

REPORT TO	ON
Licensing and Public Safety Committee	12 November 2019



TITLE	REPORT OF
Taxi and Private Hire Age Policy Review	Interim Monitoring Officer

Is this report confidential?	No
------------------------------	----

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. To consider the current age policy and how the current fleet profile impacts on air quality

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. To consider the evidence submitted within the report and agree to consult on changes if required.

CORPORATE OUTCOMES

3. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: *(tick all those applicable):*

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	
Health, Wellbeing and Safety	
Place, Homes and Environment	X

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	
----------------------------	--

BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

4. The current age policy for taxis and private hire vehicles was considered by the Committee in September 2018, the determination that followed was to leave the policy unchanged. Prior to the matter being discussed the initial proposal was to relax the age policy for saloon vehicles to bring it in line with Wheel Chair Accessible Vehicles (WAV). The consultation saw 9 formal responses received, 8 of which were in favour of relaxing the policy to create uniformity and fairness.
5. Before the matter was heard by the Committee, the Environmental Health Department raised air quality concerns and suggested that if any changes to age policy were to be considered they should be tightened rather than relaxed, in essence they recommended bringing the age policy down to 4 years as a maximum for new entry vehicles and 8 years old as a

maximum shelf life. The current policy is 4 years as a maximum for new saloons with a shelf life of 8 years and 6 years for new WAV with a shelf life of 12.

The report from September 2018 is found as **Background Document 1**- [Follow hyperlink https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11293/Proposed%20Changes%20to%20Vehicle%20Age%20Policy.pdf](https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11293/Proposed%20Changes%20to%20Vehicle%20Age%20Policy.pdf)

6. A commitment was made in the 2019/2020 Licensing work plan to revisit the age policy with particular emphasis on vehicle emissions.
7. In the last 12 months air pollution has become an emerging issue both globally and nationally, the regional picture has also been subject to plans and discussion particularly in relation to taxi and private hire licensing. There is a call for Lancashire Authorities to harmonise taxi licensing policy, the age policy suggested is a 5 year entry limit for new vehicles and a 10 year shelf life. A copy of the briefing note sent out to Lancashire Authorities is attached as **Appendix 1**.
8. South Ribble's taxi fleet consists of 231 vehicles, with an approximate split of 50% Hackney Carriages and 50% private hire vehicles, approximately 70 of the private hire vehicles are dedicated to special needs transport and are not available for private hire in the conventional sense. This distinction is important to understand when assessing the impact that a reduction in the age policy could have and the general exemptions or sunset periods that are being applied nationally to Disabled Transport Vehicles.
9. The starting point is to understand the point at which emissions levels become problematic, areas in the country have begun to implement Clean Air Zones some of these areas are known as charging zones whilst other do not apply a charge.
10. A simplistic model for applying changes to vehicles has been the Euro 6 diesel and the Euro 4 petrol model, however a more sophisticated model is to adopt the EU Emission standards, which for passenger cars is 130g/km of CO₂ and 175g/km for light commercial vehicles. These standards are EU regulations that manufacturers must achieve, for additional information on how and when the regulations were set see **Background Document 2** - https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/ICCTupdate_EU-95gram_jan2014.pdf
11. The taxi and private hire vehicle fleet has been researched to see how many of our taxis and private hires achieve compliance with these statistics.
12. The Hackney Carriage fleet consists of 115 vehicle records saved on our system, the data for each vehicle record is contained in **Appendix 2**. 16 vehicles do not meet the EU standards for emissions but out of the 16, 11 are wheel chair accessible vehicles (WAV). Out of the remaining 5 vehicles 2 have been recently changed to new compliant vehicles and the remaining 3 will drop off the fleet in the next 12 months due to their age (under the current age policy)
13. The data demonstrates that the Hackney Carriage fleet is largely compliant and the current age policy in place is having a positive effect on the emission levels.
14. The private hire fleet has very different results but if WAV's are to be distinguished then the overall residue of non-compliant vehicle is very low. There are 141 Private Hire vehicle records saved on our system, the data for each vehicle is contained in **Appendix 3**.73

vehicles do not meet the EU standards for emissions but out of these, 66 are WAV. Out of the remaining 7 vehicles 3 have expired and are no longer licensed, which leaves a total of 4 which again will drop off the fleet within 18 months due to their age (under the current age policy).

15. The research completed leads to a very clear outcome, which is a reduction in the age policy will hit WAV's very heavily and there has been a definite trend nationally to allowing sunset periods for WAV's . The charging zone in London has delayed any charges being applied to wheel chair accessible vehicles until 2025 but the Governments Clean Air Zone Framework creates an exemption for vehicles within the disabled passenger vehicle tax class. This document is attached as **Appendix 4** and the relevant paragraph is 3.9.3. Follow link:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612592/clean-air-zone-framework.pdf
16. Wallbank's account for 67 vehicle records, not all fail the emissions target but all are registered as disabled passenger vehicles.
17. The Clean Air Framework exemption in paragraph 3.9.3 is specifically for Clean Air Zones that apply a charge it does not hinder a Local Authority applying age policies on taxis nor does it suggest such vehicles should be exempt but it is helpful to understand where exactly a reduction in the age policy would bite and also the attitude of Government with regards to offering flexibility or time to comply to certain categories of vehicles.

PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)

18. The proposal is to review the effectiveness of the current age policy relating to taxis and private hire vehicles paying particular attention to the effect it has on air quality. The options available are;
19. Option 1 would be to leave the policy unchanged, the evidence and research demonstrates that the fleet is largely compliant save for WAV's, if members consider it appropriate to distinguish WAV;s then there would seem little justification for a policy change at this stage. No further consultation would be required but it may be appropriate to set a review date which would should be between 2 and 3 years.
20. Option 2 would be to align the age policy to 6 years old for new vehicles with a maximum shelf life of 12 years, this proposal was initially brought forward by a working group conceived in 2017, see **Background Document 3**:
[https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11347/WorkingGroupminutesFebruary2018.doc.pdf?\\$LO\\$=1](https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11347/WorkingGroupminutesFebruary2018.doc.pdf?LO=1)
21. The proposal was rejected in late 2018 with Air Quality implications being raised as a concern. On the basis that the impact of air quality issues with regards to the existing taxi and private hire fleet are now better understood, this proposal would require a change of policy with a formal consultation exercise to be undertaken.
22. Option 3 would be to align the age policy to 4 years old for new vehicles with a maximum shelf life of 8 years. This proposal was in considered in 2018 but rejected. This is a policy change and would require a formal consultation exercise.

23. Option 4 would be to adopt the proposal suggested in the “note to chief executives” which reads; *newly licensed vehicles to be a maximum 5 years of age when first licensed. Policy to apply from 2020. (this is the minimum policy requirement - a tighter standard can be adopted if LA considers appropriate/in line with existing rules).* The current policy for saloon vehicles in South Ribble is more robust than this proposal however this proposal would target the older WAV’s which have a shelf life of 12 years. This is a policy change and would require a formal consultation.
24. Option 5 would be to leave the age policy unchanged but add a requirement to retro fit emission reduction technology to non-compliant vehicles. This will require defining “compliance” (what level of g/kg CO2 is acceptable) and a lead in period for non-compliant vehicles to achieve the appropriate standard. This will require a policy change and consultation exercise.
25. The Options above are not an exhaustive list and members have the discretion to decide on any combination of the examples. The data used to create the evidence base is reliable but there is a discrepancy with the number of records checked and the number of licences in place. 256 records have been checked but we only have 231 valid licences. The additional records include replacement vehicles that have been put on when accidents occur but may no longer be licensed with us as they are back with the insurance companies /vehicle providers. We do not remove them off the system immediately as data retention requires us to keep them for at least 6 years. Cross referencing has been done on vehicles that do not meet the emissions standard to establish if they are still on the fleet and this fact should be apparent in both the narrative of the report and the appendices where the vehicle data is listed. Alignment of the vehicle records and the licences granted has not been possible due to the data being stored on 2 different data bases which do not integrate.

CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

26. None.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

27. See comments of Statutory Finance Officer below.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

28. Please see comments of Monitoring Officer below.

AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS

29. 1. In December 2016 the Council formally adopted the ‘South Ribble Air Quality Action Plan’ this document was, produced as part of the Council’s legal obligations under Air Quality and identified a number of action measures that the authority would undertake to improve, maintain and protection the level of Air Quality throughout the borough.

30. These measures included:-

- A. To encourage the uptake of low Emission vehicles
- B. Reduce the age limit of taxis within the borough

31. In addition, in July 2019 the Council declared a Climate Emergency with a view to reducing the Carbon Dioxide (CO2) emissions of the borough to zero by 2030 through off-setting and prevention of emissions.
32. The council have further identified the issues of air quality and CO2 emissions within the recently published Corporate Plan, with a commitment to improving health and wellbeing of our residents and to enhancing the environment. A specific priority on Air Quality is identified within the plan.
33. Of the proposed options within this report, options 1, 2, 4 & 5 move away from the above commitments and allow for an increased level of pollution over the coming years. Only option 3, which aligns the age requirements of all vehicles to the more stringent level current imposed on saloon vehicles is appropriate and in line with the Council's commitments.
34. However, it is considered that a more reasonable and beneficial option would be to abandon the age policy and move away from maximum age limits and towards an emissions based policy, staggered over a number of years to ensure that ultimately low emission vehicles alone would be allowed on to the fleet by 2025.

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

35. This review of the Council's age policy for taxis and private hire vehicles has no budgetary implications.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

36. This is an issue that has previously been debated by Committee and at full Council. This was the in the context of the growing concerns that we all have about air quality in general. As ever whatever we do must have a clear rationale for it. If we do decide to change our existing policy in any way then we need to go through an appropriate consultation exercise. A report would then be brought back to Committee. The final decision on any change to policy would rest with Full Council.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

▶ HR & Organisational Development	<i>There are no implications here</i>
▶ ICT / Technology	<i>There are no implications here</i>
▶ Property & Asset Management	<i>There are no implications here</i>
▶ Risk	<i>On the one hand any change of policy carries with it the risk of legal challenge. On the other hand we are all aware of the risks of damage to air quality and we have to mindful of this.</i>
▶ Equality & Diversity	<i>There are no implications here</i>

--	--

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Document 1 - Age Policy Report from September 2018

<https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11293/Proposed%20Changes%20to%20Vehicle%20Age%20Policy.pdf>

Document 2 - Emission Standards for Passenger Cars and Light Commercial vehicles

https://theicct.org/sites/default/files/publications/ICCTupdate_EU-95gram_jan2014.pdf

Document 3 - Minutes from Age Policy working group

<https://southribble.moderngov.co.uk/documents/s11346/WorkingGroupminutesFebruary2018.doc.pdf>

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Note to Chief Executives

Appendix 2 - Hackney Carriage Emissions Data

Appendix 3 - Private Hire Emissions Data

Appendix 4 - Clean Air Zone Framework

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/612592/clean-air-zone-framework.pdf

LT Member's Name: Dave Whelan

Job Title :Interim Monitoring Officer

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Mark Marshall, Head of Licensing	01772 625401	25 th October 2019