

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL
COMMUNITITES, HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

30 APRIL 2022

REPORT OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022
HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE – POLICY ON VEHICLE AGE

Issue for Decision

As part of the November 2020 review of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, a temporary amendment was introduced 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 milage as a result of the vehicles not being used as much.

The previously granted extension is due to expire at the end of March 2022, with consideration to be given on whether to revert to the original policy on vehicle ages or to continue to allow the increased age limits for a further temporary period. The issue was considered by the Licensing Committee on 17 March 2022, with the resulting recommendation shown below. A (draft) extract of the Minute is also included.

Recommendation Made

That the age limit of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles be extended for a further 12-month period.

Reasons for Recommendation

Due to 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.

A temporary amendment was requested, which was permitted within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 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.

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.

Extract from (draft) Minute 59, from the Licensing Committee Meeting held on 17 March 2022:

The Committee expressed support for extending the vehicle age limit due to the loss of income experienced by taxi drivers during the Covid-19 pandemic, alongside the vehicles reduced use during that time and the ongoing effects of the pandemic. The other contributing factors, such as increased fuel prices, were referenced in highlighting the ongoing problems being experienced by the taxi trade. It was felt that the extension should be reconsidered after one year.

It was confirmed that the extension provided would temporarily amend the vehicle age to seven years for a private hire vehicle and 16 years for a hackney carriage vehicle, irrespective of any previous extensions granted.

RESOLVED: *That the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee be recommended to approve the extension to the age of limit of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles for a further 12-month period.'*

Alternatives Considered and Why Not Recommended

An alternative would be to refuse to extend the amendment to the policy, however this could result in a shortfall of Maidstone licensed drivers/vehicles and could see an increase in out-of-town drivers being in Maidstone illegally cashing in on the employment gap, causing enforcement issues for the Licensing Department.

Background Documents

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

Appendices

None.