

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

meeting date: 30 JANUARY 2024
title: ELAP SEATS AND WHEELCHAIR ACCESS PROVISION
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT, CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: STEPHEN BARKER, SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 Committee is requested to determine whether there should be consultation on variation of the Council's Licensing Policy in respect of Hackney Carriages, Private Hire vehicles, drivers and operators in respect of provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles and vehicles with ELAP seats.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities

- Community Objectives }
 - Corporate Priorities }
 - Other Considerations }
- Consideration of these issues will promote the Council's aim to be a well managed Council supporting all members of the community.

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Council's policy for licensing Hackney Carriage drivers and vehicles, Private Hire operators, drivers and vehicles ("the Policy") states at 2.2 that of the 53 Hackney Carriages licensed by the Council, 4 are fully wheelchair accessible and 8 have ELAP seats. An ELAP seat is a rotating manual swivel seat enabling users to transfer on to the car seat whilst it is rotated up to 90 degrees outside the vehicle.

2.2 The 4 wheelchair accessible and 8 ELAP licensed were issued on condition that the vehicles remained as such.

3 ISSUES

- 3.1 At the annual taxi meeting, some proprietors had requested discontinuance of the requirement for ELAP seats. It was considered that such seats were not satisfactory, and proprietors stated that certain other authorities had withdrawn the requirement for such seats. It was also noted that other authorities had a policy requirement for all Hackney Carriages to be wheelchair accessible.
- 3.2 There was further discussion on the general suitability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, and the approach taken by certain drivers to people with a disability. Preference was expressed for side opening vehicles rather than back loading vehicles. Currently, all applicants for a new Hackney Carriage or Private Hire driver's licence have to undergo disability awareness training with the Blue Lamp Trust; this does not apply on renewal.
- 3.3 Committee is requested to consider whether there should be amendment of the policy in respect of provision of Hackney Carriages for disabled users, and to introduce disability awareness training as a condition for existing drivers, with a requirement that such training be renewed at a specified interval. The policy was first approved in April 2017, reviewed in September 2018, and the Head of Legal and Democratic Services has delegated powers to amend it where required by legislation or to comply with a resolution of Committee to change the Council's requirements or procedures.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications
- Resources – officer time will be utilised in consultation.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – N/A
 - Political – N/A
 - Reputation – N/A

- Equality & Diversity – amendment of the policy will provide clarity and support for disabled residents.

5 **RECOMMENDED THAT COMMITTEE**

- 5.1 Authorise the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to consult with the trade and with all interested or affected parties on any proposed amendment to the policy, and to report back to Committee.

STEPHEN BARKER

MARSHAL SCOTT

SOLICITOR

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

For further information please ask for Stephen Barker, extension 3216.