

Age Policy - Vehicles

Timetable	
Meeting	Date
Licensing Committee	14 th September 2023

Will this be a Key Decision?	No
Urgency	Not Applicable
Final Decision-Maker	Licensing Committee
Lead Head of Service	John Littlemore, Head of Housing & Regulatory Services.
Lead Officer and Report Author	Lorraine Neale.
Classification	Public
Wards affected	N/A

Executive Summary

This report is for Licensing Committee to consider the matter of the temporary amendment to Maidstone's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy (Taxi Policy) for vehicle ages

Purpose of Report

To consider whether to permanently change the taxi policy vehicle age restrictions or revert back to the original vehicle age restrictions.

This report makes the following recommendations to Licensing Committee

1. That a public consultation take place across a 6-week period, to consider permanently changing the entry level requirement for all vehicle to 4 years, 60,000 miles and the exit level of 8 years for private hire vehicles, as outlined in point 3.1 of the report.

Age Policy - Vehicles

1. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities	<p>The four Strategic Plan objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Embracing Growth and Enabling Infrastructure • Safe, Clean and Green • Homes and Communities • A Thriving Place <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We do not expect the recommendations will by themselves materially affect achievement of corporate priorities. 	Senior Licensing Officer
Cross Cutting Objectives	<p>The four cross-cutting objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Heritage is Respected • Health Inequalities are Addressed and Reduced • Deprivation and Social Mobility is Improved • Biodiversity and Environmental Sustainability is respected <p>The report recommendations do not materially impact on the achievement of the cross-cutting objectives</p>	Senior Licensing Officer
Risk Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refer to paragraph 5.1 of the report 	Senior Licensing Officer
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No implications identified 	Adrian Lovegrove
Staffing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not applicable 	Senior Licensing Officer
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is no statutory requirement to have a policy but Maidstone Borough Council chose to have one as it was felt that a policy ensures a transparent and consistent approach to licensing. The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle 	Helen Ward, Lawyer (Contentious)

	Standards recommends that Authorities have a Policy and that it is regularly reviewed.	
Information Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not impact personal information (as defined in UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018) the Council processes. 	Senior Licensing Officer
Equalities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The recommendations do not propose a change in service therefore will not require an equalities impact assessment. 	Senior Licensing Officer
Public Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We recognise that the recommendations will not negatively impact on population health or that of individuals. 	Senior Licensing Officer
Crime and Disorder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications to Crime and Disorder 	Senior Licensing Officer
Procurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable 	Senior Licensing Officer
Biodiversity and Climate Change	<p>The implications of this report on biodiversity and climate change have been considered and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are no implications on biodiversity and climate change. 	Senior Licensing Officer

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

2.1 At the meeting of 13th October 2022 Members considered the concerns of the trade in relation to the shortage of suitable vehicles that could be licensed as private hire vehicles. At that time there was difficulty in acquiring second hand vehicles under three years old and new vehicles were subject to waiting lists up to a year.

2.2 The taxi policy required that all vehicles being licensed for the first time (Hackney Carriage and Private Hire) should not have more than 30,000 miles on the clock or be older than 3 years. Members were asked to consider changing or removing this

entry level criteria subject to vehicles meeting the requirements of the compliance testing.

2.3 At the meeting Members agreed the following;

- a. The new vehicle entry level requirements as contained within the Taxi Policy 2021-2026, be amended for a pilot period of 12-months only to increase the maximum age of new vehicles from three years to four years, with a maximum mileage restriction of 60,000 and implement an exit age of eight years for private hire vehicles;
- b. To address the situation immediately the public consultation on the temporary amendments was waived.
- c. Following the 12-month pilot period relating to new vehicle entry level requirements, a report be presented to the Committee to consider any resulting implications and next steps.

2.4 As the expiry period of the pilot scheme is approaching Members need to consider whether to make the entry age of 4 years and 60,000 miles for all vehicles and the exit age of 8 years for private hire vehicles permanent. Any permanent amendments to Policy require a public consultation.

2.5 Licensing have not received any negative feedback from the public or the trade in respect of the matter. There have been no complaints received in relation to the conditions of vehicles since the new age restriction pilot scheme started. Licensing are confident that the compliance test that all vehicles have to pass each year ensures that the condition of any vehicle licensed by Maidstone Borough Council remains at a high standard.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

3.1 . To undertake a public consultation on permanently changing the entry level vehicle age and mileage requirement to 4 years, 60,000 miles for all vehicles and the exit age requirement for private hire vehicles to 8 years as per the current pilot scheme due to expire 12th October 2023. If agreed, the Committee would be presented with the feedback from the public consultation before a final decision is made on changing the policy.

The public consultation would likely take place from 2 October 2023, for a six-week period.

3.2 To revert back to the entry level vehicle age and mileage requirement for all vehicles back to 3 years, 30,000 miles and the exit age requirement for private hire vehicles to 6 years as per current policy. A public consultation would not be required in this instance.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 To undertake a public consultation on permanently changing the entry level requirement for all vehicle to 4 years, 60,000 miles and the exit level of 8 years for private hire vehicles given no adverse or negative comments have been received during the pilot scheme period.
- 4.2 See point 2.5 for the reasons for the recommendation.
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5. RISK

- 5.1 If we were to revert back to the existing age/mileage policy on entry level vehicles it could contribute once again to a shortage of available licensed vehicles. This in turn could impact the safety of the public especially during the hour of the late night economy.

6. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 6.1 N/A
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7. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 7.1 Carry out direct consultation with the taxi trade.
- 7.2 We will analyse any comments received and prepare any changes considered appropriate to the Policy for final approval and present a further report to the Licensing Committee on the 11th January 2024.
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8. REPORT APPENDICES

- N/A
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9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- N/A