



Northumberland

County Council

LICENSING & REGULATORY

DATE: 26TH FEBRUARY 2020

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE EMISSIONS

Report of Philip Soderquest, Head of Housing & Public Protection

Cabinet Member: Cllr John Riddle, Portfolio Holder, Planning, Housing and Resilience

Purpose of report:

To update Members on the result of a consultation with the hackney carriage and private hire licensing trade in relation to the regional recommendations to reduce emissions from licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles by introducing controls on the ages of vehicles that can be licensed.

Recommendations

1. That Members note the level of response, comments made in the representations and the regional position.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the Living and Enjoying priorities included in the NCC Corporate Plan 2018-2021 and recognises 'Responding to Climate Change: A Statement of Intent'

Key issues

1. The Council has a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy which stipulates the requirements for applications for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.
2. Consultation with the licensing trade is required in order to make changes to the licensing policy.

Background

1. In the light of ongoing concerns in the region about vehicle emissions, the North East Strategic Licensing Group (NESLEG) was asked by the North East Public Protection Partnership (NEPPP) to develop a set of standards for vehicles used as Hackney Carriages or Private Hire vehicles.

2. Discussions amongst the NEPPP member authorities revealed that there was no consistency across the policies that had been adopted. Some had not set emissions or age standards, whilst others, Northumberland included, had used the European Union Euro Standards, the last of which, Euro 6, was introduced in 2015. All vehicles manufactured after that date for sale in Europe had to meet this higher standard.
3. The standards controlled emissions of harmful gases. These include nitrogen oxide (NOx), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrocarbons (THC and NMHC) and particulate matter (PM), which is basically soot from diesel cars. Reducing these pollutants can also mean improved fuel economy and lower CO2 emissions.
4. The current Northumberland County Council policy states that 'Existing Licensed vehicles will be allowed to remain licensed until such times as the existing vehicle is no longer licensed or the ownership is transferred to another proprietor'. This report recommends that this requirement be amended to prohibit the use of any vehicle that is older than eight years from its date of first registration. The current policy includes an exemption for prestigious vehicles that are not used for everyday hire and reward. (In considering if a vehicle is prestigious the Council will have regard to the manufacturer, age, specification, historical value, uniqueness and any other factors that are deemed appropriate.)
5. NESLEG researched and agreed standards and these were supported by NEPPP at their meeting on 19th June 2019.
6. The intention was that the following standards recommended would be consulted on by all 12 North East local authorities.

New Licences. A 4 year vehicle age policy with effect from April 2020 for all newly licensed vehicles. This means the EURO 6 emissions standard applies from April 2020 to all new licences.

Existing Vehicles. Adopt a maximum 8 year vehicle life with a start date of April 2023. The taxi trade therefore has 4 years to comply (3 years from April 2020). This means that from April 2023 all diesel and petrol engine vehicles will be Euro 6.

Wheelchair accessible vehicles. Existing vehicles will have an extra 2 years added to the age restriction meaning that April 2025 is the compliance date.

'Full electric' and **'zero emission at source'** vehicles would be exempt

7. On 23rd October 2019 the Licensing Regulatory Committee agreed to a consultation to seek the views of the trade within Northumberland. The consultation has now ended and Officers can report that the Licensing section received the largest response to a consultation that they have ever received. All responses are attached as Appendix A.
8. In addition to a number of individual responses. There have been two sets of letters submitted. We have attached these as one letter with a list of people who have submitted them.

9. Officers were invited to attend a meeting of the Blyth Valley Taxi Driver Association where members of the trade from other areas of Northumberland were present. It was a well attended and particularly constructive meeting and attendees were advised to submit their views on the proposals.
10. As members will notice a large proportion of the responses are against the proposal entirely while others argue that although they are not entirely against the proposal should the Council feel it is necessary to change the current policy they have requested a longer lead in time and that the Council maintains the Euro status rather than an age policy.
11. A full update of the regional position will be provided at the committee. The current status for some of the regional authorities are shown below:

Durham - Policy consultation begins June 2020

Gateshead - Policy to go to committee at the end of March.

Hartlepool - Policy has been consulted and now adopted and came into effect on 1st February. Requirements are 4 years on and 6 years off (which can be extended if the vehicle has been exceptionally well maintained throughout its lifetime AND the vehicle is Euro 6.) This Euro 6 requirement is new to Hartlepool and will take effect from April 2023. Licences issued after 1st April 2022 will be limited to ensure no non-Euro 6 car can remain licensed after 1st April 2023.

Newcastle - Consultation to start early March

North Tyneside - Consultation complete

South Tyneside - Policy consultation just began.

Stockton - From the 1 January 2020 an age restriction policy will be introduced for all private hire and hackney carriage saloon vehicles. Applications will only be considered if the vehicle is no older than five years from the date of first registration. Any renewal of an existing private hire or hackney carriage saloon vehicle will only be granted if the vehicle does not exceed the maximum age limit of twelve years.

From 1 January 2020 an age restriction policy will also be introduced for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV's). Applications will only be considered for a vehicle no older than five years from the date of first registration. Any renewal of an existing WAV will only be granted if the vehicle does not exceed the maximum age limit of fifteen years.

Implications

Policy	Subject to Members' approval, the recommendations will be subject to consultation and will be incorporated into the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, if approved.
Finance and value for money	N/A
Legal	The Authority has the power to introduce the proposed changes into its Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy.
Procurement	N/A

Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) N/A X	None
Risk Assessment	None
Crime & Disorder	None
Customer Consideration	These proposals may impact on licence holders and it is important that we consult with them.
Carbon reduction	The proposals are aimed at reducing emissions from older vehicles.
Health and Wellbeing	The proposals should reduce emissions from older vehicles being used on the road leading to fewer health issues associated with pollution.
Wards	All

Background papers:

Northumberland County Council: RESPONDING TO CLIMATE CHANGE: A STATEMENT OF INTENT June 2019

Report sign off.

Authors must ensure that officers and members have agreed the content of the report:

	Full name of officer
Monitoring Officer/Legal	
Executive Director of Finance & S151 Officer	
Relevant Executive Director	P Soderquest
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