

REPORT TO	ON
GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE	10 APRIL 2018

September 2017



TITLE	REPORT OF
REPORT OF WORKING GROUP ON DIFFERENTIAL AGE LIMITS FOR LICENSED VEHICLES	INTERIM DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE (RESOURCES & TRANSFORMATION)

Is this report confidential?	No
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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to update members on the outcome of the working group convened to consider differential age limits for licensed vehicles.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are requested to:

- 2.1 receive the draft report (attached as Appendix 1) produced by the working group following its meeting on 22 February 2018;
- 2.2 consider whether to formally endorse the report and support the recommendation to amend the Licensing Policy;
- 2.3 consider whether to submit the proposed change to the Licensing Policy to a wider period of consultation as per the methodology set out in section 7 below;
- 2.4 agree to receive an update on the outcomes of the consultation exercise at a future meeting of the committee; and
- 2.5 agree that a formal letter of thanks should be sent to the representatives from the licensed trade and disability group which contributed to the process.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

The report relates to the following corporate priorities

Excellence and Financial Sustainability	
Health and Wellbeing	x
Place	

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

People	
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4. BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

- 4.1 Members will recall that, at the meeting of the General Licensing Committee in November 2017, they received a report updating them on Licensing activities. Part of that report outlined a discussion at the Taxi Trade Forum held on 26 October 2017, at which trade representatives expressed the view that it was undesirable to have a policy of differential age limits for saloon vehicles and wheelchair accessible vehicles, and enquired whether it would be possible for these to become more aligned. The Chair of the Forum (Cllr Nelson) had commented that it may be appropriate for a working group of committee members to be set up, with a view to considering the issue in detail and reporting back to the General Licensing Committee at a future date.
- 4.2 At the meeting of the General Licensing Committee in November, members agreed that a working group should be established to consider the topic in detail. It was envisaged that the working group not meet more than twice to consider the matter and then report its findings to the next appropriate meeting of this Committee

5. WORKING GROUP AND METHODOLOGY

- 5.1 The formal title for the working group was “Working Group on Differential Age Limits for Licensed Vehicles” and (as previously agreed by the committee) its membership was:

- Cllr Wooldridge (Chair)
- Cllr Green
- Cllr Hamilton
- Cllr Hancock
- Cllr Nathan

Other co-opted members of the group were:

- David Cox (TCE Airport Travel)
- Scott Washington (a licensed Hackney Carriage driver).

In addition, an approach was made to Disability Equality North West, a body which had helpfully contributed to previous Scrutiny exercises. As a result, Suzie Jones was able to attend and input from an Equalities perspective.

- 5.2 Members will recall that a draft Terms of Reference had been produced for the working group, which (along with a draft agenda for the first meeting) had been endorsed by this committee at its January meeting. In addition, officers had undertaken some initial desk top research which had also been circulated to the group, prior to its meeting.
- 5.3 The working group met on 22 February 2018 and followed a structured format in which the following key questions were identified and debated by the group:
- i) Historically, why has SRBC adopted a differential age policy?
 - ii) What are the advantages / disadvantages of a differentiated approach?
 - iii) On balance, would the working group wish to move away from the current approach?
 - iv) If so, what is the preferred option?
 - align saloons with Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (ie move to the higher age limits across the fleet)?

- align Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles with saloons (ie move to the lower age limits across the fleet)?
- adopt other age limits (to be defined)
- abandon age limits completely

v) What benefits would adoption of the preferred option bring?

6. OUTCOME OF THE WORKING GROUP

6.1 A copy of the report produced by the working group is attached as Appendix 1.

6.2 A summary of the working group's discussion is set out in the report. The debate covered a wide range of issues associated with age policies and was generally considered to have been constructive.

6.3 The recommendation of the working group is set out in the appropriate section of the attached report. In brief, the working group recommends that the current differentiated age policy should be abandoned and replaced by a standardised age policy. This would mean that the proposed age limits for all vehicles (whether saloon or wheelchair accessible) would be 6 years on first application and up to 12 years on renewal.

6.4 Should the committee wish to proceed with the change to the Licensing Policy which will be required to implement the proposal, a period of consultation will be necessary. This is considered in section 7 below.

