the Deregulation Act 2015

No licence will be granted to any new applicant unless a certificate has been produced to the licensing authority confirming that the applicant has undertaken appropriate training as approved by an authorised officer.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed private hire operators, including any director or partner, every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

Private hire operator criminal record checks

Although private hire operators may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All operators are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that operators pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity.

In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any operators who have already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process. If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

Complaints to private hire operators

Any private hire operator who receives a complaint concerning a driver's conduct or about a vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

Private hire operator convictions and other sanctions

Any licensed private hire operator (including any directors or partners where applicable) must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her. The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the operator's status as a fit and proper person, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Booking and dispatch staff

Individuals responsible for taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on behalf of a private hire operator do not require a licence. However, the private hire operator must be satisfied that any such individual will not present an undue risk to the public.

Private hire operators must formulate a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role. The policy must:

- require all booking and dispatch staff to provide a basic DBS disclosure from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record (this requirement will not apply to any staff members who have already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council); and
- outline the standards against which any prospective employee will be considered in relation to criminal convictions.

In assessing the suitability of booking and dispatch staff, the private hire operator must have sight of, and have regard to a basic DBS disclosure that is no more than three months old at the time of the assessment.

A record of any suitability assessments must be kept and maintained in a register of all staff responsible for taking bookings and/or dispatching vehicles. The register should contain as a minimum:

- the name and address of each member of booking and dispatch staff;
- a record of the private hire operator's most recent suitability assessment for each member of staff; and
- the certificate number and issue date of the basic DBS disclosure that was considered.

A template policy, along with a template assessment form, is available on the Council's website to assist private hire operators with compliance. The templates have been produced only as a guide and therefore operators are not obligated to adopt these documents in their existing state. Ultimately, it is the operator's responsibility to set and uphold appropriate standards in relation to staff undertaking booking and dispatch duties.

If a private hire operator fails to adopt an appropriate policy, assess the suitability of staff and maintain a register in accordance with the licence conditions, it may raise serious doubts

about their suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Private hire operator change of directors or partners

Where a private hire operator licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Bookings to carry a disabled person

It is an offence for a private hire operator to refuse or fail to accept a booking from, or on behalf of, a disabled person because the person is disabled or to prevent a driver from being subject to their duties to carry and assist disabled passengers.

It is also an offence for a private hire operator to make an additional charge for fulfilling any duty to carry and assist disabled passengers⁸⁰.

Private hire operators should identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.

Bookings to carry an assistance dog

It is an offence for a private hire operator to refuse or fail to accept a booking from, or on behalf of, an assistance dog user because the person will be accompanied by an assistance dog⁸¹.

It is also an offence for a private hire operator to make an additional charge for fulfilling any duty to carry assistance dogs⁸².

Planning and public liability

It is the private hire operator's responsibility to ensure that appropriate planning permission and public liability insurance is obtained where necessary prior to making provision for bookings. Any breaches in this regard would be enforceable under the relevant primary legislation.

Calculation of private hire operator licence fees

The costs associated with private hire operator licences will be recovered via the licence fees⁸³.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to criminal record checks, insurance etc.

⁸⁰ Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

⁸¹ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

⁸² Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

⁸³ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire operator licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire operator licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary⁸⁴.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all private hire operator licences:

- 1) The record required to be kept by the operator under Section 56(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall be kept in a suitable book (the pages of which are numbered consecutively) or by an alternative method approved ~~in~~ ~~writing~~ by the licensing authority.
- 2) The operator shall enter or cause to be entered in the record, before the commencement of each journey, the following details of every booking of a private hire vehicle accepted by him/her:
 - The time, ~~and date~~ **and method** of the booking ~~and how made (e.g. telephone/personal call);~~
 - The name ~~and address~~ of the hirer;
 - The date and time of pick-up;
 - The point of pick-up;
 - The destination;
 - ~~The number of passengers to be carried;~~
 - The agreed fare;
 - ~~The time at which a driver was allocated for the booking;~~
 - The registration number of the vehicle allocated for the booking;
 - The name and licence number of the driver allocated for the booking; and
 - Any remarks (including the details of any sub-contract).
- 3) The operator shall keep records of the particulars of all private hire vehicles operated by him/her, including details of the owners, registration numbers and drivers of such vehicles, together with any radio or other communication call signs used.
- 4) All records kept by the operator shall be preserved for a period of not less than 12 months following the date of the last entry.
- 5) **The operator shall identify any luggage or accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.**
- 6) The operator shall provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public at all reasonable times.
- 7) The operator shall ensure that when a private hire vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, the vehicle shall, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause, punctually attend at that appointed time and place.
- 8) The operator shall keep clean, adequately heated, ventilated and lit any premises which the operator provides and to which the public have access, whether for the purpose of booking or waiting.
- 9) The operator shall ensure that any waiting area provided by the operator has adequate seating.
- 10) The operator shall ensure that any telephone facilities and radio equipment provided are maintained in a sound condition and that any defects are repaired promptly.
- 11) The operator shall immediately upon receipt notify the Council in writing of any complaints about a driver ~~concerning the conduct of any driver, any contract for hire or purported contract for him relating to or arising from his business~~ **relating to sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual attention, racist behaviour, violence, dishonesty, breaches of equality and road safety.** ~~and of the action (if any) which the Operator has taken or proposed to take in respect thereof.~~

⁸⁴ Section 55(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- 12) The operator or, if the operator is a company, its company secretary, shall notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address or telephone number during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.
- 13) Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.
- 14) The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).
- 15) The licensee (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) shall produce an annual basic disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service and, if the relevant individual has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the previous 10-year period, a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' from the relevant country or the relevant embassy in the UK. This requirement will not apply in respect of any individuals in possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.
- 16) The licensee shall formulate and apply a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role. The policy must require all booking and dispatch staff to produce an annual basic DBS disclosure (this requirement will not apply to any staff members who are in possession of a hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council). The policy must also outline the standards against which any prospective employee will be considered in relation to criminal convictions.
- 17) The licensee shall keep and maintain a register of all staff responsible for taking bookings and/or dispatching vehicles. The register should contain as a minimum:
the name and address of each member of booking and dispatch staff;
a record of the private hire operator's most recent suitability assessment for each member of staff; and
the certificate number and issue date of the basic DBS disclosure that was considered (the issue date must be no more than three months old at the time of the assessment).
- 18) The operator shall display the operator licence issued by the Local Authority in a conspicuous position at the premises from which he/she operates the business.
- 19) Any specialist equipment provided for disabled persons shall be maintained and kept in good working order. All persons using this equipment shall be fully aware and trained in its function and use.

An appeal against conditions attached to a private hire licence lies to the Magistrates' Court⁸⁵. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

⁸⁵ By virtue of section 55(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Enforcement

This policy sets out the standards and guidance that will be applied by the licensing authority when acting in its role as regulator and enforcement agency for hackney carriage and private hire licensing in respect of drivers, proprietors and operators in North Yorkshire.

Well-directed compliance and enforcement action taken by the licensing authority benefits not only the public but also responsible licence holders engaged in hackney carriage and private hire activities.

Enforcement objectives

The aim of the licensing authority is to undertake its regulatory and enforcement role in a fair, open and consistent manner. In doing this it will act in accordance with the guidance and standards set out in this policy. In particular, the licensing authority will:

- consult with parties subject to regulation and enforcement by the licensing authority about the standards it sets in undertaking this role;
- work with individuals and businesses to assist them in complying with their legal duties and obligations;
- ensure its staff are appropriately trained and apply the policy and standards professionally and consistently;
- make information about the policy and the standards widely available to the public and businesses within the district;
- monitor compliance with the policy and review it from time-to-time in consultation with interested parties; and
- comply with the various requirements and standards of the relevant legislation, guidance, corporate policy and best practice.

The licensing authority has a statutory duty to ensure that drivers, vehicles and operators are appropriately licensed and carry out their trade in accordance with relevant legislation, byelaws, statutory notices and conditions.

Guiding principles

In undertaking its regulatory and enforcement role, the licensing authority will have regard to the following guiding principles:

- any decision regarding enforcement action will be impartial and objective, and will not be affected by race, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs of any alleged offender, complainant or witness;
- in dealing with any enforcement situation, the licensing authority's actions will be proportionate to the scale, seriousness and intentionality of any non-compliance;
- there will be consistency of enforcement whilst recognising individual circumstances which may modify the appropriate action to be taken in each case;
- except in the most serious cases, or where advice/warnings have not been heeded, adequate opportunity will be given to rectify non-compliance before formal legal action is commenced;
- prosecution will normally only be considered where it is in the public interest to do so and in serious or blatant cases, or where other approaches have failed;
- regard shall be had to the relevant legislation and codes of practice which protect the rights of the individual and guide enforcement action (including Human Rights Act 1998, the Regulators' Code and any relevant enforcement policies); and
- regard shall be had to the council's equal opportunities and customer care policies.

Decisions about licence applications and enforcement will be consistent, balanced and fair and be made by reference to approved standards. This will ensure the safety of the public is adequately protected. The seriousness of any infringement is the starting point for action to be taken in particular circumstances. Final action taken will depend on any modifying or mitigating factors present.

Service standards

The licensing authority will always endeavour to meet the highest standards of service in undertaking its regulatory and enforcement function. The following specific level of service standards will be applied:

- matters relating to enforcement and regulation will be dealt with promptly, with enquiries and complaints receiving a first response within three working days;
- except in the case of necessary and approved covert investigations, officers will announce themselves on arrival at vehicles or premises and show identification unless they are already well known to the person;
- officers will provide their name and a contact telephone number to those persons or businesses with whom they are in contact concerning a regulatory or enforcement matter;
- requests for service relating to enforcement or regulatory matters will normally only be dealt with if the name and address of the complainant is given. Any such identification will be treated in confidence but may need to be disclosed should formal legal proceedings be taken against the person or business to which the complaint relates. Anonymous complaints may, however, be investigated if they relate to protection of children or other vulnerable groups, or matters relating to serious safety issues etc or where the issue complained of can be determined by officers themselves without further involvement from the complainant;
- officers will be professional, courteous and helpful in their conduct of regulatory or enforcement matters and, wherever possible, will seek to work with individuals and businesses towards compliance;
- officers will endeavour to provide advice in a clear and concise manner and, where any corrective or remedial work is necessary, an explanation will be given as to why it is necessary, and over what timescale it is required;
- officers will generally seek an informal resolution to cases of non-compliance except where immediate formal enforcement action is required; and
- where there are rights of appeal against a decision of the licensing authority, advice on the appeal mechanism will be clearly set out in writing at the time the action is taken.

Enforcement activities

Enforcement activities will fall into the following broad areas:

- undertaking routine inspections of vehicles and operator premises;
- undertaking proactive inspections, sometimes with other agencies;
- responding to requests for service, complaints or information provided by the public, businesses and others;
- offering general and specific advice to applicants, licensees and the public about the requirements of the licensing regime; and
- taking action and, where necessary, imposing sanctions in response to breaches or the requirements of the licensing regime.

Advice and warnings

Officers may provide advice (verbally or in writing) as a means of securing good conduct by licence holders. Such an approach may be appropriate where no formal action is necessary and there is a high expectation of future compliance.

Written warnings may be issued in instances where, again, no formal enforcement action is necessary and the consequences of any non-compliance does not pose a significant risk to public safety.

Any communication in this regard will evidence the licensee's knowledge of a certain issue and may be referred to in future if patterns of behaviour emerge.

Suspension and revocation

A licence may be suspended where there is a need for remedial action to be taken and the licensing authority is not satisfied that the revocation of a licence is necessary.

A licence may be revoked where the licensing authority is not satisfied that the matter can be addressed by other means. This action may affect the livelihood of the licensee and will not be undertaken lightly. Except in instances where there is an immediate risk to public safety or the licensing authority has no discretion, the decision to revoke a licence will generally be made by the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee.

Prosecution

The decision to prosecute is a serious matter and will require consultation with the relevant senior officers. Prosecution will be considered where the law is blatantly or repeatedly disregarded, legitimate instructions of the licensing authority are not followed, the public is put at serious risk and/or a significant public interest purpose would be served.

Appeals

Appeals against decisions of the Council may be made to the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court where appropriate.

Any notifications of formal enforcement action will include written information about how to appeal. This will explain how, where and within what time period an appeal may be brought and on what grounds. It will also confirm, where appropriate, that the enforcement action is suspended pending the outcome of any appeal.

Complaints about licence holders

Members of the public are able to make complaints to the licensing authority about the conduct and/or service received from licensees. Complaints can be made:
by post to North Yorkshire Council
by email to taxifedback@northyorks.gov.uk
online via the Council's website

The licensing authority will adhere to the following procedure:

- ascertain the facts regarding the complaint and decide if action is required;
- register the complaint and refer it to an investigating officer;
- contact the complainant within 5 working days;
- investigate the complaint;
- make a decision; and
- inform all parties of that decision

Licence holders who are the subject of a complaint will be informed of the nature of the complaint and, if necessary, given sufficient notice to attend any interview.

The outcome of the investigation will be implemented in accordance with this policy.

Disputes between licensees should be resolved between themselves and not through this procedure.

If there is evidence relating to alleged criminal offences **outside the scope of the licensing regime**, this will be referred to North Yorkshire Police.

Where the licensing authority has information about a hackney carriage or private hire driver licensed by another authority that is relevant to safeguarding or road safety concerns in its area, it must share that information with the authority that issued that driver's licence within 10 working days⁸⁶.

Where the licensing authority has received a report of safeguarding or road safety concerns about a driver licensed by North Yorkshire Council, it must consider whether to suspend or revoke the driver's licence. The licensing authority must give notice of any action taken or proposed to the reporting authority within 20 working days of receiving the concerns⁸⁷.

Complaints about the service

Any dissatisfaction with the actions of an officer of the council will be dealt with under the council's corporate complaints procedure, copies of which are available from the Council's website.

⁸⁶ Section 5 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

⁸⁷ Section 6 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

Applicant suitability and criminal convictions

The licensing authority will utilise the following guidelines when determining applications for licences. However, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the committee or officer may depart from the guidelines.

A person with a conviction for a serious offence would normally be expected to remain free of conviction for an appropriate period and show adequate evidence that they are suitable to hold a licence (the onus is on the applicant to produce such evidence).

Simply remaining free of conviction may not generally be regarded as adequate evidence that a person is suitable to hold a licence.

Where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence, the licensing authority cannot review the merits of the conviction⁸⁸.

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that “spent” cautions and convictions⁸⁹ may be considered when assessing suitability. The licensing authority will therefore have regard to all relevant convictions, particularly where there is a history of offending or a pattern of repeat offending.

Case law has established that the impact of losing (or not being granted) a licence on the applicant and their family is not a relevant consideration for the licensing authority to take into account⁹⁰. The licensing authority must focus on the impact of the individual’s character on members of the public. Personal circumstances and any perceived financial hardship will not be considered relevant for these purposes.

One common misunderstanding is that, if the offence was not committed when the individual was driving a licensed vehicle, it is less serious. The same misunderstanding exists for offences committed in licensed vehicles but not when passengers were aboard. However, this is not relevant. The argument that it was a domestic dispute, or away from the taxi, is irrelevant. Any behaviour that puts any member of the general public at risk will be considered relevant.

If an applicant has any convictions, warnings, cautions or charges awaiting trial, the licensing authority may consider:

How relevant the offences are to the licence being applied for;

How serious the offences were;

When the offences were committed;

The date of conviction;

The sentence imposed by the court;

The applicant’s age at the time of conviction;

Any patterns of offending;

Any other character check considered reasonable (e.g. personal references); and

Any other factors that might be relevant.

These guidelines will apply equally to existing licence holders as they do to new applicants in determining suitability. Therefore, if a new applicant would be refused on the basis of their individual circumstances, a revocation would be an appropriate sanction for an existing licence holder under the exact same circumstances.

Misleading information

⁸⁸ *Nottingham City Council v. Mohammed Farooq* (1998)

⁸⁹ The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 2002

⁹⁰ *Leeds City Council v Hussain [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin) and Cherwell District Council v Anwar [2011] EWHC 2943 (Admin)*

It is an offence for any person knowingly or recklessly to make a false declaration or to omit any material particular in giving information required by the application for a licence.

Where an applicant has made a false statement or a false declaration on their application for the grant or renewal of a licence, the licence will normally be refused.

Violence

Licensed drivers have close regular contact with the public. A firm line is to be taken with those who have convictions for offences involving violence.

A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

- Murder;
- Manslaughter;
- Manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving;
- Terrorism offences;
- Crimes resulting in death; or
- Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Allegations of violence will be investigated as and where appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on the balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Public order and criminal damage

Where an applicant has a conviction for one of the below offences, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed:

- Racially aggravated criminal damage;
- Racially aggravated offence; or
- Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Where an applicant has a conviction for one of the below offences, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed:

- S5 Public Order Act 1986 offence (harassment, alarm or distress);
- S4 Public Order Act 1986 offence (fear of provocation of violence);
- S4A Public Order Act 1986 offence (intentional harassment, alarm or distress);
- Obstruction;
- Criminal damage; or
- Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Safeguarding and exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of

whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not ~~generally~~ normally be licensed. This includes sexual offences, slavery, trafficking, child sexual abuse or exploitation, grooming, indecent exposure, soliciting and psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

The licensing authority will not normally grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the adult's or children's barred lists maintained by the DBS.

In addition to the above the licensing authority will not normally grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register.

Allegations of sexual offences will be investigated as and where appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on a balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Dishonesty

A licensed driver is expected to be a trustworthy person. They deal with cash transactions and valuable property may be left in their vehicles. Taxi drivers are required to deposit such property with police within 24 hours. Moreover, it is comparatively easy for a dishonest driver to defraud the public by demanding more than the legal or agreed fare, etc. Overseas visitors can be confused by our currency and may be vulnerable to an unscrupulous driver. For all these reasons, a serious view is taken of any conviction involving dishonesty.

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not normally be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. This includes (but is not limited to) the following offences:

- Theft;
- Burglary;
- Fraud;
- Benefit fraud;
- Handling or receiving stolen goods;
- Forgery;
- Conspiracy to defraud;
- Obtaining money or property by deception;
- Other deception;
- Taking a vehicle without consent; or
- Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a dishonesty offence.

Drugs

A serious view is taken of any drug related offence. The nature and quantity of the drugs, whether for personal use or supply are issues which should be considered.

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not normally be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

If there is evidence of persistent drugs use, misuse or dependency, a specialist medical examination (in accordance with DVLA Group 2 medical standards) may be required before the licence is granted. If the applicant was an addict, then they would normally be required to show evidence of five years free from drug taking after detoxification treatment. In these circumstances, the applicant may have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a drug related offence.

Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Motoring Offences

A very serious view is to be taken of any applicant who has been convicted of a driving offence that resulted in the loss of life.

A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

- Causing death by dangerous driving;
- Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs;
- Causing death by driving whilst unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured; or
- Any similar offences.

Where an applicant has a conviction for driving with no insurance, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

As licensees are professional vocational drivers, a serious view is taken of convictions for driving, or being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs. Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. If there is any suggestion that the applicant is alcohol or drug dependent, a satisfactory special medical report must be provided before the application can be allowed to proceed.

Applicants should also be aware of the serious risk posed by driving whilst using a mobile phone.

There is a substantial body of research which shows that drivers who use a mobile phone suffer physical and cognitive distraction which means they:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them;
- fail to see road signs;
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed;
- are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front;
- react more slowly, take longer to brake and longer to stop;
- are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic; and
- feel more stressed and frustrated.

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a hand-held mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed

since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for an offence of driving under the influence of drink or drugs or whilst using a mobile phone.

Convictions for minor traffic offences should not prevent a person from proceeding with an application. However, the number, type and frequency of this type of offence will be taken into account. In certain instances, it may be appropriate to issue a licence for a shorter period of time than the standard duration and it may also be appropriate to issue a warning as to future driving conduct. If a significant history of offences is disclosed, applications will normally be refused.

Applicants and licensed drivers with nine or more penalty points endorsed on their driving licence in any rolling three-year period will normally be refused or revoked and will not normally be granted a licence until at least three years have elapsed from the date of the last offence.

Applicants who have been disqualified from driving will not normally be granted a licence unless they have held a licence for at least three years following the expiry of the period of disqualification without receiving any further penalty points.

Allegations of erratic or dangerous driving will be investigated as and when appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on a balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Licensing offences

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence concerned with or connected to hackney carriage or private hire activity, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a licensing-related offence.

Other offences

Where an applicant/licensee is convicted of an offence which is not detailed in this policy, the licensing authority will take that conviction into account and use these guidelines as an indication of the approach that should be taken.

Non-conviction information

If an applicant has been arrested or charged, but not convicted, for a serious offence which suggests he could be a danger to the public, consideration will be given to refusing the application (this may also include information arising from allegations). In assessing the action to take, the safety of the public must be the paramount concern.

An admission of guilt is required before a caution can be issued and therefore cautions will be taken into consideration in the same way that they would if there was a conviction. The same applies to fixed penalties and community resolutions. Each case will be considered on its own merits including the details and nature of the offence.

Licence holders

If a licence holder's conduct is such that, were they to be applying for a new licence their application would normally be refused, they should expect consideration to be given as to the suspension or revocation of their licence.

Applicants who hold a licence with another licensing authority should not automatically assume that their application will be granted by North Yorkshire Council. Each case will be decided on its own merits.

Licensees who are licensed by one or more other authorities should expect those authorities to share information regarding their conduct and to take it into account as appropriate.

Summary

To summarise, a criminal history in itself may not automatically result in refusal and a conviction for a serious crime need not bar an applicant permanently from becoming licensed. Some discretion can be afforded if an offence disclosed is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances, but the overriding consideration is the protection of the public.

While it is possible that an applicant may have a number of convictions that, individually, meet the above guidelines, the overall offending history must be considered when assessing an applicant's suitability to be licensed. A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

Being able to evidence change in behaviour will involve consideration of the circumstances at the time of the offence, steps taken to address any issues identified and that person's ability to sustain such change.

Task and Finish Group

Draft Inclusive Service Plan (ISP)

Members of the Group considered some of the additional data and analysis of the availability and demand for wheelchair accessible taxis in North Yorkshire. Members acknowledged the need to take active steps to enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire. Members also noted that officers will evaluate the impact of the ISP within 12 months and therefore further recommendations may be made in due course to ensure that the ISP meets its objectives.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to make no recommendations to amend the Inclusive Service Plan, except where required to accommodate any amendments to the Draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles

Members considered the proposal to limit the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles to WAVs and zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). Members were concerned that the scope was too narrow, which may have a significant impact on the trade both in terms of cost and in terms of their willingness to continue providing a hackney carriage service. The Group considered the obligations on the Council to support businesses by ensuring that each regulatory requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

Members acknowledged the benefits of ZEVs in terms of the wider social benefits relating to air quality and climate change and, on that basis, considered it appropriate to include ZEVs within the scope of suitable vehicles alongside WAVs. However, Members were also satisfied that similar benefits could be derived from hybrid vehicles, albeit to a lesser extent.

Members acknowledged that widening the scope of suitable vehicles may impact on the number of additional WAVs that would become available. However, the Group recognised that, even with the inclusion of hybrids, it would still represent a significant limitation on vehicle suitability compared against the current arrangements. Members were therefore satisfied that such an amendment would still be likely to stimulate an increase in WAVs whilst affording more options to the hackney carriage trade, thereby mitigating the impact in terms of cost.

Members of the Group were not convinced that the proposed vehicle specification should apply to existing licensed vehicles from January 2030. Members noted that many proprietors would have purchased their vehicles with a reasonable expectation that they could be retained in accordance with the existing policy and therefore the Group considered the proposed implementation schedule to be disproportionate. Members were satisfied that the vehicle specification should be applied only to new applications and that existing licensed vehicles should retain grandfather rights until such time as they are no longer suitable (i.e. where the appearance, condition or mechanical fitness fails to reach the necessary standard).

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that hybrid vehicles (as identified by the vehicle registration certificate or via a DVLA vehicle enquiry) be included within the scope of suitable hackney carriage vehicles.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that the revised hackney carriage vehicle specification should only apply to new applications submitted after implementation of the new policy.

Wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles

The Task and Finish Group acknowledged the likelihood that some proprietors may choose to operate a private hire service in future if new restrictions on vehicle suitability were only applied to hackney carriage vehicles. Members considered the possibility of applying a similar vehicle specification to private hire vehicles.

Members recognised that private hire vehicles must be booked in advance through an operator and therefore any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking, which is not necessarily the case for hackney carriage vehicles. Although hackney carriage vehicles may be pre-booked, they can also be made available for immediate hire at taxi ranks, transport stations or at the roadside.

Members also recognised that a switch from a hackney carriage service to a private hire service is not entirely straightforward (due to the need for a private hire operator's licence, a private hire operator's base within North Yorkshire, comprehensive booking records and suitability checks on dispatch staff) and therefore the private hire option would not be viable for everyone. Furthermore, any hackney carriage drivers and proprietors switching to a private hire service would not be able to stand or ply for hire at any time (this includes waiting on a rank or responding to flag downs at the roadside or at train stations etc) and, for many, this would represent a fundamental business transformation.

It is therefore reasonable to conclude on the balance of probability that a significant number of hackney carriage drivers and proprietors would seek to retain their existing public hire service and continue to be available for immediate hire – Members noted that there is clearly a market for such activities, evidenced by the fact that hackney carriage services continue to thrive elsewhere (even where 100% wheelchair accessible taxi policies are in effect).

Members also noted common practices elsewhere in England Wales whereby 64.5% of all licensing authorities require all or part of their hackney carriage fleet to be wheelchair accessible while only 4.8% of licensing authorities require all or a part of their private hire fleet to be wheelchair accessible.

The Group acknowledged that the proposed approach would effectively give hackney carriage proprietors a third possible alternative to WAVs (along with ZEVs and hybrid vehicles) and, whilst this would inevitably lead to some hackney carriage vehicles being replaced by private hire vehicles, the number of wheelchair accessible taxis would still be expected to rise (along with the number of ZEVs and hybrid vehicles). Members noted that 82% of all licensed vehicles in England are private hire vehicles (and 18% hackney carriage). In contrast, 53% of all licensed vehicles in North Yorkshire are private hire vehicles (and 47% hackney carriage). On that basis, a shift to some extent from hackney carriage to private hire would not be problematic.

Members were therefore satisfied that the proposed vehicle specification for hackney carriage vehicles should not be extended to private hire vehicles. Members also acknowledged that this matter may be revisited in future if the objectives of the Inclusive Service Plan are not being met.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to make no recommendations to further limit the scope of suitable private hire vehicles.

Executive hire vehicles

Members of the Group considered the circumstances under which exemptions from displaying licence plates should be issued. At present, exemptions are applied in respect of executive vehicles, limousines and other novelty vehicles only in instances where the proprietor can demonstrate that a contract for hire is in place at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey and the vehicle will not be used to undertake standard private hire work.

Members considered the possibility of allowing exemptions to be applied on an occasional basis in order to support businesses that undertake both executive hire work and standard private hire work. Members noted that these businesses are currently entitled to operate in this manner but they would not qualify for an exemption from displaying licence plates.

Members of the Group acknowledged the practical difficulties associated with temporary exemptions as many private hire operators will undertake occasional work that might be considered 'executive hire' but the requirement to display plates for all other types of journeys would be likely to lead to confusion and non-compliance.

Members also noted that the introduction of temporary exemptions would require the removal of the existing requirement for plates to be securely and permanently affixed to the vehicle and, again, this was considered a risk from both an enforcement and public safety perspective.

Members were, however, satisfied that the existing requirement for executive hire contracts to be in place at least 24 hours in advance of the journey was overly restrictive.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend the removal of the requirement for executive hire contracts to be in place at least 24 hours before the commencement of a journey.

Vehicle testing frequency

Members of the Group considered the existing vehicle testing arrangements in light of the proposal to remove vehicle age limits.

Members noted that the existing policy requires vehicles to be tested once-a-year up to the age of 5 years, twice-a-year from 5 to 10 years and three-times-a-year for any vehicle over the age of 10 years. Members acknowledged that the triannual requirement was applied to ensure that vehicles licensed beyond the existing policy age limits were subject to additional control. However, the draft policy proposes to remove age limits altogether in favour of Euro emission standards and therefore the triannual testing requirements were considered overly burdensome in the context of the draft policy.

The Task and Finish Group agreed to recommend that vehicles remain subject to an annual test up to the age of 5 years and subject to biannual tests thereafter (with no additional requirement to be applied to vehicles over the age of 10 years).

North Yorkshire Council

General Licensing and Registration Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Monday, 11 November 2024 commencing at 2.00 pm.

Councillor Tim Grogan in the Chair plus Councillors Kevin Foster, Joy Andrews, Alyson Baker, Derek Bastiman, Philip Broadbank, Barbara Brodigan, John Cattanach, Felicity Cunliffe-Lister, Stephanie Duckett, Richard Foster, Robert Heseltine, Mike Jordan, Andrew Lee, Andy Paraskos, Jack Proud, Subash Sharma, Andy Solloway (remote), Malcolm Taylor, Angus Thompson and Andrew Timothy (as a substitute for Councillor Roberta Swiers)

Officers present: Gareth Bentley, Fiona Casson, Simon Fisher and St John Harris

Apologies: Councillors John Mann and Roberta Swiers

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

14 Apologies for absence

Apologies noted (see above)

15 Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2024 were confirmed and signed as an accurate record.

16 Declarations of interests

It was noted that all members of the committee had been lobbied by certain individuals in respect of the Inclusive Service Plan but retained an open mind before the proposals in the report.

17 Public participation

The following two public statements had been submitted to the committee and were presented at the next agenda item.

Jackie Snape (Chief Executive of Disability Action Yorkshire)

Current Situation:

In the UK, 1.85% of the population depends on a wheelchair for daily mobility—a statistic that translates to around 11,200 wheelchair users in North Yorkshire, given its population of 604,900. Currently, of the 777 licensed hackney carriage vehicles, only 69 are wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs), while just 40 of the 836 private hire vehicles (PHVs) are WAVs. This equates to only one wheelchair-accessible hackney carriage for every 162 people in need and an astonishing 280 people per WAV PHV. These numbers highlight a significant gap in accessible transport for wheelchair users across the region.

While we appreciate that this proposal focuses solely on hackney carriage wheelchair-accessible vehicles (WAVs), it is important to highlight the major concern that even when

disabled individuals manage to secure a wheelchair-accessible private hire vehicle (PHV)—which is increasingly challenging—they remain vulnerable to discrimination and exploitation. Without fare regulation by NYC, these passengers face unpredictable and often inflated charges.

Barriers from the Taxi Trade:

We have been informed, directly by the taxi trade, that several licensed WAVs remain inactive due to drivers' concerns, including:

- Lower earnings compared to non-WAV drivers
- Reluctance to assist wheelchair users due to the risk of getting wet, injury, or inconvenience

In Harrogate, for instance, after 5 pm only a single WAV is available, and it is reserved for NHS purposes.

