



EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT COVER SHEET

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| Title of Report: | Extension of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences following COVID 19 | | To be marked with an 'X' by Democratic Services after report has been presented |
| Meeting of: | Full Licensing Committee | | |
| Is this an Executive Decision: | [NO] | Is this a Key Decision: | [NO] |
| Is this in the Forward Plan: | [NO] | Is the Report Confidential: | [NO] |
| If so, please state relevant paragraph from Schedule 12A LGA 1972: | [] | | |



Essential Signatories:

ALL REPORTS MUST BE IN THE NAME OF A HEAD OF SERVICE

Monitoring Officer: **Angela Wakefield**

Date Signature

Chief Finance Officer: **Sal Khan**

Date Signature

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE BOROUGH COUNCIL

Report to Full Licensing Committee

Date: 31.03.2020

REPORT TITLE: Extension of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences following COVID 19

PORTFOLIO: Regulatory Services

HEAD OF SERVICE: Mark Rizk

CONTACT OFFICER: Margaret Woolley Ext. No. x1479

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To consider a request from the Burton Taxi Trade to extend the licences of private hire and hackney carriage vehicles following issues brought about by the COVID 19 pandemic.

2.0 Executive Summary

- 2.1 A letter has been received by the licensing team from the Burton Taxi Trade requesting that consideration be given to extending the life (age limits) of private hire and hackney carriage vehicles starting from 30 December 2020 for a period of 12 months.

3.0 Report

- 3.1 The licensing team received a letter from the Burton Taxi Trade requesting that the Council consider a 1 year extension of private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licences from 30 December 2020.
- 3.2 Currently vehicle licences are issued for 1 year. Private Hire vehicles are allowed to be licensed until they are 7 years old and Hackney carriages may be licensed until they are 10 years old.

- 3.3 The Burton Taxi Trade report that following the recent COVID 19 pandemic, most vehicles are unable to earn a living and that drivers are living off their savings.
- 3.4 This proposal is put forward so that vehicle owners may carry on and earn a living once the pandemic is over and save to buy a vehicle in 2021.
- 3.5 The licensing team have also received correspondence from a licensed driver asking for vehicle licences to be extended for 3 to 6 months from May 2020 to ease the burden faced by the taxi trade of purchasing a replacement vehicle and the issues of being self-employed.
- 3.6 Vehicle licences cost £164 per annum.
- 3.7 Over the period April 2020 to July 2020 we have the following numbers of vehicles that will be reaching the 7 and 10 year age limit and therefore proprietors will potentially be bringing on replacement vehicles.
- 3.8 This report currently only relates to the vehicles below however numbers for future months beyond July can be provided:
- 3.9 April – 2 Private Hire Vehicles
May – 4 Private Hire Vehicles
June – 5 Private Hire Vehicles
July – 7 Private Hire Vehicles, 4 Hackney Carriage Vehicles
- 4.0 Relicensing of vehicles (taxi and PHV)
- 4.1 Licensing Authorities are being urged by central government to exercise discretion in dealings with the licensed taxi trade. Guidance states that:
- 4.2 Licensing authorities should consider ways in which they can use their existing powers to support the trade to continue to operate and provide essential travel. Where licensing authorities are unable to undertake inspections of vehicles to issue a certificate of compliance, they should consider whether their taxi and PHV licensing policies can be amended to accept a recent MOT certificate prior to the renewal a vehicle or proprietor licence.
- 4.3 It is important to note that any certificate of compliance issued by a licensing authority ceases to be valid for MOT purposes once the vehicle or proprietors licence expires or is revoked; the owners of any vehicles that continue to be used on the road after revocation or expiry must consider whether they need to obtain an MOT certificate in order to do so lawfully.
- 4.4 Drivers are responsible for making sure their vehicle is always safe to drive, a vehicle can be unsafe even if it has a valid MOT certificate or certificate of compliance. Drivers should be aware of their legal obligations; more information is available at: <https://www.gov.uk/legal-obligations-drivers-riders>

4.5 Options available for the Committee to consider are;

- i) To extend to private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licences that reach the 7/10 year age limit as detailed at point 3.9 of this report for a period covering the time period of the pandemic lock down. **This extension will commence from May 2020 for an initial period of 4 months and be reviewed in June 2020 to take account of any changes that may have occurred to the length of the lockdown period.**
- ii) A 6 month extension from 30 December 2020.
- iii) The 12 month extension period from the 30 December 2020 (which the taxi trade originally asking for).
- iv) The Committee may also consider that no extensions should be granted.

5.0 Financial Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Financial Management Unit: Anya Murray.

5.1 The financial considerations are set out below in relation to each option.

5.2 Option 4.5 (i)

For the vehicles detailed in paragraph 3.9, an extension of the existing licence by 4 months for these vehicles that reach the 7/10 year age limit will result in a loss of income of £1,203.

Option 4.5 (ii)

For the vehicles detailed in paragraph 3.9, an extension of the existing licence by 6 months from 30 December for these vehicles that reach the 7/10 year age limit will result in a loss of income of £1,804.

Option 4.5 (iii)

For the vehicles detailed in paragraph 3.9, an extension of the existing licence by 12 months for 30 December for those vehicles that reach the 7/10 year age limit will result in a loss of income of £3,608.

Option 4.5 (iv)

The Committee may also consider that no extensions should be granted. It is not anticipated that there will be any financial implications in this instance.

6.0 Risk Assessment and Management

6.1 The main risks to this Report and the Council achieving its objectives are as follows:

6.1.1 **Positive** (Opportunities/Benefits):

6.1.1.1 These measures will assist and support the taxi trade moving forward

6.1.2 **Negative** (Threats):

6.1.2.1 In the event of any further extension / additions there may be supplementary work undertaken not currently accommodated within the existing fee structure.

7.0 Legal Considerations

This section has been approved by the following member of the Legal Team: Angela Wakefield.

7.1 There are no significant legal issues arising from this Report.

8.0 Recommendation(s)

8.1 That the Licensing Committee consider the information contained within this report.

8.2 Options available to the Committee to consider are;

i) The recommended option is an extension to private hire and hackney carriage vehicle licences that reach the 7/10 year age limit as detailed at point 3.9 of this report. This would be for a period covering the time period of the pandemic lock down. For example, an initial period of 4 months from May 2020 which would be reviewed at the end of that period, or

ii) A 6 month extension from 30 December 2020, or

iii) The 12 month extension period from the 30 December 2020 (which the taxi trade originally asking for).

8.3 The Committee may also consider that no extensions should be granted.