

- iii. any vehicle over 9/12 years of age failing on the Council's vehicle standards will not automatically be taken off the road. The proprietor will be given the opportunity to repair the vehicle to the standard required in accordance with the vehicle standards.
- (3) Any vehicles failing a spot check, resulting in the vehicles licence being suspended, will not have the age limit extended over the 9/12 year limit.
- (4) Continue to not allow pre-checks on licensed vehicles within 14 days of the licence expiring at any of the Council's authorised testing stations.
- (5) Subject to the above:-
 - i. any vehicles on appeal will be allowed to be licensed.
 - ii. any vehicle currently issued with a licence to their 9/12 year age limit with remaining months on their certificate of compliance will be continued until the expiry date of the certificate of compliance.
- (6) The policy will be reviewed by the Taxi and Other Licensing Committee after 12 months.

RESOLVED

- (1) That it be agreed that vehicles are not to be more than 7 years old when first licensed and no more than 11 years old on renewal or if manufactured or adapted to allow for wheelchair accessibility no more than 7 years old when first licensed and no more than 12 years on renewal.
- (2) That the Planning, Building Control and Licensing Services Manager be requested to submit a report to the Taxi Licensing and Other Licensing Committee on a scheme that would publicise good taxi operators but also highlight the poor taxi operators regarding maintenance and safety of their vehicles.

REASON

To encourage drivers to take more care of their vehicles.

REASONS FOR CALL IN

Councillor Cooney explained that the reason for the Call In was that the introduction of an 11 year age limit for all licensed vehicles would put public safety at risk. Concerns had already been expressed about the number of vehicles failing spot checks. In June, 2015 93% of vehicles failed on a spot check with 77% failing in December, 2015. It was acknowledged that these failure rates were unacceptably high.

Councillor Cooney referred to a number of meetings that had been held over the past 12 months with representatives of the taxi trade and Councillors regarding incentives to help the trade improve the condition of their vehicles and improve the results of the spot checks.

The outcome of these discussions had resulted in a proposal being put to the Taxi and Other Licensing Committee that vehicles should not be more than 7 years old when first licensed and no more than 9 years old on renewal and no more than 12 years old for adapted vehicles (ie wheelchair accessible) on renewal. The licence could be extended if during the history the vehicle had not reverted to a four month test but the licence would not be extended should the vehicle fail

on any faults that would result in a VOSA MOT failure. The proprietor would, however, be given the opportunity to repair the vehicle to the standard required in accordance with the vehicle standards.

The Taxi and Other Licensing Committee fully supported this proposal (see minute above).

EXECUTIVE DECISION

Councillor Iqbal outlined why the Executive had come to a different decision to that recommended by the Taxi and Other Licensing Committee. He referred to a petition signed by 61 members of the trade which showed that the original proposal did not have the level of support which the Taxi and Other Licensing Committee believed. He said that a number of other licensing authorities in Lancashire had no vehicle age limit at all.

He felt that the Executive decision represented a fairer and better balance and would encourage members of the trade to improve the condition of their vehicles. He also felt that there would be difficulties for testing garages and Council licensing staff in operating a system where a licence would be immediately revoked after a single test failure following years in which the vehicle had been kept in satisfactory condition.

SUGGESTED ALTERNATIVE COURSE OF ACTION

Scrutiny Members felt that safety of the vehicles and for users of the vehicles was paramount. A number of alternative age limits and testing frequencies were discussed including that the age limit be extended to 10 years (12 for adapted vehicles) with 3 or 4 monthly taxi MOT tests. Any failures would then result in the license not being extended.

It was felt that by introducing an extra year to the working life of the vehicles and implementing more stringent testing this would provide an incentive to the trade to maintain their vehicles and ensure they were roadworthy.