

WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

Report by the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services

Licensing Committee – 3 May 2011

Subject: Age limit of Saloon Vehicles operating as Taxis

1. Purpose

- 1.1 A representation from West Dunbartonshire Taxi Trade Association has been submitted asking members to consider extending the age limit of saloon vehicles from 8 years to 10 years.
- 1.2 The West Dunbartonshire Taxi Trade Association have also requested that, in the event that Members agree to extend the age limit of saloon vehicles from 8 years to 10 years, that vehicles will remain subject to 2 inspections per year rather than the existing policy requiring vehicles to be tested 3 times per year once they have reached 8 years of age.

2. Background

- 2.1 The current age limit for saloon vehicles operating within the Dumbarton zone of West Dunbartonshire Council is set at 8 years.
- 2.2 The Scottish Government's Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing Best Practice Guide published in 2007 states that 'age limits for licensed vehicles is somewhat arbitrary and disproportionate particularly as it is perfectly possible for a well-maintained older vehicle to be in good condition'. It then suggests that the frequency of testing would be a more appropriate measure for councils to use to ensure that older vehicles were still meeting the standards required.
- 2.3 Currently in West Dunbartonshire, vehicles which are less than 1 year old are required to be presented for 1 test per year. Vehicles over 1 year old and less than 8 years old are required to be presented for 2 tests per year. Vehicles over 8 years old are required to be presented for 3 tests per year.

3. Main Issues

- 3.1 Saloon vehicles are operated by both taxi operators and private hire car operators in the Dumbarton zone of West Dunbartonshire. Any change to the age limit on saloon vehicles therefore should apply to both types of licence.
- 3.2 The impact of increasing the age limit for saloon vehicles would lower the overall standard of the taxi fleet which operates within the Dumbarton zone of West Dunbartonshire.

- 3.3 Wheelchair accessible vehicles which currently operate beyond 8 years are subject to 3 tests per year. A consistent policy for vehicle testing for both saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles is essential.

4. People Implications

- 4.1 There are no people implications.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 An increase in the age limit of saloon vehicles from 8 years to 10 years while retaining the current frequency of testing of 3 tests per year for vehicles over 8 years old would increase the revenue generated by the Council's MOT station.

6. Risk Analysis

- 6.1 There is no increased risk to the Council associated with the contents of this report.

7. Equalities, Health & Human Rights Impact Assessment

- 7.1 There are no equalities, health or human rights issues associated with the contents of this report.

8 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 8.1 Members are asked to consider the request from the West Dunbartonshire Taxi Trade Association with regard to increasing the age limit of saloon vehicles for both taxi and private hire cars from 8 years to 10 years.
- 8.2 In the event that Members decide to allow the increase in the age limit for saloon vehicles, they are also asked to consider allowing saloon vehicles to be excluded from the existing frequency of testing policy of requiring 3 tests per year once a vehicle is older than 8 years old.

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Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services

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Appendices: N/A.

Background Papers:

1. Letter dated 28 February 2011 from West Dunbartonshire Taxi Trade Association.
2. Letter to from West Dunbartonshire Taxi Trade Association dated 15 April 2011.

Wards Affected: N/A.