



**Consultation Report
Statement of Licensing Policy
Hackney and Private Hire
February 2024**



Cheshire West
and Chester

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Background to the survey

The Council's Statement of Licensing Policy Hackney and Private Hire ('the policy') should be reviewed every five years although it is often reviewed more frequently. This policy covers the terms and conditions for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators. The full policy is available to view on the [Council Web Site](#)

Licensed Drivers There are currently 1722 licensed drivers licensed by Cheshire West and Chester.

Hackney carriage (taxi) There are 253 hackney carriage vehicles in the Borough operating in one of three hackney zones. All hackney carriages are wheelchair accessible. Chester 154 vehicles Vale Royal 55 vehicles Ellesmere Port and Neston 45 vehicles

Private hire There are 1308 private hire vehicles working through 140 private hire operators in the borough.

The consultation and review process

A pre consultation email was sent to all licence holders, key partners and officers to inform them of the intentions to hold a policy review/consultation. They were asked to identify any areas of the current policy they felt should be included in the consultation. This identified the following:

- Vehicle
 - Entry and exit policy in relation non Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
 - Classification's of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles
 - Temporary increase of the current vehicle exit age policy
 - Hackney Carriage Vehicle specification option for Rear Loading
- Drivers
 - Process for considers applicants who have resided abroad
 - Topographical Knowledge

How the survey was carried out

A 12-week consultation was held between 27 November 2023 and 19 February 2024. This was hosted and advertised on Councils Web Site.

The following was done to raise awareness of the consultation:

- Member Briefing Note to all Councillors
- Emails to all hackney/private hire licence holders
- Email invitations to key partners and business
- Presentation to the Disability Access Forum
- Reminder emails sent in last 3 weeks of consultation

Headline findings

Question 1 Age policy entry requirements

73 % felt the current age policy should be changed.

Question 2 Ultra Low Emission Vehicle definition

43 % felt the current definition of Ultra Low Emission Vehicles should remain.

Question 3 Extra year on exit age policy

61 % felt the current exit age policy should be extended by one year temporarily.

Question 4 Hackney carriage vehicle options (rear loading)

42 % felt that Ultra Low Emission rear loading wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles should be licensed.

Question 5 Driver applicants who have resided abroad

67 % felt the proposed procedures for driver applicant who have resided abroad were appropriate.

Question 6 Topographical knowledge test requirements

There was no clear opinion on retaining the current topographical knowledge test requirement for hackney carriage drivers.

Question 7 General Comments on the policy

40 other additional comments were received on the general policy.

Details of the response to the survey questions

Question 1

Concerns Raised About The Current Licensed Vehicle Age Policy

The current age policy was introduced in 2021. The policy aims to help meet climate change obligations and improve air quality and speed up the transition to Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) in the licensed fleet. The current Exit Age Policy for vehicles licensed from 1 January 2022 reduces the exit age by one year each year from 2022 onwards. This means that, from 2032 all non-Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and from 2037 all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles must be Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.

Concerns have been raised with the Council that since this policy was introduced there have been changes in both world, national and local circumstances and the current policy will have a negative impact on the hackney and private hire trades, and in turn the residents and businesses within the Borough. The issues raised are :

the long-term financial implication of the Covid Pandemic

- neighbouring Councils do not have such stringent policies, increasing cross boarder issues
- the “cost of Living Crisis”
- the war in Ukraine
- lack of charging infrastructure for electric vehicles
- large increases in the cost of electricity
- vehicle price increases
- lack of and affordable ULEV Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)
- the Government has extended it policy on the sales of diesel and petrol vehicles by 5 years
- lack of affordable credit
- the previous exit age policy ensured the removal of higher polluting vehicles just over a longer time period
- the policy is over complicated and needs simplifying

