

ADMINISTRATION COMMITTEE

Monday, 15 February 2021

VEHICLE AGE POLICY TEMPORARY RELAXATION DUE TO COVID-19

Report of the Head of Legal Services

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

- (1) the Committee approve a temporary relaxation of the vehicle age policy for licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicles until 31 December 2021.
 - (2) any vehicle that requires a further one-year licence is to pass a mechanical inspection compliance test carried out by Hedge End Depot prior to an application being submitted for a further one year licence.
 - (3) any vehicle granted a further one year licence is to pass a mechanical inspection compliance test carried out by Hedge End Depot six months into the 1 year licence.
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Summary

This Report of the Head of Legal Services proposes a relaxation on the vehicle age policy until 31 December 2021 to allow a further 1 year licence for any vehicle that has reached the upper age limit.

This temporary relaxation is proposed to assist the Taxi and Private Hire trade during the Covid-19 pandemic due to a dramatic downturn in business and income. A discussion took place at the last Licensed Transport Forum, where the trade requested any assistance the Council may be able to offer during these times. A relaxation of the age policy was discussed.

Statutory Powers

Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (Hackney Carriages) and The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (Private Hire Vehicles).

Strategic Implications

1. This report relates to the Council's regulatory duties. In this case the proposals aim to support a sector of the local economy, with

provisions for ensuring safety and air quality standards are also maintained.

Introduction

1. The licensed vehicle age policy states “vehicles shall not be licensed once they have attained 12 years of age. Purpose built wheelchair accessible vehicles will not be licensed once they have attained 15 years of age”.
2. It was agreed under delegated powers in June 2020 as a temporary measure that where any vehicle was due to have a licence renewed prior to 31 December 2020 and had reached its upper age limit, a further licence for one year shall be granted. Any vehicle that may be granted an extension must undergo and pass a full mechanical inspection carried out by Hedge End Depot Workshop before consideration would be given to granting a further one year licence. In addition to this, 6 months into the licence a further mechanical inspection must be carried out by Hedge End Depot workshop. This allowed a small number of operators to keep their current vehicle rather than requiring them to buy a newer one.
3. The Taxi and Private Hire trades have been extremely financially affected during the Covid-19 pandemic with little to no passengers travelling into or around the area.
4. The council adopted a vehicle age policy from 1st March 2014, **Appendix A**. The pandemic is continuing to impact greatly on the Taxi and Private Hire trade and to support licence holders through these times, a further relaxation of the vehicle age policy until the 31st December 2021 would be welcomed.
5. The licensing database has identified fifteen vehicles that will have reached the upper age limit and a change of vehicle is required at renewal of the licence.

Financial Implications

6. There are no financial implications as the vehicle tests and licence fee are paid for by the licence holder.

Risk Assessment

7. The assessment of the risk is low. A further one-year licence will only be considered if the vehicles meets the current high standards both mechanically

and visually. The test also includes emissions testing. If the vehicle does meet the standards set a licence will not be considered.

- No financial risk
- The vehicle would be compliance tested by the Workshop at Hedge End Depot at renewal, also at six months into the licence, and only relicensed after meeting our high standards.

Equality and Diversity Implications

After due consideration, the issues raised in this report do not warrant a full Equalities Impact Assessment. Support to the taxi trade may have the effect of supporting some members of the community who experience socio-economic challenges.

8. Climate Change and Environmental Implications

It is considered there will be no implications to the environment or climate change as these vehicles are already licensed. Consideration will only be given to a further 1 year licence if the vehicle meets the required emissions test and compliance test.

Conclusion

9. The Committee approves the relaxation of the vehicle age policy, **Appendix A** for one year until 31st December 2021.
10. The Committee approves that any vehicle where the age policy is relaxed, must be compliance tested at renewal and 6 months into the licence by the Hedge End Depot workshop.

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Appendices Attached: 1

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 - SECTION 100D

The following is a list of documents which disclose facts or matters on which this report or an important part of it is based and have been relied upon to a material

extent in the preparation of this report. This list does not include any published works or documents which would disclose exempt or confidential information.

* List Background Papers or state None.