In the event of a mandate requiring a specified number of WAVs in a hackney fleet, drivers have threatened to switch to private hire to avoid compliance.

Experiences of Disabled People:

Disabled residents report consistent, distressing challenges in accessing WAV taxis:

Medical Appointments: Last week, a resident who booked a WAV taxi a week in advance was repeatedly told none were available.

Exorbitant Costs: Another resident had to pay **£87 for a 2-mile journey** to their GP, needing to book a WAV from Leeds due to local unavailability.

Social Isolation: A young disabled woman shared that she no longer goes out at night, unable to secure accessible transportation and feeling unsafe to go into town in the dark. She states 'even if I can get into town I know there is no way I can get back in a taxi, I am being penalised for being disabled'

Equal Access is a Basic Right:

Disabled people have the same rights as anyone else to participate in daily life—work, social activities, appointments, and education. They deserve reliable, safe, and affordable access to transport without incurring additional costs or barriers.

A Call to Action:

While many local authorities have moved toward 100% wheelchair-accessible taxi fleets or set a reasonable quota, North Yorkshire Council seems to have disregarded the needs of its disabled residents, prioritising the convenience of the taxi trade instead.

We urge you to reconsider North Yorkshire's approach to WAV accessibility, recognising the fundamental rights of disabled people to move freely within their communities. A balanced solution would respect and support both disabled residents and the taxi trade, fostering a community where accessible transportation is a shared priority.

Ian Lawson (Chair of Accessible Transport Group)

I believe that the recommendations from the Task & Finish group do not align with the vision within the NYC Council Plan for a good quality of life for all. The Plan emphasises your PSED to eliminate discrimination and advance equality of opportunity. Wheelchair using residents of North Yorkshire do not believe that the proposals from this committee will satisfy that duty.

The Government has issued Best Practice Guidance to promote the provision of safe, accessible, available and affordable taxi and PHV services since 2006, yet here we are in 2024 when the council's own Review of the Licensing Policy confirms the need for 200 more wheelchair accessible taxis. Despite the fact that wheelchair users have been lobbying the 7 Borough & District councils for many, many years for more wheelchair taxis, we believe that the licensing committee still does not understand how much the lack of wheelchair taxis impacts negatively on the lives of wheelchair users. The lack of frequent and accessible bus services across North Yorkshire adds to the isolation of wheelchair

users.

The Guidance warns against policy changes that result in unfair competition and have unintended consequences. We believe that imposing restrictions on taxis, but not on equally polluting PHVs, distorts the choice of taxi drivers towards more PHVs. Given the ending of the 10 year age limit for taxis and the option to operate a ZEV or hybrid taxi well into the 2030s why does the committee believe their proposals will result in any more wheelchair taxis in the next 10 years? We also challenge the unevidenced belief of the NYC licensing officers that taxi drivers will not apply to become PHV drivers. Online reports from the USA and Canada make it clear that PHV operators do not provide an equitable service for wheelchair users, when compared with non-WAV operators.

The Guidance also states that licensing authorities should incentivise the uptake of WAVs where mandating them would be inappropriate. The council did include incentives at the start of the current 5-year Policy which have not worked so why not mandate for more wheelchair taxis now? The EIA in the Proposals does not provide evidence why a mandate now in NYC will not work. For comparison, Exeter Council will only consider an application for a ULEV or hybrid taxi once half the taxi fleet is wheelchair accessible. After that, licences will only be issued on a one-to-one basis.

We believe that the Proposals have been influenced disproportionately in favour of taxi & PHV operators, as opposed to the benefit of wheelchair users. No targets or KPIs are included in the Proposals so how will the Committee judge the success of their proposals going forward?

18 Adoption of an Inclusive Service Plan focused on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing

Considered

The report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of a new Inclusive Service Plan in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

Introducing the report, the Head of Licensing advised that in response to the committee's comments the draft Inclusive Service Plan had been expanded to include further information about wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, and wheelchair users and their views and experiences of using taxis. The findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group established by the committee at its last meeting were appended to this and the next report and were referred to in both covering reports, since if accepted by the committee, they would impact on the wording of both the draft Inclusive Plan and the new draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Members of the committee then discussed the report and asked questions. Key points made were as follows:

- Euro 6 emission standards were introduced some ten years ago for new vehicles, so by the licensing authority adhering to the 10 year age limit on both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles Euro 6 had effectively been adopted by default for most of these vehicles
- The council's own vehicle fleet were also required to adhere to Euro 6
- In response to the representations made by Mr Lawson and Ms Snape, Councillor Kevin Foster commented that the view of the Task and Finish Group was their recommendations were a step in the right direction to form the basis of a public consultation on a draft Inclusive Service Plan. He was disappointed by the low percentage of taxis which were wheelchair accessible and the high charges; however he did not believe that mandating wheelchair accessible vehicles was the way forward at this stage, but instead the draft ISP sought to incentivise the trade

to do so whilst mitigating the cost of their introduction

It was proposed that instead of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations being presented as a series of further amendments to the draft Inclusive Service Plan appended to the report, that the recommendations be adopted by the committee and the draft Inclusive Service Plan amended accordingly into a single version for consideration by the Executive.

Resolved that the committee:

Recommend to the Executive that the Inclusive Service Plan contained in Appendix A, subject to the amendments proposed by the Task and Finish Group, is the subject of public consultation

19 Review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

Considered

The report of the Corporate Director – Environment in respect of a proposal to revise the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Since the Inclusive Service Plan formed a large part of the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy and the Task and Finish Group's recommendations also encompassed other aspects of the revised policy, it was proposed that instead of the Task and Finish Group's recommendations being presented as a series of further amendments to the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy appended to the report, that the recommendations be adopted by the committee and the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy amended accordingly into a single version for consideration by the Executive.

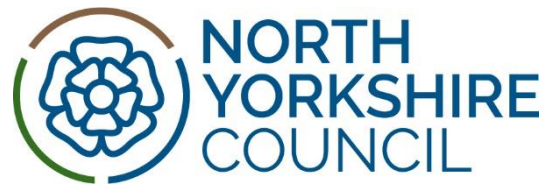
Resolved that the committee:

Recommend to the Executive that the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy contained in Appendix B, subject to the amendments proposed by the Task and Finish Group, is the subject of public consultation

20 Any other items

There were no urgent items of business.

The meeting concluded at 2.50 pm.



Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

With effect from *insert date*

Version Control

- 1.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire County Council on 21 February 2023 with effect from 1 April 2023
- 2.0 Approved by the Executive of North Yorkshire Council on *insert date* with effect from *insert date*

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General policy

North Yorkshire Council serves a diverse and dispersed population across 3,103 square miles stretching from Scarborough on the North Sea coast to Bentham in the west and from the edge of Teesside to south of the M62. Ninety eight percent of the county is either sparsely (13%) or super-sparsely (85%) populated with just over a third of the population living in these areas.

The licensing authority issues the following licences:

- Combined hackney carriage and private hire driver licence
- Hackney carriage vehicle licence
- Private hire vehicle licence
- Private hire operator licence

Legislation

The principal legislation under which functions are undertaken is contained in:

- Town Police Clauses Act 1847
- Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

North Yorkshire Council adopted the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 by a resolution on 21 February 2023.

Policy considerations

In accordance with section 22(2) of the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act 2006, the Regulators' Code⁹¹ has been considered in order to promote proportionate, consistent and targeted regulatory activity through the development of transparent and effective dialogue and understanding between the licensing authority and the trade.

The council aims to reduce regulatory burdens and supporting compliant business growth by ensuring that each requirement is properly justified by the risk it seeks to address, balancing the cost of the requirement against the benefit to the public.

In formulating this policy, the licensing authority has considered the advice contained in the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards⁹² and the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance⁹³.

Objectives

The licensing authority's objectives are:

- to encourage the provision of high quality and accessible hackney carriage and private hire services;
- to ensure the safety and comfort of users of hackney carriage and private hire services;
- to ensure the safety and wellbeing of the public affected by the operation of hackney carriage and private hire services; and
- to facilitate access to an efficient and effective public transport service.

Consultation and partnership working

⁹¹ Department for Business, Innovation & Skills – Better Regulation Delivery Office – April 2014

⁹² Department for Transport – July 2020

⁹³ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

In preparing this policy, the Council has consulted with the following stakeholders:

- Licence holders
- North Yorkshire Police
- Equality groups
- Disability groups
- Highways Authority
- Passenger Transport
- North Yorkshire Safeguarding Children's Partnership
- Other Council departments
- Service users

To promote the policy objectives the licensing authority will work in partnership with the stakeholders detailed above, along with other agencies such as:

- Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
- HM Revenue and Customs
- Department of Works and Pensions
- Home Office Immigration Services
- Disclosure and Barring Service

Applying the policy

This document sets out the policy that the licensing authority will apply when making decisions about applications and licences.

Any guidance contained within this policy is to be treated as a guide only and final interpretation of the law will ultimately rest with the courts.

Any obligation in this policy not to do any act or thing shall be deemed to include an obligation not to cause or permit that act or thing to be done.

Any reference to any statute or subordinate legislation shall be deemed to include a reference to any amendment or re-enactment.

The policy will be applied in the majority of cases when considering licence applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to the general policy.

It will be necessary to consider, in relation to any particular application, whether the specific circumstances justify allowing an exception.

It will be up to the applicant to show that an exception should be made to the policy⁹⁴ and, if the objectives can still be met, the licensing authority may exercise its discretion to depart from the general policy. Where exceptions are made, reasons will be given.

⁹⁴ R v Crown Court at Sheffield, ex p Consterdine (1998)

Policy review

The implications and effectiveness of this policy will be regularly monitored.

This policy will be reviewed where appropriate (and, in any case at least once every five years) to assess whether any amendments are required taking into account changing circumstances affecting the area, or any relevant changes in national policy.

Minor and inconsequential amendments may be made to the policy from time-to-time by a senior officer to reflect legislative changes or to correct any inaccuracies. In all other cases, the licensing authority will consult with stakeholders, interested parties and neighbouring authorities prior to implementation to ensure that the policy continues to meet its objectives.

Personal data

The council will hold personal data (about applicants, licensees, complainants etc) in connection with its licensing function.

The council will comply with its obligations under data protection legislation.

The council's aim is to minimise the unnecessary disclosure of personal data.

Personal data will only be obtained, kept or used as authorised by statute.

Personal data may be shared where it is necessary for compliance with a legal obligation.

Personal data is information that relates to an identified or identifiable individual. It includes information relating to persons who can be identified indirectly from that information in combination with other information. For example, the Information Commissioner considers that vehicle registration marks are personal data (especially when combined with other information).

Equality and diversity

An equality impact assessment has been conducted to assess the potential impact of this policy on any individuals with protected characteristics. Appropriate measures have been implemented in the relevant parts of this policy to ensure that all individuals are represented and have their interests protected.

The Council has published an Inclusive Service Plan (ISP) setting out the Council's strategy for making transport more inclusive in relation to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle services in North Yorkshire. The impact of any amendments made to the ISP will be considered in the context of this policy and the contents will be revised accordingly.

The council's policies and procedures will be applied fairly to all irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership and pregnancy and maternity. This will apply to applicants, licence holders, customers and complainants.

The licensing authority will take a very serious view of any complaints of discrimination by licensees based on these factors or of any similar incidents involving licensees and other licensees.

Safeguarding

The council has a duty of care to children and vulnerable persons who use licensed vehicles within North Yorkshire.

The council recognises that all children and vulnerable persons have a right to be safe and protected from abuse and harm. It is also acknowledged that promoting the welfare of children and vulnerable persons is everyone's responsibility.

The licensing authority will take all reasonable steps to ensure that the drivers and operators of taxis and private hire vehicles pose no risk of harm to children or vulnerable persons.

The licensing authority has the power to refuse, revoke or suspend licences after convictions for various offences or any other reasonable cause. A suspension or revocation can be given immediate effect where it is in the interests of public safety.

Any allegations made against licence holders suspected of inflicting harm on children or vulnerable adults will be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Officer or a Deputy Officer within 24 hours of the allegation being known. They will ensure that appropriate action is taken in line with the council's Safeguarding Policy both in regard to the subject of the alleged abuse and the perpetrator. A decision will also be made in relation to any necessary action to be taken against the licence, which could include suspension or revocation.

Any decision to refuse or revoke a licence on the basis that the individual is thought to have harmed or presents a risk of harm to a child or vulnerable adult will be referred to the DBS under the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. The DBS will then determine if the individual should be barred from working with adults and / or children, this will enable other licensing authorities to consider such information should further applications be made.

For these purposes, the licensing authority may consult with the North Yorkshire Safeguarding Adults Board and the North Yorkshire Children Safeguarding Children Partnership. The licensing authority will also have regard to statutory guidance (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018) and the Care Act 2014.

Air quality

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) are currently in place across areas of North Yorkshire following elevated levels of pollutants measured within the AQMA areas. An up-to-date list of local authorities with AQMAs is available from <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/aqma/>

The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. According to the Strategy, the government expects all local authorities to effectively use their powers to reduce emissions from the sources which are within their control.

In formulating this policy, the Council has also had due regard to the government's *Environmental Improvement Plan 2023* (DEFRA, updated 7 February 2023), the *Road to Zero: Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy* (Department for Transport, updated 12 September 2018) and the relevant provisions of the Environment Act 2021.

Vehicles, including hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, are identified as a contributor to poor air quality, but the Council also recognises the importance of their availability to provide transport for North Yorkshire residents.

Appropriate measures have therefore been implemented in this policy to support the delivery of national targets by taking action to reduce emissions.

Emissions standards for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles will be subject to review, taking into consideration up-to-date emission monitoring results to determine whether sufficient progress is being made towards achieving the health-based air quality objectives and improving the health and wellbeing of local residents.

Frequent maintenance of vehicles is also recommended, and emissions may also be further reduced by switching off engines whilst stationary or idling, particularly at ranks and standing in traffic.

The Council will look further at the impact of taxi emissions via the introduction of low-emission and hybrid vehicle use and the possibility to provide grant incentives and schemes to promote the uptake of low-emission, hybrid and electric vehicles in the fleet. In addition, these types of vehicles tend to carry much cheaper road tax, fuel and insurance costs.

This policy is part of the Council's responsibility to review and assess air quality and meeting national air quality objectives to benefit people's health and create a more pleasant environment for residents and visitors of North Yorkshire.

Hackney carriages

A hackney carriage is a public transport vehicle which is licensed to ply for hire. It is unlawful for a vehicle to be used for the carriage of passengers for immediate hire until such time as a hackney carriage licence is issued in respect of the vehicle⁹⁵.

The maximum number of passengers that can be carried in a vehicle for it to be capable of being licensed as a hackney carriage is eight⁹⁶.

A vehicle licensed as a hackney carriage continues to be a hackney carriage at all times and anyone driving the vehicle needs a hackney carriage driver licence⁹⁷. The only exception to this general rule is for a person driving a hackney carriage in connection with any test of the mechanical condition of the vehicle or its meter⁹⁸.

All hackney carriages must be intended for use predominantly, or entirely, within North Yorkshire⁹⁹.

Hackney carriage vehicle specification

The licensing authority will only generally issue a licence in respect of a hackney carriage vehicle if:

- It is fit for its purpose, safe and comfortable for its users and any members of the public;
- ~~It is either zero emission at the tailpipe or it is a wheelchair accessible vehicle that meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions (a wheelchair accessible vehicle must be capable of carrying at least one passenger seated in a reference size wheelchair);~~
- It is either zero emission at the tailpipe (ZEV); a hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) that meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions; or a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) that meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions.
For the purposes of this requirement:
a vehicle will be considered a hybrid electric vehicle (HEV) if it is identified as such by the vehicle registration certificate or via a DVLA vehicle enquiry;
a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) must be capable of carrying at least one passenger seated in a reference size wheelchair;
- It has not been subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off;
- ~~It is less than 10 years old (the age of the vehicle shall be taken from the date of first registration shown on the vehicle registration document, V5C). The policy with regards to vehicle specification shall be applied in the majority of cases when considering licensing applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to this policy. Where exceptions are made in this regard, vehicles shall be subject to three mechanical inspections each year;~~
- It has
 - a front nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear offside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle; and
 - a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

⁹⁵ Section 45 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

⁹⁶ Paragraph 7 of Schedule 1 to the Transport Act 1985

⁹⁷ Yates v Gates [1970] 1 All ER 754

⁹⁸ Paragraph 3 of Schedule 7 to the Transport Act 1985

⁹⁹ R (on the application of Newcastle City Council) v Berwick-upon-Tweed Borough Council [2008] EWHC 2369 (Admin)

- The front windscreen allows at least 75% of light through and the front side windows allow at least 70% of light through¹⁰⁰;
- It has nearside and offside exterior rear-view mirrors;
- A spare wheel conforming to legal requirements has been provided and properly fitted in the vehicle along with a jack and wheelbrace, unless a manufacturer's alternative is provided;
- It is equipped with a minimum of four road wheels fitted with manufacturers' recommended size tyres;
- It has a clean and smart appearance, both externally and internally;
- It is right hand drive;
- It has a permanent roof which is watertight – standard sunroof allowed (i.e. sunroof fitted when new by manufacturer);
- It has seating arrangements in accordance with the current Construction and Use Regulations¹⁰¹ and the manufacturer's specification (unless the modification has been approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme);
- It has rear seat belts (irrespective of age);
- It has a separate locking luggage area or in the case of an estate vehicle, a permanent grille, luggage bar(s) or manufacturer's recommended device fitted sufficiently to prevent luggage carried in the rear compartment from coming into contact with persons using the rear seat;
- It has ~~means~~ a minimum boot capacity of 400 cubic decimetres in the case of any vehicle licensed to carry up to 4 passengers and 600 cubic decimetres in all other cases for carrying a reference wheelchair¹⁰² and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. For these purposes, reliance on trailers or other luggage carrying devices will not be considered. If seats are located within the luggage space, the vehicle may be licensed to carry a lower number of passengers in order to comply with the luggage space requirement;
- There are sufficient means by which a passenger can communicate with the driver; and
- In the case of a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it satisfies the requirements of the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport wheelchair accessible vehicle specification in relation to tracking, anchorage, wheelchair tie-downs, restraints, spacing, doorways, direction of travel, lifts, ramps, winches and storage of equipment. Guidance is available on request.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Selby District Council or North Yorkshire Council prior to [date of publication] ~~4th April 2023~~ may remain licensed on renewal ~~in respect of any application received on or before 31st December 2029. The vehicle specification in the preceding paragraph will apply to any renewal application submitted after 31st December 2029.~~

Hackney carriage vehicle proprietorship

A person applying for a hackney carriage vehicle licence must be the proprietor of the vehicle to which the application relates. If the applicant is not the sole proprietor, he/she must name all joint proprietors including anyone involved in the day-to-day usage of the vehicle.

¹⁰⁰ Regulation 32(10) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

¹⁰¹ Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

¹⁰² As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

Unless the applicant's name is the only name on the Vehicle Registration Document, the application should include on the application form the details of any person (or company) involved in the keeping, employing or letting for hire the vehicle.

Process for new hackney carriage vehicle licence applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee; and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name. If neither is available, verifiable proof of ownership may be accepted (i.e. a bill of sale from a reputable firm).

All applicants will be required to sign a declaration as part of their application, stating that the vehicle will be used predominantly within North Yorkshire.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application (note: a vehicle test is not required if the application is made within three months of the date of first registration)**;
- a certificate confirming that the meter has been calibrated by an authorised agent to the table of fares;
- an appropriate engineer's report (only for vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off) verifying the standard of repairs;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the application meets all criteria laid down in the policy, a licence will normally be granted.

The licence and plates will be issued directly to the applicant unless the applicant has provided authorisation in writing for an alternative representative to take possession on their behalf.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application for the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a hackney carriage licence lies to the Crown Court¹⁰³.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for hackney carriage vehicle licence renewal applications

Applications for renewal should be made no more than six weeks and no less than two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the vehicle will cease to be a licensed vehicle until such time as a new application for this vehicle is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form; and
- the appropriate fee.

Licences will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application**;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application to renew a licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to renew a hackney carriage vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁰⁴. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Transfer of hackney carriage vehicle licence

¹⁰³ By virtue of section 7 of the Public Health Acts (Amendment) Act 1907

¹⁰⁴ By virtue of section 60 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

If a proprietor transfers his/her interest in a vehicle to somebody else he/she must give notice of the transfer in writing to the licensing authority within 14 days, giving the name and address of the person to whom the interest in the vehicle has been transferred¹⁰⁵.

The new owner must then make an application to transfer the licence into his/her name.

The application must be accompanied by:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for public hire;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record> in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners);
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application); and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name.

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Changing a hackney carriage vehicle

There is no legal mechanism to transfer a hackney carriage vehicle licence from one vehicle to another. A new hackney carriage vehicle licence must therefore be obtained in this scenario.

The licensing authority may exercise its discretion to reduce the licence fee in respect of the replacement vehicle provided the existing licence is surrendered. Any fee reduction will be based on the number of full months remaining on the surrendered licence. Applicants should make enquiries in this regard with the Licensing Team.

Hackney carriage vehicle plates, signs and side panels

At all times whilst licensed, a hackney carriage vehicle shall display:

- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the rear of the vehicle;
- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the front of the vehicle;
- a self-adhesive side panel provided by the licensing authority permanently affixed centrally and squarely on each of the front doors of the vehicle;
- an internal plate provided by the licensing authority facing into the vehicle and visible to all passengers;
- a sign, capable of being illuminated, bearing the word "TAXI" facing towards the front of the vehicle mounted on the roof of the vehicle. The only other text on the sign shall be the firm's name and/or telephone number; and

¹⁰⁵ Section 49 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

The licensing authority must be informed in writing should any of the above plates, signs or panels become lost, stolen, damaged or defaced. The damaged or defaced plate, sign or panel must be returned immediately to the licensing authority along with a report of the damage and a request for a replacement.

No vehicle shall be used for public hire purposes without the required plates, signs and panels.

The plates and panels are the property of the council and shall be returned to the licensing authority forthwith upon the suspension, surrender, revocation or expiry of the licence. It is an offence to fail to comply with a request to return a licence plate¹⁰⁶.

No additional signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except:

- the registration plate;
- any sign required by statute or subordinate legislation;
- any sign indicating membership of a national motoring organisation;
- any sign requesting passengers not to smoke; and
- any sign specifically approved by an authorised officer or department of the Council.

The proprietor of a licensed hackney carriage vehicle may apply to display any additional signage on the vehicle by submitting a written request to the licensing authority along with a full-colour copy of the proposed signage or advertisement.

Each request will be considered on its individual merits, but advertisements will not be approved if they:

- contain political, ethnic, religious, sexual or controversial texts;
- display nude or semi-nude figures;
- advertise tobacco products;
- are likely to offend public taste;
- depict or refer to indecency or obscenity;
- use obscene or distasteful language;
- depict men, women or children as sex objects;
- depict direct and immediate violence to anyone shown in the advertisement or advertise any racist group or organisation which intends to promote the group/organisation and/or any of its activities;
- are proposed to be displayed on any of the windows of the vehicle.

Irrespective of any consent which may have been given by the licensing authority, it remains the responsibility of the proprietor to comply with The British Code of Advertising Practice issued by the Advertising Standards Authority.

Hackney carriage vehicle testing arrangements

Subject to acceptance of a completed application, the vehicle, in respect of which an application has been made, will be required to meet approved standards of roadworthiness.

¹⁰⁶ Section 58(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Before a licence can be issued, the vehicle must be presented to a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area ~~one of North Yorkshire Council's appointed garages~~ for inspection.

All vehicles must be maintained to no less than the standards set out in the DVSA's MOT Inspection Manual. In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

- Lights inoperable, damaged, mis-aligned or of insufficient intensity
- Spare wheel, jack and wheelbrace (or manufacturers' alternative) not provided and secured
- Insufficient, damaged or worn seatbelts
- Loose, damaged, missing or defective mirrors
- Leaks, excessive wear, damaged or insecure pipes
- Excessive smoke emission
- Excessive corrosion/damage, unsightly appearance, poor repair/paint match staining, sharp edges
- Visible rusting
- Significant dents or scratches
- No separation of luggage space from passenger seating area
- Meter not linked to roof sign
- Meter not sealed
- Damaged/illegible/insecure plate
- Insecure roof sign, inconsistent/insufficient illumination or excessive damage to wiring
- Defective locks, windows, door lights or damaged/missing door seals
- Excessive dirt, stains, holes or tears
- Any other reasonable cause

In the case of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the test will also be failed if any of the following apply:

- Wheelchair restraints/seatbelts missing
- Anchorage insecure
- Webbing frayed
- Locking ineffective
- Inappropriate/insufficient ramps
- Non-slip provision worn
- Risk of obstruction or trip hazard
- Wiring defects
- Insufficient safety barriers
- Safe working load not displayed

No licence application will be granted unless the vehicle has passed the test to the satisfaction of the appointed garage.

6-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of five years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed). ~~4-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of 10 years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed).~~

An authorised officer may also require any vehicle to be presented for inspection at any time. It is an offence to fail to attend for inspection as requested¹⁰⁷. If the authorised officer is not satisfied as to the mechanical fitness of the vehicle, the licence may be suspended or revoked.

¹⁰⁷ Section 50(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Failure to attend an inspection may lead to suspension or revocation of the licence.

Hackney carriage vehicle insurance

All proprietors are required to ensure that a valid insurance policy which includes the carriage of passengers or goods for public hire or reward is kept in force in respect of any hackney carriage vehicle and in relation to its use by any drivers employed by the proprietor.

On being required by an authorised officer of the council or a police officer, the original certificate of insurance shall be made available for examination, provided that, if the driver fails to provide such certificate on request, he/she shall within seven days of such request produce it to the licensing authority at the offices of the council¹⁰⁸.

Hackney carriage proprietor criminal record checks

Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All proprietors are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that proprietors pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity. In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any proprietors who are already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver licence or a private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

¹⁰⁸ Section 50(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. ~~A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process.~~ If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the **Crown Court in the case of a new application and to the Magistrates' Court in the case of a renewal application.**

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed **or returned to the applicant where possible.** Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined ~~and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.~~

Hackney carriage vehicle accidents and damage

Any vehicle damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle shall be reported in writing to the licensing authority by the proprietor as soon as practicable and in any event within 72 hours of its occurrence¹⁰⁹.

If any damage is considered by the authorised officer to be extensive enough to affect the safety or general appearance of the vehicle, a notice of suspension will be issued.

Vehicles subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off will not be licensed as hackney carriages.

Vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off may be licensed as hackney carriages provided the applicant or proprietor has provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by an authorised officer of the council) verifying the standard of repairs.

Notwithstanding the vehicle damage reporting obligations in the previous paragraphs, any accident or collision involving any passenger or member of the public must be reported in writing to the licensing authority within 24 hours.

Dual hackney carriage plating

No hackney carriage vehicle will be granted a licence if it is licensed in another district due to the problems of meeting the variance in conditions applied in different districts and the enforcement of those conditions in cases of non-compliance (i.e. signs, meters, suspensions or revocations).

Mechanical breakdown of hackney carriage vehicle

If, during a hiring, any vehicle becomes unfit to complete a journey:

- the driver shall be entitled to demand the fare for the distance already travelled;
- the driver shall secure alternative transport without delay to complete the journey if the hirer so wishes;
- if the original vehicle is repaired and completes the hiring, the driver shall be entitled to the full fare with the exception of any time that the hirer waited for the repair to be executed; and

¹⁰⁹ Section 50(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- any such incident must be reported to the licensing authority within one working day.

Complaints to hackney carriage proprietors

The proprietor of any hackney carriage who receives a complaint concerning the driver's conduct or about the vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

Hackney carriage proprietor convictions and other sanctions

The proprietor of a licensed hackney carriage vehicle must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her (or in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners). The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the proprietor's suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Hackney carriage vehicle first aid equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for hire a suitable first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings and appliances for use in an emergency.

CCTV in hackney carriage vehicles

No CCTV system shall be installed in a hackney carriage vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. If authorisation is obtained, the proprietor will be required to ensure compliance with all licence conditions relating to CCTV to ensure that the CCTV system is appropriately installed and maintained so as not to interfere with the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as ensuring the integrity of any images captured.

No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

This policy details the minimum standards that will normally be expected to be met.

Each case will be determined on its own merits and exceptions may be made at the discretion of an authorised officer if the circumstances justify making such an exception.

The licensing authority has specified minimum criteria that it would expect a CCTV system to satisfy in order for the system to be installed in licensed vehicles.

The proprietor must meet the current Information Commissioner data protection requirements.

The CCTV system shall:

- be capable of date and time system identification stamping;
- be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of 14 days;
- be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, are of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and of such quality that they can be used for prosecution purposes;
- provide that cameras are capable of being fitted in locations that do not affect the safety of any person travelling in the vehicle, and located as securely and discreetly as possible to avoid passengers travelling in the vehicle from tampering with them;
- provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock; and
- be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification), which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

Any audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary).

Audio recording must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of any audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

The licence holder must provide evidence that the CCTV system complies with the licensing authority's minimum recommended specification.

The licence holder shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner's Office to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

Notices informing passengers of the CCTV must be displayed inside the vehicle where they can be easily viewed by passengers.

The licence holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no unauthorised access to data recorded by the CCTV.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any CCTV system installed in a vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council or Selby District Council prior to 1st April 2023 may remain in use until 31st March 2025 provided it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Trailers and roof racks on hackney carriage vehicles

No licensed vehicle may tow any trailer unless permission has been granted by the licensing authority and a further licence plate has subsequently been issued.

No such permission will be given unless evidence of valid insurance to cover such use for hire has been produced.

The vehicle licence plate giving the licence number must be clearly displayed on the rear of any trailer used, this sign being in addition to that on the rear of the vehicle.

The contents of any such trailer must be secured and covered in a proper manner.

Trailers must not be used on hackney carriage vehicles when plying for hire on a hackney carriage stand (rank).

The use of any trailer used must comply with regulations in all respects.

No hackney carriage vehicle shall be fitted with a roof rack, roof box or any other device on or above the roof of the vehicle.

Smoking and vaping in hackney carriage vehicles

All hackney carriage vehicles are required to be smoke-free at all times and 'No smoking' signage must be displayed in the vehicle¹¹⁰. Failure to comply with this may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued or a criminal prosecution.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

Hackney carriage proprietor change of address

All hackney carriage proprietors are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place¹¹¹.

Hackney carriage proprietor change of directors or partners

Where a hackney carriage vehicle licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Hackney carriage stands (ranks)

It is an offence to leave a hackney carriage vehicle unattended on a taxi rank¹¹². Hackney carriages can only wait on a rank whilst standing for hire.

A list of the hackney carriage stands which have been appointed for public hire purposes in accordance with section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 are available on the Council's website.

The number of vehicles standing at any rank must not exceed the number for which the rank is appointed at any time.

It is not acceptable to make bookings to pick up from the rank. Ranks are to be used exclusively to stand for public hire – not to pick up bookings and not to park whilst looking for customers. If any member of the public approaches a vehicle on the rank, they are entitled to expect to be offered a public hire service.

