

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire – Policy on Vehicle Age

Final Decision-Maker	LICENSING COMMITTEE
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Lead Officer and Report Author	Sharon Bamborough, Head of the Licensing Partnership
Classification	Public
Wards affected	All

Executive Summary

Members may recall that in November 2020, as part of the review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, they agreed to a temporary amendment of the vehicle age part of the policy so as to allow older vehicles to continue being used due to the lack of trade during lockdown and the subsequent lack of 'wear and tear' and mileage that would have occurred as a result of the vehicles not being used as much.

A decision needs to be made whether to revert to the original policy on vehicle ages or to continue to allow the increased age limits for a further temporary period.

Purpose of Report

Decision

This report makes the following recommendations to this Committee:

That:

1. The age limit on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles be extended for a further six-month period until 30 September 2022; and
2. The following the six-month extension, the original age limit on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles be reinstated.

Timetable

Meeting	Date
Licensing Committee	17-03-2022

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire – vehicle age

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 465 1150 501">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Cross Cutting Objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 663 1150 698">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 860 1150 896">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 1057 1150 1093">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	John Littlemore, Head of Housing and Community Services
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 1276 1150 1312">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 1473 1150 1509">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Robin Harris, Mid Kent Legal Services
Privacy and Data Protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 1635 1150 1671">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="507 1832 1150 1868">• <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership

Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No implications have been identified</i> 	Sharon Bamborough – Head of the Licensing Partnership

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the Licensing Committee on 19th November 2020, as part of the review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, there was also a discussion around the policy on the usable life span of all licensed vehicles but with specific discussion around private hire vehicles.
- 2.2 Under Paragraph 4.3 and Appendix 5 (c) of the Policy, private hire vehicles should normally be replaced when they reach their 6 year anniversary.
- 2.3 Because of the various restrictions in place during the COVID19 pandemic, the Council recognised that vehicles would have been driven far less than in normal times and that the Trade had been particularly affected by the reduction in movement over the entire pandemic period. Licensing Committee recognised that vehicles would have accumulated much less mileage and so a temporary extension of the vehicle age limit would not adversely affect passenger safety.
- 2.4 A temporary amendment was requested, which was permitted within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy at page 26 as follows:

10. Departure from the Policy

There may be instances whereby the Council may need to consider applications outside the policy. Where it necessary to depart substantially from this policy, clear and compelling reasons for doing so will be given. Any such decision may be referred to the Licensing Committee.

Licensing Committee agreed the temporary amendment and the wording approved by the Chair and Vice-Chair is as follows:-

“Maidstone Borough Council have agreed for a period of time to extend the years for which vehicles can be licensed, Hackney Carriage vehicles may be licensed until 16 years old and Private Hire Vehicles until 7 years old. This temporary policy change will be kept under review and revert no later than March 2022.”

- 2.5 This policy change is due to expire at the end of March 2022 and the trade have requested that it be extended further. The Council recognise that the licensed trade are still experiencing financial difficulties with the increased costs for fuel and with the general costs of living, and would request that Licensing Committee agree to extending this temporary policy change a further 6 months until 30th September 2022.
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3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 *In respect of the proposal* to make a decision to:

Either:

Refuse to extend the amendment to policy

Or

Agree to the proposed extension to 30 September 2022.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 Members are requested to extend the amendment to policy up for a further period up to 30 September 2022, for the following reasons:
- (i) this would support the trade and allow them to recover following the last 2 years of very reduced custom
 - (ii) due to the lack of 'use' many vehicles will still be in a similar condition as they would have been at the younger age
 - (iii) due to current rates of inflation and escalating fuel prices it is also timely to allow this extension so as to not require owners to have to purchase new/replacement cars at this time.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 Failure to introduce the proposed extension to assist the trade could result in a shortfall of Maidstone licensed drivers / vehicles. This could see an increase in out of town drivers being in Maidstone illegally cashing in on the employment gap and ultimately causing enforcement issues for the Licensing Department.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

6.1 N/A

7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

7.1 Should Members approve the proposed extension by the trade it will be communicated to them.

8. REPORT APPENDICES

None

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy:
[Maidstone Borough Council Taxi Licensing Policy 2021](#)