



Walsall Council

LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE

20 APRIL 2011

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PUBLIC SAFETY

LICENSING AGE LIMITS FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 Following a meeting of the taxi liaison group on the 10th February 2011 a request was made by the private hire group to amend the vehicle age policy. They requested that any vehicle under the age of 10 years (taken from date of first registration) on initial application be approved for licensing.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 The committee is asked to consider the contents of the report, and to determine whether private hire vehicles be permitted to be licensed for the first time up to the age of 9 years.

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At a meeting of the Taxi/Private Hire Liaison group on the 10th February 2011 a request was made by the private hire group to amend the private hire vehicle age policy. They requested that any vehicle under the age of 10 years, on initial application be approved for licensing.
- 3.2 Section 1.12 of the private hire vehicle licence conditions states that when a saloon car/MPV has not been licensed by Walsall MBC, or if it has previously been licensed by Walsall MBC and the licence allowed to expire for a period of more than 28 days other than prior arrangement in writing with the Licensing Office, then in each case the vehicle must be five years of age or under (from the first date of

registration or manufacture) depending on which is earlier, in order for that vehicle to be licensed.

- 3.3 Once a saloon car/MPV has been licensed, it may continue to be licensed until it reaches ten years of age.
- 3.4 The age limit in respect of minibuses as private hire vehicles is six and twelve years respectively.
- 3.5 There are currently 650 licensed private hire vehicles. The age profile of the fleet is:

1 year of age	=	21
2	"	= 17
3	"	= 26
4	"	= 56
5	"	= 115
6	"	= 127
7	"	= 131
8	"	= 90
9	"	= 50
10	"	=17

- 3.6 As can be seen from the vehicle age profile 81% of the fleet is 5 years of age or over.
- 3.7 Given the information contained in 3.5 it is highly likely that if the age restriction for the first licensing of the vehicle (less than 5 years of age) is allowed to be extended for up to 9 years as requested by the trade, then significantly older vehicles will dominate the age profile of the fleet.
- 3.8 The following gives neighbouring authority policy on this matter.
- Birmingham C.C. must be under 8 years on initial app. No upper age limit.
 - Sandwell MBC must be less than 5 years on initial app. Licensed to 8 years.
 - Cannock D.C must be less than six years on initial app. Licensed to 6 years.
 - Dudley MBC no age limit restrictions.
 - Wolverhampton C.C must be less than 6 years on initial app. Licensed to 9 years.
- 3.9 On the 21st April 2010 the committee resolved to reduce the frequency of vehicle testing. Vehicles under three years of age would continue to be tested annually, vehicles over three years to be tested every six months. This decision was taken in light of the improved pass rates of licensed vehicles however, if the age profile is relaxed as requested the testing frequency criteria may have to re evaluated.

3.10 The private hire group have not provided any supporting information in respect of there request.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Fee levels for private hire vehicle licences relate to whether they are under or over the age of 3 years at the point of licensing.

4.2 In light of the information in 4.1 it is unlikely that there would be any negative impact on licensing income.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Legal Services Consulted: Yes

7.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 None.

8.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

8.1 None.

9.0 WARD(S) AFFECTED

9.1 None.

10.0 CONSULTEES

10.1 Legal Services, Walsall MBC.

11.0 CONTACT OFFICER

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