

Community Protection Committee

DATE 05/11/2025

REPORT Carolina Borgstrom
Director of Economy, Environment & Infrastructure

SUBJECT Limit on Hackney Carriage Numbers / Unmet
Demand Survey Report

STATUS Open

CONTRIBUTION TO OUR AIM

Stronger Community:

Ensure there is adequate and appropriate taxi provision for all within the borough to support safe travel.

Stronger Economy:

Strengthen the local economy through relevant interested parties having the opportunity to obtain Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- This report sets out the responses to consultation undertaken following the last meeting of this Committee at which 3 proposals were made in relation to Hackney Carriage provision in North East Lincolnshire following an independent survey.
- These responses are to be considered in terms of the final policy decisions to be made at this meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- That Committee makes a final decision on the 3 proposals outlined in Section 1.1 which will take immediate effect.
- That these matters are reviewed again in 3 years.

REASONS FOR DECISION

To comply with Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance.

To help prevent a reduction in Wheel Chair Accessible vehicles and provide a more accessible and flexible taxi fleet.

To support the carbon reduction agenda

1. BACKGROUND AND ISSUES

1.1 On September 6th 2025, this Committee considered the following recommendation:

That Committee selects 1 option from the 3 sections below as their preferred policy for consultation with Taxi Trade:

Part 1 (Hackney Carriage Vehicle numbers)–

- Option 1 - Maintain the current limit of 220
- Option 2 - Remove the limit

Part 2 (WCA Vehicle policy) –

- Option 1 - Maintain the current policy that where a licence was initially issued for a WAV it must return from a Saloon to a WAV when the vehicle is next changed or transferred.
- Option 2 - Amend the above policy such that it only applies to new applicants for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences and existing Hackney Carriage Vehicle licence holders with WAVs .#

Part 3 (Vehicle Power) –

- Option 1 - Maintain the current policy which allows all vehicle types
- Option 2 - Require all new Hackney carriage vehicle licences to be fully Electric or Hybrid powered. #

These requirements would not relate to temporary vehicle licences provided to insurance companies following damage to existing vehicles

1.2 After hearing from an independent expert, Council Officers and Hackney Carriage trade representatives the Committee resolved:

1. That part one, option one as set out in the report now submitted be the preferred policy for consultation with the taxi trade.
2. That part two, option two go out for consultation with the taxi trade as the preferred policy but be amended to also apply to all current existing Hackney Carriages which are currently wheelchair accessible vehicles.
3. That part three, option one as set out in the report now submitted be the preferred policy for consultation with the taxi trade.

1.3 It was also resolved to consult with the trade before final decisions are made in these respects.

1.4 Overall, 68 responses were received with the following preferences:

Part 1: Option 1 - 66 / Option 2 – 1 / Unanswered - 1

Part 2: Option 1 - 28 / Option 2 – 37 / Unanswered – 3

Part 3: Option 1 – 64 / Option 2 – 3 / Unanswered – 1

1.5 Any additional comments are included on the attached document.

2. RISKS, OPPORTUNITIES AND EQUALITY ISSUES

Human Rights / Equality and Diversity – it is important that the policy reviews can be justified in the event of litigation by affected parties. The former policy does not support these matters as it allows the number of WAVs to reduce.

Value for Money – any survey services being provided must be value for money in terms of their benefit and the method of re-charging the trade. Failure to ensure this would be a financial cost to the Council.

The Impact on the Social, Economic and Environmental well-being of the Borough – The transport service provided by hackney carriages is an important factor in the social wellbeing and safety of the borough. The availability of a suitable number of appropriate vehicles is therefore important and there is a risk if this is not properly addressed. The former policy does not support the social well-being as it allows the number of WAV to reduce. If there a decision to allow new purpose built electric or hybrid vehicles into the fleet there are potential positive impacts on environmental well being

Economic Risk – Vehicle costs can be prohibitive in some circumstances making compliance with licensing requirements difficult.

Economic Opportunity – Whilst fees associated with Hackney Carriage Licensing are charged on a full recovery basis, allowing applications for new Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences could provide some economic opportunities to the wider borough in terms of work for garages etc.

Equalities Impact Assessment – An initial assessment of the implications of the proposed policy changes has been undertaken and no significant impacts were identified that required further action.

3. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

Committee could suggest other policy changes for consideration based on the findings of the Unmet Demand Survey.

Committee could set a different limit, but there is no basis for a new figure as the survey report findings are based on the current figure which is considered appropriate.

4. REPUTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS CONSIDERATIONS

There are potential reputational implications in relation to policy changes outlined in the report. A statement will be agreed with the Council's communications service covering information requirements and communication channels to be utilised.

5. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Efforts are made to recover all relevant costs through licence fees.

6. CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE IMPLICATIONS

The provision of additional suitable Hackney Carriages would be a benefit for the safe transport of children and young persons.

7. CLIMATE CHANGE, NATURE RECOVERY AND ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

If there is a decision to allow new purpose built electric or hybrid vehicles into the fleet there are potential positive implications in this respect.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

No significant financial implications to the Council are anticipated as a result of the recommendations contained within the report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance recommends that where quantity restrictions are in place an unmet demand survey is conducted.
- 9.2 This report outlines the findings of the consultation with the trade. Both the unmet demand survey and consultation with the trade will provide a robust and sound legal basis on which to base the Committee's decision.
- 9.3 The present legal provision on quantity restrictions for hackney carriages outside London is set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a hackney carriage licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed hackney carriages, 'if, but only if, the local authority is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet'.
- 9.4 The unmet demand survey and consultation with the trade will provide a robust and sound legal basis on which to base the Committee's decision.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR implications arising from the contents of this report.

11. WARD IMPLICATIONS

All Wards

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Hackney Carriage Driver Consultation Responses.

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UNMET DEMAND SURVEY CONSULTATION RESPONSES
The hackney carriage office needs to reassess its policy for WAV's, considering all hackney plated vehicles (inc saloons) take wheelchair jobs.
Consideration should be made for others with saloon exemptions when their vehicle is written off or replaced as its unfair for the driver to lose saloon plate when they already have an exemption. Furthermore, consideration towards the financial status of drivers should be made as hybrid/full electric vehicles are too expensive for what hackney drivers make. All wheelchair exempt saloon vehicles should be allowed to replace their vehicles to another saloon instead of reverting back to a wheelchair car. Drivers have exemptions for medical reasons. Even though we don't have to take wheelchairs, it would cause arguments being customers and drivers unnecessarily, as all customers wouldn't understand about the exemption, Also to buy wheelchair vehicles is not cheap and not all vehicles come with the right paperwork for conversion. A lot of companies charge £1000 just for the conversion paperwork. The remaining plates available with the hackney carriage office should be made available for wheelchair access vehicles only for new drivers applying. This is what all the drivers have been telling me as I am the Chair of the Drivers Equality Association.
The Hackney Carriage Office should maintain the previous law instead of current implemented WAV exemption policy. It would be unfair to remove the existing right for exempted drivers to replace their saloon with a WAV vehicle when changing of vehicle. Some drivers have genuine health issues and have been granted medical exemptions by the council, these exemptions should continue to be respected.
Nowadays, most wheelcahirs are foldable and can easily be accommodated in saloon cars. Therefore, any licensed Hackney carriage vehicle – including saloon cars – should be permitted to carry wheelchair users when possible.
Removing the previous exemption law with the current exemption law would unfairly penalise driovers who already struggle finanically or medically. The previous existing policy is fair and should remain unchanged to support both drivers and passengers effectively.
Cost is the main issue as WCA vehicles new will cost a lot and will be an immense struggle for me. If it were as it was previously and I could licence my vehicle as long as it meets the licensing requirement there would be more vehicle options that are affordable.
All exempt saloon cars should return to wheelchair access, if they can't then they should return back to private hire.
I would like to keep my saloon plate because I cant use a WAV because of my disabilities.

I would like to suggest that the old rank on cleethorpes high street is reinstated as a drop off and pick up have become more dangerous as delivery drivers and private cars are parking there forcing us to drop off on corners and dangerous junctions.

The current number of licenses needs to remain the same as there are already difficulties in getting a space on the ranks throughout both Grimsby and Cleethorpes. More licences would have a detrimental effect on the income taxis earn and their income.

The 16 plates should all be WAV. Any driver trying the exemption to get a saloon car should all be put to an assessor and they should pay for it. (not their own doctor) 92% of all the exemptions are all fake, nothing wrong with the drivers if there is a fare going to louth with suitcases they soon get them in.

Make all those drivers who was given a w.a.v plate should be made to have w.a.v , funny how they all have bad backs or excuses to convert to saloon car when if fact they can lift wheelchairs into their saloon cars.

I would like to propose that to make things fair, the council considers handling any temporary medical exemptions and any lifelong medical exemptions as two different categories. For temporary medical exemptions, those could be managed on a case-by-case basis to monitor the drivers ongoing fitness to carry wheelchair passengers periodically, with a view to the driver being kept under review. Once they recover, they can return to carry wheelchair passengers as after their temporary disablement ends. If they are not going to recover, then a lifelong medical exemption can be applied for in line with the law.

