

**LICENSING
COMMITTEE**

7th March 2016

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE AGE POLICIES

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Yvonne Smith
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

A licensed private hire operator has written to the Council to ask that consideration is given to relaxing the Council's vehicle age policy in relation to private hire vehicles that are wheelchair accessible and fitted with hydraulic lifting equipment.

Furthermore, at the recent hackney carriage and private hire liaison meetings, vehicle age policies were discussed and a number of licence holders asked if consideration could be given to relaxing the existing vehicle age policies for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are asked to consider the contents of the letter, and the representations made by licence holders at the hackney carriage and private hire liaison meetings, and RESOLVE whether or not they would like officers to bring forward a report to the Committee at a future date in order to commence formal consultation on amending the current age policies for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 The costs involved in bringing forward any future reports to the Licensing Committee would be met from existing budgets held by the Council and Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 The Council are entitled to introduce, and vary, regulations in relation to the type and age of vehicles that they consider suitable for licensing as either hackney carriage or private hire vehicles. The purpose for

which such regulations are introduced, or varied, should be clearly identified, and appropriate consultation should be undertaken before any changes are made.

A balance should be maintained between the needs and desires of the trade itself, and what is deemed to be an appropriate age limit for the purpose of ensuring that vehicles on the taxi fleet are suitable, safe and presentable, particularly bearing in mind continuing advances in relation to vehicle safety and reliability as a whole.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.3 The Council currently has a policy that it will licence vehicles to be used as private hire vehicles as long as they meet all other requirements and are not older than six years of age when first licensed. Such vehicles can then remain licensed until they are not older than nine years from the date of first registration of the vehicle.
- 3.4 In July 2013, the Council resolved to relax the vehicle age policy for private hire vehicles in relation to vehicles that are constructed or adapted to load and convey wheelchair users. These vehicles can now be licensed as private hire vehicles providing the vehicles meet all other requirements and are not older than six years of age when first licensed, and can then remain licensed until they are not older than twelve years from the date of first registration.
- 3.5 Vehicles up to the age of nine years of age are to be tested twice per year at the Council's testing station, with those over nine years of age being subject to three tests per year.
- 3.6 In November 2013 the same vehicle age policy was agreed in relation to hackney carriage vehicles.
- 3.7 Any vehicle proprietor who wishes to licence a vehicle that falls outside of the Council's policy can make application and ask for this to be determined by a Licensing Sub-Committee. A Licensing Sub-Committee may decide to grant an application to licence a vehicle that falls outside of the policy if there are exceptional circumstances that justify doing so.

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

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- 3.8 A letter has been received by Worcestershire Regulatory Services from a private hire operator licensed by Redditch Borough Council. The letter can be seen at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.9 The letter asks if consideration can be given to further relaxing the Council's vehicle age policies, specifically in respect of private hire vehicles that are fitted with hydraulic wheelchair lifting equipment.
- 3.10 Furthermore at the recent hackney carriage and private hire liaison meetings, vehicle age policies were discussed and a number of licence holders asked if consideration could be given to relaxing the existing vehicle age policies for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
- 3.11 Members are asked to consider the contents of the letter and the representations made at the hackney carriage and private hire liaison meetings and decide whether or not they would like officers to bring forward a further report to the Committee at a future date in order to commence formal consultation on amending the current vehicle age policies.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 4.1 None.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Letter from licensed private hire operator.

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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