Responses question 1

Licensed Vehicle Exit Age Policy. Having considered the concerns in relation to the current Licensed Vehicle Exit Age Policy which of the following options do you believe is most suitable.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	No change and retain the current policy		29%	22
2	Retain the current exit policy for non ULEVs but change the implementation date to April 2027 to reflect the change in Government policy on sales of petrol and diesel		46 %	37

Licensed Vehicle Exit Age Policy. Having considered the concerns in relation to the current Licensed Vehicle Exit Age Policy which of the following options do you believe is most suitable.				
	vehicles (deferred for 5 years) This means that, from 2037 all non-Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles and from 2042 all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles must be Ultra Low Emission Vehicles.			
3	Other (please use the space below to describe your proposal)		25%	21
			answered	80
			skipped	10
<p>80 responses</p> <p>Retain current policy but defer for 5 years 46 % Retain the current policy 29%; Change current policy with an alternative 25 %</p>				

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the current vehicle age policy. 30 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

There should be no exit age policy and the older the vehicle get the more tests it should have

Struggling financially, high vehicle costs will add to this

Remove the ULEV policy and retain the entry and exit age policy (entry under 7 years exit at 10/15 years) that tried and tested and still improves vehicle safety and emissions.

Delay the ULEV policy in line with Government Policy (5 Years)

Higher vehicle requirements will lead to more leaving the trade and encourages more to licence with other Councils' without such restrictions (cross border issues) .

Concerns over the growing reduction of Wheelchair Accessible Hackneys due to cost of ULEV versions of traditional hackneys

Range issues on batteries

A lot drivers have no access to off street charging

High finance costs and difficult to obtain for older drivers

All comments on question 1 can be seen in full at **appendix 1**

Question 2

Changes to the definition of what qualifies as an Ultra Low Emission Vehicle

The current policy on ULEVs was introduced to encourage the uptake of zero or ultra low emission vehicles to help improve air quality across the district.

When first introduced into the policy it was understood that the general term ULEV covered vehicles that were purely electrically driven with a minimum battery range of 70 miles. The batteries could be supported by a petrol/diesel generator known as a range extender, which recharges the battery and does not directly power the wheels. ULEVs were required to produce less than 75 grams of CO₂/ Km.

There have been recent changes to the definition of a ULEV. They are now defined as having less than 75 grams of CO₂ per kilometre (g/km) from the tail pipe and include pure electric vehicles, and other plug in electric vehicles when driving in the electric mode and produce no tailpipe CO₂ or pollution. ([the Vehicle Certification Agency list can be seen here](#))

These changes would allow a number of hybrid vehicles to be classed a ULEVs with no limitations on the use of the petrol/diesel engine. Such vehicles, while classed as ULEVs emit higher levels of pollution when being powered by the petrol/diesel engine.

Responses to question 2

Do you agree or disagree that the definition of a ULEV within the policy should be modified and limited to vehicles which are purely electrically driven (with or without a range extender).				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		20.00%	16
2	Agree		10.00%	8
3	Neither agree nor disagree		27%	22
4	Disagree		11%	9
5	Strongly disagree		32%	25
			answered	80
			skipped	10

Do you agree or disagree that the definition of a ULEV within the policy should be modified and limited to vehicles which are purely electrically driven (with or without a range extender).

80 responses
 (Strongly agree 20%; Agree 10%; Neither agree nor disagree 28%; Disagree 11%; Strongly disagree 31%)

Respondents were also invited to provide additional comments or information in relation to their answer. 20 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

Use government definition and include qualifying hybrids.

No many large vehicles such as minibuses qualify.

Should include other pollution reduction systems Add Blue and DPF

Hydrogen might become an option

All comments on question 2 can be seen in full at appendix 2

Question 3

Request for an additional year to be added to the current exit age policy for all licenced vehicles until April 2025.

This request was received by the Council stating that this would give some financial relief to existing licence holders who still struggling as a result of the Covid pandemic and cost of living crisis.

