

Review of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Age Limits

**Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Licensing
Sub-Committee**

Date: 7th January 2009

Author: Group Director, Environment and Regeneration

Wards Affected: All

Purpose

- To consider extensions to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Age Limits.

Recommendation

The Sub-Committee is asked to: -

- Extend the vehicle age limits for Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriage saloon cars from 5 years to 7 years and purpose-built Hackney Carriages from 10 to 12 years as set out in the body of the report.
- Remove the delegated authority for the Licensing Officer to allow up to a 2 year extension for prestige vehicles and replace it with delegated authority to refuse to licence a vehicle over 5 years old (or 10 years in respect of London-style Hackney Carriages) if in his opinion the vehicle has not been exceptionally well maintained.

1. Reasons

- 1.1 Vehicle Age Limits are currently 5 years of age for Private Hire Vehicles and Hackney Carriage saloon cars, and 10 years of age for purpose-built Hackney Carriages. Once a vehicle reaches the age limit it is considered too old to be licensed. This age limit has been in force since 1997.

2. Detail

- 2.1 Currently the Taxi Licensing Officer has delegated authority to allow one or two additional years, beyond 5 years of age, for "prestige" private hire vehicles. This depends on a visual inspection of the vehicle and a standard MOT test.
- 2.2 Vehicle specifications have improved significantly since 1997 and there is now divided opinion as to what constitutes a "prestige vehicle". It is recommended, therefore, that the delegated authority vested in the Taxi Licensing Officer to allow one or two additional years to "prestige" vehicles is withdrawn.
- 2.3 It is proposed that, as vehicle specifications have improved significantly, vehicles are now capable of providing a safe and comfortable service beyond the five year limit.
- 2.4 It is therefore proposed that the age limit for private hire and saloon car hackney carriage vehicles be extended to seven years, subject to the following conditions:

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- 2.4.1 Each vehicle is presented to the Licensing Officer on reaching its fifth and sixth birthday for a visual inspection. To satisfy the inspection, the vehicle must be in an exceptionally well-maintained condition, both with regard to exterior bodywork, interior fitments and all ancillary equipment.
- 2.4.2 It is recommended that the Sub-Committee grant delegated authority to the Licensing Officer to refuse to licence a vehicle over 5 years old (or 10 years in respect of London-style Hackney Carriages) if in his opinion the vehicle has not been exceptionally well maintained.
- 2.4.3 In the fifth and sixth year of a vehicle's licensing life the Council would require the vehicle to undergo two MOT tests per annum at one of the three garages contracted by the Council. The cost of all the MOT tests to be borne by the vehicle proprietor.
- 2.4.4 No vehicle seven years of age or over would be eligible for licensing.
- 2.4.5 Any vehicle, when first presented for initial licensing, shall not be five years of age or over.
- 2.5 It is further proposed that the age limit for purpose-built Hackney Carriages be increased to 12 years, subject to the same conditions for the 11th and 12th year as those set out above for private hire vehicles.
- 2.6 It is proposed that these new arrangements, if approved, will commence on 1 February 2009.

Alternative Options

- Age limits could remain as at present, of 5 and 10 years respectively.

Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. There are no procurement issues arising from this report.

Legal/Human Rights Implications

There are no legal implications to this report. Human Rights have been taken into account in the preparation of this report.

Links to Corporate Plans and Policies (in particular to Swindon 2010 Promises)

A Healthy and Caring Place; An Economically Prosperous Place; An Environmentally Friendly Place; A Safe Place.

Consultees

The Director of Finance (s.151 Officer) and the Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted on all reports.

Background Papers and Appendices

- None

Further information on the subject of this report can be obtained from Rod Collett on 01793 466212 or e-mail rcollett@swindon.gov.uk.