

**Report of the Chief Executive**

<b>AMENDMENT TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE POLICY AGE OF VEHICLE</b>
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1. Purpose of Report

To consider a request from the taxi trade to amend the current age policy for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles as outlined in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy.

2. Recommendation

**The Committee is asked to CONSIDER and RESOLVE the request accordingly.**

3. Detail

Since 2004, no hackney carriage (HC) or private hire vehicles (PHV) over 5 years old at date of first registration have been granted a new licence.

The current policy states that licence plates for HC and PHVs under 5 years old are issued annually, following a successful examination of the vehicle. When a vehicle has reached the age of 5 years it will, on the next renewal, be licensed on a six monthly basis. Subject to the vehicle successfully passing the examination, the vehicle will continue to be renewed up to the age of 8 years. Vehicles over the age of 8 years will not normally be licensed by the Council unless they are wheelchair accessible. Wheelchair accessible vehicles will normally be renewed up to the age of 10 years.

Where vehicles do not comply with the current vehicle age conditions and have reached 8 years old, application may be made for an exceptional conditions test and the vehicle subjected to a stringent examination process. If the examination is successful, the vehicle is licensed for a further 6 months and subject to further successful examinations may continue to be licensed until such time as it fails to pass.

Representations have been received from the taxi trade expressing concern over the current age limitations of the policy. Since the Covid pandemic public demand for taxis has been impacted and trade has decreased.

The cost of second hand vehicles has risen dramatically over the last three years. One driver has advised that the cost of a three-year-old Astra estate is now £5000 greater than three years ago.

There has also been a general improvement in vehicle quality.

The request is to allow vehicles of up to 8 years old at date of first registration to be granted a new licence.

However, all current testing requirements should remain in place to ensure that vehicle standards and customer comfort and safety remains unaffected.

Should the Committee consider such a proposal it may be appropriate to amend the policy as set out in appendix 1. Attached as appendix 2 is an Equality Impact Assessment.

The proposed amendment would support the taxi trade whilst retaining current vehicle, comfort and safety standards.

4. Financial Implications

The comments from the Head of Finance Services were as follows:

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report, although the change in parameters could generate a nominal increase in vehicle applications and income.

5. Legal Implications

The comments from the Monitoring Officer / Head of Legal Services were as follows:

The legal and policy considerations are contained within the report, therefore there are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

6. Human Resources Implications

The comments from the Human Resources Manager were as follows:

No comments

7. Union Comments

The Union comments were as follows:

No comments

8. Climate Change Implications

In general, older vehicles have a tendency to emit more carbon emissions than newer ones. Taxi drivers, where possible, should be encouraged to switch to newer more fuel-efficient vehicles including those that are electric.

9. Data Protection Compliance Implications

This report does not contain any [OFFICIAL (SENSITIVE)] information and there are no Data Protection issues in relation to this report.

10. Equality Impact Assessment

As this is a change to policy / a new policy an equality impact assessment is included in the appendix to this report.

11. Background Papers

Nil

**APPENDIX 1****Current Policy****6.3 Vehicle age and emissions**Age

Licence plates for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles under 5 years old are issued annually and following a successful examination of the vehicle, plates will be issued. The old plates must be surrendered before new plates will be released. When a vehicle has reached the age of 5 years it will, on the next renewal, be licensed on a six monthly basis. Subject to the vehicle successfully passing the examination, the vehicle will continue to be renewed up to the age of 8 years. Vehicles over the age of 8 years will not normally be licensed by the Council unless they are wheelchair accessible. Wheelchair accessible vehicles will normally be renewed up to the age of 10 years.

Where vehicles do not comply with the current vehicle age conditions, application may be made for an exceptional conditions test. This will normally take place at least two months before the expiry of the current licence so that should the vehicle fail the test, the applicant will have sufficient time to source a new vehicle. Further details of the exceptional condition process can be found in appendix H.

**Proposed amendment****6.3 Vehicle age and emissions**Age

Licence plates for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles under 5 years old are issued annually and following a successful examination of the vehicle, plates will be issued. The old plates must be surrendered before new plates will be released. When a vehicle has reached the age of 5 years it will, on the next renewal, be licensed on a six monthly basis. Subject to the vehicle successfully passing the examination, the vehicle will continue to be renewed.

When a vehicle reaches the age of 8 years it will become subject to an exceptional conditions test. This will normally take place at least two months before the expiry of the current licence so that should the vehicle fail the test, the applicant will have sufficient time to source a new vehicle.

The supplementary test will apply to all HC, PHV and wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Further details of the exceptional condition process can be found in appendix H.

**Vehicles over 8 years at date of first registration will not be licensed as a new vehicle.**