Hackney carriage meters

¹¹⁰ Regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2012

¹¹¹ Section 44 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

¹¹² Section 62 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and *Rodgers v Taylor* [1987] RTR 86

The licensing authority requires all hackney carriages to be fitted with a calendar-controlled taxi meter. The meter must be maintained in good working order at all times and must be sealed and calibrated to the correct tariff by an authorised agent.

All meters must meet any statutory requirements and the accuracy of any meter must be maintained.

Roof signs should be wired through the meter ensuring that when the meter is activated, the illuminated roof sign is extinguished when the fare commences.

The meter must be engaged for every journey from the point at which the hirer commences his/her journey. The meter must be engaged whether the vehicle has been pre-booked or not.

Hackney carriage fares

The hackney carriage table of fares is set by the licensing authority and is a maximum fare that can be charged by hackney carriage drivers.

It is an offence to charge in excess of the council's table of fares for any journey within North Yorkshire¹¹³. If the hiring takes the journey outside the boundary of North Yorkshire, the driver cannot charge any more than this table of fares allows unless a fare has been agreed with the hirer before the commencement of the journey¹¹⁴.

The table of fares shows the maximum charge and drivers are permitted to negotiate a fare provided they do not charge any more than the table of fares allows¹¹⁵.

Calculation of hackney carriage licence fees

The costs associated with vehicle inspections, administration, the provision of hackney carriage stands and the table of fares will be recovered via the licence fees for hackney carriage licences¹¹⁶.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of the hackney carriage stands and the table of fares must be recovered only from hackney carriage vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to mechanical tests, insurance etc.

¹¹³ Section 58 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

¹¹⁴ Section 66 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹¹⁵ Section 54 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

¹¹⁶ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Hackney carriage vehicle accessibility

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles¹¹⁷. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a “reference wheelchair¹¹⁸” to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

The drivers of any designated vehicles must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger’s luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge¹¹⁹.

Prior to publishing a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, the licensing authority will confirm the designation in writing to each proprietor of any such vehicle.

The proprietor of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle may appeal against the decision of the licensing authority to include their vehicles on the designated list¹²⁰. The appeal should be made to the Magistrates’ Court and must be made within 28 days of the vehicle in question being included on the authority’s published list.

Any wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicle must have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA). This will be shown on either the vehicle’s V5 registration document, additional chassis number on the vehicle or by a ‘Certificate of Conformity’ (COC), which shows that the vehicles have been produced to a very high and vigorous standard. The COC should show the number of passengers the vehicle is able to carry with the wheelchair conversion. **Any subsequent modifications must be approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.**

Approved anchorages must be provided for the wheelchair and the wheelchair user. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. Anchorage must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. They must be designed so as not to cause injury within the passenger compartment.

A ramp or ramps for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramps do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.

¹¹⁷ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

¹¹⁸ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

¹¹⁹ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

¹²⁰ Section 172 of the Equality Act 2010

If the vehicle has a purpose designed wheelchair lift, then a 'LOLER' certificate must be produced with the initial application, and this must be renewed annually. The onus will be on the vehicle proprietor to ensure this is kept up to date and the certificate can be requested at any time by an authorised officer.

Hackney carriages are an essential mode of transport for disabled and elderly persons. The combination of the personal service they offer, their wide availability and their door-to-door operations enable them to respond particularly well to the travel needs of people with mobility difficulties.

The licensing authority is committed to ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to those with mobility difficulties. For this reason, the licensing authority considers it important that people with impairments have access to all forms of public transportation.

The licensing authority intends to encourage proprietors to invest in wheelchair accessible vehicles, thus improving the accessibility of vehicles to disabled customers. ~~For this reason, the age limits outlined in paragraph 47 do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles. Furthermore,~~ North Yorkshire Council will continue to review its options in terms of encouraging more proprietors to obtain licences in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Horse-drawn carriages

Proprietors of horse-drawn carriages will be subject to any hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions excluding those specifically relating to vehicle design.

A Veterinary Certificate signed by a veterinary surgeon stating that each horse is fit to carry out the work required of it shall be submitted to the licensing authority as part of the application process.

A competent person nominated by the council (and representing the British Driving Society, the British Horse Society, the Heavy Horse Society or other body able to assess the competence of drivers) shall assess and provide a report stating that the driver is competent to drive the carriage as part of the application process.

The location of the stables in which the horses are normally housed shall be notified to the licensing authority as part of the application process. Access to the stables shall be granted to authorised officers and their advisers at any time.

Should the council receive a report from the RSPCA, a veterinary surgeon or other qualified person that the conditions under which the horses are being kept are not in the interests of the health of the animal and its capacity to pull a carriage, the licence shall be suspended by officers until satisfied that the horses are being kept in a satisfactory manner. In the event that the stables do not satisfy the fire safety requirements for stables by Fire & Rescue Service, the licence will be suspended until adequate fire precautions have been made.

The proprietor/driver shall be limited to routes specified in writing by the licensing authority following appropriate consultation.

Hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary¹²¹.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all hackney carriage vehicle licences:

The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle complies in all respects with the requirements of any Act and Regulation in relation to the use of motor vehicle and any Code of Practice or policy implemented by the council.

The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle is subject to a daily visual safety check of all lights, oil, water, tyres, mirrors and seat belts. A written record of each safety check must be made including the details of any faults and remedial action taken. The record must be signed and kept for a minimum period of six months to be produced to an authorised officer on request.

The licence plates, side panels and roof sign shall be properly fixed in the positions required by the licensing authority at all times in accordance with the reasonable instructions of the authorised officer of the council. Any defects must be reported to the licensing authority for repair immediately.

The holder of this licence shall cause to be affixed and maintained in a conspicuous position, in accordance with the directions of the licensing authority, any sign or notice as required from time to time by the licensing authority.

All wheelchair accessible vehicles shall display the recognised disability symbol.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment, including, where applicable, any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The vehicle, including all fittings and specialist equipment, must be well maintained and kept in good working order.

The interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition and all body work shall be sound and reasonably well maintained, free from dents and other distortions/damage. Any repairs and cosmetic improvements shall be of a reasonable quality and a good paint match achieved. Doors, door locks, boot/tail gate and locks, bonnet, hinges and catches, windows, sunroofs and hoods shall operate correctly and all upholstery shall be reasonably well maintained and free from unsightly repairs, stains and burns.

Where the vehicle is converted to be propelled by Liquid Petroleum Gas the holder of the licence shall produce to the licensing authority a certificate showing that the vehicle has been examined by a person approved by the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association and that the installation is safe, well maintained and in good working order.

The holder of this licence shall provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring.

The holder of this licence shall cause the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and watertight.

The holder of this licence shall provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that glass in all windows shall be kept clean and clear of obstruction to ensure that there is a clear view, both into and out of the vehicle.

The holder of this licence shall cause the seats in the passenger compartment to be properly cushioned and covered.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that all seating is fitted and maintained in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification and any Construction and

¹²¹ Section 47(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- Use Regulations applicable to the type of vehicle and seats shall not face sideways to the direction of travel unless approved in writing by the licensing authority.
- The holder of this licence shall cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.
- The holder of this licence shall ensure that provision is made for carrying luggage sufficient for the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed and provision is made to protect the luggage from inclement weather.
- The holder of this licence shall not allow the specification of the vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the licensing authority.
- No signs, notices, advertisements, marks or other devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except as may be required by statutory provisions or authorised by the licensing authority.
- The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).
- Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.
- The holder of this licence shall only permit the vehicle to be driven by a driver who understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.
- Seat belts shall be properly and securely fitted for each passenger authorised to be carried in the vehicle and shall be maintained in a safe condition.
- The proprietor shall ensure the vehicle is fitted with a suitable, calendar-controlled taximeter, locked and sealed by the manufacturer/supplier so that tariff rates change automatically and cannot be changed or tampered with manually by the driver.
- The taximeter shall be calibrated to a level no greater than the current maximum tariff agreed by the licensing authority and sealed to prevent unauthorised adjustment. A calibration certificate signed by the meter installer shall be provided to the licensing authority to verify the tariff at which the meter has been set.
- The proprietor shall ensure that a copy of the current maximum fare table supplied by the licensing authority is on display inside the hackney carriage at all times and that the table is clearly visible to passengers when the vehicle is for hire. In cases where the meter has been calibrated to a tariff lower than the Council's maximum rates, this table of fares must also be on display and clearly visible to passengers.
- Taximeters shall be positioned so that passengers can easily read the display.
- The proprietor shall cause the taximeter to be maintained in a sound mechanical condition at all times.
- Except as provided for in this condition, no cameras or CCTV systems shall be installed in the vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.
- An advisory notice relating to the use of CCTV, approved by the licensing authority, shall be displayed inside the vehicle on each of the rear side passenger windows. The notice shall be positioned in a prominent (though not obstructive) position where they can be easily read by persons both inside and outside of the vehicle. The proprietor shall ensure that all notices are maintained in a clean and legible condition.
- The proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is maintained and fully operative in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Upon request for image retrieval by an officer of the licensing authority or a police officer the proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is made available to the officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of the request.

The proprietor of the vehicle shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any driver of the vehicle is made aware of every condition in relation to any installed CCTV system and has been given adequate instruction regarding the need for the system to be made available as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of any authorised request for any image retrieval.

The proprietor shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

An appeal against conditions attached to a hackney carriage vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹²². Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

¹²² By virtue of section 47(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicles

Private hire vehicles are licensed to perform pre-booked work only, which is obtained through a private hire operator. Private hire vehicles cannot “ply for hire” or wait on a hackney carriage stand.

A vehicle licensed as a private hire vehicle continues to be a private hire vehicle at all times and anyone driving the vehicle needs a private hire driver licence¹²³.

Private hire vehicle specification

The licensing authority will only generally issue a licence in respect of a private hire vehicle if:

- It is fit for its purpose, safe and comfortable for its users and any members of the public;
- It meets the Euro 6 Standard for emissions;
- It has not been subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off;
- ~~It is less than 10 years old (the age of the vehicle shall be taken from the date of first registration shown on the vehicle registration document, V5C). The policy with regards to vehicle specification shall be applied in the majority of cases when considering licensing applications, but the licensing authority will consider each application on its individual merits and may, at times, allow exceptions to this policy. Where exceptions are made in this regard, vehicles shall be subject to three mechanical inspections each year;~~
- It has
 - a front nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear nearside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle;
 - a rear offside door for the use of persons conveyed in the vehicle; and
 - a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.
- The front windscreen allows at least 75% of light through and the front side windows allow at least 70% of light through¹²⁴;
- It has nearside and offside exterior rear-view mirrors;
- A spare wheel conforming to legal requirements has been provided and properly fitted in the vehicle along with a jack and wheelbrace, unless a manufacturer’s alternative is provided;
- It is equipped with a minimum of four road wheels fitted with manufacturers’ recommended size tyres;
- It has a clean and smart appearance, both externally and internally;
- It is right hand drive;
- It has a permanent roof which is watertight – standard sunroof allowed (i.e. sunroof fitted when new by manufacturer);
- It has seating arrangements in accordance with the current Construction and Use Regulations¹²⁵ and the manufacturer’s specification (unless the modification has been approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme);
- It has rear seat belts (irrespective of age);
- It has a separate locking luggage area or in the case of an estate vehicle, a permanent grille, luggage bar(s) or manufacturer’s recommended device fitted sufficiently to prevent luggage carried in the rear compartment from coming into contact with persons using the rear seat;

¹²³ *Benson v Boyce* [1997] RTR 226

¹²⁴ Regulation 32(10) of the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

¹²⁵ Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986

- ~~• It has means for carrying a reference wheelchair¹²⁶ and luggage sufficient for the number of passengers for which the vehicle is licensed to carry. If seats are located within the luggage space, the vehicle may be licensed to carry a lower number of passengers in order to comply with the luggage space requirement;~~
- There are sufficient means by which a passenger can communicate with the driver; and
- In the case of a wheelchair accessible vehicle, it satisfies the requirements of the Council's Integrated Passenger Transport wheelchair accessible vehicle specification in relation to tracking, anchorage, wheelchair tie-downs, restraints, spacing, doorways, direction of travel, lifts, ramps, winches and storage of equipment. Guidance is available on request.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council, Selby District Council or North Yorkshire Council prior to 4th April 2023 [date of publication] may remain licensed on renewal until such time as it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Private hire vehicle proprietorship

A person applying for a private hire vehicle licence must be the proprietor of the vehicle to which the application relates. If the applicant is not the sole proprietor, he/she must name all joint proprietors including anyone involved in the day-to-day usage of the vehicle.

Unless the applicant's name is the only name on the Vehicle Registration Document, the application should include on the application form the details any person (or company) involved in the keeping, employing or letting for hire the vehicle.

Process for new private hire vehicle licence applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee; and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name. If neither is available, verifiable proof of ownership may be accepted (i.e. a bill of sale from a reputable firm).

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);
- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied no more than one month prior to the date of application (note: a vehicle test is not required if the application is made within three months of the date of first registration);

¹²⁶ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

- an appropriate engineer's report (only for vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off) verifying the standard of repairs;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the application meets all criteria laid down in the policy, a licence will normally be granted.

The licence and plates will be issued directly to the applicant unless the applicant has provided authorisation in writing for an alternative representative to take possession on their behalf.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application for the grant of a private hire vehicle licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹²⁷.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for private hire vehicle licence renewal applications

Applications for renewal should be made no more than six weeks and no less than two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the vehicle will cease to be a licensed vehicle until such time as a new application for this vehicle is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form; and
- the appropriate fee.

Licences will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- confirmation that the vehicle has an MOT test Certificate (required for all vehicles aged over one year as from the date of first registration as shown on the vehicle registration document);

¹²⁷ By virtue of section 48 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- proof that the licensing authority's testing arrangements have been satisfied **no more than one month prior to the date of application**;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application).

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If the authorised officer has any concerns about an application to renew a licence, it will be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for a decision.

An appeal against a refusal to renew a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹²⁸. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Transfer of private hire vehicle licence

If a proprietor transfers his/her interest in a vehicle to somebody else he/she must give notice of the transfer in writing to the licensing authority within 14 days, giving the name and address of the person to whom the interest in the vehicle has been transferred¹²⁹.

The new owner must then make an application to transfer the licence into his/her name.

The application must be accompanied by:

- a current vehicle insurance certificate or cover note which includes the carriage of passengers for private hire;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** from <https://www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record> in respect of all proprietors (or in the case of a company or partnership, in respect of all directors or partners); and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, **including any director or partner**, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application); and
- the vehicle registration document (V5C) in the name of the proprietor/part-proprietor or formal confirmation from the DVLA that the vehicle has been registered in the applicant's name.

No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Changing a private hire vehicle

¹²⁸ By virtue of section 60 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹²⁹ Section 49 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

There is no legal mechanism to transfer a private hire vehicle licence from one vehicle to another. A new private hire vehicle licence must therefore be obtained in this scenario.

The licensing authority may exercise its discretion to reduce the licence fee in respect of the replacement vehicle provided the existing licence is surrendered. Any fee reduction will be based on the number of full months remaining on the surrendered licence. Applicants should make enquiries in this regard with the Licensing Team.

Private hire vehicle plates, signs and side panels

At all times whilst licensed, a private hire vehicle shall display:

- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the rear of the vehicle;
- an external plate provided by the licensing authority securely and permanently affixed to the front of the vehicle;
- a self-adhesive side panel provided by the licensing authority permanently affixed centrally and squarely on each of the front doors of the vehicle;
- an internal plate provided by the licensing authority facing into the vehicle and visible to all passengers; and
- at least two adhesive signs advising passengers how to complain to the licensing authority about any licensed driver, vehicle or operator in a position that can be easily read by passengers from the front and rear of the vehicle.

The licensing authority must be informed in writing should any of the above plates, signs or panels become lost, stolen, damaged or defaced. The damaged or defaced plate, sign or panel must be returned immediately to the licensing authority along with a report of the damage and a request for a replacement.

No vehicle shall be used for private hire purposes without the required plates, signs and panels.

The plates and panels are the property of the council and shall be returned to the licensing authority forthwith upon the suspension, surrender, revocation or expiry of the licence. It is an offence to fail to comply with a request to return the rear licence plate¹³⁰.

No additional signs, notices, advertisements, plates, marks, letters, figures, symbols, emblems or devices shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except:

- the registration plate;
- any sign required by statute or subordinate legislation;
- any sign indicating membership of a national motoring organisation;
- any sign requesting passengers not to smoke; and
- any sign specifically approved by an authorised officer or department of the Council.

At no time will the word "taxi" or "cab" or "for hire" or any word or words of similar meaning or appearances, whether alone or as part of another word be displayed on or in the vehicle.

The proprietor of a licensed private hire vehicle may apply to display any additional signage on the vehicle by submitting a written request to the licensing authority along with a full-colour copy of the proposed signage or advertisement.

¹³⁰ Section 58(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Each request will be considered on its individual merits, but advertisements will not be approved if they:

- contain political, ethnic, religious, sexual or controversial texts;
- display nude or semi-nude figures;
- advertise tobacco products;
- are likely to offend public taste;
- depict or refer to indecency or obscenity;
- use obscene or distasteful language;
- depict men, women or children as sex objects;
- depict direct and immediate violence to anyone shown in the advertisement or advertise any racist group or organisation which intends to promote the group/organisation and/or any of its activities;
- are proposed to be displayed on any of the windows of the vehicle.

Irrespective of any consent which may have been given by the licensing authority, it remains the responsibility of the proprietor to comply with The British Code of Advertising Practice issued by the Advertising Standards Authority.

Private hire vehicle testing arrangements

Subject to acceptance of a completed application, the vehicle, in respect of which an application has been made, will be required to meet approved standards of roadworthiness.

Before a licence can be issued, the vehicle must be presented to a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area ~~one of North Yorkshire Council's appointed garages~~ for inspection.

All vehicles must be maintained to no less than the standards set out in the DVSA's MOT Inspection Manual. In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

In addition, the test will be failed if any of the following apply:

- Lights inoperable damaged, mis-aligned or of insufficient intensity
- Spare wheel, jack and wheelbrace (or manufacturers' alternative) not provided and secured
- Insufficient, damaged or worn seatbelts
- Loose, damaged, missing or defective mirrors
- Leaks, excessive wear, damaged or insecure pipes
- Excessive smoke emission
- Excessive corrosion/damage, unsightly appearance, poor repair/paint match staining, sharp edges
- Visible rusting
- Significant dents or scratches
- No separation of luggage space from passenger seating area
- Meter not sealed (where applicable)
- Damaged/illegible/insecure plate
- Defective locks, windows, door lights or damaged/missing door seals
- Excessive dirt, stains, holes or tears
- Any other reasonable cause

In the case of wheelchair accessible vehicles, the test will also be failed if any of the following apply:

- Wheelchair restraints/seatbelts missing
- Anchorage insecure

Webbing frayed
 Locking ineffective
 Inappropriate/insufficient ramps
 Non-slip provision worn,
 Risk of obstruction or trip hazard
 Wiring defects
 Insufficient safety barriers
 Safe working load not displayed.

No licence application will be granted unless the vehicle has passed the test to the satisfaction of the appointed garage.

6-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of five years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed). ~~4-monthly tests are required in the case of any vehicle that is over the age of 10 years at the time the licence is granted (or renewed).~~

An authorised officer may also require any vehicle to be presented for inspection at any time. It is an offence to fail to attend for inspection as requested¹³¹. If the authorised officer is not satisfied as to the mechanical fitness of the vehicle, the licence may be suspended or revoked.

Failure to attend an inspection may lead to suspension or revocation of the licence.

Private hire vehicle insurance

All proprietors are required to ensure that a valid insurance policy which includes the carriage of passengers or goods for private hire or reward is kept in force in respect of any private hire vehicle and in relation to its use by any drivers employed by the proprietor.

On being required by an authorised officer of the council or a police officer, the original certificate of insurance shall be made available for examination, provided that, if the driver fails to provide such certificate on request, he/she shall within seven days of such request produce it to the licensing authority at the offices of the council¹³².

Private hire vehicle proprietor criminal record checks

Although vehicle proprietors may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All proprietors are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that proprietors pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity.

In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any proprietors who are already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a hackney carriage/private hire driver licence or a private hire operator licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

¹³¹ Section 50(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹³² Section 50(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. ~~A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process.~~ If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

Private hire vehicle accidents and damage

Any vehicle damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle shall be reported in writing to the licensing authority by the proprietor as soon as practicable and in any event within 72 hours of its occurrence¹³³.

If any damage is considered by the authorised officer to be extensive enough to affect the safety or general appearance of the vehicle, a notice of suspension will be issued.

Vehicles subject to a Category A, B or S insurance write-off will not be licensed as private hire vehicles.

Vehicles subject to a Category C, D or N insurance write-off may be licensed as private hire vehicles provided the applicant or proprietor has provided an appropriate engineer's report (approved by an authorised officer of the council) verifying the standard of repairs.

Notwithstanding the vehicle damage reporting obligations in the previous paragraphs, any accident or collision involving any passenger or member of the public must be reported in writing to the licensing authority within 24 hours.

Dual private hire vehicle plating

No private hire vehicle will be granted a licence if it is licensed in another district due to the problems of meeting the variance in conditions applied in different districts and the enforcement of those conditions in cases of non-compliance (i.e. signs, suspensions or revocations).

Mechanical breakdown of private hire vehicle

If, during a hiring, any vehicle becomes unfit to complete a journey:

- the driver shall be entitled to demand the fare for the distance already travelled;
- the driver shall secure alternative transport without delay to complete the journey if the hirer so wishes;
- if the original vehicle is repaired and completes the hiring, the driver shall be entitled to the full fare with the exception of any time that the hirer waited for the repair to be executed; and
- any such incident must be reported to the licensing authority within one working day.

Complaints to private hire vehicle proprietors

The proprietor of any private hire vehicle who receives a complaint concerning the driver's conduct or about the vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

¹³³ Section 50(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire vehicle proprietor convictions and other sanctions

The proprietor of a licensed private hire vehicle must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her (or in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners). The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the proprietor's suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Private hire vehicle first aid equipment

There shall be provided and maintained in the vehicle at all times when it is in use or available for hire a suitable first aid kit containing appropriate first aid dressings and appliances for use in an emergency.

CCTV in private hire vehicles

No CCTV system shall be installed in a private hire vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. If authorisation is obtained, the proprietor will be required to ensure compliance with all licence conditions relating to CCTV to ensure that the CCTV system is appropriately installed and maintained so as not to interfere with the safety and comfort of passengers, as well as ensuring the integrity of any images captured.

No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g. dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

This policy details the minimum standards that will normally be expected to be met.

Each case will be determined on its own merits and exceptions may be made at the discretion of an authorised officer if the circumstances justify making such an exception.

The licensing authority has specified minimum criteria that it would expect a CCTV system to satisfy in order for the system to be installed in licensed vehicles.

The proprietor must meet the current Information Commissioner data protection requirements.

The CCTV system shall:

- be capable of date and time system identification stamping;
- be capable of recording and storing images for a minimum period of 14 days;
- be capable of capturing images that, in low light conditions, are of sufficient quality to enable identification of any person travelling in the vehicle and of such quality that they can be used for prosecution purposes;
- provide that cameras are capable of being fitted in locations that do not affect the safety of any person travelling in the vehicle, and located as securely and discreetly as possible to avoid passengers travelling in the vehicle from tampering with them;

provide that, where the system uses a DVD recorder, the system is protected from shock; and
be marked with the EMC (Electro Magnetic Certification), which signifies that it meets the European Industry Standard.

Any audio recording should be both overt (i.e. all parties should be aware when recordings are being made) and targeted (i.e. only when passengers (or drivers) consider it necessary).

Audio recording must not be continuously active by default and should recognise the need for privacy of passengers' private conversations between themselves. Activation of any audio recording capability of a system might be instigated when either the passenger or driver operates a switch or button.

The licence holder must provide evidence that the CCTV system complies with the licensing authority's minimum recommended specification.

The licence holder shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner's Office to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

Notices informing passengers of the CCTV must be displayed inside the vehicle where they can be easily viewed by passengers.

The licence holder shall take reasonable steps to ensure that there is no unauthorised access to data recorded by the CCTV.

Notwithstanding the above criteria, any CCTV system installed in a vehicle licensed by either Craven District Council, Hambleton District Council, Harrogate Borough Council, Richmondshire District Council, Ryedale District Council, Scarborough Borough Council or Selby District Council prior to 1st April 2023 may remain in use until 31st March 2025 provided it would have been permitted by the terms of the relevant policy in effect on 31st March 2023.

Trailers on private hire vehicles

No private hire vehicle may tow any trailer unless permission has been granted by the licensing authority and a further licence plate has subsequently been issued.

No such permission will be given unless evidence of valid insurance to cover such use for hire has been produced.

The vehicle licence plate giving the licence number must be clearly displayed on the rear of any trailer used, this sign being in addition to that on the rear of the vehicle.

The contents of any such trailer must be secured and covered in a proper manner.

The use of any trailer used must comply with regulations in all respects.

Smoking and vaping in private hire vehicles

All private hire vehicles are required to be smoke-free at all times and 'No smoking' signage must be displayed in the vehicle¹³⁴. Failure to comply with this may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued or a criminal prosecution.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

Private hire vehicle proprietor change of address

All private hire vehicle proprietors are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

Private hire vehicle proprietor change of directors or partners

Where a private hire vehicle licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Private hire meters

Operators and proprietors of private hire vehicles are not required to install a meter. However, if a meter is in use, it must be maintained in good working order at all times.

All meters must meet any statutory requirements and the accuracy of any meter must be maintained.

Where a private hire operator uses a table of fares to assist customers and drivers in determining the cost of a journey, it must be prominently displayed in the vehicle.

Calculation of private hire vehicle licence fees

The costs associated with vehicle inspection and administration will be recovered via the licence fees for private hire vehicle licences¹³⁵.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of hackney carriage stands and the table of fares cannot be recovered from private hire vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

¹³⁴ Regulation 2 of the Smoke-free (Signs) Regulations 2012

¹³⁵ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to mechanical tests, insurance etc.

Private hire vehicle accessibility

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles¹³⁶. For these purposes, wheelchair accessible means that it would be possible for the user of a “reference wheelchair¹³⁷” to enter, leave and travel in the passenger compartment in safety and reasonable comfort whilst seated in their wheelchair.

The drivers of any designated vehicles must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger’s luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge¹³⁸.

Prior to publishing a list of designated wheelchair accessible vehicles, the licensing authority will confirm the designation in writing to each proprietor of any such vehicle.

The proprietor of a designated wheelchair accessible vehicle may appeal against the decision of the licensing authority to include their vehicles on the designated list¹³⁹. The appeal should be made to the Magistrates’ Court and must be made within 28 days of the vehicle in question being included on the authority’s published list.

Any wheelchair accessible private hire vehicle must have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approval (ECWVTA). This will be shown on either the vehicle’s V5 registration document, additional chassis number on the vehicle or by a ‘Certificate of Conformity’ (COC), which shows that the vehicles have been produced to a very high and vigorous standard. The COC should show the number of passengers the vehicle is able to carry with the wheelchair conversion. **Any subsequent modifications must be approved via the voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.**

Approved anchorages must be provided for the wheelchair and the wheelchair user. These anchorages must be either chassis or floor linked and capable of withstanding approved dynamic or static tests. Restraints for wheelchair and occupant must be independent of each other. Anchorage must also be provided for the safe stowage of a wheelchair when not in use, folded or otherwise, if carried within the passenger compartment. They must be designed so as not to cause injury within the passenger compartment.

A ramp or ramps for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

¹³⁶ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

¹³⁷ As defined by Schedule 1 to the Public Service Vehicle Accessibility Regulations 2000

¹³⁸ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

¹³⁹ Section 172 of the Equality Act 2010

An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramps do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.

If the vehicle has a purpose designed wheelchair lift, then a 'LOLER' certificate must be produced with the initial application, and this must be renewed annually. The onus will be on the vehicle proprietor to ensure this is kept up to date and the certificate can be requested at any time by an authorised officer.

Private hire vehicles are an essential mode of transport for disabled and elderly persons. The combination of the personal service they offer, their wide availability and their door-to-door operations enable them to respond particularly well to the travel needs of people with mobility difficulties.

The licensing authority is committed to ensuring a wide variety of opportunities is available to those with mobility difficulties. For this reason, the licensing authority considers it important that people with impairments have access to all forms of public transportation.

The licensing authority intends to encourage proprietors to invest in wheelchair accessible vehicles, thus improving the accessibility of vehicles to disabled customers. ~~For this reason, the age limits outlined in paragraph 173 do not apply to designated wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles. Furthermore,~~ North Yorkshire Council will continue to review its options in terms of encouraging more proprietors to obtain licences in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Executive and novelty vehicles

An executive vehicle, limousine or other novelty vehicle is, in essence, a private hire vehicle, and all other interpretations, policies and conditions relevant to licensed private hire vehicles also apply, except where described below.

There is no legal definition of executive vehicle. However, there is common acceptance that an executive vehicle would be a relatively expensive vehicle that includes additional features designed to increase the comfort of the driver and passengers, which exhibits the qualities of luxury, prestige, and refinement. A classic car could be an executive vehicle. Vehicles qualifying for executive status must be of a high-end vehicle specification.

Executive vehicles usually place more emphasis on comfort, appearance, and amenities such as technological upgrades and higher quality materials than on performance, economy, or utility. They are often built in smaller numbers than more affordable mass-market vehicles. Luxury vehicles are historically 5 or 6 passenger four-door saloons. The term was coined in the 1960s to describe cars targeted at successful professionals and middle to senior managers, often as a company car but retaining enough performance and comfort to be desirable in their own right.

Executive cars could be luxury versions of family saloons; at the higher end, they are often larger models by mainstream manufacturers or the entry-level models by companies specialising in larger luxury vehicles.

Proprietors of companies wishing to license such vehicles would not normally be mainstream private hire companies but would be offering chauffeur driven contracts, airports runs and other similar services where the driver would be expected to observe a strict dress

code. Chauffeur driven contracts for the undertaking of a journey in an executive vehicle would generally be made by way of a written contract.

For the purposes of this policy, a stretched limousine is regarded as a luxurious vehicle that has been modified (stretched) to extend the length of the vehicle. The stretch shall not exceed 120 inches [3048 millimetres]. The vehicle shall be capable of carrying up to, but not exceeding eight passengers. Each passenger seating area will be at least 400mm wide.

For the purposes of this policy, a novelty vehicle is defined as follows:

- a vehicle that has been specially constructed, adapted or converted by a low volume specialist vehicle manufacture or modifier;
- a vehicle that has been specially modified from its original design or specification;
- a vehicle that is capable of carrying up to but not exceeding 8 passengers;
- a vehicle that is intended for the carriage of fare paying passengers that, prior to the introduction of this policy, would not be licensed by the Authority as a private hire vehicle because they did not comply with one or more of the standard conditions relating to private hire vehicles; and
- any vehicle that, in the opinion of an authorised officer, because of its specialist design/styling or origin, requires it to be classed as a novelty vehicle.

