

Consultation with taxi and private hire licence holders

Review of Vehicle Age Policy – August 2024

We consulted with you in April 2024 and asked your views on whether we should replace our 5 years old or less policy on first licensing a vehicle, with a Euro 6 compliant policy on first licensing. Exemptions to remain for EV's and ULEVs.

Unfortunately, there was a low response of only 11% . 10 licence holders supported removing the age criteria and 7 were against it.

The Councillors on the Taxi Task and Finish Group are looking at this again so they can make a recommendation to the Community Services and Licensing Committee. The Group are clear that if any changes are to be recommended, that they must reflect the best interests of both the local taxi and private hire businesses and their customers.

The Councillors recognise that second hand vehicles are becoming increasingly expensive and are a significant cost to local business. They also are aware that Tewkesbury Borough Council does not have an age policy on first licensing a vehicle but have recently introduced that the vehicle must be Euro 6 compliant. We know that some Stroud licensed businesses subcontract work to Tewkesbury licensed operators and so take advantage of lower vehicle costs meaning they can undercut local fares. More recently, we are also seeing Uber vehicles within the district now that Uber has an operator licence through Gloucester City Council.

Nationally most Councils have an age policy like ours or are even more restrictive. A risk of making our criteria less restrictive is that more businesses may choose to base themselves in our district so increasing competition. This is something that has already happened in Tewkesbury, who have a very high number of licences issued compared to the other local authorities in Gloucestershire. Removing the age criteria could also mean that, over time, vehicles that are licensed will get older and older and standards may fall.

We are consulting with you again with the hope that we can obtain a much stronger response this time. This time we are adding two further options. One is keeping an age policy but increasing it to 7 years, and another is removing age policy on first licensing but adding an age policy on renewal of 12 years. It is really important to give us your views on this. Any changes could impact on all businesses, and you need to weigh up the advantages and disadvantages.

If the response to the consultation is low again, we will assume that the majority of licence holders have no strong opinion in which case we are unlikely to make any changes.

Please email the Licensing Manager rachel.andrew@stroud.gov.uk with your preferred option from the table on the next page, and add any further comments you may have, by Friday 23rd August 2024.

	Options	Detail	Notes
1	Make no changes to vehicle policy	<p>This will retain our current policy that on first licensing a vehicle must be 5 years old or less with exemptions for WAVs, EV and ULEV</p> <p>On renewal a vehicle must be Euro 6 compliant apart from WAVs, EV and ULEV</p>	<p>This will keep us comparable with all our neighbouring authorities apart from Tewkesbury. It will avoid businesses moving their base to Stroud to take advantage of a less restrictive age policy</p>
2	Change the age policy to vehicles must be 7 years old or less on first licensing	<p>This will change the current policy so that on first licensing a vehicle must be 7 years old or less with exemptions for WAVs, EV and ULEV</p> <p>On renewal a vehicle continue to be Euro 6 compliant apart from WAVs, EV and ULEV</p>	<p>This is a compromise between having no age policy and our current age policy and would enable businesses to buy slightly older cars which will be less expensive so that they can be more competitive</p>
3	Remove the age policy on first licensing and replace with Euro 6 compliance	<p>This will change the current policy so that on first licensing all vehicles must be Euro 6 compliant or EV or ULEV</p> <p>On renewal a vehicle continue to be Euro 6 compliant apart from WAVs, EV and ULEV</p>	<p>This will enable businesses to buy cheaper vehicles to keep costs down and be more competitive. However, we may find that more businesses choose to become licensed in Stroud District and that standards of vehicles fall over time.</p>
4	Remove the age policy on first licensing and replace with Euro 6 and place an age policy of 12 years or less on renewal	<p>This will change current policy so that on first licensing all vehicles must be Euro 6 compliant or EV or ULEV</p> <p>Change the current renewal policy so that a vehicle must be no more than 12 years old (and Euro 6 compliant) apart from WAVs, EV and ULEV</p>	<p>This will enable businesses to buy cheaper vehicles to keep costs down and be more competitive. However, we may find that more businesses choose to become licensed in Stroud District. Having an age policy on renewal may help to retain standards of vehicles.</p>