

**Committee:** Licensing & Environmental Health

**Date:**

**Title:** Review of Licensed Vehicle Emissions Policy

29 September 2020

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## Summary

- 1.1. Members will be aware that the Committee adopted the current Licensed Vehicle Emissions Policy - **attached as Background Paper A** - on 20 March 2020, which subsequently came into effect on 1 April 2020.
- 1.2. In brief, the Policy requires vehicles licensed by Uttlesford District Council to meet or exceed a prescribed European Emission standard. The prescribed standard differs depending on the type of fuel and whether the vehicle is currently licensed by the Council or is being applied for as new.
- 1.3. The Policy states that "each application will be considered on its own merits".

## Recommendations

- 2.1. Members are recommended to consider the following proposals made by Licensing Officers.
- 2.2. Vehicles that were granted exemptions under the Licensed Vehicle Emissions Policy but that are not wheelchair accessible, should either have their licences revoked after a period of 6 months following the date of an official announcement by the UK Government that social distancing guidance has been completely relaxed, or will have any application made to renew their licences refused after 1 April 2025, whichever sooner.
- 2.3. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to be given a later date for the implementation of a prescribed minimum European Emission Standard. Licensing Officers recommend a minimum European Emission 6 for both new licences and renewed licences after 1 April 2025. This would in practice mean that all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles by 1 April 2026 will be no more than 12 years old. Using the figures in 6.10, only 7 of those vehicles would meet the minimum Standard by this date.
- 2.4. All licensed vehicles would continue to be required to undergo 2 mechanical inspections per year at a Council approved testing station, alongside the mandatory MOT, therefore alleviating any potential concern over the roadworthiness of an older vehicle.

- 2.5. All other parts of the existing Policy to remain in force. This includes the discretion to deviate from the Policy as referenced in 1.3, however a strong business case would be required in writing for the Licensing Manger to approve.

### **Financial Implications**

- 3.1. The recommendations made would indirectly allow vehicle proprietors to purchase and licence vehicles for a lesser cost than would otherwise be the case.

### **Background Papers**

- 4.1. The following papers were referred to by the author in the preparation of this report and are available for inspection from the author of the report.

- A. Licensed Vehicle Emissions Policy
- B. Emissions Exemption Form

### **Impact**

- 5.1.

Communication/Consultation	None
Community Safety	None
Equalities	None
Health and Safety	None
Human Rights/Legal Implications	None
Sustainability	None
Ward-specific impacts	None
Workforce/Workplace	None

### **Situation**

- 6.1. The Coronavirus (Covid-19) pandemic has had a significant detrimental effect on the taxi trade. Lack of work from locations such as Stansted Airport have resulted in a financial burden, and compliance with social distancing guidelines has naturally been difficult within vehicles, particularly for saloons and hatchbacks.
- 6.2. The Licensing Team made provision for assisting the trade at this unprecedented time, as referenced at 6.1 above.

- 6.3. The Licensing Manager agreed in consultation with the Licensing Chair that as of May 2020 and until 31 August 2020, vehicle proprietors could apply to the Council to licence a new 8 seat Multi-Purpose Vehicle (MPV) which may not meet the prescribed European Emission standard as referenced at 1.2, providing said vehicles were applied for in the spirit of the decision, which was to allow for more affordable and social distancing compliant vehicles to be purchased and licensed.
- 6.4. In order to be granted the exemption in 6.3, vehicle proprietors were requested to apply to the Council in advance using a prescribed form – **attached as Background Paper B** - whereby they would provide details of the vehicle and justification of why they were applying.
- 6.5. The Council has licensed 17 vehicles using the exemption during this period.
- 6.6. The vehicles that were granted the exemption were required to be licensed for a maximum of 5 passengers only, in order to facilitate social distancing. This number will not change for the duration of the vehicle's service.
- 6.7. Upon the date that social distancing guidelines are completely relaxed by Government, the vehicles will no longer be required for the purpose that they were granted the exemption for. It is therefore necessary to decide on a suitable timescale for the vehicles to cease being used as licensed hackney carriages or private hires.
- 6.8. Exemptions were also granted to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) using the same reasoning and process as referenced in 6.3 and 6.4.
- 6.9. WAVs are considerably more expensive to purchase than 'Non-WAV' counterparts due to the modifications and safety requirements necessary to be legally compliant. Such modifications can cost anywhere in the region of £5,000-£10,000 and above.
- 6.10. As of 30 March 2020 the Council has 281 hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences issued to Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles. Under the current Policy 176 of those 281 vehicles are unlikely to meet the required Standard upon renewal of the licence between the period of 1 April 2021 and 1 April 2022.

## Risk Analysis

7.1.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
[Click here - see	[Click here]	[Click here]	[Click here]

below]			
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- 1 = Little or no risk or impact
- 2 = Some risk or impact – action may be necessary.
- 3 = Significant risk or impact – action required
- 4 = Near certainty of risk occurring, catastrophic effect or failure of project.