Exemptions and standards for executive/novelty vehicles

It would be expected that a contract for the hire of an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle would normally be in place no less than 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey. The vehicles would not be used to undertake standard private hire work.

There are no age restrictions relating to executive vehicles, stretched limousines and other novelty vehicles but all such vehicles must be exceptionally well-maintained.

The licensing authority has the power to disapply the general requirement to display a licence plate where the circumstances justify it¹⁴⁰. Accordingly, an authorised officer may give an exemption notice to the proprietor of an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle.

Any applicant seeking an exemption from displaying plates must submit an application form to the licensing authority confirming the details of their executive/novelty arrangements. An exemption notice will only be issued to the applicant if the authorised officer is satisfied that:

the vehicle will be in immaculate condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim;

no meter or data head shall be fitted to the vehicle;

a written contract will be in place from any hirer wishing to employ the services of an executive private hire vehicle. ~~Any such contracts will be in place at least 24 hours prior to the commencement of the journey;~~

the vehicle will not be used for standard private hire work or school contracts.

any driver of the vehicle will follow a formal dress code, suit or smart jacket and trousers and collared shirt;

no advertising or identification (including company logos) will be displayed on or in the vehicle at any time; and

¹⁴⁰ Section 75(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

the hirer will be invoiced separately for the pre-agreed fare and no payments will be taken in the vehicle.

The licensing authority may withdraw the exemption in the event that an authorised officer is no longer satisfied that the above arrangements are being made.

Where an exemption has been granted, the exemption notice and the licence plates must be kept inside the vehicle at all times whilst the vehicle is licensed as a private hire vehicle. The notice and the plates must be made available for inspection to a police officer or authorised officer of the council upon request.

Whilst driving an executive vehicle, stretched limousine or other novelty vehicle in accordance with an exemption, the driver of the vehicle will also be exempt from the general requirement to wear his/her driver badge. In these instances, the badge must be kept inside the vehicle at all times whilst the driver is using the vehicle for private hire purposes and it must be made available for inspection to any passenger, police officer or authorised officer of the council upon request.

Private hire vehicle licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary¹⁴¹.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all private hire vehicle licences:

- 20) The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle complies in all respects with the requirements of any Act and Regulation in relation to the use of motor vehicle and any Code of Practice or policy implemented by the council.
- 21) The proprietor must ensure that the vehicle is subject to a daily visual safety check of all lights, oil, water, tyres, mirrors and seat belts. A written record of each safety check must be made including the details of any faults and remedial action taken. The record must be signed and kept for a minimum period of six months to be produced to an authorised officer on request.

The licence plates and side panels shall be properly fixed in the positions required by the licensing authority at all times in accordance with the reasonable instructions of the authorised officer of the council. Any defects must be reported to the licensing authority for repair immediately.

The holder of this licence shall cause to be affixed and maintained in a conspicuous position, in accordance with the directions of the licensing authority, any sign or notice as required from time to time by the licensing authority.

All wheelchair accessible vehicles shall display the recognised disability symbol.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that the driver understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment, including, where applicable, any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The vehicle, including all fittings and specialist equipment, must be well maintained and kept in good working order.

The interior and exterior of the vehicle shall be kept in a clean and tidy condition and all body work shall be sound and reasonably well maintained, free from dents and other distortions/damage. Any repairs and cosmetic improvements shall be of a reasonable quality and a good paint match achieved. Doors, door locks, boot/tail gate and locks, bonnet, hinges and catches, windows, sunroofs and hoods shall

¹⁴¹ Section 48(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

operate correctly and all upholstery shall be reasonably well maintained and free from unsightly repairs, stains and burns.

Where the vehicle is converted to be propelled by Liquid Petroleum Gas the holder of the licence shall produce to the licensing authority a certificate showing that the vehicle has been examined by a person approved by the Liquid Petroleum Gas Association and that the installation is safe, well maintained and in good working order.

The holder of this licence shall provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring.

The holder of this licence shall cause the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and watertight.

The holder of this licence shall provide any necessary windows and means of opening and closing with not less than one window on each side of the passenger compartment.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that glass in all windows shall be kept clean and clear of obstruction to ensure that there is a clear view, both into and out of the vehicle.

The holder of this licence shall cause the seats in the passenger compartment to be properly cushioned and covered.

The holder of this licence shall ensure that all seating is fitted and maintained in accordance with the vehicle manufacturer's specification and any Construction and Use Regulations applicable to the type of vehicle and seats shall not face sideways to the direction of travel unless approved in writing by the licensing authority.

The holder of this licence shall cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering.

~~The holder of this licence shall ensure that provision is made for carrying luggage sufficient for the number of persons for which the vehicle is licensed and provision is made to protect the luggage from inclement weather.~~

The holder of this licence shall not allow the specification of the vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the licensing authority.

No signs, notices, advertisements, marks or other devices whatsoever shall be displayed on, in or from the vehicle except as may be required by statutory provisions or authorised by the licensing authority.

The word "taxi" or "cab" or any similar word which, in the opinion of the licensing authority, may imply that the vehicle is a hackney carriage shall not appear on the vehicle.

Where the vehicle is fitted with a taximeter, the meter must be maintained in good working order at all times.

The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).

Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

The holder of this licence shall only permit the vehicle to be driven by a driver who understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

Seat belts shall be properly and securely fitted for each passenger authorised to be carried in the vehicle and shall be maintained in a safe condition.

Except as provided for in this condition, no cameras or CCTV systems shall be installed in the vehicle unless it has previously been authorised in writing by the licensing authority. No authorisation is required for the installation of external-facing cameras used for the purposes of recording accidents or incidents outside the vehicle (e.g.

dashcams) provided the system does not record audio or images of any interior parts of the vehicle in which passengers may be seated.

An advisory notice relating to the use of CCTV, approved by the licensing authority, shall be displayed inside the vehicle on each of the rear side passenger windows. The notice shall be positioned in a prominent (though not obstructive) position where they can be easily read by persons both inside and outside of the vehicle. The proprietor shall ensure that all notices are maintained in a clean and legible condition.

The proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is maintained and fully operative in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions.

Upon request for image retrieval by an officer of the licensing authority or a police officer the proprietor shall ensure that the CCTV system is made available to the officer as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of the request.

The proprietor of the vehicle shall take all reasonable steps to ensure that any driver of the vehicle is made aware of every condition in relation to any installed CCTV system and has been given adequate instruction regarding the need for the system to be made available as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any event within seven days of any authorised request for any image retrieval.

The proprietor shall ensure that notification is lodged with the Information Commissioner to cover the purposes for which the CCTV system is used.

An appeal against conditions attached to a private hire vehicle licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁴².

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

¹⁴² By virtue of section 48(7) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers

The licensing authority issues combined hackney carriage and private hire driver licences.

An application for a single hackney carriage or private hire driver licence will be considered if requested.

A restricted private hire driver licence is also available for individuals seeking to drive private hire vehicles for the sole purpose of fulfilling school and social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council.

The licensing authority must be satisfied that every licensed driver of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

The licensing regime should therefore ensure that licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers are safe drivers with good driving records and adequate experience, sober, mentally and physically fit, honest, and not persons who would take advantage of their employment to abuse or assault passengers¹⁴³.

There is no judicially approved test of fitness and propriety but, if there is any concern that granting a licence to an individual may have an adverse effect on the public, further consideration will be given as to whether or not the individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage and/or a private hire driver licence.

When establishing whether or not an individual is a fit and proper person, the licensing authority will consider the relevance of any criminal convictions and it may take into account any other relevant information relating to:

- the applicant's character;
- the applicant's experience as an employed driver or hackney carriage or private hire driver;
- the applicant's criminal record;
- the applicant's driving ability;
- the applicant's knowledge of spoken/written English, the locality and rules governing licensees;
- the applicant's medical condition;
- any other matter that the licensing authority considers relevant.

In determining suitability, the licensing authority is entitled to take into account all matters concerning an applicant or licensee. It is not simply concerned with the individual's behaviour whilst working in the hackney carriage or private hire trade. This consideration is far wider than simply criminal convictions or other evidence of unacceptable behaviour, and the entire character of the individual will be considered. This can include, but is not limited to, the individual's attitude and temperament.

The assessment as to whether or not a person is a fit and proper person to hold a licence requires a much broader approach to the mere consideration of any alleged misconduct at any given time. The assessment requires a prospective consideration of any action that may be warranted in the public interest, having regard to the impact of the licence holder's character on passengers and other members of the public.

¹⁴³ *McCool v Rushcliffe Borough Council* [1998] 3 All E.R. 889

Process for new driver applications

An application will not be processed unless the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- a fully completed application form;
- the appropriate fee;
- the applicant's full driving licence issued by the DVLA;
- a suitable digital photograph of the applicant (taken or approved by a member of the licensing authority); and
- prescribed documentation to confirm that the applicant has a right to work in the UK.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- an enhanced criminal record check from the Disclosure and Barring Service (if the licence has not been determined within four months of the issue date shown on the disclosure certificate, a further criminal record check must be obtained);
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has passed a practical driving assessment approved by an authorised officer (a standard assessment is acceptable for most drivers but anyone wishing to drive wheelchair accessible vehicles must undergo a suitable enhanced/upgrade assessment);
- a medical assessment carried out to the appropriate standard no more than one month prior to the date of application (if the licence has not been determined within four months of the date shown on the medical assessment, a further assessment must be obtained);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has undertaken appropriate safeguarding training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer);
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant has undertaken appropriate disability awareness training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer);
- a record of passing a written test delivered by North Yorkshire Council on the applicant's knowledge of the locality, the rules governing licensees and the applicant's understanding of the English language. A modified test will be available for any applicant seeking to obtain a restricted private hire driver for the sole purpose of fulfilling school and social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council.

An appeal against a refusal to grant a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁴⁴.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for driver renewal applications

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the driver will cease to be a licensed driver until such a time as a new application is received and subsequently granted.

An application will not be processed unless the licensing authority is in receipt of a fully completed application form and the appropriate fee.

¹⁴⁴ By virtue of section 59(2) and section 52 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 respectively

An applicant who wishes to renew a licence will need to carry out a check on tax registration (a tax check). The licensing authority will need to obtain confirmation from HMRC that the check has been completed before considering the application¹⁴⁵.

An appeal against a refusal to renew a hackney carriage and/or private hire driver licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁴⁶.

Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Duration of driver licences

All hackney carriage and private hire driver licences will expire three years from the date of the grant of the licence **unless:**

**The applicant specifically requests a one-year licence; or
The specific circumstances of a case require a shorter licence period¹⁴⁷; or
The applicant's immigration permission is time-limited, in which case, the licence will expire when the applicant's period of permission to work in the UK is due to lapse¹⁴⁸.**

A licence may be granted for a period of less than three years in the circumstances of an individual case but not because of a blanket policy¹⁴⁹.

DVLA driving licence

An applicant for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence must hold a valid UK driving licence issued by the DVLA.

An applicant for a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence must have held a driving licence for at least 12 months. For this purpose only, full driving licences issued by EEA states will be taken into account¹⁵⁰.

All applicants are required to provide a DVLA check code (obtained via www.gov.uk/check-driving-information or by calling 0300 083 0013) to allow the licensing authority to view the applicant's driving record. The code must be provided on application and at 12-month intervals thereafter.

¹⁴⁵ Schedule 33 to the Finance Act 2021 and The Finance Act 2021, Schedule 33 (Licensing Authorities: Tax Information) Regulations 2022

¹⁴⁶ By virtue of section 61(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹⁴⁷ Section 53(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(2) of the Deregulation Act 2015

¹⁴⁸ Section 53A(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹⁴⁹ Section 53(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(2) of the Deregulation Act 2015

¹⁵⁰ Sections 51 and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by the Driving Licences (Community Driving Licence) Regulations 1996

Medicals

The licensing authority considers it appropriate for hackney carriage and private hire drivers to have more stringent medical standards than those applicable to normal car drivers because they:

- carry members of the general public who have expectations of a safe journey;
- are on the road for longer hours than most car drivers; and
- may have to assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

All medical assessments are to be to the standard of the Group 2 medical standards applied by DVLA in relation to bus and lorry drivers.

A medical form obtained from North Yorkshire Council must be completed by the applicant's GP or by another doctor with access to the applicant's medical history.

Further medical assessments are required every ~~three years~~ **five years from the age of 45** until the applicant has reached the age of 65 years, **at which point, an annual medical assessment is required¹⁵¹** ~~and annually once the applicant has attained the age of 65 years¹⁵².~~

The driver shall notify the licensing authority in writing as soon as practicable and in any event within seven days of his/her becoming aware of any medical condition suffered by him/her which may affect his/her ability to drive and operate a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

Driver safeguarding training

The hackney carriage and private hire industry can be a valuable asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if the individuals working within the industry are aware of, and alert to, the signs of potential abuse and they know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

Licensed drivers are required to undertake safeguarding training in order to help:
provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
recognise what makes a person vulnerable; and
understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice.

No licence will be granted to any new applicant unless a certificate has been produced to the licensing authority confirming that the applicant has undertaken appropriate training as approved by an authorised officer.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed drivers every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

¹⁵¹ [Department for Transport's taxi and private hire vehicle licensing best practice guidance \(Nov 2023\)](#)

¹⁵² In line with the Group 2 medical standards applied by DVLA

Disability awareness training

All drivers are required to undergo disability awareness training prior to being granted a licence to drive hackney carriages and/or private hire vehicles.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed drivers every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

Duty to carry passengers in wheelchairs

The licensing authority maintains a list of designated wheelchair accessible hackney carriage and private hire vehicles¹⁵³.

The driver of any designated vehicle must:

- carry the passenger while in the wheelchair if requested to do so and provide reasonable assistance to enable the passenger to get into or out of the vehicle;
- carry the wheelchair if the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat and provide reasonable assistance to load the wheelchair into or out of the vehicle;
- provide reasonable assistance to load the passenger's luggage into or out of the vehicle;
- take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort; and
- not make any additional charge¹⁵⁴.

The licensing authority may exempt drivers from the duties to assist passengers in wheelchairs if it is satisfied that it is appropriate to do so on medical or physical grounds¹⁵⁵.

Any person wishing to apply for an exemption certificate must make a request in writing and should provide evidence in the form of a letter or report from a general practitioner.

Where a driver has been exempted from these duties, they must display at all times the exemption certificate in the designated vehicle they are driving.

Duty to carry and assist any disabled person

The driver of any non-wheelchair accessible vehicle (i.e. a vehicle that is not included on the Council's designated list) must carry and assist disabled passengers without making an extra charge for doing so¹⁵⁶. This applies to any disabled passenger, including wheelchair users (with the assumption that the wheelchair user transfers to a passenger seat to travel).

The duty to assist disabled passengers could include, but may not be limited to:

- opening the passenger door
- folding manual wheelchairs and placing them in the luggage compartment
- installing a boarding ramp
- securing a mobility aid within the passenger compartment

¹⁵³ Section 167 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁵⁴ Section 165 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁵⁵ Section 166 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁵⁶ Section 164A of the Equality Act 2010

In instances where hackney carriages and private hire vehicles have been pre-booked, the driver has a duty to assist any disabled passenger to find or locate the vehicle without making an additional charge for doing so¹⁵⁷. In order to help fulfil these duties, drivers should consider:

- giving audio directions for a visually impaired passenger (calling the passenger once at the pick-up point)
- giving visual directions (for example, the colour and registration of the vehicle) for a hearing-impaired passenger
- repeating key information for a passenger with mental or cognitive impairments

The requirement not to charge a disabled person extra means that a meter should not be left running while the driver performs duties required by the Equality Act 2010.

In accordance with the Department for Transport's Statutory Guidance on access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users, the government expects licensing authorities to take tough action where drivers or operators breach their duties under the Equality Act 2010. The Council will use its available powers to ensure that drivers or operators who discriminate against disabled passengers are held accountable.

If a driver receives a conviction for breaching their duties under the Equality Act 2010, the licensing authority will review whether or not the driver remains a fit and proper person to hold a driver's licence. A driver who wilfully fails to comply with their duties would be unlikely to remain a "fit and proper person". The licensing authority may also consider suspension, revocation or refusal of a licence where no prosecution proceeds but the authority is satisfied that the driver has treated a disabled passenger unreasonably.

Duty to carry assistance dogs

Guide dogs are working animals (not pets) and their owners rely on them for both independence and mobility. Guide dogs have up to two years of intensive training and are monitored closely throughout their working lives. In addition, guide dog owners are given training on how to maintain the extremely high standards of grooming which the dogs require, and the dogs are regularly checked by vets. In terms of travel, guide dogs are trained to sit at their owner's feet at all times, not to bother other people and not to climb on seats.

Licensed hackney carriage drivers are under a duty to carry guide, hearing and other assistance dogs in their taxis without additional charge¹⁵⁸. Similar rules apply to drivers and operators of private hire vehicles¹⁵⁹.

Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the licensing authority for an exemption from this duty on medical grounds. A notice of any exemption granted by the licensing authority must be displayed in the vehicle while the exempted driver is using it.

If any other driver fails to comply with these duties, they will be guilty of a criminal offence and, on conviction, will be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 (level 3 on the standard scale). The licensing authority will investigate any alleged breaches and will seek to prosecute offenders where sufficient evidence is identified.

¹⁵⁷ Section 165A of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁵⁸ Section 168 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁵⁹ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

Licensed drivers are also encouraged to accept the carriage of trainee assistance dogs, which can benefit service accessibility by familiarising drivers with the role of assistance dogs and by helping the dogs to learn to behave appropriately when travelling in licensed vehicles.

Driver criminal record checks

A criminal record check is an important safety measure, particularly for those working closely with children and vulnerable adults. Drivers are subject to an Enhanced Disclosure through the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).

The licensing authority requires criminal record checks to be carried out every six months. Any licensed driver's failure to obtain a criminal record check as required will generally result in the licence being suspended or revoked.

The disclosure may include details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions and any other information held in police records that is considered relevant by the police (e.g. details of minor offences, non-conviction information on the Police National Computer such as Fixed Penalty Notices and, in some cases, allegations).

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

Applications are determined in accordance with any relevant legislation and the council's policies relating to hackney carriage and private hire drivers. Applicants for hackney carriage and private hire driver licences are exempt from the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that "spent" cautions and convictions may be considered.

A criminal record does not, however, mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits.

The council's overriding consideration is always the protection of the public. If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

DBS update service

The DBS allows applicants to subscribe to its Update Service in order for their DBS Certificate to be kept up to date. More information is available via www.gov.uk/dbs

Once subscribed, applicants will be able to give prospective employers (within the same workforce) or licensing authorities permission to access a web portal, which allows a check to be carried out as to whether or not there have been any changes to the data listed on the most recent disclosure certificate.

If there is no change to the data, the licensing authority can make a decision based on the information contained on the existing disclosure certificate. If, however, the web portal indicates a change to the data, a new certificate would need to be obtained.

All licensed drivers must evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months.

If an applicant has lived overseas in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, he/she must produce a further criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

Language proficiency

The Council recognises that a lack of language proficiency could impact on a driver's ability to understand written documents such as policies and guidance relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults. Any such misunderstanding could lead to a failure to identify and act on relevant matters (including, for example, signs of exploitation).

The licensing authority is satisfied that the application criteria (including training, practical assessments and knowledge tests) provide a reasonable test of an applicant's language proficiency and therefore any individual with inadequate English language skills would be unable to meet the requirements to obtain a licence.

If any concerns are raised in relation to a driver's ability to understand and comply with communications from the Licensing Team, an authorised officer may require the driver to undergo a language proficiency test at the driver's expense. In the event of any failure to satisfy such a requirement, or in the event of any persisting concerns in this regard, the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee may be asked to consider the suitability of the applicant or licence holder.

Smoking

Smoking is not permitted in a workplace under the Health Act 2006. A licensed vehicle is regarded as a workplace for these purposes and therefore drivers must not smoke or permit passengers to smoke in the vehicle. Failure to comply with this may lead to a criminal prosecution, fixed penalty and/or a referral to the Licensing Committee.

Display of driver badges

One driver's badge issued by the licensing authority shall be displayed on the driver's person at all times when the vehicle is available for hire so that it is visible. A second badge issued by the licensing authority shall be prominently displayed at all times in a position visible to passengers in the front and rear passenger seats.

Return of driver badge

The driver shall upon the expiry (without immediate renewal), revocation or suspension of this licence forthwith return to the licensing authority the driver's badges issued to him/her by the licensing authority when granting this licence.

Dress code

Whilst the licensing authority does not wish to impose a dress code by way of conditions to any licence, it expects a high standard will be maintained at all times. Licensed drivers will be expected to dress appropriately and to pay particular attention to their personal hygiene.

Driver conduct

All licensed drivers are expected to:

- comply with all licence conditions, byelaws and the requirements in this policy;
- drive with care and due consideration for other road users and pedestrians; and
- not consume alcohol before or at any time whilst driving or being in charge of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle.

Licensed drivers are expected to demonstrate appropriate professional conduct at all times, whether in the context of their work or otherwise. Licensees should be courteous, avoid confrontation, not be abusive or exhibit prejudice in any way.

Under no circumstances should licensed drivers take the law into their own hands.

Drivers are expected to act with integrity and demonstrate conduct befitting the trust that is placed in them.

Licensed drivers are expected to work cooperatively with officers of the licensing authority and North Yorkshire Police. Any failure to behave in a civil and respectful manner towards officers who are carrying out their duties may raise serious concerns over a driver's suitability to act as a hackney carriage and/or private hire driver.

Licensed drivers must not have sexual relationships with passengers or attempt to engage in a relationship with a passenger. Similarly, licensed drivers must not have any form of communication with a passenger which could be regarded as sexually inappropriate.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the driver's status as a fit and proper person, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration

A hearing of the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee can take a number of weeks to arrange and therefore the licensing authority has made alternative arrangements for the consideration of urgent matters in the interests of public safety. Where the relevant officer is satisfied that there is an immediate risk to public safety and an immediate revocation might be considered appropriate, the matter may be referred to a senior officer for urgent review.

Section 61 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows the Council to revoke or refuse to renew a hackney carriage and private hire driver's licence for any reasonable cause and the power can be given immediate effect in the interests of public safety. This applies to decisions made by the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee and/or by a senior officer with delegated powers.

Driver convictions and other sanctions

Any licensed driver must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her. The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to disclose such information may raise doubts over the driver's honesty and suitability to hold a licence, regardless of the outcome. Any failure to comply may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Seat belts

The law relating to the use of seatbelts differs slightly in connection with private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

There is no legal requirement for the driver of a hackney carriage vehicle to wear a seat belt whilst using the vehicle for public hire purposes (i.e. whilst plying/standing for hire or carrying passengers).

There is no legal requirements for the driver of a private hire vehicle to wear a seat belt whilst carrying passengers but seat belts must be worn at all other times.

Although exemptions apply to both hackney carriage and private hire drivers at certain times, all drivers are advised to wear a seat belt even when there is no legal obligation to do so.

It is the driver's responsibility to ensure that children under the age of 14 years are restrained correctly¹⁶⁰.

¹⁶⁰ Section 15 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Meters and fares (hackney carriage only)

The licensing authority requires all hackney carriages to be fitted with a calendar-controlled taxi meter.

The meter must be engaged for every journey from the point at which the hirer commences his/her journey. The meter must be engaged whether the vehicle has been pre-booked or not.

The driver cannot charge in excess of the council's table of fares for any journey within North Yorkshire. If the hiring takes the journey outside North Yorkshire, the driver cannot charge any more than the table of fares allows unless a fare has been agreed with the hirer before the commencement of the journey.

The table of fares represents the maximum charge but drivers are permitted to negotiate a fare provided they do not charge any more than the table of fares allows.

Driver change of address

All licensed drivers are required to notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of their address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

Calculation of driver licence fees

The costs associated with the issue and administration of hackney carriage and private hire driver licences can be recovered via the licence fee¹⁶¹.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

Some costs are associated with specific types of applications and these must be recovered accordingly. For instance, the costs of the hackney carriage stands and the table of fares must be recovered only from hackney carriage vehicle licence fees whereas other costs (such as policy and service development) will apply to all licence fees.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to criminal record checks, medicals or knowledge tests.

National register for revocations, refusals and suspensions (NR3S)

A National Register of taxi licence revocations, refusals and suspensions (NR3S) is held allowing all licensing authorities to record details of where a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence has been revoked, refused or suspended. This enables licensing authorities to gather vital intelligence about an applicant's past behaviour.

¹⁶¹ Section 53(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

North Yorkshire Council provides information for the national register and carries out searches of NR3S in order to assess whether an individual is a fit and proper person to hold a hackney carriage or private hire driver licence.

Where a driver licence has been revoked, refused or suspended, the council will record this decision on NR3S.

The licensing authority must conduct a search of the register for all applicants and further details will be sought from the relevant authority if any information is recorded¹⁶².

Any request from another authority for information held by North Yorkshire Council will be considered on its own merits, taking into account the data subject's rights and the responsibilities of a taxi driver. A record of every decision in this regard will be made to detail:

- the date of the request;
- the name(s) searched;
- whether any information was provided;
- if information was provided, why it was provided;
- if information was not provided, why it was not provided; and
- how and when the decision (and any information) was communicated to the requesting authority.

Driver licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire driver licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary¹⁶³.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will be imposed on all **combined** driver licences:

22) The driver shall give all reasonable assistance with passengers' luggage.

The driver shall at all times be clean, respectable in his/her dress and person and behave in a civil and orderly manner.

The driver shall take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of passengers conveyed in, entering or leaving the vehicle driven by him/her.

The driver shall not without the express consent of the hirer, drink or eat in the vehicle.

The driver shall not without the express consent of the hirer, play any radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the vehicle other than for the purpose of sending or receiving messages in connection with the operation of the vehicle.

The driver shall at no time cause or permit the noise emitted by any radio or other previously mentioned equipment in the vehicle while he/she is driving to be a source of nuisance or annoyance to any person, whether inside or outside the vehicle.

The driver shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in a vehicle a greater number of persons than that prescribed in the licence for the vehicle.

The driver shall not without the consent of the hirer of the vehicle convey or permit to be conveyed any other person in that vehicle.

The driver shall immediately after the termination of any hiring of a vehicle or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left there.

If any property accidentally left in a vehicle by any person who may have been conveyed therein is found by or handed to the driver, he/she shall take all

¹⁶² Section 2 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

¹⁶³ Section 51(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

reasonable steps to return the item to its owner or to make arrangements for its collection on request.

The driver shall if requested by the hirer of a vehicle provide a written receipt for the fare paid.

The driver shall not convey in a vehicle any animal in their custody and shall ensure that any animal in the custody of any passenger is conveyed in the rear of the vehicle. This requirement does not apply to assistance dogs.

The driver of a vehicle shall, if he/she is aware that the vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place or he/she has otherwise been instructed by the operator or proprietor of the vehicle to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, punctually attend at that appointed time and place, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause.

The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her.

The holder of this licence shall evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service along with any necessary consent to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new information every six months during the period of the licence.

Where a vehicle is fitted with a taxi meter, the driver shall not cause the fare recorded thereon to be cancelled or concealed until the hirer has had a reasonable opportunity of examining it and has paid the fare (unless credit is to be given).

The driver shall not demand from any hirer of a vehicle, a fare in excess of any previously agreed fare for that hiring between the hirer and operator, or if the vehicle is fitted with a taxi meter, and there has been no previous agreement as to the fare, the fare shown on the face of the taxi meter.

The driver shall not drive a vehicle in such a manner as to be dangerous or potentially dangerous to passengers, other road users or the public.

One driver's badge issued by the licensing authority shall be displayed on the driver's person at all times when the vehicle is available for hire so that it is visible. A second badge issued by the licensing authority shall be prominently displayed at all times in a position visible to passengers in the front and rear passenger seats.

The driver shall notify the licensing authority in writing as soon as practicable and in any event within seven days of his/her becoming aware of any medical condition suffered by him/her which may affect his/her ability to drive and operate a hackney carriage/private hire vehicle.

The licensee shall notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of their address during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.

The driver shall not drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle unless he/she understands how to operate the vehicle and any equipment fitted to make the vehicle accessible by disabled persons.

The licence does not authorise the driver to drive any wheelchair accessible vehicles licensed by North Yorkshire Council unless an appropriate practical assessment (approved by an authorised officer) has been passed and a certificate has been obtained and submitted to an authorised officer.

The driver shall not at any time use electronic cigarettes or similar devices in licensed vehicles.

In the case of a restricted private hire driver licence (i.e. where the applicant has specifically requested one), the following condition will also be imposed:

The holder of this licence shall not drive any private hire vehicle for the purposes of hire and reward unless the booking has been made under the terms of a school or social care contract with North Yorkshire Council.

An appeal against conditions attached to a driver's licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁶⁴.
Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

¹⁶⁴ By virtue of section 52(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Private hire operators

A private hire vehicle can only be despatched to a customer by a licensed private hire operator.

Although private hire operators will not necessarily drive members of the public, they will be in possession of information about the whereabouts of some members of the public and therefore the licensing authority must be satisfied that every private hire operator is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

When establishing whether or not an individual is a fit and proper person, the licensing authority will consider the relevance of any criminal convictions and it may take into account any other relevant information relating to:

- the applicant's character;
- the applicant's experience as a private hire operator;
- the applicant's criminal record;
- the applicant's knowledge of spoken/written English, the locality and rules governing licensees; and
- any other matter that the licensing authority considers relevant.

In instances where the private hire operator is a company or partnership, the licensing authority will apply the 'fit and proper' test to each of the directors or partners in that company or partnership.

Process for new private hire operator applications

Applications will not be processed by the licensing authority unless it is in receipt of a fully completed application form, the appropriate fee and, in the case of any individual applicants, prescribed documentation to confirm that they have a right to work in the UK.

The private hire operator's base (i.e. the location from which provision is made for the invitation and acceptance of bookings) must be within North Yorkshire.

Licences will not be granted unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of:

- A copy of the private hire operator's policy on employing ex-offenders involved with taking bookings and dispatching vehicles;
- a satisfactory basic criminal record check issued no more than three months prior to the date of application from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record in respect of all individual applicants or, in the case of a company or partnership, any director or partner; and
- a certificate of good conduct (only if the applicant, including any director or partner, has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application). No criminal record check or certificate of good conduct will be required for any applicant who has already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council; and
- a certificate to confirm that the applicant, including any director or partner, has undertaken appropriate safeguarding training in the last three years (to be approved by an authorised officer).

An appeal against a refusal to grant a private hire operator licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁶⁵. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

Process for private hire operator renewal applications

Applications for renewal should be made at least two weeks before the expiry date of the current licence to allow reasonable time for the application to be processed.

Any application for the renewal of a licence will not be accepted after the date of expiry. In these cases, the operator licence will cease to have effect until such a time as a new application is received and subsequently granted.

All renewal applications must be accompanied by the appropriate fee.

