

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

**REPORT AUTHOR: Sue Jones, Senior Licensing Officer**

**SUBJECT: Consultation on Vehicle Licence Conditions**

**28<sup>th</sup> February 2019**

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**UPDATE REPORT**

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**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The reason for the update is that the consultation on revised vehicle licence conditions that introduce an age limit for licensed vehicles, presented to this committee on 6th December 2018 was completed on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2019. A copy of the original report is attached at Annex A
- 1.2 Following December's meeting a Taxi newsletter was sent out to all taxi drivers in Powys, within the newsletter was a consultation on the proposals to introduce an age limit on licensed vehicles. See Annex B. The trade was given until 31<sup>st</sup> January to respond.
- 1.3 The proposal consulted on was:

*Vehicles first presented for licensing must be less than 6 years old from the date of first registration (admission age)*

*Vehicles currently licensed when presented for renewal must be less than 12 years old from the date of first registration provided each subsequent licence takes place immediately on expiry of the current licence. (i.e. no breaks in between renewal of the licence).*

*This condition will effect existing vehicle licences (excluding stretch limos) 12 months from the implementation date of 1/4/2019*

- 1.4 Six written responses were received from taxi drivers in Powys during the consultation period. The full responses are attached at Annex C, below are the main points raised:
- Mr Richard Davies – he has a lower mileage vehicle that does not carry out traditional taxi work, his vehicle is currently 10 years old and only does 8000 – 8500 miles a year
  - Mr Ian Grainger - he has an 11year old vehicle, he operates in the Ystradgynlais area and alleges he will licence his vehicle in Neath Port Talbot instead.

- Mike James, proprietor of Pontardawe Taxis he has vehicles licensed both with Powys and Neath Port Talbot, he raises the point that Neath Port Talbot no longer have an age policy
- David Smout who has a 12 year old vehicle and makes the point that a newer licensed vehicle that is used both day and night by different drivers can have done a higher mileage than a newer vehicle
- Wrights Taxis, Welshpool, they have a large number of vehicles licensed of which 45% are over 12 years old, he argues he is able to provide a more affordable service and this would be impacted if this policy was approved
- Amber Cabs from Welshpool, just under half of their fleet would be over 12 years old, the concerns expressed relate to the 6 years on first registration and would prefer that a 9/10 year limit.

The objections represent 18 currently licensed vehicles that would be affected by the new policy as they are over 12 years old. There are currently 98 licensed vehicles that are over 12 years old. The volume of responses was quite low given that there are over 450 vehicles licensed in Powys.

1.5 In response to some of the issues raised:

- In exceptional circumstances a licensing sub-committee can consider departure from the policy, this would be on a case by case basis, for example if an applicant wanted to licence a vintage or novelty vehicle to be used on special occasions or for tours only and not generally for vehicles carrying out regular private hire or taxi work. The vehicle would need to be maintained to a high standard and be in exceptional condition for its age. It would be for the applicant to present a written case and present the vehicle to persuade a sub commit that it would be appropriate to depart from the policy
- I can confirm that Neath Port Talbot replaced an age condition for their licensed vehicles with a strict vehicle standard test that they conduct at their in house garage.

1.6 As stated in the previous report an age limit is a simple means, easily implemented and checked by which to raise the standard of the licensed fleet in Powys and is consistent with the majority of other authorities in Wales.

It is recommended that the authority proceeds with an age policy, either the original policy consulted on:

Option A

*Vehicles first presented for licensing must be less than 6 years old from the date of first registration (admission age)*

*Vehicles currently licensed when presented for renewal must be less than 12 years old from the date of first registration provided each subsequent licence*

*takes place immediately on expiry of the current licence. (i.e. no breaks in between renewal of the licence).*

or the alternative condition suggested in the original report :

Option B

*Vehicles first presented for licensing must be less than 8 years old from the date of first registration (admission age)*

*Vehicles currently licensed must be less than 12 years old from the date of first registration provided each subsequent licence takes place immediately on expiry of the current licence. (i.e. no breaks in between renewal of the licence).*

In both case there will be a lead in period of 12 months to allow a reasonable amount of time for vehicle proprietors to make arrangements to replace older vehicles, where necessary:

<b>Recommendation:</b>		<b>Reason for Recommendation:</b>	
That one of the age policies as outlined at 1.6 above, either option A or option B be approved for implementation on 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2019.		Implementing an age condition will reduce the age of the fleet of licensed vehicles in Powys, in turn raising the reliability, safety and overall standard of licensed vehicles.	
<b>Relevant Policy (ies):</b>			
<b>Within Policy:</b>	Y	<b>Within Budget:</b>	Y
<b>Relevant Local Member(s):</b>	N/A		
<b>Relevant Portfolio Holder</b>	Cllr James Evans		
<b>Person(s) To Implement Decision:</b>	Sue Jones		
<b>Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:</b>		With immediate effect	
<b>Contact Officer Name:</b>	<b>Tel:</b>	<b>Fax:</b>	<b>Email:</b>
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**Background Papers used to prepare Report:**