

Report of	Meeting	Date
Deputy Chief Executive (Introduced by Chair of Licensing and Public Safety Committee)	Council	Wednesday, 31 January 2024

Vehicle Age Policy Update

Is this report confidential?	No
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Is this decision key?	Not applicable
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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. To consider the outcome of a consultation exercise undertaken in November 2023, and the approval by the Licensing & Public Safety Committee (LPSC) of a proposed change to the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy in the light of this consultation, at the meeting of 12/12/23.
2. To seek formal adoption of changes to the Taxi Licensing Policy following consideration by the LPSC with regards to the Vehicle Age Policy (VAP).

Recommendations to Council

3. Members are requested to formally adopt the updated Taxi Licensing Policy at **Appendix 1** following the approval by the LPSC on the 12/12/2023.

Reasons for recommendations

4. Following an Unmet Demand Survey conducted in 2023, on the availability of licenced vehicles within South Ribble, the necessary changes were highlighted in a report taken to Committee on 12/09/2023 and 12/12/2023, which outlined recommended changes required to the vehicle age policy to be compliant with the council's equality duty to wheelchair users.

Other options considered and rejected

5. Options considered by members of the LPSC.

6. To stay with the current policy wording,
7. to vary the policy to allow wheelchair accessible vehicles with a euro rating of less than 6, to be licenced up to 12 years.

Corporate priorities

8. The report relates to the following corporate priorities:

An exemplary council	Healthy and happy communities
Opportunities for everyone	Green and clean neighbourhood

Background

9. At the meeting of the LPSC in April 2022, Members supported a new VAP which gave emphasis to new restrictions on the ages of licenced vehicles dependant on the emissions rating of the vehicle.
10. The new policy permitted vehicles with an emissions rating of euro 6 to be licenced up to 6 years old when first licenced, then remain to remain licenced up to 12 years old.
11. The policy set out that vehicles with an emissions rating of less than euro 6, would only be licenced up to 4 years old when first licenced, then remain licenced up to 8 years old.
12. Euro 6 is the name given to a set of limits for exhaust emissions produced by virtually any vehicle powered by petrol or diesel engines.
13. Euro 6 - Applies to most new cars registered from 1 September 2015.
14. The policy was formally adopted by council on 20th April 2022, for a period to 2025.

Issues

15. Since the policy was passed in 2022, the council has instructed an independent “Unmet Demand Survey” of vehicles licenced by this authority.
16. An unmet demand survey looks at the current policy on licensing vehicles and reports back the levels of diversity, between the types of vehicles available to its residents, and if there is any unmet demand of licenced vehicles in the locality.
17. Local authorities are expected to have these surveys conducted every 3 years.
18. The report stated that the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles licenced by the authority is in line with the guidelines set out in the Department For Transport (DFT) statutory standards released in 2022.
19. The unmet demand survey can be found within Background Document 1 – Item 21 as appendix 1.

20. Under section 167 of the Equality Act 2010, the Council has a duty to license wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) and keep a list of the vehicles advertised to the general public, so that there is no unmet demand for vehicles by wheelchair users.
21. Since the new policy was introduced in April 2022, the only remaining vehicles pending to be changed, that are now non-compliant with the new policy introduced last year, are either wheelchair accessible or multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) / WAV vehicles - we still have 11 licensed, (older than 8 years old but euro 5 rated).
22. The type of vehicles that are normally adapted for wheelchair access are normally small, converted vans or MPV's in which manufacturers have taken longer to implement low co2 rated engines than they have for cars.
23. The cost of purchasing these types of vehicles is much greater than saloon type non-WAV's.
24. Officers are concerned should these vehicles not be licenced by the authority we may see an unmet demand for WAVs for our wheelchair users.
25. 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.
26. Understandably there are important environmental considerations, reducing the amount of higher polluting vehicles, improving air quality, but also the authority needs to be aware of our duties under equalities legislation – in particular we need to ensure that there are enough wheelchair accessible vehicles available on our fleet.

LPSC meeting 12/09/2023.

27. Members of the LPSC 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).
28. Members agreed to receive a report advising of the results of that consultation exercise at a future meeting.
29. The report presented to members of the licensing and public safety committee on 12/09/2023, can be found within background document n1 - 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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

LPSC meeting 12/12/2023.

30. At the meeting of the LPSC, members were presented feedback on the consultation exercise carried out with regards to the proposed small change to the policy on the age of the vehicles licenced by this authority.
31. All Licenced drivers, Vehicle Proprietors and Operator were contacted with a copy of the consultation and asked to respond.

32. The consultation can be found attached within Background document 2 - agenda item 33, paragraphs 44 to 46 of the report.
33. Members agreed to amend 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.
34. Members agreed for the report to be presented at the next meeting of Full Council with a recommendation for formal adoption of the proposed policy changes.
35. The report presented to members of the licensing and public safety committee on 12/12/2023, can be found via the link under agenda item 33. [Agenda for Licensing and Public Safety Committee on Tuesday, 12th December, 2023, 6.00 pm - South Ribble Borough Council \(modern.gov.co.uk\)](#)

Proposal

36. Members of The Council are invited to consider the feedback given from the two previous Licensing and Public Safety Committees, found attached to this report as background documents 1 and 2, and the consultation exercise undertaken in November 2023.
37. Members are asked to take the decision to formally adopt the proposed changes to the wording of the Vehicle Age Policy within the South Ribble Borough Council Taxi Licensing Policy (indicated in red) attached to this report as **appendix 1**.

Climate change and air quality

38. 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

39. South Ribble Borough Council is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers, and operators.
40. This policy applies to all regardless of gender, age, disability, religious belief, race or ethnic minority or sexual orientation.
41. No overall impacts have been identified across the equality strands within this report.
42. Please see the summarised outcome of the Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) attached to the report as Appendix 2.

Risk

43. 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

44. There are no direct financial implications of this report.

Comments of the Monitoring Officer

45. The amendments proposed to the Policy have undergone a consultation process with relevant stakeholders, consideration and approval at the Licensing and Public Safety Committee and it is now at the stage requiring approval by Council. It is a requirement within the Council's constitution for all amendments to the Taxi Policy to be adopted by Full Council.

Background documents

46. Background Document 1 - 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 \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#)

47. Background Document 2 - The report presented to members of the licensing and public safety committee on 12/12/2023, can be found via the link under agenda item 33. [Agenda for Licensing and Public Safety Committee on Tuesday, 12th December, 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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