An applicant who wishes to renew a licence will need to carry out a check on tax registration (a tax check). The licensing authority will need to obtain confirmation from HMRC that the check has been completed before considering the application¹⁶⁶.

A licence will not be renewed unless, in addition to the above, the licensing authority is in receipt of a satisfactory basic criminal record check **issued no more than three months prior to the date of application** in respect of all individual applicants or, in the case of a company or partnership, any director or partner. A criminal record check will not be required for any applicant who is already regarded as a fit and proper person, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

Duration of private hire operator licence

All private hire operator licences will expire five years from the date of the grant of the licence **unless:**

- The applicant specifically requests a one-year licence; or**
- The specific circumstances of a case require a shorter licence period¹⁶⁷; or**
- The applicant's immigration permission is time-limited, in which case, the licence will expire when the applicant's period of permission to work in the UK is due to lapse¹⁶⁸.**

A licence may be granted for a period of less than five years but only in the circumstances of an individual case, not because of a blanket policy¹⁶⁹.

Private hire operator safeguarding training

The hackney carriage and private hire industry can be a valuable asset in the detection and prevention of abuse or neglect of children and vulnerable adults. However, this is only the case if the individuals working within the industry are aware of, and alert to, the signs of potential abuse and they know where to turn to if they suspect that a child or vulnerable adult is at risk of harm or is in immediate danger.

¹⁶⁵ By virtue of section 55(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹⁶⁶ Schedule 33 to the Finance Act 2021 and The Finance Act 2021, Schedule 33 (Licensing Authorities: Tax Information) Regulations 2022

¹⁶⁷ Section 55(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(3) of the Deregulation Act 2015

¹⁶⁸ Section 55ZA(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹⁶⁹ Section 55(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended by section 10(3) of the Deregulation Act 2015

Private hire operators are required to undertake safeguarding training in order to help:
provide a safe and suitable service to vulnerable passengers of all ages;
recognise what makes a person vulnerable;
understand how to respond, including how to report safeguarding concerns and where to get advice; and
provide advice to drivers in relation to safeguarding issues.

No licence will be granted to any new applicant unless a certificate has been produced to the licensing authority confirming that the applicant has undertaken appropriate training as approved by an authorised officer.

Appropriate training must be undertaken by all licensed private hire operators, including any director or partner, every three years. Failure to comply may bring into question the licence holder's status as a fit and proper person.

Private hire operator criminal record checks

Although private hire operators may not have direct contact with passengers, they are still entrusted to ensure that they take appropriate steps to ensure that vehicles and drivers are safe and suitable. All operators are therefore required to produce an annual basic disclosure from the DBS in order for the licensing authority to satisfy itself that operators pose no threat to the public and have no links to serious criminal activity.

In the case of a company or partnership, a basic disclosure must be provided by all directors or partners.

Basic DBS disclosures will not be required for any operators who have already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.

If an applicant (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the 10-year period leading up to the date of application, they must produce a criminal record check or 'certificate of good conduct'. Applications need to be made in the relevant country or to the relevant embassy in the UK. Information on the application process is available here: www.gov.uk/government/publications/criminal-records-checks-for-overseas-applicants

North Yorkshire Council complies fully with the DBS Code of Practice and undertakes to treat all applicants for positions fairly. It undertakes not to discriminate unfairly against any subject of a Disclosure on the basis of a conviction or any other information revealed.

The licensing authority is committed to the fair treatment of all users and potential users of its services, regardless of race, gender, religion, sexual orientation, responsibilities for dependants, age, physical/mental disability or offending background.

The Applicant Suitability and Criminal Convictions section of this policy makes provision for dealing with applications from ex-offenders. The licensing authority actively promotes equality of opportunity for all and welcomes applications from all, including those with criminal records.

A criminal record does not mean that an applicant will automatically be refused a licence. Each application is considered on its individual merits. The council's overriding

consideration is always the protection of the public. A statutory declaration is requested as part of the application process. If the licensing authority decides to refuse an application, written reasons for this decision will be provided. Any applicant who is aggrieved at such a decision has the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

All criminal record documentation is kept in accordance with the DBS requirements relating to secure storage. If a disclosure indicates no criminal record this will be recorded on an applicant's file and the disclosure documentation will be destroyed. Disclosures with entries will be retained in secure storage until the application has been determined and any subsequent appeal is disposed of.

Complaints to private hire operators

Any private hire operator who receives a complaint concerning a driver's conduct or about a vehicle's fitness, appearance, safety or fare levied shall inform the licensing authority, in writing, within 48 hours of the receipt of such a complaint.

Private hire operator convictions and other sanctions

Any licensed private hire operator (including any directors or partners where applicable) must at the earliest opportunity, and in any case, within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge or conviction imposed upon him or her. The same applies to any simple cautions, fixed penalties, DVLA licence endorsements and community resolutions.

Any failure to comply may raise doubts as to the operator's status as a fit and proper person, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Booking and dispatch staff

Individuals responsible for taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on behalf of a private hire operator do not require a licence. However, the private hire operator must be satisfied that any such individual will not present an undue risk to the public.

Private hire operators must formulate a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role. The policy must:

require all booking and dispatch staff to provide a basic DBS disclosure from www.gov.uk/request-copy-criminal-record (this requirement will not apply to any staff members who have already been deemed suitable, evidenced by their possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council); and

outline the standards against which any prospective employee will be considered in relation to criminal convictions.

In assessing the suitability of booking and dispatch staff, the private hire operator must have sight of, and have regard to a basic DBS disclosure that is no more than three months old at the time of the assessment.

A record of any suitability assessments must be kept and maintained in a register of all staff responsible for taking bookings and/or dispatching vehicles. The register should contain as a minimum:

the name and address of each member of booking and dispatch staff;

a record of the private hire operator's most recent suitability assessment for each member of staff; and
the certificate number and issue date of the basic DBS disclosure that was considered.

A template policy, along with a template assessment form, is available on the Council's website to assist private hire operators with compliance. The templates have been produced only as a guide and therefore operators are not obligated to adopt these documents in their existing state. Ultimately, it is the operator's responsibility to set and uphold appropriate standards in relation to staff undertaking booking and dispatch duties.

If a private hire operator fails to adopt an appropriate policy, assess the suitability of staff and maintain a register in accordance with the licence conditions, it may raise serious doubts about their suitability to hold a licence, in which case, the matter may be referred to the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee for consideration.

Private hire operator change of directors or partners

Where a private hire operator licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.

Bookings to carry a disabled person

It is an offence for a private hire operator to refuse or fail to accept a booking from, or on behalf of, a disabled person because the person is disabled or to prevent a driver from being subject to their duties to carry and assist disabled passengers.

It is also an offence for a private hire operator to make an additional charge for fulfilling any duty to carry and assist disabled passengers¹⁷⁰.

Private hire operators should identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.

Bookings to carry an assistance dog

It is an offence for a private hire operator to refuse or fail to accept a booking from, or on behalf of, an assistance dog user because the person will be accompanied by an assistance dog¹⁷¹.

It is also an offence for a private hire operator to make an additional charge for fulfilling any duty to carry assistance dogs¹⁷².

Planning and public liability

It is the private hire operator's responsibility to ensure that appropriate planning permission and public liability insurance is obtained where necessary prior to making provision for bookings. Any breaches in this regard would be enforceable under the relevant primary legislation.

¹⁷⁰ Section 167A of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁷¹ Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

¹⁷² Section 170 of the Equality Act 2010

Calculation of private hire operator licence fees

The costs associated with private hire operator licences will be recovered via the licence fees¹⁷³.

The cost of the service is determined by several factors including staffing (salaries, National Insurance, pensions etc), accommodation, utilities, IT support, legal costs, software, insurance, printing, postage etc.

The licence fee for each type of application is then dependent on several other factors including, where relevant, the time spent on complaints, committees, inspections, advertising, administration, consultations etc.

The licence fee is refundable upon request in the event of an unsuccessful application. However, the licensing authority will not reimburse the applicant for any payments made in relation to criminal record checks, insurance etc.

Private hire operator licence conditions

The licensing authority may attach to the grant of a private hire operator licence any such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary¹⁷⁴.

Unless there are exceptional circumstances that require a different approach, the following conditions will generally be imposed on all private hire operator licences:

- 23) The record required to be kept by the operator under Section 56(2) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 shall be kept in a suitable book (the pages of which are numbered consecutively) or by an alternative method approved ~~in writing~~ by the licensing authority.
- 24) The operator shall enter or cause to be entered in the record, before the commencement of each journey, the following details of every booking of a private hire vehicle accepted by him/her:
 - The time, ~~and date~~ **and method** of the booking ~~and how made (e.g. telephone/personal call);~~
 - The name ~~and address~~ of the hirer;
 - The date and time of pick-up;
 - The point of pick-up;
 - The destination;
 - ~~The number of passengers to be carried;~~
 - The agreed fare;
 - ~~The time at which a driver was allocated for the booking;~~
 - The registration number of the vehicle allocated for the booking;
 - The name and licence number of the driver allocated for the booking; and
 - Any remarks (including the details of any sub-contract).
- 25) The operator shall keep records of the particulars of all private hire vehicles operated by him/her, including details of the owners, registration numbers and drivers of such vehicles, together with any radio or other communication call signs used.
- 26) All records kept by the operator shall be preserved for a period of not less than 12 months following the date of the last entry.
- 27) **The operator shall identify any luggage or accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided.**

¹⁷³ Section 70(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

¹⁷⁴ Section 55(3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

- 28) The operator shall provide a prompt, efficient and reliable service to members of the public at all reasonable times.
- 29) The operator shall ensure that when a private hire vehicle has been hired to be in attendance at an appointed time and place, the vehicle shall, unless delayed or prevented by sufficient cause, punctually attend at that appointed time and place.
- 30) The operator shall keep clean, adequately heated, ventilated and lit any premises which the operator provides and to which the public have access, whether for the purpose of booking or waiting.
- 31) The operator shall ensure that any waiting area provided by the operator has adequate seating.
- 32) The operator shall ensure that any telephone facilities and radio equipment provided are maintained in a sound condition and that any defects are repaired promptly.
- 33) The operator shall immediately upon receipt notify the Council in writing of any complaints about a driver ~~concerning the conduct of any driver, any contract for hire or purported contract for him relating to or arising from his business relating to~~ **sexual misconduct, sexual harassment or inappropriate sexual attention, racist behaviour, violence, dishonesty, breaches of equality and road safety.** ~~and of the action (if any) which the Operator has taken or proposed to take in respect thereof.~~
- 34) The operator or, if the operator is a company, its company secretary, shall notify the licensing authority in writing of any change of his/her address or telephone number during the period of the licence within seven days of such change taking place.
- 35) Where this licence is held by a company or partnership, any changes to the directors or partners must be notified to the licensing authority as soon as practicable and, in any case, within seven days of any such change.
- 36) The holder of this licence shall, at the earliest opportunity, and in any case within 48 hours, disclose to the licensing authority in writing the details of any arrest, criminal charge, conviction, caution, fixed penalty notice, DVLA licence endorsement or community resolution imposed upon him or her (or, in the case of a company or partnership, on any of the directors or partners).
- 37) The licensee (including any director or partner of a company or partnership) shall produce an annual basic disclosure from the Disclosure & Barring Service and, if the relevant individual has lived overseas for a period of six months or more in the previous 10-year period, a 'Certificate of Good Conduct' from the relevant country or the relevant embassy in the UK. This requirement will not apply in respect of any individuals in possession of a current hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council.
- 38) The licensee shall formulate and apply a policy on assessing the suitability of any person taking bookings and dispatching vehicles on their behalf prior to undertaking any such role. The policy must require all booking and dispatch staff to produce an annual basic DBS disclosure (this requirement will not apply to any staff members who are in possession of a hackney carriage/private hire driver or vehicle licence issued by North Yorkshire Council). The policy must also outline the standards against which any prospective employee will be considered in relation to criminal convictions.
- 39) The licensee shall keep and maintain a register of all staff responsible for taking bookings and/or dispatching vehicles. The register should contain as a minimum: the name and address of each member of booking and dispatch staff; a record of the private hire operator's most recent suitability assessment for each member of staff; and the certificate number and issue date of the basic DBS disclosure that was considered (the issue date must be no more than three months old at the time of the assessment).

- 40) The operator shall display the operator licence issued by the Local Authority in a conspicuous position at the premises from which he/she operates the business.
- 41) Any specialist equipment provided for disabled persons shall be maintained and kept in good working order. All persons using this equipment shall be fully aware and trained in its function and use.

An appeal against conditions attached to a private hire licence lies to the Magistrates' Court¹⁷⁵. Any appeal must be made within 21 days following notice of a decision.

¹⁷⁵ By virtue of section 55(4) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Enforcement

This policy sets out the standards and guidance that will be applied by the licensing authority when acting in its role as regulator and enforcement agency for hackney carriage and private hire licensing in respect of drivers, proprietors and operators in North Yorkshire.

Well-directed compliance and enforcement action taken by the licensing authority benefits not only the public but also responsible licence holders engaged in hackney carriage and private hire activities.

Enforcement objectives

The aim of the licensing authority is to undertake its regulatory and enforcement role in a fair, open and consistent manner. In doing this it will act in accordance with the guidance and standards set out in this policy. In particular, the licensing authority will:

- consult with parties subject to regulation and enforcement by the licensing authority about the standards it sets in undertaking this role;
- work with individuals and businesses to assist them in complying with their legal duties and obligations;
- ensure its staff are appropriately trained and apply the policy and standards professionally and consistently;
- make information about the policy and the standards widely available to the public and businesses within the district;
- monitor compliance with the policy and review it from time-to-time in consultation with interested parties; and
- comply with the various requirements and standards of the relevant legislation, guidance, corporate policy and best practice.

The licensing authority has a statutory duty to ensure that drivers, vehicles and operators are appropriately licensed and carry out their trade in accordance with relevant legislation, byelaws, statutory notices and conditions.

Guiding principles

In undertaking its regulatory and enforcement role, the licensing authority will have regard to the following guiding principles:

- any decision regarding enforcement action will be impartial and objective, and will not be affected by race, gender, sexual orientation or religious beliefs of any alleged offender, complainant or witness;
- in dealing with any enforcement situation, the licensing authority's actions will be proportionate to the scale, seriousness and intentionality of any non-compliance;
- there will be consistency of enforcement whilst recognising individual circumstances which may modify the appropriate action to be taken in each case;
- except in the most serious cases, or where advice/warnings have not been heeded, adequate opportunity will be given to rectify non-compliance before formal legal action is commenced;
- prosecution will normally only be considered where it is in the public interest to do so and in serious or blatant cases, or where other approaches have failed;
- regard shall be had to the relevant legislation and codes of practice which protect the rights of the individual and guide enforcement action (including Human Rights Act 1998, the Regulators' Code and any relevant enforcement policies); and
- regard shall be had to the council's equal opportunities and customer care policies.

Decisions about licence applications and enforcement will be consistent, balanced and fair and be made by reference to approved standards. This will ensure the safety of the public is adequately protected. The seriousness of any infringement is the starting point for action to be taken in particular circumstances. Final action taken will depend on any modifying or mitigating factors present.

Service standards

The licensing authority will always endeavour to meet the highest standards of service in undertaking its regulatory and enforcement function. The following specific level of service standards will be applied:

- matters relating to enforcement and regulation will be dealt with promptly, with enquiries and complaints receiving a first response within three working days;
- except in the case of necessary and approved covert investigations, officers will announce themselves on arrival at vehicles or premises and show identification unless they are already well known to the person;
- officers will provide their name and a contact telephone number to those persons or businesses with whom they are in contact concerning a regulatory or enforcement matter;
- requests for service relating to enforcement or regulatory matters will normally only be dealt with if the name and address of the complainant is given. Any such identification will be treated in confidence but may need to be disclosed should formal legal proceedings be taken against the person or business to which the complaint relates. Anonymous complaints may, however, be investigated if they relate to protection of children or other vulnerable groups, or matters relating to serious safety issues etc or where the issue complained of can be determined by officers themselves without further involvement from the complainant;
- officers will be professional, courteous and helpful in their conduct of regulatory or enforcement matters and, wherever possible, will seek to work with individuals and businesses towards compliance;
- officers will endeavour to provide advice in a clear and concise manner and, where any corrective or remedial work is necessary, an explanation will be given as to why it is necessary, and over what timescale it is required;
- officers will generally seek an informal resolution to cases of non-compliance except where immediate formal enforcement action is required; and
- where there are rights of appeal against a decision of the licensing authority, advice on the appeal mechanism will be clearly set out in writing at the time the action is taken.

Enforcement activities

Enforcement activities will fall into the following broad areas:

- undertaking routine inspections of vehicles and operator premises;
- undertaking proactive inspections, sometimes with other agencies;
- responding to requests for service, complaints or information provided by the public, businesses and others;
- offering general and specific advice to applicants, licensees and the public about the requirements of the licensing regime; and
- taking action and, where necessary, imposing sanctions in response to breaches or the requirements of the licensing regime.

Advice and warnings

Officers may provide advice (verbally or in writing) as a means of securing good conduct by licence holders. Such an approach may be appropriate where no formal action is necessary and there is a high expectation of future compliance.

Written warnings may be issued in instances where, again, no formal enforcement action is necessary and the consequences of any non-compliance does not pose a significant risk to public safety.

Any communication in this regard will evidence the licensee's knowledge of a certain issue and may be referred to in future if patterns of behaviour emerge.

Suspension and revocation

A licence may be suspended where there is a need for remedial action to be taken and the licensing authority is not satisfied that the revocation of a licence is necessary.

A licence may be revoked where the licensing authority is not satisfied that the matter can be addressed by other means. This action may affect the livelihood of the licensee and will not be undertaken lightly. Except in instances where there is an immediate risk to public safety or the licensing authority has no discretion, the decision to revoke a licence will generally be made by the General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee.

Prosecution

The decision to prosecute is a serious matter and will require consultation with the relevant senior officers. Prosecution will be considered where the law is blatantly or repeatedly disregarded, legitimate instructions of the licensing authority are not followed, the public is put at serious risk and/or a significant public interest purpose would be served.

Appeals

Appeals against decisions of the Council may be made to the Magistrates' Court or the Crown Court where appropriate.

Any notifications of formal enforcement action will include written information about how to appeal. This will explain how, where and within what time period an appeal may be brought and on what grounds. It will also confirm, where appropriate, that the enforcement action is suspended pending the outcome of any appeal.

Complaints about licence holders

Members of the public are able to make complaints to the licensing authority about the conduct and/or service received from licensees. Complaints can be made:
by post to North Yorkshire Council
by email to taxifedback@northyorks.gov.uk
online via the Council's website

The licensing authority will adhere to the following procedure:

- ascertain the facts regarding the complaint and decide if action is required;
- register the complaint and refer it to an investigating officer;
- contact the complainant within 5 working days;
- investigate the complaint;

- make a decision; and
- inform all parties of that decision

Licence holders who are the subject of a complaint will be informed of the nature of the complaint and, if necessary, given sufficient notice to attend any interview.

The outcome of the investigation will be implemented in accordance with this policy.

Disputes between licensees should be resolved between themselves and not through this procedure.

If there is evidence relating to alleged criminal offences **outside the scope of the licensing regime**, this will be referred to North Yorkshire Police.

Where the licensing authority has information about a hackney carriage or private hire driver licensed by another authority that is relevant to safeguarding or road safety concerns in its area, it must share that information with the authority that issued that driver's licence within 10 working days¹⁷⁶.

Where the licensing authority has received a report of safeguarding or road safety concerns about a driver licensed by North Yorkshire Council, it must consider whether to suspend or revoke the driver's licence. The licensing authority must give notice of any action taken or proposed to the reporting authority within 20 working days of receiving the concerns¹⁷⁷.

Complaints about the service

Any dissatisfaction with the actions of an officer of the council will be dealt with under the council's corporate complaints procedure, copies of which are available from the Council's website.

¹⁷⁶ Section 5 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

¹⁷⁷ Section 6 of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022

Applicant suitability and criminal convictions

The licensing authority will utilise the following guidelines when determining applications for licences. However, each case will be considered on its individual merits and, where the circumstances demand, the committee or officer may depart from the guidelines.

A person with a conviction for a serious offence would normally be expected to remain free of conviction for an appropriate period and show adequate evidence that they are suitable to hold a licence (the onus is on the applicant to produce such evidence).

Simply remaining free of conviction may not generally be regarded as adequate evidence that a person is suitable to hold a licence.

Where an applicant has been convicted of a criminal offence, the licensing authority cannot review the merits of the conviction¹⁷⁸.

Hackney carriage and private hire drivers are exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that “spent” cautions and convictions¹⁷⁹ may be considered when assessing suitability. The licensing authority will therefore have regard to all relevant convictions, particularly where there is a history of offending or a pattern of repeat offending.

Case law has established that the impact of losing (or not being granted) a licence on the applicant and their family is not a relevant consideration for the licensing authority to take into account¹⁸⁰. The licensing authority must focus on the impact of the individual's character on members of the public. Personal circumstances and any perceived financial hardship will not be considered relevant for these purposes.

One common misunderstanding is that, if the offence was not committed when the individual was driving a licensed vehicle, it is less serious. The same misunderstanding exists for offences committed in licensed vehicles but not when passengers were aboard. However, this is not relevant. The argument that it was a domestic dispute, or away from the taxi, is irrelevant. Any behaviour that puts any member of the general public at risk will be considered relevant.

If an applicant has any convictions, warnings, cautions or charges awaiting trial, the licensing authority may consider:

- How relevant the offences are to the licence being applied for;
- How serious the offences were;
- When the offences were committed;
- The date of conviction;
- The sentence imposed by the court;
- The applicant's age at the time of conviction;
- Any patterns of offending;
- Any other character check considered reasonable (e.g. personal references); and
- Any other factors that might be relevant.

These guidelines will apply equally to existing licence holders as they do to new applicants in determining suitability. Therefore, if a new applicant would be refused on the basis of their individual circumstances, a revocation would be an appropriate sanction for an existing licence holder under the exact same circumstances.

¹⁷⁸ *Nottingham City Council v. Mohammed Farooq* (1998)

¹⁷⁹ The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions)(Amendment) Order 2002

¹⁸⁰ *Leeds City Council v Hussain* [2002] EWHC 1145 (Admin) and *Cherwell District Council v Anwar* [2011] EWHC 2943 (Admin)

Misleading information

It is an offence for any person knowingly or recklessly to make a false declaration or to omit any material particular in giving information required by the application for a licence.

Where an applicant has made a false statement or a false declaration on their application for the grant or renewal of a licence, the licence will normally be refused.

Violence

Licensed drivers have close regular contact with the public. A firm line is to be taken with those who have convictions for offences involving violence.

A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

Murder;

Manslaughter;

Manslaughter or culpable homicide while driving;

Terrorism offences;

Crimes resulting in death; or

Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence of violence against the person, or connected with any offence of violence, a licence will not normally be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Allegations of violence will be investigated as and where appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on the balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Public order and criminal damage

Where an applicant has a conviction for one of the below offences, a licence will not normally be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed:

Racially aggravated criminal damage;

Racially aggravated offence; or

Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Where an applicant has a conviction for one of the below offences, a licence will not normally be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed:

S5 Public Order Act 1986 offence (harassment, alarm or distress);

S4 Public Order Act 1986 offence (fear of provocation of violence);

S4A Public Order Act 1986 offence (intentional harassment, alarm or distress);

Obstruction;

Criminal damage; or

Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

Possession of a weapon

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of a weapon or any other weapon related offence, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Safeguarding and exploitation

Where an applicant or licensee has been convicted of a crime involving, related to, or has any connection with abuse, exploitation, use or treatment of another individual irrespective of whether the victim or victims were adults or children, they will not ~~generally~~ **normally** be licensed. This includes sexual offences, slavery, trafficking, child sexual abuse or exploitation, grooming, indecent exposure, soliciting and psychological, emotional or financial abuse, but this is not an exhaustive list.

The licensing authority will not normally grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the adult's or children's barred lists maintained by the DBS.

In addition to the above the licensing authority will not normally grant a licence to any applicant who is currently on the Sex Offenders Register.

Allegations of sexual offences will be investigated as and where appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on a balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Dishonesty

A licensed driver is expected to be a trustworthy person. They deal with cash transactions and valuable property may be left in their vehicles. Taxi drivers are required to deposit such property with police within 24 hours. Moreover, it is comparatively easy for a dishonest driver to defraud the public by demanding more than the legal or agreed fare, etc. Overseas visitors can be confused by our currency and may be vulnerable to an unscrupulous driver. For all these reasons, a serious view is taken of any conviction involving dishonesty.

Where an applicant has a conviction for any offence where dishonesty is an element of the offence, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed. This includes (but is not limited to) the following offences:

- Theft;
- Burglary;
- Fraud;
- Benefit fraud;
- Handling or receiving stolen goods;
- Forgery;
- Conspiracy to defraud;
- Obtaining money or property by deception;
- Other deception;
- Taking a vehicle without consent; or
- Any similar offences (including attempted or conspiracy to commit) which replace the above.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a dishonesty offence.

Drugs

A serious view is taken of any drug related offence. The nature and quantity of the drugs, whether for personal use or supply are issues which should be considered.

Where an applicant has any conviction for, or related to, the supply of drugs, or possession with intent to supply or connected with possession with intent to supply, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least 10 years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Where an applicant has a conviction for possession of drugs, or related to the possession of drugs, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

If there is evidence of persistent drugs use, misuse or dependency, a specialist medical examination (in accordance with DVLA Group 2 medical standards) may be required before the licence is granted. If the applicant was an addict, then they would normally be required to show evidence of five years free from drug taking after detoxification treatment. In these circumstances, the applicant may have to undergo drugs testing at their own expense to demonstrate that they are not using controlled drugs.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a drug related offence.

Discrimination

Where an applicant has a conviction involving or connected with discrimination in any form, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

Motoring Offences

A very serious view is to be taken of any applicant who has been convicted of a driving offence that resulted in the loss of life.

A licence will not normally be granted where the applicant has a conviction for an offence such as:

Causing death by dangerous driving;

Causing death by careless driving whilst under the influence of drink or drugs;

Causing death by driving whilst unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured; or

Any similar offences.

Where an applicant has a conviction for driving with no insurance, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

As licensees are professional vocational drivers, a serious view is taken of convictions for driving, or being in charge of a vehicle while under the influence of drink or drugs.

Where an applicant has a conviction for drink driving or driving under the influence of drugs, a licence will not **normally** be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed. If there is any suggestion that the applicant is alcohol or drug dependent, a satisfactory special medical report must be provided before the application can be allowed to proceed.

Applicants should also be aware of the serious risk posed by driving whilst using a mobile phone. There is a substantial body of research which shows that drivers who use a mobile phone suffer physical and cognitive distraction which means they:

- are much less aware of what's happening on the road around them;
- fail to see road signs;
- fail to maintain proper lane position and steady speed;
- are more likely to 'tailgate' the vehicle in front;
- react more slowly, take longer to brake and longer to stop;
- are more likely to enter unsafe gaps in traffic; and
- feel more stressed and frustrated.

Where an applicant has a conviction for using a hand-held mobile telephone or a hand-held device whilst driving, a licence will not normally be granted until at least five years have elapsed since the conviction or completion of any sentence or driving ban imposed, whichever is the later.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for an offence of driving under the influence of drink or drugs or whilst using a mobile phone.

Convictions for minor traffic offences should not prevent a person from proceeding with an application. However, the number, type and frequency of this type of offence will be taken into account. In certain instances, it may be appropriate to issue a licence for a shorter period of time than the standard duration and it may also be appropriate to issue a warning as to future driving conduct. If a significant history of offences is disclosed, applications will normally be refused.

Applicants and licensed drivers with nine or more penalty points endorsed on their driving licence in any rolling three-year period will normally be refused or revoked and will not normally be granted a licence until at least three years have elapsed from the date of the last offence.

Applicants who have been disqualified from driving will not normally be granted a licence unless they have held a licence for at least three years following the expiry of the period of disqualification without receiving any further penalty points.

Allegations of erratic or dangerous driving will be investigated as and when appropriate. No licence will be granted unless the licensing authority is satisfied on a balance of probability that the applicant is a fit and proper person.

Licensing offences

Where an applicant has a conviction for an offence concerned with or connected to hackney carriage or private hire activity, a licence will not normally be granted until at least seven years have elapsed since the completion of any sentence imposed.

A licence will not normally be granted if an applicant has more than one conviction for a licensing-related offence.

Other offences

Where an applicant/licensee is convicted of an offence which is not detailed in this policy, the licensing authority will take that conviction into account and use these guidelines as an indication of the approach that should be taken.

Non-conviction information

If an applicant has been arrested or charged, but not convicted, for a serious offence which suggests he could be a danger to the public, consideration will be given to refusing the application (this may also include information arising from allegations). In assessing the action to take, the safety of the public must be the paramount concern.

An admission of guilt is required before a caution can be issued and therefore cautions will be taken into consideration in the same way that they would if there was a conviction. The same applies to fixed penalties and community resolutions. Each case will be considered on its own merits including the details and nature of the offence.

Licence holders

If a licence holder's conduct is such that, were they to be applying for a new licence their application would normally be refused, they should expect consideration to be given as to the suspension or revocation of their licence.

Applicants who hold a licence with another licensing authority should not automatically assume that their application will be granted by North Yorkshire Council. Each case will be decided on its own merits.

Licensees who are licensed by one or more other authorities should expect those authorities to share information regarding their conduct and to take it into account as appropriate.

Summary

To summarise, a criminal history in itself may not automatically result in refusal and a conviction for a serious crime need not bar an applicant permanently from becoming licensed. Some discretion can be afforded if an offence disclosed is isolated and there are mitigating circumstances, but the overriding consideration is the protection of the public.

While it is possible that an applicant may have a number of convictions that, individually, meet the above guidelines, the overall offending history must be considered when assessing an applicant's suitability to be licensed. A series of offences over a period of time is more likely to give cause for concern than an isolated minor conviction.

Being able to evidence change in behaviour will involve consideration of the circumstances at the time of the offence, steps taken to address any issues identified and that person's ability to sustain such change.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)

In September 2023, North Yorkshire Council commissioned a research project into wheelchair accessibility to support the development of an Inclusive Service Plan. The research revealed a likely shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles based on anecdotal evidence and supported by comparisons with national data.

According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, "*disabled people are particularly reliant on taxi and private hire vehicle services, either because they may not have access to a private car, are unable to use public transport, or because the built environment is insufficiently accessible to meet their needs. This can mean that the availability of an accessible, affordable taxi or private hire vehicle service can make the difference that allows them to live their life the way they want to, and ultimately, to fulfil their potential. The government wants disabled people to be able to travel easily, confidently and without additional cost, and it is important that all transport services play their part in making this a reality*".

The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy imposes no requirement on licensed vehicles to be wheelchair accessible.

