

Report of	Meeting	Date
Interim Deputy Chief Executive	Licensing and Public Safety Committee	Tuesday, 12 December 2023

Vehicle Age Policy Update - Consultation Feedback

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	No
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Savings or expenditure amounting to greater than £100,000	Significant impact on 2 or more council wards
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Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to provide feedback on the consultation carried out in response to the intended policy amendments, with regards to the age of vehicles licensed by this authority.

Recommendations

2. Note the content of the report.
3. Consider the consultation responses from members of the trade.
4. Determine whether to proceed to accept officer recommendations, to include all wheel chair and multipurpose vehicles to be licenced up to 12 years of age.
5. If members are minded accepting the recommendations of officers, then to forward this report to the next meeting of the Council with a recommendation for formal adoption of the proposed policy changes.

Reasons for recommendations

6. To keep the policy concurrent with the equality duty to passengers of licenced vehicles.

Other options considered and rejected

7. All options possible are address within the report body

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Thriving communities
A fair local economy that works for everyone	Good homes, green spaces, healthy places

LPSC meeting - 12/09/2023

9. A detailed report presented to members of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee on 12/09/2023, updated members, on the effectiveness of the Vehicle Age Policy introduced in 2022.
10. At the meeting of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee in April 2022, members passed a new vehicle age policy which gave emphasis to new restrictions on the ages of licenced vehicles dependant on the emissions rating of the vehicle.
11. With vehicles with an emissions rating of euro 6, being licenced up to 6 years old when first licence, then licenced until 12 years old.
12. Whereas vehicles with an emissions rating of less than 6, would only be licenced up to 4 years old when first licence, then licenced until 8 years old.
13. Although the policy was adopted until 2025, member also asked for an update on the policy after 12 months.

Current Position Feedback/Update - LPSC 12/09/2023.

14. At the meeting on 12/09/2023 members were given an update on the new policy.
15. Officers advised that the policy was working and since its introduction last year, officers have found that all new vehicles licensed have been euro 6 rated vehicles.
16. This with the exception of some larger vehicles licenced as special needs transport vehicles (as per the policy wording) in line with the current ULEZ rules by "The transport for London" which have been euro 5 rating.
17. Prior to the policy being introduced in 2022 the fleet of vehicles licenced by SRBC had only 10 hybrid vehicles.
18. Since June 2022, this had increase by 16 additional hybrid vehicles being added to the fleet, members were advised the council licenced 26 hybrid vehicles on the fleet.
19. At the point of writing this report (Nov 2023) the number of hybrid/ electric vehicles licenced by the authority has continued to increase, and is now 29.
20. Vehicle proprietors are clearly seeing the incentives to buying hybrid low polluting vehicles as they can be 2 years older when first licenced and remain licenced for 4 years longer.
21. We are seeing an increase in low polluting hybrid vehicles coming onto the fleet, with lower CO2 levels helping create a fleet of low polluting vehicles, a step towards the councils' aspirations to be net carbon zero by 2030.
22. Giving drivers an increase margin for vehicle ages, drivers are finding it more affordable to purchase hybrid type vehicles with less restrictions on ages from the previous policy in place up to 2022. (4 years to 6 years).

UPDATE - Current Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles - LPSC 12/09/2023.

23. At the meeting on 12/09/2023 Officers explained that they have again, researched the costs of electric vehicles.
24. Officers explained that, although some second-hand electric vehicles have been found at a lower expense, (since the policy was implemented in 2022), fit for purpose vehicles are still seen as being out of the price range for our drivers.
25. Additionally, the cheaper vehicles have low ranges, most less than 200 miles, they are not capable of performing the required number of miles in one charge. Potentially leaving electric vehicles sat either charging or waiting to be charged during peak times, leaving an unmet demand for passengers.
26. Members were presented with an array of vehicles attached to the report of 12/09/2023, that were either out of the price range for our trade members or not capable of performing the number of miles a taxi/private hire vehicle will perform in a shift before needing to be charged again.
27. Additionally, officers explained, the current infrastructure of charging points within South Ribble is not capable to accommodate the number of vehicles if the council were to change to an “electric only” policy.
28. Officers advised members that the market for electric wheelchair accessible vehicles which are fit for purpose, is still unattainable for our drivers.
29. With vehicles in excess off £40,000 for used electric wheelchair accessible vehicles with a range capable of performing to expectations.
30. Whilst the authority caps the number of licensed non-wheelchair accessible hackneys, keeping the authority compliant with our equality duties to our wheelchair bound passengers, the option of mandating electric vehicles is not possible with the current infrastructure and availability of electric wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV).

Problems found with the current policy wording - LPSC 12/09/2023.

31. Officers report the only vehicles pending to be changed from the old policy, that are now non-compliant with the new policy introduced last year, are either wheelchair accessible or MPV/ WAV vehicles - we still have 11 licensed, (older than 8 years old).
32. Officers explained, that the recent unmet demand survey, looked at the current policy on licensing vehicles within our area and reported back, the levels of diversity between the types of vehicles available to its residents.
33. The council has a duty to license wheelchair accessible vehicles and keep a list of the vehicles advertised to the general public, so there is no unmet demand for vehicles by wheelchair bound residents.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles - LPSC 12/09/2023.

34. The type of vehicles that are normally adapted for wheelchair access are normally small, converted vans or MPV's which manufacturers have taken longer to implement low co2 rated engines.
35. The cost of purchasing these types of vehicles are excessively more than saloon type non-WAV's.
36. Officers are concerned should these vehicles not be licenced by the authority we may see an unmet demand for WAVs for our wheelchair bound residents.
37. Replacing non wheelchair accessible vehicles (saloons) with low polluting Hybrid / electric vehicles is much easier and more cost effective than WAV and MPV for the reasons indicated.

