

Minutes of	Licensing and Public Safety Committee
Meeting date	Wednesday, 6 April 2022
Committee members present:	Councillors Jacky Alty (Chair), Julie Buttery, Derek Forrest, Peter Mullineaux, Alan Ogilvie and Colin Sharples
Committee members attended virtually (non-voting):	Councillors Keith Martin
Officers present:	Tasneem Safdar (Shared Legal Services Team Leader), Coral Astbury (Democratic and Member Services Officer), Justin Abbotts (Licensing Officer) and Stephanie Newby (Licensing Officer)
Other attendees:	Councillors and Phil Smith and Karen Walton (attended virtually)
Public:	0

20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillors Jane Bell, John Rainsbury, Paul Wharton-Hardman and Jacqui Mort.

Councillor Margaret Smith was in attendance as substitute for Councillor John Rainsbury and Councillor Martin attended the meeting virtually.

21 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

22 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 8 March 2022 of Licensing and Public Safety Committee

Resolved: (Unanimously)

That the minutes of the last meeting be agreed as a correct record for signing by the Chair, subject to the amendment of the attendance list to include Councillor Margaret Smith.

23 Consultation Feedback Report - Vehicle Age Policy & The Licensing of New Hackney Carriage Vehicles

The committee considered a report of the Director of Planning and Development which sought to provide feedback on the consultation carried out in response to the intended policy amendments, with regards to the age of vehicles licensed by the authority.

The Licensing Manager explained that the report had previously been presented to committee which advised that two sections of the Licensing Policy were due for renewal: the Vehicle Age Policy and Licensing of Hackney Carriage Vehicles.

In addition to the consultation, a further consultation was held for two weeks as Officer's felt the need to consult the trade for their views on granting exemptions from the euro 6 rule (within Option 4), specifically relating to vehicles that currently do not meet the proposed rating, but need to be licensed to complete specific types of work such as special needs transport vehicles.

The proposed amendments to the Vehicle Age Policy had been for consultation, and all drivers and operators received a copy of the consultation to complete. 60 responses were received:

- Option 1, Keep as it is – 45 responses
- Option 2, Reduce all vehicles to the same age (4 and 8 years) – 0 responses
- Option 3, Have a blanket policy for all vehicles with 5 years on and 10 years off the fleet – 3 responses
- Option 4, Reduce all vehicles to 4 and 8 years. With an option of an extension for non-polluting vehicles that conform to a certain euro rating – 12 responses.

The Licensing Manager explained that of the 45 responses received for Option 1, 39 of those were received from one operator who solely used older transit type vehicles to perform school contract work, and would benefit from keeping this type of vehicle licensed until they are 12 years old.

The Licensing Manager advised members that Officer's preference was Option 4, which would help the authority to meet their clean air zone commitments. Providing an incentive of being able to licence a vehicle for longer providing it meets a certain euro rating criteria for lower Co2 levels would help to create a fleet of low polluting vehicles.

Members agreed that Option 4 was preferred and commented on the lack of current infrastructure for electric and hybrid vehicles and agreed that the cost of vehicles were currently beyond the price range of the driver's. Members hoped that the affordability and availability of electric vehicles would improve within the next three years.

Members noted that the Vehicle Age Policy was due for renewal in 2019 and had only been brought for renewal now and expressed concern that implementing the policy for a further three years would hinder the Council's ambition of being carbon neutral by 2030. Members asked if the policy could be considered on as a rolling programme with the policy being brought back before committee in June 2023. In response, the Licensing Manager agreed that this could be added to the Licensing Service Business Plan for April 2023 – April 2024.

The Licensing Manager presented the proposed amendments to the licensing of New Hackney Carriage Vehicles which would look to cap the number of saloon hackney carriage vehicles initially to 100, with officer's given delegated power to increase the cap should market demand increase through evidence of unmet demand from the public. An unmet demand survey had been undertaken in April

2019 which found the fleet to have a high provision of wheelchair accessible capable disabled vehicles in the private hire fleet.

The Licensing Manager explained that it would help to ease issues surrounding cross border working and would make it easier to licence vehicles through South Ribble as opposed to neighbouring authorities. Drivers would still be able to licence wheelchair accessible vehicles with no cap on how many would be licensed.

In response to a member enquiry, the Licensing Manager explained that because driver's found it difficult to get licensed within South Ribble they were going to neighbouring authorities and licensing vehicles there and bringing them back to work in South Ribble. Currently, drivers could only licence saloon vehicles as hackney carriages if they were licensed prior to 2014. Since then, numbers of saloon vehicles licensed as hackney carriages had naturally diminished. Initially there would be a cap of 100 saloon vehicles to be licensed, which would be changed in line with increased demand.

The Licensing Manager confirmed that the numbers of saloon vehicles licensed as hackney carriages would be monitored and reviewed with the Chair every six months, a report would be presented to committee yearly for noting.

Resolved: (Unanimously)

1. The committee note the contents of the report.
2. The committee considered the consultation responses and accepted Option 4, including the exemption for vehicles that perform Special Needs school contract work in relation to the vehicle age policy.
3. Members considered the proposed amendments to the licensing of new hackney carriage vehicles, and agreed to cap the number of saloons to be licensed to 100 vehicles.
4. Members agreed that both policies would be recommended to the next meeting of full council for adoption, with the policy being formally reviewed in 2025.
5. In addition, both policies would be part of an ongoing programme of review and would be reported back to the committee every 12 months, with the first update due in June 2023.

Chair

Date