

## WEST DUNBARTONSHIRE COUNCIL

### Report by the Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services

#### Licensing Committee – 6 April 2010

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#### **Subject: Age Limit of Vehicles operating as Taxis**

#### **1. Purpose**

- 1.1** A representation from a Clydebank taxi operator, Mr. Charles Murray, has been submitted asking members to consider extending the age limit of purpose built vehicles beyond the current limit of 14 years. Mr. Murray also requests that when a vehicle is replaced during the course of a licence that no age restriction is placed on the substitute vehicle. The representation is accompanied by signatures representing 61 current holders of taxi licences all of whom operate purpose built vehicles issued in the Clydebank zone of West Dunbartonshire Council

#### **2. Background**

- 2.1** The decision to restrict the age limit of purpose built vehicles operating as taxis to 14 years was taken by the former Clydebank District Council prior to April 1996. Prior to this decision there was no age limit on vehicles operating as taxis in Clydebank
- 2.2** The decision was taken in order to improve the standard of the taxi fleet operating within Clydebank at that time.
- 2.3** A purpose built vehicle is a vehicle which is manufactured from materials and components on a production line.
- 2.4** 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.
- 2.5** 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 until they reach their maximum age which is currently 14 years for both purpose built vehicles and vehicles which have been adapted to carry wheelchair passengers. The age limit

for both saloon cars and MPV's which are not adapted to carry wheelchair passengers is set at 8 years.

- 2.6** At present, taxi operators who use purpose built vehicles, are able to substitute their vehicles during the course of their licence without any age restriction up to the maximum age limit of 14 years.

### **3. Main Issues**

- 3.1** The impact of increasing the age limit would obviously lower the overall standard of the taxi fleet which operates within the Clydebank zone of West Dunbartonshire. Currently the overall average age of purpose built vehicles operating as taxis in the Clydebank zone is 8 years. It is fair to assume that this would increase through time if the age limit was removed.

- 3.2** Glasgow City Council operate a policy where there is no upper age limit for any vehicle which has been approved as a taxi. They stipulate that when an operator wishes to apply for the grant of a taxi licence or wishes to substitute an existing vehicle then the replacement vehicle must be either less than 5 years old or, if the vehicle is older than 5 years old, it must have been operated as a taxi in the Glasgow City Council area within the preceding 12 months.

### **4. Personnel Issues**

- 4.1** There are no personnel issues.

### **5. Financial Implications**

- 5.1** There are no financial implications.

### **6. Risk Assessment**

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

### **7. Equalities Impact**

- 7.1** There would be no alteration to the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles available as a result of increasing the age limit of purpose built taxis therefore there are no equalities impact issues.

### **8. Recommendations**

- 8.1** Members are asked to consider the request from Mr. Murray with regard to increasing the age limit of purpose built taxis and, if approved, whether or not to impose an age restriction on replacement vehicles.

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Head of Legal, Administrative and Regulatory Services

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**Background Papers:**

1. Letter from Mr. Charles Murray, 16 Cunard Court, Clydebank, G81 1QD - received 3 March 2010.
2. Letter to Mr. Mr. Charles Murray dated 23 March 2010.

**Appendices:** N/A.

**Wards Affected:** N/A.

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