Proposal

To impose a new requirement for all hackney carriage vehicles to be either wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) or zero emission vehicles (ZEVs). In order to give existing licence holders sufficient time to make arrangements for replacement vehicles, it is proposed to apply 'grandfather rights' to any existing licensed hackney carriage vehicles until 31st December 2029, after which, only WAVs and ZEVs may be licensed as hackney carriages.

Rationale

In accordance with section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, North Yorkshire Council must have due regard to the need to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (including disability) and persons who do not share it.

According to Department for Transport data, 39% of all licensed hackney carriage vehicles outside London are wheelchair accessible. At present, just 9% of all licensed hackney carriage vehicles in North Yorkshire are wheelchair accessible. North Yorkshire Council currently licenses 70 wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles, which represents one WAV for every 9,000 people in its population. Nationally, the best WAV:population ratios in rural areas are approximately one WAV for every 2,000 to 3,000 people.

The Council has previously introduced incentives by waiving the licence fee and by relaxing the age limits in respect of WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low.

A number of options have been considered to address the shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (including imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles). However, the Council must balance its proposals against any additional duties and obligations. This includes avoiding imposing unnecessary regulatory burdens where the outcome could be achieved by less burdensome means in

accordance with the Regulators' Code. It also includes consideration of any air quality implications.

The Council must have regard to DEFRA's Air Quality Strategy when exercising functions of a public nature that could affect the quality of air. The proposed revision to the hackney carriage vehicle specification is intended to enhance the number of WAVs available in North Yorkshire whilst mitigating any potential adverse effects on climate change and air quality. The proposals facilitate compliance with the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations, giving vehicle proprietors multiple options with wider social benefits.

In accordance with government proposals, all new cars and vans must be zero emissions at the tailpipe from 2035. Licensing authorities are expected to set out their own long-term plan in good time and the gradual replacement of existing licensed vehicles with WAVs and ZEVs will facilitate this transition.

Wheelchair users will often pre-book licensed vehicles and therefore an adequate supply of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles would also be beneficial. Further measures will be taken to encourage more wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles to be licensed on a voluntary basis but, as any accessibility needs can be discussed at the time of booking a private hire vehicle, it is not considered necessary to also apply the WAV/ZEV requirement to private hire vehicles at present. However, it is proposed to introduce new obligations on all private hire operators to identify a passenger's accessibility needs prior to taking a booking, to ensure that an appropriate vehicle is provided wherever possible.

In contrast, a hackney carriage vehicle can be hailed by passengers on the roadside, and it can stand on a rank to await the approach of passengers in addition to being pre-booked by telephone. On that basis, there is a greater need to ensure adequate provision of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles.

Hackney carriage vehicle proprietors unwilling or unable to acquire a suitable WAV or ZEV may consider adapting their service to a private hire operation with no such WAV or ZEV restriction. It is anticipated that this approach will support the delivery of a mixed WAV and non-WAV fleet across hackney carriage and private hire services in accordance with Best Practice Guidance.

Vehicle age limits

The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy requires all licensed vehicles (except WAVs) to be under the age of 10 years at the time of a new or renewal application.

According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, licensing authorities should not impose age limits on licensed vehicles. Instead, they should consider more targeted requirements to meet their policy objectives on emissions, safety rating and increasing wheelchair accessible provision where this is low.

Proposal

To remove the age limit in respect of licensed vehicles and to replace it with a requirement to meet the Euro 6 emission standards. It is proposed to apply the minimum Euro emission standards to all new licences on implementation of the revised policy. Any vehicles licensed prior to implementation will effectively retain grandfather rights.

Rationale

According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, the setting of an arbitrary age limit may be inappropriate, counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers.

Vehicles manufactured from 2015 must meet the Euro 6 standard and therefore only a small number of vehicles that would have complied with existing requirements will become unsuitable after implementation.

As authorities begin to implement alternatives to vehicle age limits the risk of becoming the authority of choice for proprietors unable to obtain licences from their home authority will be reduced.

Vehicle testing frequency

The current policy requires all licensed vehicles to be tested prior to each new or renewal application. A second test is required midway through the licence period in respect of any vehicle over the age of 5 years and, in the case of any vehicle over the age of 10 years that has been licensed following consideration of the exceptional circumstances, three tests are required each year.

Proposal

To consistently apply the frequency of vehicle testing as follows:

A test will be required on initial application for all vehicles over the age of 3 months;

A test will be required on renewal (i.e. every 12 months) for all vehicles under the age of 5 years;

Biannual tests (i.e. every six months) will be required for all vehicles aged between 5 and 10 years;

Triannual tests (i.e. every four months) will be required for all vehicles over the age of 10 years.

Rationale

It is not considered necessary for new vehicles (i.e. vehicles under the age of three months) to be subject to a mechanical inspection.

An annual test is considered appropriate for all vehicles under the age of five years and a biannual test is considered appropriate for all vehicles aged between five and 10 years. No changes are therefore proposed in this regard.

The requirement to undergo three tests per year currently applies only to vehicles over the age of 10 years that have been granted a licence on the basis of exceptional circumstances. No equivalent measure was applied to WAVs over the age of 10 years because WAVs are currently exempt from the age limit requirements and are therefore not necessarily subject to consideration of exceptional circumstances.

According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, more frequent tests may be appropriate for older vehicles which may be more prone to mechanical defects. If the proposals relating to vehicle age limits are adopted, it is likely that more vehicles over the age of 10 years will be licensed in North Yorkshire, particularly as manufacturing standards have been raised and vehicles may remain suitable for longer.

Restricted private hire driver licences

Currently, all licensed drivers are subject to the same application criteria in terms of criminal record checks, medical assessments, appropriate training and Council knowledge tests.

Officers have been made aware that the Council's knowledge test represents a significant barrier to some applicants who have no need to possess licensing knowledge of matters relating to taxi ranks, meters, fares etc because they intend to work only in relation to school or social care contracts.

Proposal

To offer applicants the opportunity to apply for a restricted private hire driver licence for the sole purpose of fulfilling school or social care contracts agreed between private hire operators and North Yorkshire Council.

Rationale

Applicants for a restricted private hire driver licence would be invited to undergo a simplified knowledge test designed specifically to demonstrate their knowledge of related matters only. Compliance in this regard would replace the requirement to pass the existing hackney carriage and private hire driver knowledge test.

All other application criteria relating to criminal record checks, medical assessments and other training will continue to be required.

A condition will be imposed on all restricted private hire driver licences to ensure that the holder of such a licence is only permitted to drive licensed private hire vehicles for the purposes of fulfilling a school or social care contract.

Driver medical assessments

Under the current policy, all applicants for a hackney carriage and private hire driver licence must submit a medical and vision assessment along with their initial application and every three years thereafter until they reach the age of 65 years, at which point annual assessments are required.

According to the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, licensing authorities should apply the DVLA Group 2 standards in terms of criteria and frequency.

Proposal

To retain the requirement to submit a medical and vision assessment on application but only to require further assessments for drivers over the age of 45 years (every five years). Drivers over the age of 65 years would continue to be subject to annual assessments.

Rationale

This proposal is in line with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance. Further medical assessments may be requested in the event of a specific concern.

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Vehicles

Vehicle specification – to quantify the minimum boot capacity to remove ambiguity over what is 'sufficient' (no longer applicable to private hire as any requirements can be discussed at the time of booking and therefore the Council does not need to be overly prescriptive about luggage space). Prohibit the use of roof racks and other storage devices (to ensure nothing interferes with the HC roof sign). Require that vehicle modifications (post-grant) are subject to the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.

Vehicle inspections - to remove the requirement for a vehicle inspection when the vehicle is less than three months old (from date of registration). To require vehicle inspections to be conducted no more than one month prior to the application date.

Proprietors - required to submit a certificate of good conduct for all directors and partners (who have lived abroad for more than six months in the last ten years) of company applicants and to require that basic DBS checks are no more than three months old at the time of application.

Changing a hackney carriage vehicle – a new paragraph has been inserted to clarify that licences cannot be transferred from one vehicle to another but fee reductions may be available on request (currently £20 per full month remaining but this amount is subject to change over time and has therefore not been specified in the policy).

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Drivers

Type and duration – amended to confirm that the Council will consider single HC or PH driver licences where requested. Clarification given on the circumstances under which a licence will be issued for less than three years.

Language proficiency - new paragraphs to acknowledge the importance of language proficiency and to confirm that the application requirements sufficiently (and legitimately) provide an adequate test of the applicant's English language skills.

Private Hire Operators

Duration – amendment to clarify the circumstances under which a licence will be issued for less than five years.

Applicants – amendments to require proof of right to work in the UK and all company directors and partners are required to complete safeguarding training. Basic DBS certificates required to be no more than three months old at the time of application.

Itemised list of all policy amendments

Equality and diversity	
Para 28	Formulation of a new Inclusive Service Plan.
Air quality	
Paras 39-40	Reference to Council obligations to have regard to government strategies.
Para 42	Confirms that appropriate measures are included to reduce emissions.
Hackney carriage vehicle specification	
Para 51	Requires all HCVs to be zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) or Euro 6 compliant wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs). Removes 10-year age limit. Quantifies minimum boot capacity to remove ambiguity over what is 'sufficient'. Aligns WAV specification with IPT requirements
Para 52	Extends 'grandfather rights' to all vehicles licensed prior to implementation of the revised policy. Grandfather rights will apply until 1 st January 2030, at which point, all vehicle specifications (including WAV/ZEV requirement) must be satisfied.
Process for new hackney carriage vehicle licence applications	
Para 57	Requires vehicle inspections to be conducted no more than one month prior to the application date. Removes the requirement for a vehicle inspection when the vehicle is less than three months old (from the date of first registration). Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Process for hackney carriage vehicle licence renewal applications	
Para 67	Requires vehicle inspections to be conducted no more than one month prior to the application date. Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Transfer of hackney carriage vehicle licence	
Para 73	Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Changing a hackney carriage vehicle	
Paras 75-76	Clarifies that licences cannot be transferred from one vehicle to another but fee reductions may be available on request (currently £20 per full month remaining but this amount is subject to change over time and has therefore not been specified in the policy).
Hackney carriage vehicle testing arrangements	
Para 86	Replaces "Council's appointed garages" with "a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area".

Para 88	Clarifies that all vehicles over 10-years old are subject to three vehicle inspections per year (previously only applicable to vehicles over 10 years old that were approved by Committee but this didn't apply to WAVs).
Hackney carriage proprietor criminal record checks	
Para 102	Clarifies that appeals against new licences are to the Crown whereas appeals against renewals are to the Magistrates.
Trailers and roof racks on hackney carriage vehicles	
Para 135	Prohibits the use of roof racks and other storage devices (to ensure nothing interferes with the HC roof sign).
Hackney carriage vehicle accessibility	
Para 160	Ensures that vehicle modifications (post-grant) are subject to the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme
Para 167	Removes reference to age limit exemptions
Private hire vehicle specification	
Para 179	Requires all PHVs to meet Euro 6 Standards for emissions. Removes 10-year age limit. Removes prescriptive requirements on luggage space. Aligns WAV specification with IPT requirements
Para 180	Extends 'grandfather rights' to vehicles licensed by NYC prior to implementation of the revised policy.
Process for new private hire vehicle licence applications	
Para 184	Requires vehicle inspections to be conducted no more than one month prior to the application date. Removes the requirement for a vehicle inspection when the vehicle is less than three months old (from the date of first registration). Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Process for private hire vehicle licence renewal applications	
Para 194	Requires vehicle inspections to be conducted no more than one month prior to the application date. Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Transfer of private hire vehicle licence	
Para 200	Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application. Requires a certificate of good conduct to be submitted by all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Changing a private hire vehicle	
Paras 202-203	Clarifies that licences cannot be transferred from one vehicle to another but fee reductions may be available on request (currently £20 per full month remaining but this amount is subject to change over time and has therefore not been specified in the policy).

Private hire vehicle testing arrangements	
Para 214	Replaces “Council’s appointed garages” with “a DVSA-accredited MOT testing station in the North Yorkshire Council area”.
Para 219	Clarifies that all vehicles over 10-years old are subject to three vehicle inspections per year (previously only applicable to vehicles over 10 years old that were approved by Committee but this didn’t apply to WAVs).
Private hire vehicle accessibility	
Para 279	Ensures that vehicle modifications (post-grant) are subject to the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme.
Para 286	Removes reference to age limit exemptions
Private hire vehicle licence conditions	
Para 302	Removes prescriptive condition on luggage space.
Hackney carriage and private hire drivers	
Para 305	Confirms that the Council will consider single HC or PH driver licences where requested.
Para 306	Makes provision for restricted private hire driver licences to be issued exclusively for use on school and social care contracts.
Process for new driver applications	
Para 314	Makes arrangements for a simplified knowledge test in respect of restricted private hire driver licence applications.
Duration of driver licences	
Para 322	Clarifies the circumstances under which a licence will be issued for less than three years.
DVLA licence	
Para 324	Requires applicants to hold a UK driving licence
Medicals	
Para 330	Applies the Group 2 medical standards in terms of frequency - i.e. a medical is required on initial application and subsequent medicals required only for drivers over 45 years old (every 5 years until the age of 65 and annually thereafter). In accordance with Best Practice Guidance.
Duty to carry assistance dogs	
Para 352	Commitment to investigate alleged offences and to seek prosecution where evidence is obtained.
Para 353	Encourages drivers to carry trainee assistance dogs (in accordance with Best Practice Guidance).
Language proficiency	
Paras 369-371	Acknowledges the importance of language proficiency and confirms that the application requirements sufficiently (and legitimately) provide an adequate test of the applicant’s English language skills.
Licence conditions	
Para 408	Condition to be imposed on restricted private hire driver licences to ensure exclusive use under the terms of school and social care contracts.
Process for new private hire operator applications	
Para 414	Requires proof of right to work in the UK.
Para 415	Confirms that the private hire operator’s base must be in North Yorkshire.
Para 416	Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application.

	Extends safeguarding training requirement to all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Process for private hire operator renewal applications	
Para 422	Requires basic DBS checks to be no more than three months old at the time of application.
Duration of private hire operator licences	
Para 423	Clarifies the circumstances under which a licence will be issued for less than five years.
Private hire operator safeguarding training	
Para 428	Extends safeguarding training requirement to all directors and partners in the case of company applicants.
Bookings to carry a disabled person	
Para 450	Requires operators to identify any accessibility needs at the time of booking.
Private hire operator licence conditions	
Para 459	Removes unnecessary/obsolete requirements. Requires operators to identify any accessibility needs or luggage requirements at the time of booking.
Complaints about licence holders	
Para 482	Clarifies that allegations of criminal activity will be referred to the police only if it concerns offences outside the remit of the licensing authority.
Applicant suitability and criminal convictions	
Paras 499-528	Amended for consistency (a licence will not “normally” be granted under certain circumstances, but the Council retains discretion to take a different approach and must consider individual merits).



Equality impact assessment (EIA) form: evidencing paying due regard to protected characteristics

(Form updated October 2023)

Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy

If you would like this information in another language or format such as Braille, large print or audio, please contact the Communications Unit on 01609 53 2013 or email communications@northyorks.gov.uk.



যদি আপনি এই ডকুমেন্ট অন্য ভাষায় বা ফরমেটে চান, তাহলে দয়া করে আমাদেরকে বলুন।

如欲索取以另一語文印製或另一格式製作的資料，請與我們聯絡。

اگر آپ کو معلومات کسی دیگر زبان یا دیگر شکل میں درکار ہوں تو برائے مہربانی ہم سے پوچھئے۔

Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are public documents. EIAs accompanying reports going to County Councillors for decisions are published with the committee papers on our website and are available in hard copy at the relevant meeting. To help people to find completed EIAs we also publish them in the Equality and Diversity section of our website. This will help people to see for themselves how we have paid due regard in order to meet statutory requirements.

Name of Directorate and Service Area	Environment, Licensing
Lead Officer and contact details	Simon Fisher, Service Development Lead simon.fisher@northyorks.gov.uk
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the EIA	Gareth Bentley, Head of Licensing gareth.bentley@northyorks.gov.uk
How will you pay due regard? e.g. working group, individual officer	Individual officers
When did the due regard process start?	January 2024

Section 1. Please describe briefly what this EIA is about. (e.g. are you starting a new service, changing how you do something, stopping doing something?)

It is proposed to revise the Council's existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

The proposed policy incorporates the new Best Practice Guidance published by the Department for Transport and seeks to enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles in North Yorkshire.

The proposed revisions include introducing a new requirement for all hackney carriage vehicles to be either wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) or zero emission vehicles (ZEVs).

Section 2. Why is this being proposed? What are the aims? What does the authority hope to achieve by it? (e.g. to save money, meet increased demand, do things in a better way.)

It is necessary to continually revise the policy to take account of national guidance and any changes in local circumstances. The public sector equality duty has been considered in drafting the proposals and will continue to be considered throughout.

Research indicates that there is a shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire, and this is supported by comparisons with national data. As is the case in many parts of the country, the demand for wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles is not currently being met by the licensed trade in North Yorkshire.

The proposed revisions are intended to enhance the availability of licensed wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles sufficiently to satisfy the demand for accessible services.

Alternative options have already been explored to encourage more wheelchair accessible vehicles to be licensed in North Yorkshire by waiving the licence fee and relaxing the age limits on WAVs. However, the number of hackney carriage WAVs in North Yorkshire remains very low and there is no reasonable expectation that this will change without further intervention.

Alternative options have subsequently been considered to address the shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (including imposing a mandatory wheelchair accessible requirement on all licensed vehicles). The current proposal, however, is considered a more reasonable and proportionate measure to satisfy the Council's public sector equality duty and its air quality obligations without imposing an unnecessary regulatory burden on businesses.

Further measures (including provision of information relating to passengers' rights and the Council's approach to dealing with complaints) are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to all passengers with or without disabilities.

Section 3. What will change? What will be different for customers and/or staff?

If the draft policy is adopted following consultation, all applications for new hackney carriage vehicle licences from 1st April 2025 must be in respect of either a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV). All hackney carriage vehicle licence renewal applications from 1st January 2030 must be in respect of either a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) or a zero-emission vehicle (ZEV).

The proposed revision will narrow the scope of vehicles that may be licensed as hackney carriages in North Yorkshire and therefore may have cost implications on proprietors of licensed vehicles.

The proposal is intended to ensure that all customers are able to utilise hackney carriage services in future.

Customers will also have more access to information on passengers' rights and the Council's approach to dealing with complaints.

There will be minor changes for staff who will be advising the public and trade of the revised policy and implementing any changes in their day-to-day procedures.

Section 4. Involvement and consultation (What involvement and consultation has been done regarding the proposal and what are the results? What consultation will be needed and how will it be done?)

Subject to Executive approval, the proposals will be consulted on for a period of 12 weeks to gauge the views of the public, the licensed trade and any other interested parties, including wheelchair users and their representatives. The Communications Team will be fully engaged in delivering the consultation. Any responses to the consultation will be considered by the Executive in due course prior to a decision being made.

Section 5. What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

The proposals are cost neutral. The vast majority of the licensing authority's service costs (including the proposed consultation and any subsequent meetings) are recovered by way of licence fees and the service will continue to operate on the same cost-recovery basis in future.

Section 6. How will this proposal affect people with protected characteristics?	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
Age		✓		Mobility difficulties and accessibility needs are often more prominent with

				age. The proposals seek to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users. Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to ambulant passengers with mobility difficulties and accessibility needs.
Disability		✓		The proposals seek to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users. Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered by the licensed trade to wheelchair users and ambulant disabled passengers.
Sex	✓			
Race	✓			
Gender reassignment	✓			
Sexual orientation	✓			
Religion or belief	✓			
Pregnancy or maternity	✓			
Marriage or civil partnership	✓			
Section 7. How will this proposal affect people who...	No impact	Make things better	Make things worse	Why will it have this effect? Provide evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.
...live in a rural area?	✓			
...have a low income?	✓			
...are carers (unpaid family or friend)?		✓		The proposals seek to enhance the availability of suitable vehicles for wheelchair users, which should assist carers.

				Further measures are proposed to enhance the quality of the service offered to customers with mobility difficulties accessibility needs.
..... are from the Armed Forces Community	✓			

Section 8. Geographic impact – Please detail where the impact will be (please tick all that apply)

North Yorkshire wide	✓
Craven	
Hambleton	
Harrogate	
Richmondshire	
Ryedale	
Scarborough	
Selby	
If you have ticked one or more areas, will specific town(s)/village(s) be particularly impacted? If so, please specify below.	

Section 9. Will the proposal affect anyone more because of a combination of protected characteristics? (e.g. older women or young gay men) State what you think the effect may be and why, providing evidence from engagement, consultation and/or service user data or demographic information etc.

People of advanced age and with a disability will benefit more because of the improved access to wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Section 10. Next steps to address the anticipated impact. Select one of the following options and explain why this has been chosen.
(Remember: we have an anticipatory duty to make reasonable adjustments so that disabled people can access services and work for us)

	Tick option chosen
1. No adverse impact - no major change needed to the proposal. There is no potential for discrimination or adverse impact identified.	✓
2. Adverse impact - adjust the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We will change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, or we will achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people.	

<p>3. Adverse impact - continue the proposal - The EIA identifies potential problems or missed opportunities. We cannot change our proposal to reduce or remove these adverse impacts, nor can we achieve our aim in another way which will not make things worse for people. (There must be compelling reasons for continuing with proposals which will have the most adverse impacts. Get advice from Legal Services)</p>	
<p>4. Actual or potential unlawful discrimination - stop and remove the proposal – The EIA identifies actual or potential unlawful discrimination. It must be stopped.</p>	
<p>Explanation of why option has been chosen. (Include any advice given by Legal Services.)</p> <p>The proposed revisions to policy are designed to improve access for wheelchair users. The impact can only be a positive one.</p>	

<p>Section 11. If the proposal is to be implemented how will you find out how it is really affecting people? (How will you monitor and review the changes?)</p> <p>Further consultation and policy revision 12 months from implementation. Ongoing dialogue with the trade and disabled passengers (including wheelchair users). Monitoring the number of wheelchair accessible and zero-emission vehicles.</p>
--

<p>Section 12. Action plan. List any actions you need to take which have been identified in this EIA, including post implementation review to find out how the outcomes have been achieved in practice and what impacts there have actually been on people with protected characteristics.</p>				
Action	Lead	By when	Progress	Monitoring arrangements
Further consultation and policy revision 12 months from implementation.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	1 April 2026		Head of Licensing / Service Plan / quarterly KPIs
Ongoing dialogue with the trade and wheelchair users.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	Ongoing and by 1 April 2026		Head of Licensing
Monitoring the number of wheelchair and fully electric vehicles.	Gareth Bentley and Simon Fisher	Ongoing and by 1 April 2026		Head of Licensing / quarterly KPIs

Section 13. Summary Summarise the findings of your EIA, including impacts, recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

Research indicates that there is a shortage of licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) in North Yorkshire, and this is supported by comparisons with national data. The proposals are designed to enhance the availability of wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles in the area.

The recommendation is to consult on the proposals and consider any responses in due course with a view to implementing a revised policy, with or without further amendments, from 1 April 2025.

Legal Services have been involved in the drafting of the proposed policy revisions and in the preparation of the report.

Section 14. Sign off section

This full EIA was completed by:

Name: Gareth Bentley
Job title: Head of Licensing
Directorate: Environment
Signature: Gareth Bentley

Completion date: 23/10/2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Callum McKeon

Date: 04/12/2024

Climate change impact assessment

The purpose of this assessment is to help us understand the likely impacts of our decisions on the environment of North Yorkshire and on our aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as close to that date as possible. The intention is to mitigate negative effects and identify projects which will have positive effects.

This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. The final document will be published as part of the decision making process and should be written in Plain English.

If you have any additional queries which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Version 2: amended 11 August 2021

Please note: You may not need to undertake this assessment if your proposal will be subject to any of the following:

Planning Permission
Environmental Impact Assessment
Strategic Environmental Assessment

However, you will still need to summarise your findings in the summary section of the form below.

Please contact climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk for advice.

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Title of proposal	Consultation on the adoption of new Inclusive Service Plan and review of existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
Brief description of proposal	Adopt / review policy with a focus on how the Council will promote inclusivity and climate change impact in its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing service.
Directorate	Environment
Service area	Licensing
Lead officer	Gareth Bentley
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Simon Fisher
Date impact assessment started	June 2024

Options appraisal

Were any other options considered in trying to achieve the aim of this project? If so, please give brief details and explain why alternative options were not progressed.

Options are detailed in the report. The following options are being considered:

Stay the same, introduce Euro 6 standards for petrol / diesel vehicles, introduce a limited requirement to provide fully electric vehicles and to include hybrid vehicles as an additional choice.

At this stage, the proposal is to consult on available options. A further report will analyse the consultation responses and recommend final policy detail.

What impact will this proposal have on council budgets? Will it be cost neutral, have increased cost or reduce costs?

Please explain briefly why this will be the result, detailing estimated savings or costs where this is possible.

There will be no impact on Council budgets. Any costs associated with the review will be recovered through licence fees.

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>	
<p>Minimise greenhouse gas emissions e.g. reducing emissions from travel, increasing energy efficiencies etc.</p>	Emissions from travel	√			<p>It is proposed to reduce emissions from licensed vehicles with phased implementation beginning in summer 2025.</p>		<p>See the report for detail.</p>
	Emissions from construction		√				
	Emissions from running of buildings		√				
	Emissions from data storage		√				
	Other		√				
<p>Minimise waste: Reduce, reuse, recycle and compost e.g. reducing use of single use plastic</p>		√					
<p>Reduce water consumption</p>		√					

<p>How will this proposal impact on the environment?</p> <p>N.B. There may be short term negative impact and longer term positive impact. Please include all potential impacts over the lifetime of a project and provide an explanation.</p>	<p>Positive impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>No impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Negative impact (Place a X in the box below where</p>	<p>Explain why will it have this effect and over what timescale?</p> <p>Where possible/relevant please include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes over and above business as usual • Evidence or measurement of effect • Figures for CO₂e • Links to relevant documents 	<p>Explain how you plan to mitigate any negative impacts.</p>	<p>Explain how you plan to improve any positive outcomes as far as possible.</p>
<p>Minimise pollution (including air, land, water, light and noise)</p>	√			See above.		
<p>Ensure resilience to the effects of climate change e.g. reducing flood risk, mitigating effects of drier, hotter summers</p>	√			The proposals will reduce greenhouse gas emissions from vehicles.		
<p>Enhance conservation and wildlife</p>		√				
<p>Safeguard the distinctive characteristics, features and special qualities of North Yorkshire's landscape</p>		√				
<p>Other (please state below)</p>		√				

Are there any recognised good practice environmental standards in relation to this proposal? If so, please detail how this proposal meets those standards.

There are no specific recognised standards in this area.

Summary Summarise the findings of your impact assessment, including impacts, the recommendation in relation to addressing impacts, including any legal advice, and next steps. This summary should be used as part of the report to the decision maker.

The draft policy takes account of general government guidance in respect of emission standards and the need to transition to zero emission vehicles.

Sign off section

This climate change impact assessment was completed by:

Name	Gareth Bentley
Job title	Head of Licensing
Service area	Licensing
Directorate	Environment
Signature	
Completion date	9 December 2024

Authorised by relevant Assistant Director (signature): Callum McKeon

Date: 09 December 2024

Recommendations

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

17 December 2024

Mayoral Investment Fund – Acceptance of funding to deliver priority projects

Report of the Corporate Director of Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request approval from the Executive to accept the funding from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) to deliver the priority projects as set out in the report below; and
- 1.2 For the Executive to delegate approval to the Corporate Director of Community Development in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic, to agree and enter into the final terms of the grant agreement with the YNYCA.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In June 2024, a decision was granted by the Director of Resources as Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, the Executive Member for Open to Business, the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing and the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation to approve a series of grant applications to the YNYCA for the use of mayoral gainshare funds. A copy of the decision report is attached as Appendix A for information.
- 2.2 Following this approval, applications for the following projects were submitted to YNYCA for assessment and were subsequently approved at their board meetings on 6 September 2024 and 2 October 2024:

YNY Combined Authority Gainshare Awards					
Project	Contact	Service area	Description	Amount awarded	Council funding required
Project Delivery Funding					
Selby Station Gateway	Richard Binks	Major Projects	Improvement of the Selby station building – to accompany the Transforming Cities Fund scheme – in partnership with Network Rail / Trans Pennine Express	£700,000	Funding for Selby of £22.1m approved as part of the Transforming Cities Fund project and included in the capital plan
Works to accompany	Richard Binks	Major Projects	Works to accompany the	£500,000	Funding for Harrogate of £11.8m

the Harrogate Station Gateway TCF scheme			Harrogate Station Gateway TCF scheme (signals and junction works and enhancements to Station Square and Queen Victoria statue)		approved as part of the Transforming Cities Fund project and included in the capital plan
Scarborough Boat Lift	Chris Bourne	Harbours and Coastal	Scarborough Boat Lift and associated works	£700,000	Additional funding from NYC will be required to deliver this project. A report on the financial implications of the Boat lift and associated works is being prepared and will be reported to Executive
Electric Vehicle charging	Richard Binks	Major Projects	Electric Vehicle charging in Northallerton / Bedale / Stokesley / Thirsk / Easingwold / Gt Ayton	£175,000	No further match funding required from NYC
			TOTAL	£2,075,000	
Business Case Development Funding					
Project	Contact	Service area	Description	Amount awarded	Council funding required
Wyvern Link Road	Alan McVeigh	Network Strategy	Finalise outstanding feasibility and design information to allow an implementation solution to be agreed for road link.	£90,000	Grant is for feasibility works. Additional funding will be required to deliver the scheme.
Abbey Quarter, Selby	Julian Rudd	Regeneration South & West	Extend TCF transformation from station to town centre / Abbey area. Full design and community engagement, to include HAZ sites (Back Micklegate / Micklegate) and the 2 NYC-owned commercial sites adjoining the Station Square.	£150,000	Grant is for feasibility works. Additional Council funding will be required to deliver the scheme.
Accelerating Housing Delivery	Hannah Heinemann	Housing	Feasibility and development work to bring forward	£80,000	Grant is in addition to the approved development budget in the HRA Business

			housing sites to deliver 200 units.		Plan. No further match funding required from NYC.
Ripon Connectivity	Alan McVeigh	Network Strategy	Feasibility, design and options appraisal / business case model for: A flagship mobility hub at Ripon bus station, with expanded facilities Priority pedestrian links and active travel corridors	£80,000	Grant is for feasibility works. Additional Council funding will be required to deliver the scheme.
			TOTAL	£400,000	

- 2.3 A copy of the relevant decisions (minute reference CA24-41 and CA24-51) from the YNYCA Board meetings in September and October 2024 are attached as Appendix B, for background information (relevant NYC project approvals have been highlighted).
- 2.4 Discussions are now underway with officers at YNYCA to develop and agree a Grant Agreement for these projects, as is standard with grant offers of this kind. Prior to the Grant Agreement being signed, approval is required from Executive to accept the offer(s) of grant – due to the combined financial value of the grants.
- 2.5 As noted in the original ‘decision to submit’ report at Appendix A, the various projects are at different stages in terms of development and delivery. Where relevant, projects will be subject to further internal approvals in line with the Council’s project governance processes, which will include ensuring the Corporate Director Resources is satisfied that there are sufficient allocated budgets (including contingencies) to deliver the schemes in question.