Responses to question 3

T The Council has received a request for a temporary extension of one year to the Exit Age Policy on all vehicles. If granted until April 2026 the Exit Age for None Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles will be 11 years (currently 10) and 16 years (currently 15) for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles. Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		43.90%	36
2	Agree		17.07%	14
3	Neither agree nor disagree		12.20%	10
4	Disagree		3.66%	3
5	Strongly disagree		23.17%	19
			answered	82

<p>T The Council has received a request for a temporary extension of one year to the Exit Age Policy on all vehicles. If granted until April 2026 the Exit Age for None Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles will be 11 years (currently 10) and 16 years (currently 15) for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles. Do you agree or disagree with this proposed change</p>		
	skipped	8
<p>82 responses (Strongly agree 44%; Agree 17%; Neither agree nor disagree 12%; Disagree 4%; Strongly disagree 23%)</p>		

Respondents were also invited to provide additional comments or information in relation to their answer. 26 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

- Should be longer than a year*
- No exit age but increase the number of tests per year*
- Changing would be unfair to those who have complied and changed*
- Others are less stringent and this encourages cross board licensing*
- Older vehicles pollute more*

All comments on question 3 can be seen in full at **appendix 3**

Question 4

Possible changes to the Hackney Carriage vehicle requirements (Rear Loading Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles)

The Council remains committed to promoting the availability of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs). Current policy requires all Hackney Carriage Vehicles to be wheelchair accessible and be able to carry a passenger who chooses to remain in a wheelchair to enter, exit and travel safely and securely for the entire journey. These Hackney Carriage Vehicles are often bookable through Private Hire operators.

In recent years the number and availability of vehicle models that are suitable to meet these requirements has reduced. This problem has been exacerbated by a a very limited number of WAV vehicles that produce zero or very low emissions.

The known advantages and disadvantages of this vehicle type are

Advantages

- Many wheelchair users use rear loading vehicles in their personal lives (e.g. through the Motability scheme) and will be confident and comfortable using them and this may be their preference.
- Easier to load/unload in some locations compared to side loading vehicles (e.g. private driveways and locations where there is no kerb)
- Easier for driver to load as some models can be fitted with an assistance winch (at an additional cost).
- No need for driver to turn the wheelchair 90 degrees inside the vehicle which can be difficult for many drivers.
- More suitable for some people using larger, heavier electric wheelchairs.
- Provides disabled people with an additional transport option when booking (some wheelchair users find the side loading vehicles difficult to access).
- Cheaper to purchase
- Electric options are available which are less polluting than diesel variants.
- A number of Local Authorities already licence rear loading vehicles as Hackney Carriages

Disadvantages

- Where there are no dropped kerbs it could be difficult or uncomfortable to move a wheelchair bound passenger off a kerb on to the road.
- Loading in the road puts passengers and drivers at greater risk from other road users.
- No additional space on most existing ranks to accommodate rear loading vehicles (up to 3000mm space is needed for rear loading).
- Could require expensive redesign of the majority of ranks as dropped kerbs could be needed and ranks may need to be extended in length with no current budget for this work. Any costs could be recovered through an increase in licence fees for the Hackney Vehicles in that Hackney zone.
- Some ranks could be located in heritage or conservation areas where modifications may not be permitted because of their location.
- As cheaper than side loading vehicles, it could result in the entire fleet being rear loading, which would not be ideal in urban/city centre environments
- In most cases these vehicles are smaller and carry fewer passengers than side loading vehicles.
- Possible opposition from drivers who have recently purchased expensive side loading
- Wheelchair user would be positioned in the crumple zone at the rear
- Confusion to the public with different vehicle style availability in different Hackney zones within the Borough.
- Drivers may not feel as secure as there is no partition between them and the rear passengers.