7. METHODOLOGY

7.1 Should members wish to endorse the draft report and its recommendation for a revision to the Licensing Policy, it will be necessary to proceed with a consultation exercise. It is therefore proposed that the following process be adopted:

- a) details of the consultation exercise will appear on the Council's website;
- b) the consultation exercise will be mentioned at the Taxi Trade Forum on 3 May 2018;
- c) all operators will be written to and advised of the consultation; and
- d) the Council will also promote the consultation via social media.

7.2 The consultation period will last for 28 days.

7.3 On conclusion of the consultation exercise, a further report can then be presented to members updating them of the feedback / responses received. At that stage, members will be invited to consider whether (in light of the consultation feedback) they still wish to support the recommendations in the report. If so, the report and proposed change to the Licensing Policy can then be forwarded for adoption by full Council.

8. LICENSING POLICY – PROPOSED WORDING TO IMPLEMENT THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 The current wording of the Licensing Policy (reflecting a differentiated approach to age limits) is reproduced below:

Section 6.9 - Hackney Carriage Vehicle Age Limits

The Council operates an age policy in respect of licensed vehicles and since its introduction, the travelling public of South Ribble have benefitted from more reliable vehicles which are fitted with better safety features and are more environmentally friendly.

The Council will where appropriate, issue Hackney Carriage Licences to vehicles which:

- a) Are no older than 4 years, when first presented for licensing
- b) In respect of purpose built taxis (i.e. Peugeot E7, Euro taxi) or other wheelchair accessible vehicles are no older than 6 years, when first presented for licensing

Vehicles in (a) above, which have been continuously licenced by South Ribble, will no longer be eligible for renewal once they are 8 years old.

Vehicles in (b) above, which have been continuously licenced by South Ribble, will no longer be eligible for renewal once they are 12 years old

The Council operates an age policy in respect of licensed vehicles and since its introduction, the travelling public of South Ribble have benefitted from more reliable vehicles which are fitted with better safety features and are more environmentally friendly.

Section 7.8 - Private Hire Vehicle Age Limits

The Council will where appropriate, issue Private Hire Licences to:

- a) Saloon/estate vehicles which are no older than 4 years, when first presented for licensing,
- b) Larger MPVs, minibuses and other wheelchair accessible vehicles which are no older than 6 years, when first presented for licensing.

Vehicles in (a) above, which have been continuously licensed by South Ribble, will no longer be eligible for renewal once they are 8 years old.

Vehicles in (b) above, which have been continuously licensed by South Ribble, will no longer be eligible for renewal once they are 12 years old.

- 8.2 Should members wish to adopt the recommendation in the Working Group's report, it is proposed that the following proposed wording would need to be the subject of the consultation exercise outlined in section 7 above:

Section 6.9 - Hackney Carriage Vehicle Age Limits

The Council operates an age policy in respect of licensed vehicles and since its introduction, the travelling public of South Ribble have benefitted from more reliable vehicles which are fitted with better safety features and are more environmentally friendly.

The Council will, where appropriate, issue Hackney Carriage Licences to vehicles which (whether saloon vehicles, purpose-built taxis or other wheelchair accessible vehicle) are (i) no older than 6 years when first presented for licensing and (ii) will cease to be eligible for renewal when they become 12 years old.

The Council operates an age policy in respect of licensed vehicles and since its introduction, the travelling public of South Ribble have benefitted from more reliable vehicles which are fitted with better safety features and are more environmentally friendly.

Section 7.8 - Private Hire Vehicle Age Limits

The Council will, where appropriate, issue a Private Hire Licence to any vehicle (whether a saloon / estate vehicle; larger MPV; minibus; or other wheelchair accessible vehicle) which are (i) no older than 6 years when first presented for licensing and (ii) will cease to be eligible for renewal when they become 12 years old.

9. WIDER IMPLICATIONS AND BACKGROUND DOCUMENTATION

9.1 Comments of the Statutory Finance Officer

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

9.2 Comments of the Monitoring Officer

Should members wish to formally endorse the recommendations of the Working Group's report and consider any changes to the Licensing Policy, then there will be a requirement for a formal consultation on this matter.

Other implications:	
▶ Risk	None
▶ Equality & Diversity	None
▶ HR & Organisational Development	None
▶ Property & Asset Management	None
▶ ICT / Technology	None

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Appendix 1 –draft report produced by the working group

ELT Member's Name: Lisa Kitto

Job Title: Interim Deputy Chief Executive (Resources & Transformation)

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Interim Licensing Manager	01772 625401	2 March 2018