

**REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**LICENSING  
COMMITTEE**

11<sup>th</sup> November 2013

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**HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE POLICY –  
MULTI SEATED WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES**

|                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| Relevant Portfolio Holder  | Councillor Rebecca Blake                                     |
| Portfolio Holder Consulted | Yes  |
| Relevant Head of Service   | Steve Jordan – Head of<br>Worcestershire Regulatory Services |
| Wards Affected             | All Wards  |
| Ward Councillor Consulted  | N/A  |
| Non-Key Decision           |  |

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

- 1.1 To provide Members with feedback on the responses received during the consultation with the taxi trade over amendment of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy to bring it into line with the Policy adopted for Private Hire Vehicles with regard to age extensions for adapted vehicles.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**The Committee is asked to RESOLVE:**

**Whether or not to approve the draft Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy at Appendix 1 to come into effect from 1<sup>st</sup> December 2013.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications for Redditch Borough Council.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.2 There are no legal implications for the Council arising from this report however, should an applicant feel aggrieved by any decision made by a Sub Committee then the applicant may apply for a Judicial Review.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3 On the 17<sup>th</sup> December 2012, at the Overview & Scrutiny Committee meeting, it was recommended that taxi proprietors who operate adapted vehicles should be offered a licence for an extended period of time over the standard period of time for vehicles (currently 9 years) from the date of first registration.
- 3.4 In November 2011, members gathered data on adapted vehicles which showed that there were 4 adapted Hackney Carriages and 10 adapted Private Hire vehicles, representing approximately 2% of the taxi fleet, compared to Worcester City Council (30%) and Wyre Forest District Council (50%). These figures have not changed to date.
- 3.5 The Access for Disabled People Task Group was concerned about the relatively low number of adapted vehicles currently in the taxi and private hire fleet operating in Redditch.
- 3.6 A key incentive that the group believes would encourage an increase in the number of adapted vehicles would be to offer licences for an extended period of time for adapted vehicles. In this context, adapted vehicles would be awarded licences to operate for a number of years longer than standard vehicles.
- 3.7 A higher age criteria could enable a taxi company to justify the significant expenditure required to invest in an adapted vehicle, which costs more than a standard vehicle, as the costs involved would be offset by the additional trade that could be attracted over an extended period of time.
- 3.8 Neighbouring Authorities provide:

| Licensing Authority          | Wheelchair Accessible - Number of years |
|------------------------------|---|
| Bromsgrove District Council  | 10 years                                |
| Wychavon District Council    | 12 years                                |
| Malvern District Council     | 10 year                                 |
| Worcester City Council       | 12 years                                |
| Wyre Forest District Council | 7 years                                 |

- 3.9 On 1<sup>st</sup> July 2013 the Licensing Committee resolved to approve a new Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy following consultation with the taxi trade. The new Policy provides that if vehicles are constructed or adapted to load and convey wheelchair bound passengers, they will be licensed up to 12 years old (143 months) from the date of first registration as new by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency.

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- 3.10 The Committee also resolved to carry out consultation with the taxi trade over amendment of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy to bring it into line with the new Policy adopted for Private Hire Vehicles with regard to age extensions for adapted vehicles.
- 3.11 Consultation took place with the trade over a period of six weeks beginning in August 2013.
- 3.12 Only one response was received during the consultation, which was from a driver who was in favour of the proposal and had thought that the consultation carried out earlier in the year had related to the extension of age limits for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- 3.13 Members should note that it would remain open to the owner of any particular vehicle to ask the Council to depart from its policy and licence that vehicle even though it exceeds the upper age limit.

#### **4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 None

#### **5. APPENDICES**

- 5.1 Appendix 1 - Draft Hackney Carriage Vehicle Policy

#### **AUTHOR OF REPORT**

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