Do you agree or disagree that the Council should consider licensing rear loading WAVs as hackney carriages so long as they are ULEVs in all zones within the Borough				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		31%	25
2	Agree		11%	9
3	Neither agree nor disagree		30%	25
4	Disagree		9%	7
5	Strongly disagree		19%	15
			answered	81
			skipped	9
81 responses (Strongly agree 31%; Agree 11%; Neither agree nor disagree 30%; Disagree 9%; Strongly disagree 19%)				

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the current vehicle age policy. 12 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

No change side is safer and more comfortable

Not as practical or as nice but acceptable if it helps WAV numbers

Not fair to those who have paid more for traditional vehicles

Makes sense.

Vehicles without a partition are not as safe for drivers

Disadvantages seem to outweigh the advantages

If approved, consider limiting numbers to maintain more choice

Reduce the cost of WAV plates/not require ULEV to retain numbers

All comments on question 4 can be seen in full at **appendix 4**

Question 5

The checking of criminal records for applicants who have resided abroad.

This was to set out the process the Council intends to follow to determine if an applicant is fit and proper (safe and suitable) where the applicant has resided abroad for more than 3 months an adult.

It is intended to add the following process/requirements (below) to the policy at paragraph 8.5 onwards.

- 8.6 *In line with the requirements of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (2020) any applicant who has any periods of residency outside the UK as an adult for more than 3 consecutive months requires a Certificate of Good Conduct (COGC) or equivalent to cover that period. This must be obtained from the relevant embassy/consulate for the country concerned (guidance is available from the Home Office on obtaining a COGC). In cases where a COGC requires to be translated, details of an approved translation service will be provided. The payment for this service will be the responsibility of the applicant.*
- 8.7 *Any application that requires a COGC but the applicant does not provide one, will be deemed incomplete and will not be processed further until the required documentation is provided. Applications that fail to progress after six months will be deemed incomplete and rejected.*
- 8.8 *In cases where an applicant can demonstrate and evidence why it is not possible to provide a COGC from any country identified, such as being granted asylum or refugee status (a residence card will only be accepted if it clearly states refugee status), the applicant will be required to provide a Statutory Declaration (in a format prescribed by the Council) about their conviction history. Any costs incurred in obtaining a Statutory Declaration are the responsibility of the applicant.*
- 8.9 *The application once considered complete, will be determined by the General Licensing Sub-Committee and either granted or refused. Please note that applications requiring determination by the General Licensing Sub Committee may be subject to significant delays.*
- 8.10 *Where an existing Licensed Driver who applies to renew their licence and a new or previously unknown qualifying period of residency abroad is identified requiring to be covered by a COGC. The applicant will be given a period of three months to obtains the required COGC. If the applicant is unable to obtain the required COGC an assessment will be made by the Senior Manager, Regulatory Services (Compliance). They will consider the evidence provided by the applicant as to why they have been unable to provide the required COGC and the applicants history since being licensed. If unable to determine that the applicant remains being fit and proper (safe and suitable) person the matter will be determined by the General Licensing Sub-Committee and either revoked or allowed to retain their licence.*

<p>Do you agree or disagree with the proposed process proposed on how the Council will deal with applications from persons that have resided abroad (for more than 3 months as an adult) and who are unable to provide a valid Certificate of Good Conduct (COGC) as part of their application for a driver's licence.</p>		
Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total

Do you agree or disagree with the proposed process proposed on how the Council will deal with applications from persons that have resided abroad (for more than 3 months as an adult) and who are unable to provide a valid Certificate of Good Conduct (COGC) as part of their application for a driver's licence.				
1	Strongly agree		41%	33
2	Agree		26%	21
3	Neither agree nor disagree		19%	15
4	Disagree		6%	5
5	Strongly disagree		9%	7
			answered	81
			skipped	9
Please use the space below for any comments regarding your answer you would like the Council to consider: (17)				

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the current vehicle age policy. 17 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

Very important this process is followed
Only required if under a set time 6 or 10 years in the UK
Extend cut off period if applicant proves they still trying to obtain
Takes to long and is complicated and costs to much
Uk residents at a disadvantage

All comments on question 5 can be seen in full at **appendix 5**

Question 6 Topographical knowledge test requirements

The Council requires all applicants who wish to drive a licenced Hackney Carriage to pass a topographical knowledge test for the hackney zone they wish to drive in before consent is given. This requirement is contained within paragraph 1.6 of the dual licenced drivers conditions.