3.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 If approved, the Council will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the YNYCA. Delegated authority is requested to the Corporate Director of Community Development in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic to agree the final terms of the grant agreement with the YNYCA.
- 3.2 A condition of accepting the YNYCA grant will be that the Council has satisfied Subsidy Control legislation for each of the projects. Subsidy control legislation enables public bodies to provide subsidies for local economic growth purposes, provided distortion to competition is minimised. An initial assessment has indicated that the legislation will be satisfied however formal assessment will be completed by Legal Services for each project as part of formal grant acceptance.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any funding in addition to approved budgets, required for the projects set out in paragraph 2.2 above, will need approval in line with the Council’s usual financial governance procedures.

4.2 The current status on match funding requirements is included in the table in section 2.2.

5.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

5.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment (EIA) screening has been undertaken and it has been determined that a full EIA on the request for approval of funding is not required; however, given the nature of some of the projects and the potential benefits they have for some of the protected characteristics, it would be beneficial to carry out full assessments on some of the individual projects at a later stage of the process, once funding is secured (see Appendix C).

6.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A climate change impact assessment screening form has been undertaken and there is not expected to be a significant impact on climate change due to the acceptance of the funding. All projects will be required to undergo an environmental impact assessment (see Appendix D).

7.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 The recommendations will secure additional external funding to bring forward significant regeneration proposals in North Yorkshire and accelerate the development of a pipeline of future schemes to help meet local and regional objectives.

8.0

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive approves:

- i) to accept the funding awarded by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority towards the delivery of priority projects and development of business cases for pipeline projects by North Yorkshire Council
- ii) delegation to the Corporate Director of Community Development in consultation with the Corporate Director of Resources and the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic to agree and enter into the final terms of the grant agreement with the YNYCA.
- iii) that the funding allocations and responsibility for seeking any necessary further internal project approvals in relation to project delivery are allocated to the lead Project Managers and relevant Directorate/Service as set out in paragraph 2.2 above

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – Decision report by NYC Director of Resources for submission of the funding applications to YNYCA – June 2024

Appendix B – Minutes from the YNYCA Board meeting held 6 September 2024 and 2 October 2024

Appendix C – Equalities Impact Screening form

Appendix D – Climate Change Impact Assessment Screening form

Nic Harne

Corporate Director – Community Development

County Hall

Northallerton

Report Author – Kathryn Daly

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North Yorkshire Council
Corporate Director Resources

17th June 2024

Release of YNY Combined Authority Gainshare – Priority Projects

Report of the Corporate Director Community Development

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To request approval from the Corporate Director Resources following consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, the Executive Member for Open to Business, the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing and the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation to authorise submission of the North Yorkshire projects to the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA), in response to the recent release of gainshare funding towards the delivery of capital schemes and the development of business cases for pipeline projects.

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The initial £9m of gainshare from the devolution deal for York and North Yorkshire is being made available by the newly formed YNY Combined Authority (CA). Around half of this is needed to fund the mayoral election and establishing the CA.

2.2 Of the remaining circa £4.5m, £1m is being allocated to fund the development of business cases for pipeline regeneration schemes, split equally between York and NYC. This is to help ensure that a range of projects are bid-ready. Funds are available now, via a short application process and allocation is delegated to senior CA officers.

2.3 The remaining £3.5 / £4m (exact amount to be confirmed) is being made available to contribute to the delivery of major regeneration projects in Y&NY, to be split roughly 50/50 between York and NYC. A detailed business case will be required to be submitted for each bid, reflecting the former YNY LEP assurance framework. The details of the application process were shared with the Council on 15 March.

2.4 Most suitable projects will have a business case already prepared, such as the Transforming Cities Fund schemes, and it is expected that this will be used to populate the business case to the CA. Projects should be close to implementation, with no major obstacles to delivery. NYC and City of York can each bid for several projects. Bids of around £500k (up to maximum of £700k) will get a lighter touch appraisal than 1 or 2 larger bids and so this approach is preferred.

3.0 IDENTIFICATION OF NORTH YORKSHIRE PRIORITY PROJECTS AND BIDS

3.1 In discussion with the Portfolio Holder and other senior members, officers have taken a pragmatic approach to identifying 'oven ready' projects to form the North Yorkshire submission.

3.2 Major regeneration projects from across NY have been assessed, with involvement from Economic Development, Regeneration, Highways, Planning, and Housing. Projects have been discounted if:

- they can be delivered by other funds (e.g. Towns Fund)

Appendix A

- there are significant obstacles and delay to their delivery
- they create unbudgeted costs for NYC

3.3 Based on these criteria, it is recommended to support the submission of funding bids for four projects to the CA:

Improvement of the Selby station building – to accompany the Transforming Cities Fund scheme -- in partnership with Network Rail / Trans Pennine Express – £700k
Works to accompany the Harrogate Station Gateway TCF scheme (signals and junction works and enhancements to Station Square and Queen Victoria statue) – £500k
Scarborough Boat Lift and associated works – £700k
Electric Vehicle charging in Northallerton / Bedale / Stokesley / Thirsk / Easingwold / Gt Ayton - £200k

3.4 Details of the four projects, including costs, strategic fit, timescales, outputs and risks are reproduced at Appendix A. The projects in Scarborough, Selby and Harrogate each involve a bid for £500,000 or above, and as such require a key decision.

Proposed bids to the CA for the development of business cases (£500k total fund)

3.5 There are a range of pipeline economic and regeneration projects across North Yorkshire, with new projects arising from the NY Economic Growth Strategy and a wide variety of existing schemes from former District Councils. Officers are reviewing these projects, including their fit with the Council Plan, Economic Growth Strategy and emerging CA economic framework, in advance of reporting to the Executive regarding priority schemes.

3.6 To assess which schemes should be submitted to the CA for some of the £500k fund for the development of business cases, officers have reviewed the pipeline regeneration projects in terms of:

- Can the cost of this project be met from elsewhere?
- Does the project have potential for a future MCA bid?
- Does the project require additional development within NYC ahead of commissioning external work?
- Can the proposed development work proceed quickly (e.g. within 6 months)?

3.7 On this basis, it is recommended that bids are submitted to the CA for the following pipeline projects:

GAINSHARE DEVELOPMENT FUND			
Wyvern Link Road	Andrew Laycock	Finalise outstanding feasibility information to allow an implementation solution to be agreed for road link. Funding in capital programme for delivery.	£90,000
Abbey Quarter, Selby	Sarah Fenwick	Extend TCF transformation from station to town centre / Abbey area. Full design and community engagement, to include HAZ sites (Back Micklegate / Micklegate) and the 2 NYC-owned commercial sites adjoining the Station Square.	£150,000
Scarborough Regeneration Sites (Brunswick Cinema and Former Argos)	Helen Jackson	Contribution to masterplan led by developers to incorporate NYC land as part of a whole site solution, and further investigation of the Brunswick project development options.	£100,000

Appendix A

<i>Accelerating Housing Delivery</i>	<i>Hannah Heinemann</i>	<i>Feasibility and development work to bring forward housing sites to deliver 200 units.</i>	£80,000
<i>Ripon Connectivity</i>	<i>Louise Anne Neale</i>	<i>Feasibility, design and options appraisal / business case model for:</i> <i>· A flagship mobility hub at Ripon bus station, with expanded facilities</i> <i>· Priority pedestrian links and active travel corridors</i>	£80,000

4.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If these funding bids are successful the Council will be required to enter into a funding agreement with the MCA. The implications of this, together with any significant legal implications of proceeding with the four delivery projects, will be set out when the appropriate permission is sought to accept the funding.
- 4.2 At this stage, the main risks linked to each of the four delivery projects, including any legal matters, are set out in Appendix A.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Further details of financial implications are set out in Appendix A.
- 5.2 It is proposed to fund the Boat Lift project through three different funding sources, subject to the success of grant funding applications:
- UK Seafood Fund - £500k
 - MCA Gainshare funding – up to £700k
 - North Yorkshire Council capital requirement - £553k or more, depending on how much grant is secured.
- 5.3 If successful, it is expected that the project will be delivered in the 24/25 and 25/26 financial years. Once delivered, ongoing maintenance costs would be met from revenue. As the business case is still being developed, costs and income associated with this project are not yet quantified. The full details of the business case will be included when the decision is taken about whether to accept the funding (should this bid be successful). If the Council is not successful in attracting the external funding of £1.2m, the business case for the whole project would no longer be viable and therefore the project would be unlikely to go ahead.
- 5.4 None of the other three proposed delivery projects has significant financial implications for NYC but specific details about costings, including any match funding and revenue implications outside of agreed budgets, will be set out when the appropriate permission is sought to accept the funding.

6.0 REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The recommendations will secure additional external funding to bring forward significant regeneration proposals in North Yorkshire and accelerate the development of a pipeline of future schemes to help meet local and regional objectives.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- i) To request approval from the Corporate Director Resources following consultation with the Executive Member for Finance, the Executive Member for Open to Business, the Executive Member for Culture, Arts and Housing and the Executive Member for Highways and Transportation that the:
 - a. projects identified in paragraph 3.3 above and in Appendix A, are submitted to the YNYCA (York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority) for funding in line with their invitation to bid for gainshare monies.
 - b. that the proposals for project development funding set out in paragraph 3.7 above, are submitted to the YNYCA for funding in line with their invitation to bid for gainshare monies.

- ii) To note that if applications are successful, a decision on whether to accept the funding will be taken in line with the Council's governance procedures.

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – YNY CA – Proposed NYC Projects for Gainshare Delivery Funding – June 2024

Nic Harne
Corporate Director – Community Development
County Hall
Northallerton

Report Author – Julian Rudd

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Minutes of the meeting held at West Offices, York on Friday 6 September 2024 commencing at 3.00 pm.

CA24-41 Mayoral Investment Fund – Project Funding Decisions

Considered – A joint report of the Head of Delivery and the Head of Strategy which set out projects that have been proposed by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council for funding from the Mayoral Investment Fund in response to the original approval in principle to develop a pipeline of investible schemes that will support delivery of the York and North Yorkshire Economic Framework.

Liz Philpot, Head of Delivery, gave an overview of key points:

- A schedule of proposed projects was detailed at Section 4.1 of the report. Two project appraisals had been fully completed and were now recommended for approval.
- **Scarborough Boat Hoist** – the requested funding of £700k was part of a larger funding package and would enable NYC to go ahead with another funding application for the boat hoist itself.
- **North Yorkshire EV Charging Infrastructure Improvements** – the funding was intended for replacement of charging points across Hambleton and Craven areas. In Hambleton the original supplier was now in liquidation and replacement of the installation was required to ensure the continued operation of the facilities. In Craven the original contractor had withdrawn from the market and the existing installations were not able to be transferred to a new operator.
- Further schemes would be brought to the next meeting on 2 October

Members welcomed the investment. It was noted that the Movement and Place Transport Study in York included plans to tackle congestion and reduce miles travelled.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) the following projects be approved for Mayoral Investment Fund grant:
 - a) Scarborough Harbour Boat Hoist - £700,000
 - b) North Yorkshire EV Charging Infrastructure Improvements - £175,000
- ii) appraisal work be completed to inform recommendations for the following projects be referred to the YNYCA meeting on 2 October 2024 for decision:
 - a) Harrogate Junction Improvements
 - b) Selby Station Gateway Contribution
 - c) York Movement and Place Transport Study
 - d) York City Centre Regeneration

York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority

Minutes of the meeting held at West Offices, York on Wednesday 2nd October 2024 commencing at 4.00 pm

CA24-51 Mayoral Investment Fund - Project Funding Decisions

Considered – A joint report of the Head of Delivery and Head of Strategy which set out projects that have been proposed by North Yorkshire Council and City of York Council for funding from the Mayoral Investment Fund.

The report provided information on the confirmed pipeline of investible schemes requiring further preparatory and development work. The Combined Authority were requested to note the projects listed in recommendation 1, which were being funded from an amount of £500k for each constituent authority agreed by the Joint Devolution Committee on 15 December 2024. The report also gave details of proposed projects for which approval was requested.

Liz Philpot, Head of Delivery, gave an overview of key points:

- At the time that funding was approved for the projects detailed in Appendix 1 delegated authority was given to the Chief Executive and Director of Resources to sign off the schedule of proposals, and these were now being brought back to ensure there was awareness of the projects funded through that mechanism.
- Appendix 2 provided a schedule of projects for decision at the meeting brought forward by the constituent authorities. Once approved projects would be progressed through Grant Funding Agreements.

Resolved (unanimously) – that:

- i) the pipeline projects listed below be noted, that have been considered by Chief Executive (successor to the Interim Director of Transition) and Director of Resources (Section 73 Officer) and will be progressed, under delegated authority, following the allocation £1m (£500,000 for each local authority) at the meeting of the York and North Yorkshire Joint Devolution Committee on 15 December 2023:

North Yorkshire Council :

- Housing Revenue Proposition
- Ripon Connectivity
- Scarborough Town Centre Sites
- Skipton Wyvern Link Road
- Selby Abbey Quarter

City of York Council

- Our City Centre Regeneration
- Construction Skills

- ii) the following projects be approved for Mayoral Investment Fund grant as listed below and detailed in the report:

North Yorkshire Council:

Harrogate A61 Major Junctions Improvements
Selby Station Gateway Contribution

City of York Council:

York Cultural Passport for Young People Programme
Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure

- iii) all projects will be progressed through Grant Funding Agreements (GFAs) and any outstanding matters will be addressed through conditions to be included in the GFAs.

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Community Development		
Service area	Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism & Skills		
Proposal being screened	To request approval from the Executive to accept the funding from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) to deliver the priority projects		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Julian Rudd, Head of Regeneration (S&W) Duncan Ferguson, Regeneration Delivery Manager Kathryn Daly, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills.		
What are you proposing to do?	To use the funding for the delivery of priority projects and development of business cases for pipeline projects by North Yorkshire Council.		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To help ensure that a range of priority projects are 'bid ready' and that funds are allocated to the lead Project Managers and relevant services		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	It is not considered that there is a significant commitment or removal of resources.		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your Equality rep for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		✓	
Disability		✓	
Sex		✓	
Race		✓	
Sexual orientation		✓	
Gender reassignment		✓	
Religion or belief		✓	
Pregnancy or maternity		✓	
Marriage or civil partnership		✓	
People in rural areas		✓	
People on a low income		✓	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		✓	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable	N/A		

impacts (e.g. disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.				
Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (e.g. partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.	It is not expected that receiving the gainshare funds from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority to deliver the priority projects for North Yorkshire Council would have an impact on how other organisations operate, or those with protected characteristics			
Decision (Please tick one option)	EIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full EIA:	
Reason for decision	As set out above, it is concluded that there are no adverse equalities implications; however, it is recognised that subject to the funding award the projects will likely have several positive benefits. As this assessment is purely for the funding bid it is not felt that this information will be relevant; however, when scoping each of the projects there is an expectation that they will include full EIAs to demonstrate the positive impact they are expected to deliver.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Kathryn Daly, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism and Skills			
Date	20/11/2024			

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Mayoral Investment Fund – Acceptance of funding to deliver priority projects
Brief description of proposal	To request approval from the Executive to accept the funding from the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority (YNYCA) to deliver the priority projects
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism & Skills
Lead officer	Duncan Ferguson – Regeneration Delivery Manager
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Kathryn Daly, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism & Skills Julian Rudd, Head of Regeneration (S&W)

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	No effect on emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	✓	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	The report is seeking approval to accept the funding awarded by the York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority towards the delivery of priority projects and development of business cases for pipeline projects by North Yorkshire Council. Therefore, this does not in itself impact the environmental factors set out above.			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Kathryn Daly, Assistant Director of Economic Development, Regeneration, Tourism & Skills			
Date	20/11/2024			

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Appendix A of this report contains information of the type defined in paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)

North Yorkshire Council

Executive

17 December 2024

Harrogate Convention Centre – Outcome of Soft Market Testing

Report of the Corporate Director of Resources

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Executive about the results of the Soft Market Testing (SMT) carried out by 31Ten for the Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC). It also provides recommendations for the next steps, including the development of Studio 2 and the consideration of adopting a more commercial operating model.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) is a versatile multi-purpose venue in Harrogate, hosting a wide range of events, including conferences, exhibitions, banquets, and entertainment.
- 2.2 HCC plays a vital role in the local economy, contributing an estimated £45m annually, benefiting local jobs, shops, cafés, restaurants, hotels, and bars.
- 2.3 Despite its economic significance, the Centre faces challenges, including an annual operating subsidy of £2.6m, (though this reduced significantly in 2023/24 to £1.9m), the need for substantial capital investment and significant carbon emissions.
- 2.4 In 2016, Harrogate Borough Council initiated a redevelopment project in response to the then declining income and the need for significant capital investment.
- 2.5 On 12 March 2024, the North Yorkshire Council (NYC) Executive received a report indicating that the estimated cost of Phase 1 redevelopment works had risen to £57m. The project became unaffordable due to the unsuccessful Levelling Up Fund application and other cost pressures. In addition, the proposed three-year construction programme was likely to disrupt HCC's operations, potentially affecting its long-term financial sustainability.
- 2.6 The Executive recommended awaiting the SMT results before reassessing the available options for HCC.
- 2.7 NYC engaged 31Ten to conduct the market assessment and options appraisal for HCC. The 31Ten report is attached at Appendix A.

3.0 ASSESSMENT

31Ten – SMT Approach

3.1 The SMT approach by 31Ten involved: -

- A site visit and tour of HCC.
- Discussions with NYC's senior project team.
- Reviewing the history of HCC's redevelopment.
- Evaluating HCC's current performance, financial projections, and maintenance issues.
- Engaging with public and private sector operators/developers.
- Providing a scored options appraisal for HCC.

Strategic Objectives

3.2 NYC outlined its primary objectives for the SMT, focusing on retaining HCC's economic benefits, protecting public funds, reducing carbon emissions, and providing best value. Specific objectives to support market engagement included: -

- Retaining HCC's economic benefits.
- Protecting public funds and reducing carbon emissions.
- Identifying investment opportunities to reduce the Council's subsidy and improve operational facilities.
- Align HCC's operations with NYC's long-term vision for Harrogate.
- Being open to various operating and ownership models.

Market Engagement

3.3 A key element of the options appraisal process was to engage with the market to better understand the current marketplace and inform whether the options being considered may be feasible, therefore it was important to try to meet with a range of organisations in the industry, including developers, third-party operated venues, wholly owned company (WOC) operated venues, and energy solutions developers/operators.

3.4 The results of this exercise demonstrated that there was limited interest in HCC from private developers, as retaining convention centre use on the site seemed to be the best way to retain the level of economic benefit from the site. A hybrid approach of only retaining part of the convention centre was also of limited interest, due to the constrained nature of the site. The exercise demonstrated that there is a limited pool of 'energy solutions' developers that would be interested and HCC is considered to be of a low scale to attract this type of offer. However, Officers are of the view that this may be worth exploring further as part of a future business plan initiative.

3.5 There is a very limited market of private operators, and local authority venues which have private operators tend to include other offerings such as an arena, concert hall or hotels, or be of a much larger scale and based in large cities, such as the London Olympia, Gateshead and Aberdeen.

Operating Model Insights

3.6 The typical operational model for Council-owned convention centres is through a commercial entity, often a wholly owned company (WOC). These types of operating models provide greater commercial flexibilities, alignment with industry standards and ultimately reduced costs.

Business Plan Viability

- 3.7 The SMT's feedback on HCC and its economic impact on the region was encouraging. The market believes a viable business plan is attainable, contingent on securing adequate capital investment over time to maintain the facility's safety and functionality. Key enhancements might involve expanding Studio 2 to accommodate larger conferences, implementing a more efficient operating model, and maintaining a focus on robust commercial performance.

Strategic Opportunities

- 3.8 The soft market testing also highlighted successful examples from across the country where convention centres have adopted a broader strategic approach to growth. These centres have formed partnerships with local government bodies or universities to expand their offerings and develop more innovative business plans. HCC should explore similar strategic opportunities in its future planning to attract a wider audience and secure additional funding. This could include collaborations with the wider Yorkshire region including, Universities, Colleges, Airports, and the Mayoral Combined Authority, potentially leading to a rebranding of HCC.

Options

- 3.9 In addition to the Market Engagement feedback 31Ten modelled various options for HCC's future, including: -

Option 1 – Do Nothing: -

This option would lead to HCC's gradual decline, negatively impacting income, maintenance, and economic benefits.

Option 2 – Phase 1 Capital Works (£57m): -

This high-risk, unaffordable option would cause significant operational disruption and has already been discounted.

Option 3 – Studio 2 - Commercial Investment Approach: -

This option focuses on increasing revenue and maximising the Centre's usage, aiming to reduce the need for a continued financial subsidy and attract future investment. With an initial investment of £7 million, Studio 2 is projected to generate an additional £1.5 million in annual income (£1.0 million net), presenting a clear invest to save opportunity.

Option 4 – Improve Conference Facilities and Change Use of Exhibition Halls:

This option entails a £30 million investment to upgrade the conference facilities, while either selling the exhibition halls or entering into a joint venture. However, private sector interest in developing the exhibition halls was limited due to site constraints and the requirement to preserve the economic benefits.

Option 5. – Freehold Sale or Lease Agreement: -

Although no potential buyers were identified by 31Ten, NYC was approached by an agent representing a global conference operator, indicating potential future opportunities including lease arrangements for the property. Further dialogue will be pursued with any positive feedback being reported back to Members.

4.0 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN AND RESPONSES

4.1 An informal presentation was given to the Harrogate and Knaresborough Area Committee Members on 5 December 2024. The recommendations, as set out in the report, were well received.

5.0 CONTRIBUTION TO COUNCIL PRIORITIES

5.1 Economic Growth - Investment in HCC supports the Council's Economic Growth Strategy and Destination Management Plan, prioritising business and leisure events for high-value tourism.

5.2 Carbon Reduction: Investment in HCC contributes to the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

5.3 Providing Value to the Taxpayer: Reducing or eliminating the subsidy to HCC enhances value for taxpayers.

6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

6.1 The alternative options are set out in the 31Ten report and covered in section 3.9 of this report.

7.0 IMPACT ON OTHER SERVICES/ORGANISATIONS

Operational Property

7.1 HCC is an aging facility with numerous mechanical, electrical, and plumbing (MEP) systems that require repair or replacement. As one of the largest carbon emitters in North Yorkshire, HCC also faces high energy consumption and costs. Replacing the outdated MEP systems with modern, energy-efficient alternatives is expected to significantly reduce the Centre's carbon footprint.

7.2 If planned maintenance, refurbishment projects, and reactive repairs are not addressed promptly, the building will continue to deteriorate, increasing the risk of operational failures. These risks will be managed as effectively as possible in the short to medium term through careful prioritisation and management of the maintenance and lifecycle costs budget. This approach will ensure the venue's safe operation and compliance with health and safety standards. However, in the long term, essential repairs are necessary to sustain HCC's operations, making inaction an untenable option.

7.3 HCC operates with a small building services team that handles client-facing projects such as redecoration, toilet refurbishments, and LED lighting installations while supporting the delivery of statutory compliance tasks. The majority of compliance work is handled by the Property Services team, which has successfully managed statutory compliance across the venue.

7.4 Reactive and planned maintenance is also provided by the Property Services Team. Adopting a more commercial operating approach could entail a dedicated on-site property team focused solely on HCC, addressing the timely and specific needs of HCC.

8.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Current Operating Subsidy

Financial Performance Overview

- 8.1 In the 2022/23 financial year, the Harrogate Convention Centre (HCC) required an operating subsidy of circa £2.6m. Through strategic initiatives, such as prioritising and minimising maintenance lifecycle costs (whilst undertaking this review) by £0.7m and improving operational efficiency by bringing the catering function in-house, the subsidy requirement for 2023/24 has been effectively reduced to £1.9m. These measures demonstrate a proactive approach to financial management, aiming to minimise dependency on subsidies.

Income and Expenditure	2019/20 Actual £'000	2020/21 Actual (Covid) £'000	2021/22 Actual (Part Covid) £'000	2022/23 Actual £'000	2023/24 Actual (Catering Service in-House) £'000
Income	5,220	3,074	3,691	5,154	7,303
Expenditure					
Employees	2,898	1,926	2,214	2,831	4,086
Supplies & Services	1,326	769	1,060	1,324	2,189
Premises	1,258	1,673	1,401	2,420	2,540
Total	5,482	4,368	4,675	6,575	8,815
Operational Loss	262	1,294	984	1,421	1,512
Lifecycle Costs	568	906	1,115	1,206	399
Net Loss	830	2,200	2,099	2,627	1,911

Utility Costs and Energy Management

- 8.2 Utility costs have emerged as a substantial financial burden for HCC, increasing from 17% of turnover in 2018/19 to 40% in 2022/23, amounting to £2.36m. The costs for 23/24 were £2m. Sustained management of energy consumption is critical.
- 8.3 Good progress has already been made in terms of reducing utility costs with new system controls currently being fitted to manage the heating in the Auditorium. Further savings will also accrue from changes made to the district heating system, although it is not possible at this stage to be precise about the scale of the saving this will yield.

Transparency and Community Support Costs

- 8.4 Historically, HCC's financial statements have included costs associated with supporting the Harrogate Theatre and various local community groups. To enhance transparency and provide a clearer reflection of HCC's operational expenses, officers will explore more effective methods for managing and reporting this continued financial support.

Employment Costs and Operational Efficiency

- 8.5 Increased employment costs as a result of revised recruitment and temporary staff arrangements have had an additional financial burden on HCC budgets. Managing and reducing these costs will be a key focus of any future operating model.

Business Strategy and Revenue Growth

- 8.6 HCC's focused business strategy since 2019/20 has successfully increased lettings income by 21% from the 2018/19 baseline. Forward bookings indicate potential growth resulting in total lettings income exceeding £4m per annum. However, a lack of sufficient conference breakout space has limited HCC's ability to capitalise on approximately £1.5m in new sales.

Investment in Studio 2

- 8.7 Converting Studio 2 into a dedicated breakout area, as recommended, is expected to significantly enhance the venue's commercial potential. This option focuses on increasing revenue and maximising the Centre's usage, aiming to reduce the need for a continued financial subsidy and attract future investment. With an initial investment of £7 million, from corporate reserves, Studio 2 is projected to generate an additional £1.5 million in annual income (£1.0 million net), presenting a clear invest to save opportunity. This would reduce the annual operating subsidy to circa £1m, though this subject to the development of a detailed business case before investment is approved.

Transition to a Commercial Operating Model

- 8.8 Potential financial and operating benefits exist from HCC transitioning to a more commercial operating model. This will be explored in more detail as part of developing a revised business plan.

9.0 HR IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Any HR considerations will be investigated and detailed as part of any future decision with regard to moving towards a more commercial operational approach.

10.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Legal support would be required for the procurement and award of any contract for the redevelopment of Studio 2.
- 10.2 The legal implications of any future operating model will be considered as part of a future report.

11.0 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 HCC currently meets the accessibility statutory compliance requirements. However, the HCC management team will strive to improve standards to ensure mobility impaired workers and visitors have equitable access to the venue. This can be achieved via a phased approach by accessing grants and exploring funding avenues over time.

12.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 12.1 Investment in HCC will contribute to the council's Climate Change Strategy by helping to ensure that the buildings and events are as energy efficient as possible. The council is committed to reducing its carbon emissions and has an aspiration to achieve net carbon neutrality by 2030, or as near to that date as possible. HCC's MEP systems have received little investment over their 40-year life and are generally approaching or already beyond technological obsolescence, resulting in excessive energy consumption, much reactive 'fire-fighting' repair and high costs to maintain the asset and service events. Investment over the longer-term will ensure that sustainable energy and low carbon technology is embedded in future redevelopment plans.

12.2 The preferred option does not immediately address the Council's broader sustainability objectives, although sustainability improvements would be made on an ongoing basis through the further investment supported by the Business Plan. As such, it is recommended that alongside these works a review is undertaken of the potential sustainability improvements that could be made as "quick wins" alongside the longer-term investment strategy. The review should consider external funding opportunities to help HCC reduce its carbon footprint.

13.0 PERFORMANCE IMPLICATIONS

13.1 Even with HCC's improved sales strategy and the increase in income being achieved as a result, inefficient and failing MEP, lack of breakout spaces and unsatisfactory access continue to hamper the venue's ability to become cost-neutral and grow its economic impact. However, a tactical investment approach over time will address a number of these issues in the longer-term, which will be to significantly enhance the performance of the venue and crucially enable the venue to remain open for business.

14.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 14.1 The recommended course of action is Option 3, which involves the Council developing Studio 2 and adopting a more commercially driven operational approach. This strategy is anticipated to enhance the venue's financial performance, strengthening the case for securing future funding, including external sources, to address the significant building challenges.
- 14.2 To improve HCC's effectiveness and efficiency, a shift in the operating model should be considered. The options appraisal in the 31Ten report indicates that transitioning to a Wholly Owned Company (WOC) is the best solution. However, officers recommend a more in-depth evaluation of different commercial operating models and delegations as part of developing a comprehensive business case for HCC before finalising the operational direction.
- 14.3 This recommendation hinges on a £7m invest to save capital contribution to fund the development of Studio 2, with repayment expected from an additional £1.0m in net income per year, once established. The investment will also strengthen the case for securing future funding, including external third-party contributions, to address the venue's long term maintenance requirements.
- 14.4 While the preferred option represents a critical step forward, it does not immediately address major challenges at HCC, such as the need for replacements for mechanical and electrical systems. This option includes only an initial capital injection from the Council, acknowledging that long-term investment in repair and replacement work will be essential to the venue's sustainability.
- 14.5 The Council is expected to first assess improvements in HCC's operating performance, driven by its commercial operations and the development of Studio 2, before considering any additional investments in the venue. However, this does not preclude actively seeking external funding opportunities, which are crucial for supporting necessary repairs at HCC.
- 14.6 Ensuring that HCC buildings remain safe and suitable for operation is a priority for NYC. Consequently, an adequate annual budget for essential repairs and preventative maintenance will be required in the short term, until the venue can self-fund repairs from surpluses generated through the new commercial model. Additionally, there should be a stronger focus on securing external funding opportunities, particularly those aimed at helping HCC reduce its carbon footprint.

- 14.7 The Council must remain receptive to potential market opportunities, including offers for the freehold sale or alternative operating models. Although initial soft market testing indicated limited interest in a full sale, ongoing engagement with prospective buyers, such as the recent approach from a global conference operator, could uncover unexpected opportunities. By staying open to these possibilities, the Council can swiftly respond to any viable offers that align with its long-term objectives. Regardless of the outcome of these discussions, the report recommendations remain unchanged.

