

REPORT TO	SOUTH RIBBLE BOROUGH COUNCIL <i>Forward with South Ribble</i>	ON
Licensing and Public Safety Committee		12 November 2019

TITLE	REPORT OF
Proposal of annual Licensing of vehicles	Interim Monitoring Officer

Is this report confidential?	No
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PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This report advises members of a proposed change to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy, in that the proposal is that Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle plates are issued for a 12 monthly duration as appose to the existing issuing of 6 monthly plates.

RECOMMENDATIONS

2. Members are requested to note the contents of the report
3. To agree that the licensing department carry out a consultation exercise with stakeholders on the proposes change
4. Agree to receive a report on the outcome of the consultation exercise at a future meeting

CORPORATE OUTCOMES

5. The report relates to the following corporate priorities: (tick all those applicable):

Excellence, Investment and Financial Sustainability	x
Health, Wellbeing and Safety	
Place, Homes and Environment	x

Projects relating to People in the Corporate Plan:

Our People and Communities	
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BACKGROUND TO THE REPORT

6. Currently Drivers are asked to apply to renew their Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle licence every 6 months.

As part of the application process Licence holders are expected to provide;

- (i) The prescribed Roadworthiness Certificate
- (ii) V5 Log Book
- (iii) A valid Insurance document

Applications are submitted via The Gateway or on-line through our Firmstep Portal.

The Licensing unit will receive the renewal application by email once complete and produce the licence (plate) within 4 days of the application being submitted.

We have 231 Licensed Hackney Carriages & Private Hire vehicles within our Authority that require two vehicle renewals per year. On average we are currently issuing 7-9 plates per week.

This is broken down as;

108 Hackney Carriage vehicles which require a small front and large rear plate twice yearly.

123 Private Hire vehicles which require a large rear plate only, twice yearly.

PROPOSALS (e.g. RATIONALE, DETAIL, FINANCIAL, PROCUREMENT)

7. In light of the Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 part of the Council's vision and priorities are to focus on ensuring South Ribble develops and delivers a strategy to eliminate single use plastics. Whilst complete elimination is not possible at this time this move will see a 50% reduction in the purchase and subsequent distribution of plastic plates.

In order to assist with this strategy we believe that by issuing a 12 monthly plate as opposed to a 6 monthly plate we are proactively reducing our carbon footprint. The demand to produce plates will reduce, meaning the amount of poly-carbonated plastic we require will decrease.

This would also alleviate the need for a full application every 6 months., Licence Holders would benefit from less time spent off the road avoiding potential lengthy waiting times in Gateway. It should be noted that the trade have always intimated that they would prefer a 12 monthly plate for the above reasons.

In order for the Council to be satisfied that the vehicles it licences are safe and fit for purpose, Drivers would still be expected to provide the 6 monthly roadworthiness certificate. Administrative procedures will be put in place by Licensing Officers to make certain that 6 monthly roadworthiness are completed by Drivers.

The change in procedure would also allow Licensing Officers to spend less time completing administrative tasks and enable Licensing Officers to free up more time for enforcement activity, improving the proactive capability of enforcement.

Changes required within the Taxi Licensing Policy.

The Taxi Licensing Policy States;

“Section 6 Hackney Carriage vehicles, 6.3 Duration of Licences

Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences will be issued for a maximum of 6 months. However the Council will consider issuing a vehicle licence for a shorter period where it deems it appropriate in the individual circumstances.

A change of Policy will be required to read:-

Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences will be issued for a maximum of 12 months. However the Council will consider issuing a vehicle licence for a shorter period where it deems it appropriate in the individual circumstances.

Section 7 Private Hire vehicles, 7.2 Duration of Licences

Private Hire Vehicle Licences will be issued for a maximum of 6 months. The Council will consider issuing a vehicle licence for a shorter period where it deems it appropriate in the individual circumstances.

A change of Policy will be required to read:-

Private Hire Vehicle Licences will be issued for a maximum of 12 months. The Council will consider issuing a vehicle licence for a shorter period where it deems it appropriate in the individual circumstances.

In order to ensure that the remainder of the policy is in line with the proposed changes, there will also be a requirement to amend the policy in respect of the roadworthiness aspect for both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

The current policy states:-

“Section 6 Hackney Carriage vehicles, 6.7 Roadworthiness

In addition to the standard annual MOT requirements for vehicles, the Council must be satisfied that the vehicles it licences are safe and fit for purpose. To this end, hackney carriages must pass the Council’s roadworthiness test no earlier than 28 days before being granted each 6 month licence. See Appendix 6 for the current roadworthiness standard and list of approved garages.”

A change of Policy will be required to read:-

“In addition to the standard annual MOT requirements for vehicles, the Council must be satisfied that the vehicles it licences are safe and fit for purpose. To this end, hackney carriages must pass the Council’s roadworthiness test every 6 months. This must be done over two occasions;

(a) Once no earlier than 28 days before the expiry date of their 12 monthly vehicle licence and;

(b) Once no earlier than 28 days before its 6 monthly interim test.

See Appendix 6 for the current roadworthiness standard and list of approved garages.”

The current policy states:-

“Section 7 Private Hire vehicles, 7.6 Roadworthiness

In addition to the standard annual MOT requirements for vehicles, the Council must be satisfied that the vehicles it licences are safe and fit for purpose. To this end, private hire vehicles must have passed the Council’s roadworthiness test no earlier than 28 days before being granted each 6 month licence. See Appendix 6 for the current roadworthiness standard and list of approved garages.”

A change of Policy will be required to read:-

“In addition to the standard annual MOT requirements for vehicles, the Council must be satisfied that the vehicles it licences are safe and fit for purpose. To this end, private hire vehicles must pass the Council’s roadworthiness test every 6 months. This must be done over two occasions;

- (a) Once no earlier than 28 days before the expiry date of their 12 monthly licence plate and;*
- (b) Once no earlier than 28 days before its 6 monthly interim test.*

See Appendix 6 for the current roadworthiness standard and list of approved garages.”

CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT AND OUTCOME OF CONSULTATION

- 8. Matters have been mentioned at the Taxi Trade Forums previously and have received positive feedback from the trade. The same matter will be raised again on the 31st October 2019 at a pre-consultation meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9. There will be no impact on income to the Council because the charges will remain the same. The costs for buying in the plates would decrease in future because less stock will be required. This would be taken into account when calculating the licensing fees.

AIR QUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 10. The proposed changes relate to the road worthiness of the vehicles and have no direct impact on air quality

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

- 11. No further comments – see financial implications above.

COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

- 12. S48 (5) of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 allows a Local Authority to issue private hire vehicle licences for a period of up to one year. In respect of Hackney Carriage vehicles, S43 of the Town and Police Clauses Act allows for a hackney carriage licence to be issued for up to 1 year.

LT Member’s Name Dave Whelan
Job Title -Interim Monitoring Officer

Report Author:	Telephone:	Date:
Stephanie Fairbrother, Licensing Officer	01772 625337	29 th October 2019