1.6 All new applicants for a dual hackney/private hire drivers' licence wishing to drive a hackney carriage within a zone are required to pass a detailed topographical knowledge test before being authorised to drive a hackney carriage in that zone.

The Council has received a request to remove this condition. The requesters says that a topographical test is not required because :-

- Nearly all drivers follow satellite navigation or modern booking apps that provide directions
- Its prevents drivers from driving readily available Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles that are hackneys

- From 2009 to 2013 the Council did not have this requirement and there no complaints about driver not knowing locations or how to operate a hackney meter.

Having considered the above request, do you agree or disagree that the requirement to pass a topographical knowledge test before being authorised to drive a Hackney Carriage should be removed?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Strongly agree		28.92%	24
2	Agree		10.84%	9
3	Neither agree nor disagree		22.89%	19
4	Disagree		8.43%	7
5	Strongly disagree		28.92%	24
			answered	83
			skipped	7
Please use the space below for any comments regarding your answer you would like the Council to consider: (23)				

Respondents were also invited to give further comments or suggestions about the current vehicle age policy. 27 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

Essential still needed do not remove.
Satellite Navigation not always correct (road closures)
Old fashioned not needed
Satellite navigation and apps can distract the driver
After a year of being a private hire driver you have all the experience needed to be a hackney driver
Its not London

All comments on question 6 can be seen in full at **appendix 6**

Question 7 General comments made on the policy.

Respondents were also invited to give further comments on the consultation or any other element of the Statement of Licensing Policy Hackney and Private Hire. 40 comments were received and the key messages from those comments were:

Cross Boarder Issues
Equality Issues
Changes to and more frequent and regular Hackney Fare increases
Application process takes too long and disjointed
General request from Chester Hackney driver and owner

All comments on question 7 can be seen in full at **appendix 7**

Profiles of Respondents

Consultees were asked to voluntarily indicate in what capacity they were completing the survey. Below is a breakdown of those who chose to answer.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	I am a resident of Cheshire West and Chester		58% 49
2	I use Hackney and or Private Hire services		32% 27
3	I am a representative of a voluntary organisation		0% 0
4	I am a representative of a community or residents organisation		0% 0
5	I have a business interest in Cheshire West and Chester		8% 7
6	I work in the Hackney or Private Hire trade		77% 65
7	I represent a Hackney or Private Hire Organisation		8% 7
8	I am an elected Member of Cheshire West and Chester Council		0 % 0
9	I am a local town or parish councillor		1% 1
10	An officer of the Council		0% 0
11	Other (please specify below):		4% 3
		answered	84
		skipped	6

As some issues in the survey were relating to accessibility issues. Consultees were invited to indicate if they had any long term illness, health issue or disability that limited their your daily activities or the work they could do. The responses received are shown below

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		7.32% 6
2	No		82.93% 68
3	Prefer not to say		9.76% 8
		answered	82
		skipped	8

Those that responded above were invited to provide more detail if they chose to these are shown below.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Physical impairment that causes mobility issues, e.g. wheelchair user		33.33%	3
2	Visual impairment		11.11%	1
3	Hearing impairment		0.00%	0
4	Learning disability or difficulty		0.00%	0
5	Mental Health issue		22.22%	2
6	Long standing illness or health condition		33.33%	3
7	Prefer not to say		22.22%	2
8	Other (please specify):		11.11%	1
			answered	9
			skipped	81