For drivers with lifelong medical exemptions awarded under the Equality Act 2010, those drivers have a lifelong disability and have been awarded a life long legal exemption from carrying wheelchair passengers. As such they should remain able to drive saloon vehicles. It would be a detriment, and financial hardship, to this cohort of drivers to impose a policy that they have to drive WAV's when they are unable to carry wheelchair passengers due to having a lifelong legal exemption.

Although self-employed drivers or workers, if we were employees of the council we wouldn't be expected to deliver work which we are unable to carry out due to having a disability, and instead reasonable adjustments would be made in recognition of this, therefore we would like the same approach to be applied to this situation please.

In regard to part 2 option 2. There are not many affordable options for WCA vehicles. It would be completely out of budget on the current taxi driver earnings and that's without including the cost of living. The other issue is buying a vehicle for its specific accessibility at such a high cost and not be able to physically use it for its intended purpose is money we already don't have down the drain for appearances sake.

All vehicles on the rank should be wheelchair accessible (just as all Black Cabs are) regardless of whether the Driver has an exemption certificate from handling them or

not HOWEVER the big stumbling block is the cost of WAV's under 5 years old and maybe North East Lincolnshire Licensing could copy say Leeds Councils policy, whose policy is that "cars" must be first registered as per this Council (5 Years old or under) BUT WAV's they allow them to be first registered at 8 years old or under, they have clearly recognised that the price is a barrier to getting WAV,s licensed. North East Lincolnshire Council should consider reviewing its current policy to ensure more WAV,s are available for people with disabilities to help enrich their lives.

in order to keep WAV as what we need drivers that have more than 1 vehicle should be made to use the saloon car plate and rent the WAV. I think part 2 option 1 will go a long way to putting things right.

Disagree with Mr Somir my Mother and many wheelchair users can not get out of wheelchair to get in front seat. There is a need for WAV's.

Instead of a lifetime exemption a medical every three years.

With regards to WAV I strongly believe that if it's a WAV plate it should be on a WAV vehicle. If the driver has an exemption certificate then he can still drive the WAV vehicle with the certificate in the window screen. I believe this would solve some of the problems; alternatively the driver could go Private Hire. There is enough WAV plates they need to be on WAV vehicles.

Any wheelchair-exempt plate that was previously permitted on a saloon vehicle should continue to be allowed for use on a saloon vehicle when the licensed driver replaces their car. There is no practical benefit in requiring exempt drivers to switch back to a wheelchair-accessible vehicle, as these drivers are not carrying wheelchair passengers and do not use their vehicles for that purpose.

In fact, fitting a wheelchair-accessible vehicle in such cases may cause confusion and disappointment for customers who assume the vehicle can accommodate wheelchairs when it cannot. Furthermore, changing from a saloon vehicle back to a wheelchair-accessible vehicle would impose significant financial costs — including the purchase of a new vehicle, the removal and refitting of the taxi meter, and the cost of certification — all without any practical public benefit.

Although the current policy requires me to revert to a WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle) when changing my vehicle, I believe such decisions should be considered on an individual basis. Given that my medical condition is lifelong and I have been granted a permanent exemption, it would be more reasonable to assess each case according to personal circumstances. Individuals with severe or comparable medical conditions should be permitted to continue operating under the saloon vehicle exemption if they are genuinely unable to manage a WAV. It is illogical to expect someone who cannot safely operate such a vehicle to purchase one, especially when the cost ranges from £15,000 to £30,000. Therefore, I believe exemptions should remain valid for those who meet the medical criteria, allowing them to continue providing taxi services without undue hardship.

I wish to suggest that the taxi rank is moved back to its previous place on Cleethorpes High Street with cameras in place as drop offs and pick ups have become more dangerous due to delivery drivers, private hire and private vehicles parking there forcing us to pick up/drop off customers at places other than the allocated rank.
There is no more space at Town Rank, and please make for us a rank on high street Cleethorpes.
There is a problem in Cleethorpes high street rank delivery driver always parking there and we had to wait on Osborne street then no body follow the queue please could you make high street taxi only after at least 5pm.
The Hackney Carriage Office should keep the previous WAV exemption policy. Forcing exempt drivers, especially those with medical issues, to switch to WAVs is unfair. Most wheelchairs are foldable and fit in saloon cars, so these vehicles should remain allowed. The old policy was fair and should stay unchanged.
The wheelchair taxi plate should stay on a wheelchair accessible vehicle. If some drivers have an exemption they should have to go back to private hire.