

Report to: Licensing and Enforcement Committee

Date of Meeting 26 October 2022

Document classification: Part A Public Document

Exemption applied: None

Review date for release N/A



Report on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Ages

Report summary:

To temporarily amend the Council's hackney carriage and private hire licensing policy to amend the age of newly licensed vehicles until full review of policy next year.

Is the proposed decision in accordance with:

Budget Yes ☒ No ☐

Policy Framework Yes ☒ No ☐

Recommendation:

That the Committee considers a further request from Hackney Carriage Vehicle licence holders to temporarily extend the maximum age for newly licensed vehicles to 5 years from date of manufacture.

Reason for recommendation:

The Licensing and Enforcement Committee is asked to consider approving a temporary arrangement to revise the age requirements of newly licensed vehicles.

Officer: Steve Saunders, Licensing Manager (Governance and Licensing)

Portfolio(s) (check which apply):

- ☐ Climate Action and Emergency Response
- ☒ Coast, Country and Environment
- ☐ Council and Corporate Co-ordination
- ☐ Democracy, Transparency and Communications
- ☐ Economy and Assets
- ☐ Finance
- ☐ Strategic Planning
- ☐ Sustainable Homes and Communities
- ☐ Tourism, Sports, Leisure and Culture

Equalities impact Low Impact

Climate change Low Impact

Risk: Low Risk;

Links to background information

Link to [Council Plan](#)

Priorities (check which apply)

- ☐ Better homes and communities for all
 - ☐ A greener East Devon
 - ☒ A resilient economy
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Report in full

1 Background

- 1.1 The Council's Taxi and Private Hire licensing policy was approved in 2017 and is due to be fully reviewed in 2023 through consulting the public, licence holders and all stakeholders. The policy has been revised when necessary and temporary amendments were also authorised by this Committee under emergency measures arising from the Coronavirus Act 2020 and the Health Protection (Business Closure) Regulations 2020.
- 1.2 The amendments did not replace the legislation governing hackney and private hire operations and licence holders have to comply with the requirements of the Council's existing policy. As part of the support to licensees during the Coronavirus period, this Committee temporarily relaxed the policy for the age of newly licensed cars from being no older than 4 years (from date of manufacture), to allow officers to consider licensing those up to 5 years of age. This temporary change helped alleviate the impact of costs for licensees when needing to change vehicles.
- 1.3 During the course of contact with licensees regarding taxi fares, the trade has asked whether the age relaxation from vehicles aged 4 to 5 years could be approved and continued as a result of the current economic situation. The change will further support with the costs of purchasing newly licensed taxi (and Public Hire) vehicles.
- 1.4 Acknowledging that public safety is paramount, licensing officers understand the circumstances experienced by the taxi trade and licence holders who continue to manage continuing financial challenges. Officers conduct thorough assessment and checks for each newly licensed vehicle and it is not considered as being a risk to the public by approving this change until the full policy review.
- 1.5 Officers would recommend that the temporary option to purchase and licence suitable vehicles up to 5 years of age be considered from today and to operate until this Council's Taxi Policy is fully reviewed in early 2023. At that point the age and suitability of licensed vehicles will be amongst all other factors for drivers, vehicles and operators reviewed in the next policy. It would not be appropriate to consider any other age change at this point, other than that previously approved for 5 year old vehicles until the full policy is reviewed.
- 1.6 If the Committee should give approval today, it will provide officers the necessary delegated power to licence new taxis and private hire vehicles up to the age of 5 years from date of manufacture rather than those of a maximum of 4 years of age. That age amendment will be in line with the approval provided under the Coronavirus amendments. Any consideration to extend the age of newly licensed vehicles, or those reaching the end of their licensed working life should be considered under the full policy review and officers would not seek any increase of the current age requirements beyond that previously approved, being for 5 years as a maximum age.

Financial implications:

This would incur minimal officer time and costs.

Legal implications:

The proposed change amends the current taxi licence policy until the full policy is reviewed in 2023. The change is in line with amendments and regulations made under the Coronavirus Act 2020.