Appendix 1 All comments received to question 1

<p>The old age policy at 10 and 15 seems ok and works but would take longer and better for the trade. Happy with the delay as well but 7 years would be better</p>
<p>Hello! Can u pls 7 years old car in to any car plssss! Not easy to buy car ! Thanks</p>
<p>The council should ad at least another 5 years on to the exit policy due to covid an family's still struggling</p>
<p>The Council must consider the fact the Private Hire operators are now using Vehicles and Drivers licensed in other boroughs to get round the rules. These changes will only really apply to Hackney Carriages as they need to be licensed in the area in which they work.</p>
<p>Longer exit date or there will be a lot less wav vehicles available because the electric vehicles are just too expensive euro 5 and above okay</p>
<p>Also minimum requirement should be a hybrid vehicle that can at least run 30 miles just on electric as there is a very limited number of vehicles that are fully electric that can do at least 300 miles on one charge there just isn't enough infrastructure also the current exit age for cwac is nonsense when other taxis from other districts can do jobs in cwac like the school run in older vehicles I don't see why cwac vehicles can't run whilst there still passing all the checks and still in a fit and working manner both mechanically and bodywork</p>
<p>Remove the implementation of electric only vehicles.</p>
<p>They create more pollution in production alone than a euro 6 diesel does throughout its entire lifespan (with average mileage and driving style)</p>
<p>Electric cars are more dangerous should a collision happen and the batteries ignite.</p>
<p>Electric cars are unpractical for the industry due to a lack of infrastructure both nationally and locally.</p>
<p>If the electric only plan is implemented i and many other drivers will be forced out of work and will be leaving the job for good.</p>
<p>With the job geting harder to earn a living with all the cross border hiring being allowed in Cheshire west and chester i think the current vehicle age restriction should be extended even if once the vehicle reaches this age they have to have more inspections to keep them up to a high standard</p>
<p>You need to extend the 10 years for any vehicles licensed before covidit is greatly unfair that I bought a vehicle two months before covid and did not use it for 18months yet still have to change it when it's of its age when it will be very much under mileage and condition</p>
<p>Extension of age limit for diesel hackneys</p>

Could we not keep the older vehicles after a certain age and pay for the modifications to be made into a low emissions vehicle. I no other areas have started doing this like up in Scotland. With the rules how they are a lot of drivers are looking to go a cross the border to be licensed and still work Chester because of the major difference in price and rules on the age policy's. On a personal level if you made old vehicles have a extra mot a year like Warrington that would be better than the financial strain what's here

The financial impact of both Covid and the financial crisis means spreading the cost of a vehicle over a longer period of time would be helpful.

Many customers have commented that having Hackney's that are only fully wheel chair accessible has the implication that the majority are the bigger and higher can type vehicles which means they are difficult for the majority with mobility issues to get up into them. Those with walking sticks and frames, this forces them to try and prebook a private hire which are not always readily available especially at school run times.

Since the age policy was introduced to reduce emissions licencing has produced no data to show that he policy is working.
we should have a start figure of ???? and an annual figure of ???? to show reduced emissions in our air quality in our borough directly associated to the change in this policy or what's the point in changing policy. Just saying it's obvious is not an answer. Data results and monitoring of emissions in the borough and city centres is the only way we know if the policy really really works. Anything else is guess work.

The policy used by cwac is financially debilitating, and will over a short space of time limit the amount of vehicles and drivers available.
It's no use having policy if no one can afford to buy a suitable vehicle .
We need common sense policy not one based on the councils ideas .
We have a climate problem yer you close winsford office and force people to drive a almost 60miles round trip to pick up Licensing stuff badges,Plates .
So you actually contradict
Policy by doing this .
At least place an office person in Winsford 1 day a week to help reduce travel distance and help reduce the nox added to air quality by reducing travel distance by 100,s of vehicles going to Ellesmere Port.

Extension with at least 3 years or more.

