

LICENSING

DATE OF MEETING: 23 November 2021

TITLE OF REPORT: Taxi and Private Hire Policy: Mandatory Card Payments

Report of: Head of Place

Cabinet member: Cllr Sara Kinnell, Regulatory

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider an amendment to the Taxi and Private Hire Policy, relating to the mandatory card payment acceptance in licenced vehicles, following consultation with the public and responsible authorities

2 OFFICER RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 Licensing Committee is recommended to:
Approve the amendment to the Taxi and Private Hire policy relating to mandatory card payment acceptance in licenced vehicles; and
- 2.2 Authorise the Head of Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regulatory to make minor alterations and typographical corrections to the document before it is published.

3 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Taxi and Private Hire Policy sets out the Council's approach to the administration of the Taxi and Private Hire licensing functions under the Town Centre Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 3.2 The policy was updated in line with the Department for Transport Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (hereafter referred to as DfT guidance). The policy was approved by Licensing Committee on 2 March 2021 following a 12-week consultation period.
- 3.3 During that consultation comments were received from members of the trade asking that card payments should be made mandatory in all licensed vehicles. As this was not in the original consultation it could not be included in the new policy in March without a separate consultation. Licensing Committee agreed that they wished this to be undertaken.
- 3.4 Licensing Committee at its meeting of 1 June 2021 considered the proposed draft amendment to the Taxi and Private Hire Policy relating to mandatory card payment acceptance in licenced vehicles. The Committee approved the draft amendment for consultation.

4 CONSIDERATIONS

- 4.1 The key benefit of mandating the acceptance of card payments would be to provide customers with a wider range of payment options. This is especially important during the current climate where contactless payments are preferred to reduce the risk of the transmission of Covid 19. Members must decide if they wish to pursue this as a mandatory option for licensing.
- 4.2 The Council will only be able to mandate that card payments are accepted, but not how. This will be up to the licensed drivers or vehicle proprietors to determine.
- 4.3 Passengers can already pay by contactless card on the bus and rail Networks. There is therefore an expectation that similar arrangements are in place for licensed vehicles.
- 4.4 All taxi drivers must accept card payments via a card payment device located within the licensed vehicle and provide printed receipts for those payments upon request.
- 4.5 During the consultation responses were received from three people / organisations. These responses are set out in Appendix A, along with the Council's response.
- 4.6 Appendix B sets out the proposed amendment to the Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.
- 4.7 Appendix C sets out the guidelines for electronic payment devices.

5 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 5.1 Cash Payments are already available to the public and will continue to be available as an alternative to card payments.

6 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Service Plan

Is the proposal identified in the Service Plan?	No
Is the proposal being funded from current budgets?	Yes
Have staffing resources already been identified and set aside for this proposal?	Yes

Legal and Constitutional Issues

The updated policy sets out how Hart District Council intends to administer its adopted function under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 in respect of the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators. The policy has been appropriately amended in line with the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards published in July 2020.

Financial and Resource Implications

There will be an additional cost to drivers, vehicle proprietors or operators if every vehicle is required to provide means of card payment. There are a number of options for electronic payment, and it will be up to individual drivers or proprietors to choose a system that best meets their needs, and their customer's needs.

7 EQUALITIES

7.1 There are no direct equalities impacts arising from the recommendations.

8 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no direct carbon/environmental impacts arising from the recommendations.

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APPENDICIES

Appendix A: Consultation Responses

Appendix B: Proposed amendment to the Licensing Policy for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

Appendix C: Guidelines for Electronic Payment Devices