

Relevant Portfolio Holder		Councillor Monica Stringfellow
Portfolio Holder Consulted		No
Relevant Assistant Director		Simon Wilkes – Director of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Kiran Lahel	Job Title: Licensing and Support Services Manager Contact email: kiran.lahel@worcestershire.gov.uk Contact Tel: 01562 738067	
Wards Affected		All
Ward Councillor(s) consulted		No
Relevant Council Priority		Keep my place safe and looking good
Non-Key Decision		
If you have any questions about this report, please contact the report author in advance of the meeting.		
This report contains exempt information as defined in Paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, as amended		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members RESOLVE whether they wish to proceed with the actions required to permanently delegate authority to officers to determine applications for licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles where the vehicle does not meet the Council's required criteria in respect of the age of the vehicle.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On the 7th March 2024 the Constitutional Review Working Party (CRWP) made a recommendation to Council that, for a trial 12 month period officers had delegated authority to determine hackney carriage and private hire vehicle applications that fell outside of the Council's age criteria policy.
- 2.2 On 20th May 2024 Council resolved that the delegation was given to officers for a 12 month period as recommended by the CRWP. The trial period of the delegation ended on the 31st July 2025.
- 2.3 At a meeting on July 14th 2025 this Committee considered and approved the undertaking of a six week consultation with relevant stakeholders to determine whether to make this delegation permanent.

3. KEY ISSUES

- 3.1 This report seeks to update Members on the outcome of the consultation which would change the current policy to as shown below:

Where a vehicle does not meet councils criteria on age, the application will be determined by authorised officers under powers delegated to them by the Council.

In this case the application will be determined jointly by a Licensing Officer and a qualified Taxi Engineer.

- 3.2 On the 14th July 2025, the Licensing Committee considered a report inviting them to consider whether to direct officers to carry out consultation on delegating authority to determine this type of application to officers.
- 3.3 After some debate as to the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach, Members resolved that consultation should be carried out on permanently delegating authority to Officers to determine applications for licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles where the vehicle had not met the Council's required criteria in respect of the age of the vehicle.
- 3.4 This consultation was conducted between 6th October 2025 and 17th November 2025. The consultation was undertaken using an online survey tool in part so that people completing the survey would be able to use freely available online translation tools to translate the questions being asked into any language of their choosing.
- 3.5 A link to the online survey was sent to all licence holders and also to the Redditch Taxi Association. It was also sent to all Redditch Borough Councillors and other relevant stakeholders including but not limited to:
- Relevant national trade bodies
 - Worcestershire County Council
 - West Mercia Police
 - The Community Safety Team
 - Relevant managers and staff at Crossgates Depot, Redditch
- 3.6 The consultation asked respondents to answer the following question:
- Who do you think should be responsible for deciding whether or not to renew a licence to use a vehicle taxi or private hire vehicle, where that vehicle exceeds the maximum age limit set out in the Council's policy?*

Councillors (on a Licensing Sub-Committee) or Licensing Officers

Licensing Committee

8 December 2025

- 3.7 In total, 47 people answered the main consultation question. The responses received were as follows:

	No. of responses	%
Councillors (on a Licensing Sub-Committee)	12	25.53
Licensing Officers	35	74.47

- 3.8 Respondents were also asked to explain and provide any reasons for their answer, and these are set out in **Appendix 1**. A total of 34 respondents provided their reasons for giving the answer that they did.
- 3.9 A further question was asked at the end of the survey to enable respondents to provide any extra comments. A total of 30 respondents provided further information. These comments are set out in **Appendix 2**.
- 3.10 Finally the respondents were also asked to identify what capacity they were responding to the consultation in. The breakdown of all of the responses received to this question was:

Licensed Taxi / Private Hire Driver	39	82.98%
Licensed Private Hire Operator	9	19.15%
Councillor	2	4.26%
Member of the Public	4	8.51%
Other	0	0%

- 3.11 If the Council ultimately decided to delegate decision making on these applications to officers, the process would remain identical to that of the

12 month trial. The inspection by officers would take place at Crossgates Depot at the same time that the vehicle is subject to its mechanical safety check and checked by both the licensing officer and a taxi engineer.

- 3.12 Since the Licensing Committee meeting on 14th July 2025, this proposal has been discussed further with relevant members of the team at Crossgates Depot who have confirmed that they are happy for this to continue and have found the process has improved relationships with the trade.
- 3.13 Members are now asked to consider the responses received during this consultation exercise and decide whether they wish officers to proceed with the actions that would be required to delegate authority to officers to determine applications for licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles where the vehicle does not meet the Council's required criteria in respect of the age of the vehicle.
- 3.14 Initially this would involve making a recommendation to the Council's Constitutional Working Group for consideration.
- 3.15 If such a recommendation were to be made and ultimately followed, the Council would also need to amend the wording in part 3.12 of its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy to make clear that any applications for licences to use vehicles as hackney carriages or private hire vehicles where the vehicle does not meet the Council's required criteria in respect of the age of the vehicle, will be determined by officers under delegated authority rather than by a Licensing Sub-Committee.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The costs of carrying out the consultation exercise were met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Any proposed changes to the scheme of delegations will need to be approved by the Constitutional Review Working Party and recommended to Council.
- 5.2 Carrying out consultation on any proposals to amend the Council's policies has minimised the risk of a successful legal challenge if the proposals are subsequently implemented.

6. OTHER - IMPLICATIONS

Local Government Reorganisation

- 6.1 Any policy change will not have any impact on Local Government Reorganisation.

Relevant Council Priority

- 6.2 Any policy change would consider the Council's key priorities and ensure that changes are aligned with current Council policies to ensure the travelling public are safe.

Climate Change Implications

- 6.3 No implications.

Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 6.4 A initial screening equality impact assessment will be carried out. If this provides any reason to carry out a Full equality impact assessment the team will do this as part of the consultation process.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 Proper consultation on any proposals to amend the Council's policies minimises the risk of legal challenge if the proposals are subsequently implemented.

8. APPENDICES and BACKGROUND PAPERS

Appendix 1: Comments from Respondents
Appendix 2: General Comments

9. REPORT SIGN OFF

Department	Name and Job Title	Date
Portfolio Holder	Please record the name of the relevant Portfolio Holder who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Lead Director / Assistant Director	Please record the name of the relevant lead Director /	Please give the date they

REDDITCH BOROUGH COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

8 December 2025

	Assistant Director who has signed off the report here.	signed off the report here.
Financial Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Financial Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Legal Services	Please record the name of the relevant Officer in Legal Services who has signed off the report here.	Please give the date they signed off the report here.
Policy Team (if equalities implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Policy team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.
Climate Change Team (if climate change implications apply)	If applicable, please record the name of the relevant Officer in the Climate Change team who has signed off the report here.	If applicable, please give the date they signed off the report here.