Age is irrelevant. The condition of the car is more important. If a car is well maintained it will produce less harmful emissions. Badly maintained newer cars can smoke Badly.
It is tough making a living be a taxi driver now, how the council think drivers can afford electric vehicles is madness.

extend by 3 years increase from 15 years to 18 years .I have been in taxi business since 1983 we have had hard run since deregulation which hit us hard also covid which seen our work dried up due to lockdown. i spent 20 years as radio operator running taxi office ,i know all about demand for taxis to serve chester ,I have also been driving the cabs since 1990 .In that time i have had to buy 3 taxis my first taxi cost £28,000 second taxi 31,000 and the one i have now bought second hand for £22,000 i cannot afford another taxi due to the decrease in jobs due to Uber and private hire flooding Chester ,everyday i work i see wolverhampton,sefton ,burnley plated private hire working Chester .after 40 years of being involved in taxi business my cab is due to come off the road 22/12/2025 after 15 years extra 3 years would give me chance to carry on in jod i support and love .

The age of a vehicle should not be an issue if it passes bianual checks maybe bring out policy to check the fixtures fittings and furniture to keep the vehicle in a good repair inside as well as out

Moving back on any policy for a greener environment and a move to net-zero is regressive. The Tory government is going in the wrong direction, CWAC should go in the right direction and maintain its policy.
BUT... there needs to be a lot more charging points available for taxis, lets hope a Labour Government can help with that!

Policy needs to be consistent and it is not fair to keep changing. People have invested in new cabs and then suddenly find out it wasn't necessary. Buying a new cab is a massive investment and we need to be sure that having made such an investment that we will be protected for the future.

Cars are very expensive as long as they meet the emissions standard they should be allowed . You can buy 10 year old electric cars that produce less than moder cars

By allowing cars to be kept longer this enables better public safety in thag drivers will be able to upgrade a year later

When you have strict age limits it encourages operators to licence in areas that not so strict over age . These vehicles still work in your area. Private hire vehicles have no conditions on the areas they work.

It's totally unfair on your local companies to keep replacing cars frequently when some council have no age limits and these vehicles still work in your area . Because they have less overheads. This means they can do it cheaper .

The local licences trade deserves being able to run older cars that meet emission standards whilst their competitors in the next town also have older cars

Local jobs for local people

I believe that any existing licensed Hackney carriage vehicle should be given a three year extension. (up from fifteen years to eighteen years) There is a huge shortage of secondhand Hackney vehicles at the moment and this has pushed prices up dramatically. If I give my vehicle as an example, it is almost five years old and has a mileage of 130,000 miles.. It should be worth around £20,000-£25,000. In fact, similar vehicles are now trading at around the £35,000 mark. This is because, at this moment in time, the only vehicle available to buy that meets CWAC requirements is the LEVC cab, which, if purchased on their pcp scheme has a total amount payable over five years of £108,000!

i think is better ULEZ ZONE viechels

Could non-wheelchair new electric vehicles be considered for use as a hackney carriage within Vale Royal? New electric wav's are far too expensive and Vale royal is not a busy zone within CWAC. Car and cab do a vehicle with a safety screen that would be perfect for our zone

Open to all, the market will provide.

Until the industry is harmonised across the whole country there seems no point in implementing any restrictions as drivers and vehicles will just re license and plate with other councils whom have a far less stricter policy and a lot cheaper, and also having no Brady to police the vehicles and drivers

For a new vehicle to be first licensed it must be must be under 7 years. This policy must be kept as with passage of time more electric second hand car will be available and will be cheaper to buy as will low finance. to make it balance diesel and petrol should be on as will tell Bank of England interest rates goes down. Now A days buying a electric bus its cost £60k its not worth it as no trader available for it.

Government policy has changed - USA and Europe have changed end date for diesel car manufacture to 2035

I believe that the CWaC should become more competitive with the other councils around and change the policy. A 10 year car to be permitted for phv plates will have a positive impact in both us the drivers and the council pockets. As things are at the moment for us the phv drivers is not worthy to have a cheater badge anymore .

