

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Non-Statutory Licensing Committee

20 January 2021

Report title	Extension of Age Limit for Hybrid and Electric Private Hire Vehicles	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Ross Cook, Director of City Environment	
Originating service	Licensing	
Accountable employee	Chris Howell	Commercial Regulation Manager
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Report to be/has been considered by	N/A	

Recommendations for decision:

The Non-Statutory Licensing Committee is recommended to:

1. Consider a request from the Private Hire Trade Working Group to increase the private hire vehicle age limit and decide to:
 - a. Agree to an increase in the age limit for Hybrid or Electric vehicles and an additional £50 fee for the manual processing of the application; or
 - b. Decline the request.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To inform Councillors of a request made by the Private Hire Trade Working Group to increase the vehicle age limit, allowing for Hybrid and Electric Vehicles to be licensed until they reach 14 years old.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 The Private Hire Trade Working Group has been established for many years and has an excellent record of working together. The Group meet quarterly to discuss operational matters and it is an opportunity for the trade to raise policy change requests.
- 2.2 It is likely that in the near future the Council will move to a vehicle emissions licensing policy, rather than an age policy. This accords with many other councils' policies and the Black Country ULEV Strategy (Ultra Low Emission Vehicle). A detailed analysis of the current fleet is being undertaken to develop a draft ULEV strategy that will be presented to committee.

3.0 Discussion

- 3.1 Private Hire Vehicles can currently be licensed until they are 12 years old. There is no distinction between vehicle models/types. This ensures that there is a modern fleet.
- 3.2 The trade has requested that Hybrid and Electric vehicle be allowed to be licensed until they are 14 years old.
- 3.3 As vehicles get older, they become cheaper to buy and as such are attractive to the Private Hire trade. The trade reports that these vehicles require less maintenance and also provide significant reductions in running costs.
- 3.4 Normal hybrids and even plug-in hybrids can lose some emissions benefit over time. Therefore, an old hybrid will have less of a CO2 benefit today than when it was first purchased. However, relative to internal combustion engines, they will still have lower CO2 emissions.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 The current computer systems are not set to distinguish between hybrid/electric vehicles and diesel/petrol vehicles. Therefore, were the extension to be agreed, an application would not be able to be submitted via iApply, the council's online system.
- 4.2 Private Hire Vehicle licence applications outside of iApply would need to be processed manually and that requires additional staff time. If Councillors are minded to agree to the request, an additional application fee of £50 per application should also be agreed.
- 4.3 Should this be agreed the impact would be cost neutral. This would be monitored as part on the council's quarterly revenue monitoring processes. [SB/11012021/P]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 70 refers to the vehicle and operator licence fees and states that a district council may charge such fees for the grant of a vehicle and operators' licence as may be resolved by them from time to time and may be sufficient to cover in whole or in part:
- 5.2 In addition, Section 70 provides that a public notice of the new charges in relation to operators and vehicles is required to be given in a local newspaper. The closing date for the receipt of objections must not be less than 28 days after the date of publication. Should objections be received, consideration must be given to them, and another date for implementation may have to be specified. [SH/07012021/C]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 There are no direct equalities implications.

7.0 Climate change and environmental implications

- 7.1 The use of hybrids and electric vehicles is preferred to the use of older diesel/petrol vehicles. However, this change should not be seen as a method to reduce emissions. A vehicle emissions licensing policy should be devised and duly considered for implementation.

8.0 Covid Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct covid-19 implications

9.0 Schedule of background papers

- 9.1 None