

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

24 OCTOBER 2017

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR OPERATIONAL AND PARTNERSHIP SERVICES

HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE AGE POLICY GUIDELINES

1. Purpose of Report.

1.1 The purpose of the report is to:

- Consider the fitness of the current age policy for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles;
- To obtain members' approval to consult on a proposal to amend the vehicle age policy guidelines.

1.2 The proposed policy amendments are part of a wider piece of work and as such this report should be read in conjunction with the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Vehicle Testing Policy report.

2. Connection to Corporate Improvement Objectives/Other Corporate Priorities

2.1 The proposals are necessary to enable the Council to discharge its functions as a taxi licensing authority.

3. Background.

3.1 The Council is the Licensing Authority for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles by virtue of the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The Authority has a Licensing Policy that sets out the criteria for first registration that must be complied with for a licence to be granted. Conditions include the age at which a vehicle can be presented for first time licensing.

3.2 The authority currently operates a policy in relation to the age and mileage at which a vehicle can first be licensed.

4. Current situation / proposal.

4.1 The current policies in relation to the age at which hackney carriage and private hire vehicles can first be licensed were approved by the Licensing Committee on 10 March 2008. A copy of these policies are attached at Appendix A and B.

4.2 In summary, the current policies requires hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to be new when presented for their first licence. However, there are provisions for older private hire vehicles to be considered by the Licensing Sub-Committee on their own merits and wheelchair accessible vehicles up to three years old may also

be licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle, provided a full service history and safety certification can be provided.

- 4.3 It is proposed to amend the age policy guidelines to introduce two classes of vehicle; class one being either a standard saloon, multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) or wheelchair accessible vehicle not fitted with an automated wheelchair lift, and class two being a wheelchair accessible vehicle that has been fitted with an automated wheelchair lift.
- 4.4 Class one vehicles, when presented for their first licence, will be under 5 years old, class two vehicles, when presented for their first licence, will be under 10 years old. This is in recognition of the prohibitive cost of purchasing a class two vehicle and the nature of the work that they carry out, as it is less likely to cause as much wear on the vehicle.
- 4.5 The local trade has asked the Council to review what is seen as a burden that requires them to purchase brand new vehicles to obtain their first licence. It has been commented that the proposed policy would allow proprietors to replace their vehicles more frequently, and when they do replace their vehicle, they will be able to purchase a higher quality vehicle for their budget which would improve the overall standard of vehicles licensed in the County Borough.
- 4.6 The Licensing department have received comments from disability groups that they have difficulty in accessing wheelchair accessible vehicles. The department does not currently have a clear picture of the needs of disabled passengers, it is therefore proposed that questions will be asked as part of the consultation for ways to improve provisions for travelling disabled passengers.
- 4.7 The proposed age policy guidelines would harmonise the policy between Bridgend and The Vale of Glamorgan, which forms part of the Shared Regulatory Service.
- 4.8 If approved, a public consultation will be carried out and a letter sent to all vehicle proprietors inviting their comments.

5. Effect upon Policy Framework & Procedure Rules.

- 5.1 None.

6. Equality Impact Assessment

- 6.1 The proposal has been screened for the potential impact on protected groups within the community and human rights. We do not consider on the basis of the above that a detailed Equality Impact Assessment is required for this proposal at this stage, but the position will be reviewed at the end of the consultation process.

7. Financial Implications.

- 7.1 The Council must set the fees for these licences on the basis that it only recovers costs which it is entitled statutorily to recover. It is not envisaged that the proposal will have an impact on income, but fees will be reviewed to take into account any surplus or deficit accrued from taxi vehicle licensing.

8. Recommendation.

- 8.1 It is recommended that the Licensing Committee approve that a consultation exercise be conducted with the public and the local taxi trade on the proposals to amend the age policy in of respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles

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Background documents

Bridgend County Borough Council Hackney Carriage Guidance Notes
Bridgend County Borough Council Private Hire Guidance Notes