Exemptions from ULEZ zones for these types of vehicles - LPSC 12/09/2023.

38. This problem has been identified in London within its "Ultra Low Emission Zones" (ULEZ), where WAV type vehicles have been given a grace period which exempts them from paying the ULEZ charge until 24 October 2027, by the transport for London.

Committee Decision LPSC 12/09/2023

39. members of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee agreed to proceed to a consultation exercise, to explore extending exemptions from the Euro 6 policy to all WAV (wheelchair accessible) and MPV (Multipurpose Vehicles).
40. This meaning all WAV and MPV type vehicles would be licenced in line with euro 6 type vehicles, from 6 years old when first licence, then licenced until 12 years old.
41. Members agreed to receive a report advising of the results of that consultation exercise at a future meeting.
42. The report presented to members of the licensing and public safety committee on 12/09/2023, can be found via the link under agenda item 21 - [Agenda for Licensing and Public Safety Committee on Tuesday, 12th September, 2023, 6.00 pm - South Ribble Borough Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Consultation Exercise and Statistics

43. The whole trade have been consulted via email. The emails have been sent to every licenced driver, vehicle proprietor and licenced operator.
44. The Summarised consultation responses are as follows.

Consultation question 1

Do you agree to allow all wheelchair accessible vehicles and multipurpose vehicles to stay licenced until 12 years of age if they are less than euro 6 rated vehicles?

Yes	5
No	0
Unsure	0

Consultation question 2

Do you have any comments to make about the current age policy for vehicles licenced by South Ribble borough Council?

Yes	0
No	5
Unsure	0

45. From the results above the trade as a whole have supported the proposed change to include exemptions to WAV and MPV's.

46. A summary of comments made by the trade within their responses are as follows;

I agree with this as these vehicles are more expensive to buy than cars.

The vehicle should remain on until the end of its 12th year.

Wheelchair vehicles are clearly becoming extremely expensive now, that full 12th year of use can be vitally important, when considering purchasing a WAV vehicle.

I think all private hire vehicles should be allowed up to 12 years old, it is very expensive in these very hard times for everyone to buy a car less than 6 years old, so I would like to recommend you increase this age limit to 8 years when first licensed and can stay licensed up to 12 years old. All neighbouring councils i.e., Chorley Preston BLACKBURN don't even have an age limit for their licenced vehicles

I feel we have spent a lot of money licencing with srbc we have a massive issue now we are seeing nearly 20-year-old cars operating in South Ribble area. (uber) licenced under different authority's work has drastically been affected I have a feeling a lot of drivers licenced with South Ribble council may move where its cheaper. I don't think it's possible but I would advise if possible allow operating licence to uber they have already taken a lot of work most likely drivers will start joining uber as the takings with local operators don't justify the rent and overall costs.

Recommendation

47. Officers consider after seeing the policy in place for almost 18 months, the current policy is working well. It has created an incentive to drivers to obtain lower polluting vehicles.
48. The recommendation to members is to make the minor amendment to the policy wording to include WAV and MPV vehicles that are not euro 6 compliant to be exempt from being euro 6 and remain licensed until 12 years old.
49. This would only be relevant to the remaining 11 vehicles which are not compliant.
50. Officers feel the equality duty on the council to provide a diverse vehicle fleet for our residents, is just as important as working towards the council's objectives for air quality.
51. For that reason, the remaining WAV's and MPV's should remain on the fleet and be licensed until 12 years old or until they have been replaced.
52. This would not include any new vehicles licensed by the authority. The numbers will be reduced as vehicles are changed or become 12 years old. This would be reviewed as part of the full policy review scheduled for 2025.
53. The proposed change would only amend the following section of the age policy,

Any vehicle current performing "special educational needs school transport" **or a WAV or MPV type vehicle** may be granted the exemption from being categorised into (a) where its euro rating does not comply with euro 6. Thus, these types of vehicle will fall into category (b) at the discretion of the licensing manager upon assessment of the vehicle by officers.
54. The full vehicle age policy, including the proposed change above can be found attached to the report as **appendix 1**. (marked change is highlighted red within the appendix).

Climate change and air quality

55. The work noted in this report impacts on the following areas of climate change and sustainability targets of the Councils Green Agenda.:
 - a. net carbon zero by 2030
 - b. limiting non sustainable forms of transport
 - c. limiting or improving air quality

Equality and diversity

56. South Ribble Borough Council is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators.
57. This policy applies to all regardless of gender, age, disability, religious belief, race or ethnic minority or sexual orientation. No overall impacts have been identified across the equality strands within this report.

58. Please see the summarised outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) attached to the report as **Appendix 2**.

Risk

59. The risk to the council not fulfilling its duty to have wheelchair accessible vehicles available has been identified in the report, with a recommendation to change the policy to address this risk.

Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

60. There are no direct financial implications to the Council of this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

61. Committee should consider the responses from the consultation and thereafter reach a decision, as to whether to include all wheel chair and multipurpose vehicles to be licenced up to 12 years of age.

Background documents

Background Document 1 - report and attached appendices from 12/09/2023- [Agenda for Licensing and Public Safety Committee on Tuesday, 12th September, 2023, 6.00 pm - South Ribble Borough Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Proposed Policy Wording.
Appendix 2. Equality Impact Assessment

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