

REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER

TO: TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE

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Report Author: Jackie Allen
Tel. No: 661638
E-mail: jackie.allen@pendle.gov.uk

AGE LIMIT OF LICENSED VEHICLES

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider a request from the Pendle Private Hire and Hackney Trade Associations to remove the age limit of licensed vehicles.

RECOMMENDATION

That no changes are made to the age limit of private hire vehicles and hackney carriages until a detailed report is brought back to the next meeting.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

To explore the option of introducing vehicle emissions standards and the maintenance of licensed vehicles before any change is made to the age limit.

BACKGROUND

1. At a meeting of this committee on 12 March 2020 a request was made from the trade that the age limit be removed. It was agreed that the trade should submit a report with their proposals.
2. The current age limit for our licensed vehicles is up to a maximum of seven years when first licensed. A licensed vehicle can continue to be licensed until they reach eleven years of age. For wheelchair accessible vehicles the corresponding times are seven through to twelve years of age and for a London style hackney carriage through to fifteen years.
3. Taxi tests are carried out once a year for vehicles one to three years old, twice a year for vehicles over three years old and for a vehicle failing on serious faults three times a year

until it has passed three consecutive tests with no faults. This also applies to spot checks.

ISSUES

4. The report of the Pendle Private Hire and Hackney Trade Associations proposes the following with their reasons:

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic which has brought o light the severe economic impact on the trade and the financial losses we have incurred, due to no work, as a result of restrictions being placed across Pendle for the last 15 months. The trade believes that having an arbitrary age limit is not one which we can sustain going forward. The council needs to adapt to the requirements of the trade and work with us by removing the age limit.

It is the case that many councils across the country including Blackburn and Ribble Valley have no age limit and it is the councils who monitor testing of vehicles to ensure passenger and driver safety.

RECOMMENDATION

1. The age limit on private hire and hackney carriage vehicles be removed with immediate effect.
2. The regime for taxi testing of vehicles be as follows:
 - Vehicles under 3 years old be tested every 12 months
 - Vehicles over 3 years but less than 10 years old be tested every 6 months
 - Vehicles over 10 years be tested every 4 months.
5. Blackburn with Darwen is the only Council, in East Lancashire, that has a strictly no age limit. Whilst Ribble Valley have no age limit in place, all vehicles over seven years are licensed for four months only.
6. Other Councils in East Lancashire either have an age limit less than ours or require vehicles to comply with emission standards.
7. Our neighbouring authority, Burnley, has a much stricter age limit of eight years maximum for saloon vehicles. With cross bordering, most of our vehicles work across Burnley and Pendle, therefore, it would make more sense to have a similar age limit to them.
8. Another option is to look at vehicle emissions and to remove the age limit, with a policy change, that all vehicles must comply with Euro 6 emission standards. Most vehicles registered after 1 September 2015 meet these standards.

CONCLUSION

9. The principle concerns in relation to any change is whether or not the age limit is necessary in order to protect public safety and provide the public with an acceptable quality of vehicles.
10. Different Councils have a range of policies in place. They also however have different standards of vehicles that are encountered.
11. We are concerned that increasing the age limit will further erode the quality of the vehicles that is being encountered in Pendle presently. The last inspection was not untypical of

previous ones where vehicle maintenance was at an unacceptably low level. The concern is that by allowing older, and by definition, more well used vehicles to be licensed that the quality of vehicles, already a cause for concern, will erode even further.

12. The option of introducing euro emission standards should be explored which was introduced to reduce levels of harmful car and van exhaust emissions, both in petrol and diesel cars.

IMPLICATIONS

Policy: As outlined in the report.

Financial: None arising directly from the report.

Legal: None arising directly from the report.

Risk Management: None arising directly from the report.

Health and Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Sustainability: None arising directly from the report.

Community Safety: None arising directly from the report.

Equality and Diversity: None arising directly from the report.

APPENDICES

None.

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None