15.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

Studio 2

- 15.1 Investing in Studio 2 will attract larger conferences that require more breakout spaces. Estimated at £7m this investment is expected to be repaid through increased income, presenting a clear invest to save opportunity. The Executive is requested to approve the expenditure of £7m for Studio 2, subject to the Corporate Director Resources being satisfied with the business case for investment and consulting with the relevant Members.
- 15.2 This investment will help rebuild confidence in the venue, paving the way for future investments and funding. Developing Studio 2 will enhance HCC's economic impact by creating jobs and improving its viability as a financially sustainable venue.

Commercial Operating Model

- 15.3 The proposal includes exploring a commercially driven operating model for HCC as part of a broader business case. This approach would align operations with other successful council-owned convention centres, offering greater flexibility and oversight. It is anticipated that this change will enhance HCC's ability to become financial sustainable.

Strategic Partnerships

- 15.4 It is recommended to pursue strategic partnerships with local governments, universities, mayoral combined authority and other entities to expand HCC's services and create an innovative business plan. Such partnerships could unlock new growth opportunities and funding, making HCC more appealing to a wider audience. These collaborations would also align HCC's activities with regional economic development strategies, strengthening its long-term sustainability and potential for rebranding.

Incremental Capital Improvements Over Large-Scale Redevelopment

- 15.5 Instead of pursuing a large-scale redevelopment, which is unaffordable due to limited funding and potential operational disruptions, the proposal is to focus on phased, incremental capital improvements targeting external funding opportunities. This approach would minimise disruptions, keep the facility operational, and ensure its gradual upgrade while maintaining safety standards.

Remaining Open to Market Opportunities for Freehold Sale or Lease

- 15.6 The Council is advised to remain open to market opportunities, including potential offers for the freehold sale or lease of HCC. While initial market testing showed limited interest in a full sale, ongoing engagement with potential buyers such as a recent approach from a global conference operator may uncover new opportunities. Staying receptive to these possibilities will enable the Council to act swiftly if a viable offer aligns with its long-term goals.

Prioritising Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Measures

- 15.7 Prioritising efforts to reduce HCC's carbon footprint is essential for both environmental and financial sustainability. A long-term strategy should be developed, focusing on carbon reduction and linking future investments to external funding opportunities.

Summary

- 15.8 These recommended steps aim to improve HCC's financial performance, operational efficiency, and sustainability while maintaining its contribution to the regional economy. By focusing on practical, incremental improvements and strategic changes, the Council can ensure HCC remains a key asset to Harrogate and North Yorkshire.

16.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive is recommended to:

- (i) Agree in principle to support the Soft Market Testing recommended Option 3 - the creation of Studio 2 and explore the shift to a more commercial operational approach.

Subject to the approval of the above recommendation, it is further recommended that:-

- (ii) Officers scope and tender the most cost-effective construction works to create Studio 2, engaging with NYC Align Property Partners and utilising preparatory work already completed, with cost estimates indicating a budget of £7 million.
- (iii) Develop a new Business Plan for HCC including investment in Studio 2, commercial operating models and the future vision for HCC supported by financial, operational, and sustainability plans.
- (iv) Delegate to the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Corporate Director Community Development, Executive Member for Finance and Resources, Executive Member for Open to Business, the authority to approve the business case to implement the improvements to Studio 2 to the value of £7m and to undertake any associated decisions.
- (v) Review and define the governance requirements for HCC.
- (vi) Actively pursue and secure future funding opportunities, including North Yorkshire Mayoral Investment, government grants, and other sustainability initiatives. As part of the business case, consider rebranding HCC to broaden its market appeal and align with the strategic goals for the wider Yorkshire region.
- (vii) Scope and implement immediate sustainability improvements and develop a long-term strategy, including identifying external funding opportunities.
- (viii) Prioritise essential property maintenance repairs to ensure the safe management and operation of HCC and explore delivering essential works via a small in-house team utilising existing North Yorkshire procurement frameworks.
- (ix) Delegate authority to Officers to continue engaging with potential external operators or buyers of HCC, with further reports as required to be brought back to Members.

- | | |
|-----|--|
| (x) | Delegate authority to the Corporate Director Resources, in consultation with the Assistant Chief Executive for Legal and Democratic Services, to review and approve specific officer delegations, for the HCC Director, to support commercial operating. |
|-----|--|

APPENDICES:

Appendix A – 31Ten HCC Options Review June 2024 (exempt)

Appendix B – Equality Impact Assessment form

Appendix C – Climate Change Impact Assessment form

Gary Fielding
Corporate Director – Resources
County Hall
Northallerton

November 2024

Report Author and Presenter of Report – Nick Edwards, Paula Lorimer North Yorkshire Council

Note: Members are invited to contact the author in advance of the meeting with any detailed queries or questions.

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

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Initial equality impact assessment screening form			
This form records an equality screening process to determine the relevance of equality to a proposal, and a decision whether or not a full EIA would be appropriate or proportionate.			
Directorate	Community Development		
Service area	Harrogate Convention Centre		
Proposal being screened	Investment in the creation of Studio 2 plus review of current governance arrangements, to seek funding where appropriate and to scope sustainability improvements and ensure essential maintenance works are delivered.		
Officer(s) carrying out screening	Nick Edwards		
What are you proposing to do?	Develop a business case for the investment of up to £7m in the conference centre to create additional conferencing space.		
Why are you proposing this? What are the desired outcomes?	To better utilise the whole building and drive additional income from being able to accommodate break out requirements from larger events.		
Does the proposal involve a significant commitment or removal of resources? Please give details.	The proposal would require up to £7m of capital investment		
Impact on people with any of the following protected characteristics as defined by the Equality Act 2010, or NYC's additional agreed characteristics			
As part of this assessment, please consider the following questions:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent is this service used by particular groups of people with protected characteristics? Does the proposal relate to functions that previous consultation has identified as important? Do different groups have different needs or experiences in the area the proposal relates to? 			
If for any characteristic it is considered that there is likely to be an adverse impact or you have ticked 'Don't know/no info available', then a full EIA should be carried out where this is proportionate. You are advised to speak to your directorate representative for advice if you are in any doubt.			
Protected characteristic	Potential for adverse impact		Don't know/No info available
	Yes	No	
Age		X	
Disability		X	
Sex		X	
Race		X	
Sexual orientation		X	
Gender reassignment		X	
Religion or belief		X	
Pregnancy or maternity		X	
Marriage or civil partnership		X	
People in rural areas		X	
People on a low income		X	
Carer (unpaid family or friend)		X	
Are from the Armed Forces Community		X	
Does the proposal relate to an area where there are known inequalities/probable impacts (for example, disabled people's access to public transport)? Please give details.	No		

<p>Will the proposal have a significant effect on how other organisations operate? (for example, partners, funding criteria, etc.). Do any of these organisations support people with protected characteristics? Please explain why you have reached this conclusion.</p>	<p>No</p>			
<p>Decision (Please tick one option)</p>	<p>EIA not relevant or proportionate:</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>Continue to full EIA:</p>	<p>✓</p>
<p>Reason for decision</p>	<p>The proposal do not meet the requirements for a full EIA</p>			
<p>Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)</p>	<p>Nic Harne / Nick Edwards</p>			
<p>Date</p>	<p>06/12/24</p>			

Initial Climate Change Impact Assessment (Form created August 2021)

The intention of this document is to help the council to gain an initial understanding of the impact of a project or decision on the environment. This document should be completed in consultation with the supporting guidance. Dependent on this initial assessment you may need to go on to complete a full Climate Change Impact Assessment. The final document will be published as part of the decision-making process.

If you have any additional queries, which are not covered by the guidance please email climatechange@northyorks.gov.uk

Title of proposal	Harrogate Convention Centre – Outcome of Soft Market Testing
Brief description of proposal	This report informs the executive about the results of the soft market testing carried out by 31Ten for the Harrogate Convention Centre. It provides a recommendation to redevelop studio 2 and to consider adopting a more commercial operating model.
Directorate	Community Development
Service area	Harrogate Convention Centre
Lead officer	Paula Lorimer
Names and roles of other people involved in carrying out the impact assessment	Hannah Nutsey (Climate change business partner)

The chart below contains the main environmental factors to consider in your initial assessment – choose the appropriate option from the drop-down list for each one.

Remember to think about the following;

- Travel
- Construction
- Data storage
- Use of buildings
- Change of land use
- Opportunities for recycling and reuse

Environmental factor to consider	For the council	For the county	Overall
Greenhouse gas emissions	Increases emissions	No Effect on emissions	No effect on emissions
Waste	Increases waste	No effect on waste	No effect on waste
Water use	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage	No effect on water usage
Pollution (air, land, water, noise, light)	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution	No effect on pollution
Resilience to adverse weather/climate events (flooding, drought etc)	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience	No effect on resilience
Ecological effects (biodiversity, loss of habitat etc)	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology	No effect on ecology
Heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape	No effect on heritage and landscape

If any of these factors are likely to result in a negative or positive environmental impact then a full climate change impact assessment will be required. It is important that we capture information about both positive and negative impacts to aid the council in calculating its carbon footprint and environmental impact.

Decision (Please tick one option)	Full CCIA not relevant or proportionate:	X	Continue to full CCIA:	
Reason for decision	<p>This report presents a recommendation to develop studio 2 and for HCC to operate on a more commercial operating approach. If approved, the report highlights that sustainability will be considered in future grants and possible funding. Similarly, it is noted that a long-term strategy to reduce carbon emissions should be considered and this development would be part of this approach.</p> <p>Greenhouse gas emissions and waste are likely to be increased for the council if the development is approved but this would be short term during construction. It is suggested that this development would support the contribution of HCC to the regional economy. At this stage, it is not proportionate to carry out a full CCIA because the details of the development of studio 2 are not yet known.</p>			
Signed (Assistant Director or equivalent)	Paula Lorimer Director of HCC			
Date	09/12/2024			

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**North Yorkshire Council
Executive
17 December 2024**

Appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies

Report of the Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To enable appointments to Committees and Outside Bodies to be considered.

2.0 KYLE AND UPPER OUSE DRAINAGE BOARD

- 2.1 The Executive appoints to the Kyle and Upper Ouse Drainage Board. At present, Councillor John Cattanach and Victoria Oldham are appointed to the Board. It is now recommended that Councillor Nigel Knapton and John Corden, the Chair of Huby Parish Council, replace Councillor John Cattanach and Victoria Oldham as the two North Yorkshire Council appointments to the Board.

3.0 IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no equalities, finance, legal or climate change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 That the Executive appoints Councillor Nigel Knapton and John Corden to the Kyle and Upper Ouse Internal Drainage Board.

Barry Khan
Assistant Chief Executive, Legal and Democratic Services
County Hall, Northallerton
25 November 2024

Report Author - Daniel Harry, Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny

Background documents - NYC Constitution, v8, July 2024 [NYC Constitution - Version 8 - July 2024](#)

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FORWARD PLAN

The decisions likely to be taken by North Yorkshire Council in the following 12 months are set out below:

Publication Date: 9 December 2024

Last updated: 9 December 2024

Period covered by Plan: 9 December 2024 to 28 February 2026

PLEASE NOTE:-

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Executive Arrangements)(Meetings and Access to information)(England) Regulations 2012, at least **28 clear days' notice**, excluding the day of notification and the day of decision taking, must be published on the Forward Plan of any intended key decision. It is also a requirement that **28 clear days' notice** is published of the intention to hold an Executive meeting or any part of it in private for the consideration of confidential or exempt information. For further information and advice please contact the Head of Democratic Services and Scrutiny on 01609 533531.

FUTURE DECISIONS

Likely Date of Decision	**Decision Taker	In Consultation with (Executive Member or Corporate Director)	Description of Matter – including if the report contains any exempt information and the reasons why	Key Decision YES/NO	Decision Required	Consultees (i.e. the principal groups to be consulted)	Consultation Process (i.e. the means by which any such consultation is to be undertaken)	Contact details for making representations (Tel: 0845 034 9494) unless specified otherwise)	Relevant documents already submitted to Decision Taker
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Amendments to the Council's Constitution	Yes	Consideration of proposed amendments to the Council's Constitution for recommendation to full Council. Subject to any comments Members may have, to recommend the proposed amendments to the Constitution to full Council for approval.	Relevant NYC Officers and Members The Members' Working Group on the Constitution	Correspondence and meetings	Moira Beighton moira.beighton@northyorks.gov.uk	Amendments to the Council's Constitution
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		2025/26 Mainstream School and Special School Budgets	Yes	To approve final details of the Schools Block/DSG budgets for 2025/26 for submission to the Department for Education including Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) and, if applicable, a 0.5% funding transfer from the 2025/26 Schools Block DSG to the 2025/26 High Needs	All mainstream school and academy leadership and Governing Bodies / Trust Boards All special school and academy leadership	Consultation with all mainstream schools and mainstream academies, Consultation and discussion with special schools and special academies Discussion at	Howard Emmett howards.emmett@northyorks.gov.uk	2025/26 Mainstream School and Special School Budgets

					budget To approve final details of the Special Schools Budgets 2025-26 including: The level at which the minimum funding guarantee (MFG) protection is set for special schools. Banded values for Element 3 top up funding	and Governing Bodies / Trust Boards North Yorkshire Schools Forum, North Yorkshire special schools	North Yorkshire Schools Forum		
7 Jan 2025 Page 351	Executive (County Hall)		Parking Principles and Tariff Re-balancing	Yes	A number of parking principles which are aligned with the Council Plan and rebalancing of the Council's car parking tariffs and car park operating times (supporting the car parking principles) are set out. Approval to adopt the parking principles document and agree the tariff rebalancing is requested.	N/a	N/a	Steve Brown, Head of Parking Services	Parking Principles and Tariff Re-balancing
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Health and Adult Services Care and Support Hubs	Yes	To consider and agree proposals for development of new Council-run Care and Support Hubs to support market capacity for adult social care, for	Local stakeholders	Stakeholder meetings	Hannah Brown Email: hannah.brown3@northyorks.gov.uk / Tel No: 01609 535906	Health and Adult Services Care and Support Hubs

					inclusion in the Capital Plan.				
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Proposal to increase pupil numbers at Springwater Community Special School,	Yes	<p>Following the publication of statutory notices, to determine whether to increase pupil numbers at Springwater School, effective from 1 September 2025.</p> <p>If there are no objections to the statutory notices, this decision will be taken by the Executive Member for Education, Learning and Skills at the meeting with the Corporate Director - Children and Young People's Service</p>	Parents, Staff, Governors, Local Elected Members, Town and parish councils, MP and other local stakeholders.	<p>Consultation ran from 6 September 2024 to 11 October. Consultation document issued to consultees and available on NYC website.</p> <p>Statutory proposals published on NYC website, in a local newspaper and displayed at the school. Statutory proposals representation period from 14 November 2024 to 12 December 2024.</p>	Jon Holden, Head Strategic Planning (CYPS) jon.holden@northyorks.gov.uk	Proposal to increase pupil numbers at Springwater Community Special School,
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Acceptance of funding from DESNZ for Warm Homes Local Fund	Yes	Accept funding for Warm Homes Local Grant, to provide insulation measures, renewable heating, Solar PV, and other energy efficiency measures. To assist the council to alleviate fuel poverty across the	Legal, Procurement, Climate change, Finance	No consultation process required.	Lynn Williams, Head of Housing Renewal lynn.williams@northyorks.gov.uk	Acceptance of funding from DESNZ for Warm Homes Local Fund

					county and support the councils drive towards net zero.				
7 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Request to accept the grant funding for Warm Homes Social Housing Decarbonisation Grant (Wave 3)	Yes	NYC submitted a grant application for Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 3 on 22 November 2024. This provides financial support of up to 50% for housing retrofit measures to council-owned stock plus low carbon heating incentive funding. The bid value was for £34.3 million, with a total project cost of £63.3 million. This would support housing retrofit of approximately 2,700 dwellings over 3 years from April 2025 to September 2028. The report is to accept a funding offer that is expected early in the new year.	Consultation with Housing Services, Climate Change, and central services including Finance, Legal Services, Procurement, Public Health, and Transformation.	A Task and Finish group has been established to ensure services are engaged. Align Property Partners are preparing the acceptance documentation for submission in consultation with Housing Standards.	Lorraine Larini, Head of Homes and Places Lorraine.larini@northyorks.gov.uk	Request to accept the grant funding for Warm Homes Social Housing Decarbonisation Grant (Wave 3)
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Review of Future Household Waste Collection Options	Yes	To inform Executive of the options for future household waste collections and the outcome of the Let's Talk Rubbish public consultation.	Cross party members task and finish group Members of the public Internal	Meetings and public consultation	Peter Jeffreys, Head of Service - Waste peter.jeffreys@northyorks.gov.uk	Review of Future Household Waste Collection Options

					<p>To:</p> <p>i) to recommend to Full Council, the approval of the recommended option for future household waste collections and the proposed timetable for service change across the county and, ii) to recommend to Full Council, the approval of the capital funding for recycling containers in relation to the service change.</p>	<p>consultation with senior officers</p>			
<p>Jan 2025</p>	<p>Executive (County Hall)</p>		<p>Harbours Infrastructure Projects</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Several coastal projects are underway, with funding already allocated for design and procurement work. This work is close to concluding, therefore the report seeks to update Members on the programme of projects and their prioritisation and</p> <p>i. approve a capital budget for the construction of essential pile replacement works to Eskside Wharf, Whitby</p>	<p>Harbour User Groups Tenant, Eskside Wharf</p>	<p>Meetings with the Harbour User Groups and tenant of Eskside Wharf.</p>	<p>Chris Bourne, Head of Projects chris.bourne@northyorks.gov.uk</p>	<p>Harbours Infrastructure Projects</p>

					<p>ii. approve a capital budget for the construction of essential pile repair works to West Pier, Scarborough</p> <p>iii. approve a capital budget for the construction of essential repair works to Fish Quay, Whitby</p> <p>iv. approve a capital budget to carry out design and procurement of a high priority scheme to replace piles at the West Pier Bullnose and Lighthouse Piers, Scarborough</p> <p>v. delegating authority to the Corporate Director - Environment to enter into such contracts as are necessary to complete the works identified above.</p>				
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term Financial Strategy - To make	Yes	To consider and recommend to Council the Revenue Budget for 2025/26 and the Medium Term Financial	Management Board	Budget consultation process	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources	Revenue Budget 2025/26 and Medium Term

			recommendation to Full Council		Strategy (MTFS) including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management; Prudential Indicators			gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Financial Strategy - To make recommendation to Full Council
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Council Plan 2025-2029 - To make recommendation to Full Council	Yes	To consider and recommend to council the Council Plan for 2025-2029	Corporate and Partnerships Overview and Scrutiny Committee Management Board	Meetings	Will Boardman, Head of Strategy & Performance, Alaina Kitching, Strategy & Performance Officer will.boardman@northyorks.gov.uk; alaina.kitching@northyorks.gov.uk,	Council Plan 2025-2029 - To make recommendation to Full Council
15 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Admission Arrangements 2026/2027	Yes	To report on the consultation response to the proposed admission arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled schools for the school year 2026/2027, and to seek Council determination.	Statutory consultation – public and schools	Posted on Council website and emailed to primary and secondary schools and other stakeholders including diocesan directors for education and neighbouring authorities. Dates of consultation 23rd October 2024 to 18th December 2024.	Lisa Herdman, Lead for Admissions, Education and Skills lisa.herdman@northyorks.gov.uk	Admission Arrangements 2026/2027
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy	Yes	Executive is asked to approve and adopt the North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy 2024 – 2028.	The Drug and Alcohol Partnership Board comprising	A 12-week public consultation was conducted and has now concluded. A	Angela Hall, Health Improvement Manager, Louise Wallace, AD	North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy

A Key Decision was taken on 12 January 2024 to undertake a 12-week public consultation on the draft North Yorkshire Substance Use Strategy.

North Yorkshire Council, North Yorkshire Police, Probation Service, North Yorkshire Horizons, North Yorkshire RISE, Job Centre, Humber and North Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board, Office for Police, Fire, Crime and Commissioning, North Yorkshire Connected Spaces lived experience recovery organisation, Tees Esk and Wear Valley NHS Foundation Trust.

Consultation Summary Report has been prepared and will be published.

Health and Integration
Email: angela.hall@northyorks.gov.uk /
Tel No: 07773169901,

21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, Leyburn – Proposal to remove Sixth Form Provision	Yes	To seek approval to publish Statutory Proposals to change the age range at Wensleydale School, effective from 31 August 2025, by ceasing the Sixth Form Provision.	Parents, Staff, Governors, Primary Feeder Schools, Local Secondary Schools, Local Elected Members, Town and parish councils, MP and other local stakeholders.	Consultation ran from 11 November to 20 December 2024. Consultation document issued to consultees and available on NYC website. If approved statutory proposals would be published on NYC website, in a local newspaper and placed on the school gate. The representation period for the statutory proposals would be from 31 January to 28 February 2025.	Mark Ashton, Strategic Planning Officer, CYPS Mark.ashton@northyorks.gov.uk	Wensleydale School and Sixth Form, Leyburn – Proposal to remove Sixth Form Provision
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Proposal to close Hackforth and Hornby, Church of England, VC Primary School, Hackforth – School Closure Proposal	Yes	To seek approval to publish Statutory Proposals to close Hackforth and Hornby, Church of England, Voluntary Controlled Primary School by 31 August 2025.	Parents, Staff, Governors, Local Secondary Schools, Local Elected Members, Town and parish	Consultation ran from 11 November to 20 December 2024. Consultation document issued to consultees and available on NYC website.	Mark Ashton, Strategic Planning Officer, CYPS mark.ashton@northyorks.gov.uk	Proposal to close Hackforth and Hornby, Church of England, VC Primary School, Hackforth – School

						councils, MP and other local stakeholders.	If approved statutory proposals would be published on NYC website, in a local newspaper and placed on the school gate. The representation period for the statutory proposals would be from 31 January to 28 February 2025.		Closure Proposal
Page 359	Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)	Whitby Maritime Training Hub	Yes	The report will seek approval: 1. Subject to a viable business case to enter into contract with the construction contractor to deliver agreed works.	Community Development : Economic Development , Regeneration , Tourism and Skills, Resources Environment: Harbours, Resources Legal and Democratic Services: Legal Resources: Property, Procurement and	Email and briefing	Helen Jackson, Regeneration Projects Manager helen.jackson1@northyorks.gov.uk	Whitby Maritime Training Hub

						Commercial			
21 Jan 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Transforming Cities Fund Works Contract Entry Authority	Yes	To seek approval for the Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) programme to enter construction contract, post grant funding body approval to Proceed assurance stage and subject to affordable tender pricing received from contractor.	Members Senior officers	Project Board Environment Directorate Capital Board Management Board	Richard Binks, Head of Major Projects & Infrastructure richard.binks@northyorks.gov.uk	Transforming Cities Fund Works Contract Entry Authority Transforming Cities Fund (TCF) – Update on progress and next steps.pdf Transforming Cities Fund Works Contract Entry Authority
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Scarborough Harbour West Pier Delivery	Yes	The report will seek approval: 1.To agree final budget for delivery of the Scarborough Harbour West Pier Deliver. 2.To request approval of the NYC required funding. 3.To request approval to enter into a contract with construction contractor to deliver agreed works.	Community Development : Economic Development , Regeneration , Tourism and Skills, Resources Environment: Harbours, Resources Legal and Democratic Services: Legal Resources:	Email and briefing	Helen Jackson, Regeneration Projects Manager helen.jackson1@northyorks.gov.uk	Scarborough Harbour West Pier Delivery

						Property, Procurement and Commercial			
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Scarborough Harbour Boat Lift	Yes	To allocate funding towards the purchase of a boat lift at Scarborough Harbour	Scarborough harbour users	Group meetings	Chris Bourne, Head of Projects chris.bourne@northyorks.gov.uk	Scarborough Harbour Boat Lift
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Ethical Decision Making in Adult Social Care	Yes	To update Members on actions being taken to address adult social care waiting times and workforce pressures and to set out the evaluation of the Ethical Decision-Making Framework that was put in place in January 2022.			Karen Siennicki, Assistant Director Adults Social Care	Managing Adult Social Care Pressures
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Grant funding to Raise Participation in Adult Essential Skills, life skills and skills for work in collaboration with the Voluntary and community sector'	Yes	o seek approval for an application to the York and North Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority for the purposes of raising participation in Adult Education, primarily essential skills, life skills and skills for work in collaboration with the voluntary and community sector as already demonstrated	York and North Yorkshire Combined Authority – application is based on the published skills plan. Better Connect as lead partner and other		Paul Cliff, Shared Head of Adult Learning and Skills paul.cliff@northyorks.gov.uk	Grant funding to Raise Participation in Adult Essential Skills, life skills and skills for work in collaboration with the Voluntary and

					<p>through the Multiply programme.</p>	<p>voluntary and community Sector partners.</p> <p>North Yorkshire and York Localities, economic development, Regeneration and adult learning teams.</p> <p>City of York Council.</p>		<p>community sector'</p>
<p>Feb 2025</p>	<p>Executive (County Hall)</p>		<p>To procure and support an enterprise data architecture solution for the council</p>	<p>Yes</p>	<p>Following LGR, the Council inherited a wide range of systems and data solutions, which restrict the Council's ability to share and leverage value from of the information it holds. As we move forwards with our transformation journey it is vital the platform is both feature rich as well as robust and trusted. The Council are seeking a flexible platform to deliver data capabilities, e.g. ingestion, transformation, links to corporate presentation</p>	<p>None</p>	<p>Mark Peterson, Head of Data and Insight mark.peterson@northyorks.gov.uk</p>	<p>To procure and support an enterprise data architecture solution for the council</p>

					tools, governance, etc. This will support immediate tactical benefits around convergence of data, but also longer-term strategic objectives around predictive analytics and the ability to forecast demand on services.				
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		North Yorkshire Council Tenancy Strategy	Yes	To seek approval from the Executive to adopt the revised Tenancy Strategy.	•All members of the York	•Through an online survey •The draft strategy has been presented to the York	Carl Doolan, Housing Services Manager carl.doolan@northyorks.gov.uk	North Yorkshire Council Tenancy Strategy
4 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Children's residential increasing capacity proposals	Yes	proposal to increase the CYPS capacity for residential provision.. This includes a proposal to add a third NWD Hub, a 6 bedded cluster consisting of 3 two bedded homes for the most complex children and conversion of an existing building to provide emergency and unplanned care for children. There is an urgent need to increase the property portfolio for children in care due to insufficient capacity in our in-house	Internally property, housing, planning and finance services. External partners, police, health, and education	A working group has been established consisting of all the internal services, meeting frequently to develop a project plan. Discussions have taken place with health partners and will be held via the safeguarding partnership with	Mel Hutchinson, AD Children & Families hudith.russ@northyorks.gov.uk	Children's residential increasing capacity proposals

					and increasing use of expensive and poor quality external provision. A national crisis of limited provision, increased costs, combined with an increase of referrals and children entering care is creating significant demand and service pressure.		police and education.		
18 Feb 2025	Executive (County Hall)		Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report
18 Mar 2025	Executive (Malton)		North Yorkshire Autism Strategy	Yes	To approve the North Yorkshire Autism Strategy, considering feedback and refinements following the public consultation.	The draft strategy was subject to public consultation (November 2023 – March 2024), including Scrutiny of Health. A range of partner organisations also contributed to	The Executive Member Health and Adult Services approved the launch of the public consultation plan at the Health and Adult Services Executive meeting on 3rd November 2023.	Natalie Smith, Head of Service HAS Planning, Public Health Team natalie.smith@northyorks.gov.uk 01609 534823	North Yorkshire Autism Strategy

						the draft strategy.		
18 Mar 2025	Executive (Malton)		Review of Household Recycling and Waste Collection Guidance	Yes	To inform Executive of the work undertaken to harmonise operational waste collection processes and procedures and to approve the draft Household Recycling and Waste Collection Guidance.	A cross party members task and finish group. Internal consultation with senior officers		Peter Jeffreys, Head of Service - Waste, Aimi Brookes, Service Development Manager, Waste Management peter.jeffreys@northyorks.gov.uk / aimi.brookes1@northyorks.gov.uk,
18 Mar 2025	Executive (Malton)		Joint Place Committee with Humber and North Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board	No	Proposals to consider options for the governance of joint business with the Humber and North Yorkshire NHS Integrated Care Board including consideration of any consultation on any proposed Section 75 agreements.			Richard Webb, Corporate Director of Health and Adult Services Email: Richard.webb@northyorks.gov.uk / Tel No: 01609 532139
18 Mar 2025	Executive (Malton)		Redeployment of land to the north and south of Crosshills Lane, Selby	Yes	To approve the proposed redeployment of the property	Executive members and Management Board at the informal Executive meeting held on 8 June 2021		Philip Cowan, Non-Operational Property Manager, NYCC Property Services Philip.Cowan@northyorks.gov.uk

15 Apr 2025	Executive (Harrogate)		Double Devolution – Pilot Business Case sign-off	No	The double devolution pilots are progressing with the parish and town councils, business case templates have been shared with them all and will require sign-off individually once completed. Specific dates to be agreed with each area and the Forward Plan will be updated for each area once this has been confirmed. Areas for information: Filey Town Council Knaresborough Town Council Malton Town Council Northallerton Town Council Ripon Town Council Selby Town Council Skipton Town Council Whitby Town Council	N/A	Not required	Rachel Joyce, Assistant Chief Executive Local Engagement Rachel.Joyce@northyorks.gov.uk; Tel: 01423 556705	Double Devolution – Pilot Business Case sign-off
27 May 2025	Executive		Q4 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q4 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Q4 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report
19 Aug 2025	Executive		Q1 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q1 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including:	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate	Q1 Performance Monitoring

					Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators			Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	and Budget Report
16 Sep 2025	Executive		North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery (LNRS) Strategy) - Publication	Yes	To seek approval to formally publish the statutory outputs of the North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery (LNRS) Strategy comprising -local habitat map -statement of biodiversity priorities. As developed in accordance with the LNRS Regulations 2023.	Natural England City of York Council North York Moors National Park Authority Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority Stakeholders and members of the public across NY and City of York	Online hosting	Timothy Johns, Senior Policy Officer timothy.johns@northyorks.gov.uk	North Yorkshire and York Local Nature Recovery (LNRS) Strategy) - Publication
18 Nov 2025	Executive		Q2 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q2 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Q2 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report
20 Jan 2026	Executive		Revenue Budget 2026/2027 and Medium Term Financial Strategy - To make	Yes	To consider and recommend to Council the Revenue Budget for 2026/2027 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Management Board	Budget consultation process	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Revenue Budget 2026/2027 and Medium Term Financial

			recommendation to Full Council		including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management; Prudential Indicators				Strategy - To make recommendation to Full Council
17 Feb 2026	Executive		Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report	Yes	Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget report including: Revenue Plan; Capital Plan; Treasury Management and Prudential Indicators	Management Board	Meetings	Gary Fielding, Corporate Director of Resources gary.fielding@northyorks.gov.uk	Q3 Performance Monitoring and Budget Report

Should you wish to make representation as to the matter being discussed in public please contact Daniel Harry
Email: (daniel.harry@northyorks.gov.uk) Tel: 01609 533531.