Appendix 2 All comments received to question 2

<p>Not happy that a diesel main engine could be used all the time not worried on the entry side but should not be given a unlimited life that should just be for the real ULEVs</p>
<p>ULEVs do not have the range for taxi driving. People travelling a greater distance would require a “ freshly charged” vehicle. Also the driver would have to take into account where the passengers are going and is there a charging point nearby. Theoretically the driver could get stuck somewhere or may have to stop part way thorough the outward journey to charge up to get back.</p>
<p>If it's ULEV it should be electric only no petrol or diesel extender or it's just the same as having a petrol or diesel vehicle</p>
<p>There's no way it can fully go electric there just isn't enough vehicles with the range 300+ and 7+ seats I agree that the hybrids that are really bad on emissions should be removed from the list but there's alot of vehicles that are hybrid that emits less than 75grams co2</p>
<p>Need to better understand hydrogen technologies to better judge best dates for changes</p>
<p>How can a hybrid vehicle using unleaded and electricity, how can they omit higher levels of pollution.</p>
<p>Current co2 around the planet is 0.004% . If we go under 0.002% all plant life including humans die . Proven from the ice cores there has been a lot more co2 in the past and this made all plant life bigger and better . We are being lied to yet again by certain powers and groups around the planet who no one votes for and cannot be held accountable at present but this will change</p>
<p>I don't agree or disagree with ulez i think it is all a big waste of time and money as the batterys have to be charged anyway and the power comes from power plants and they pollute the air more than a petrol or diesel vehicle a few years ago we was encouraged to buy a diesel vehicle and now we are wanted to get rid of them . And Electric taxis don't have the range for alot of drivers , so in my opinion diesel or petrol taxi should be the future not Electric</p>
<p>Coming from a Chauffeur company (long distance work) point of view and with clients in the Automotive sector. We are in the "middle" of a change where there is no 100% solution to all needs and sectors. Indeed testing on Electric vehicles in Japan currently show for example that CO2 given off by tyres in EV's versus ICE vehicles are actually higher and therefore the over CO2 produced by EV and ICE is equal. So how do you classify one element of a vehicle as greener than another. I suspect National guidance will continue to change as EVs impact on the environment are realised and understood, therefore its my view we should not be limiting EV's only as ULEV.</p>

<p>The policy does not allow for the use of Electric minibuses which are a very rare and very expensive commodity. If I use my company as a current example I would need twice as many vehicle to do the same amount of thus increasing my carbon footprint as well as the cost outlay for the vehicle and infrastructure. I currently operate 26 minibuses for special needs children with tail lift minibuses which are on contract to the council. If I double this this cost would be needed to be passed onto the council so is counter productive as well as having to find larger premises for the required fleet to do the same job. Half the fleet would be "Charging" whilst the other half would be working</p>
<p>I don't agree with only all electric vehicles should be only ones to be allowed or used. It's financially impossible for a lot of drivers to finance such a vehicle, so if you don't own your own house i.e. have some kind of collateral you could not get finance for an electric vehicle at costs of over £30,000 . It's almost impossible if you're a housing association tenant.</p>
<p>It seems to me that the council are ok with cars they deem as polluting in their towns as long as they are taxed to do so. Money grab.</p>
<p>Not sure of the question</p>
<p>Right now I think the definition of electric only is too narrow for existing infrastructure and costly for voters. That's not to say it could and should change in future.</p>
<p>Electric cars are very expensive . Yet in other authorities people can drive 20 year old cars and work private hire in your area</p> <p>How does this benefit your economy ? Surely the rules should be more lenient both towards age and emissions. As long as these emissions fit current legislation surely that is acceptable</p>
<p>I think the policy for private hire vehicles is acceptable. The huge price of an electric Hackney (£108,000) is prohibitive for most if not all Hackney owners.</p>
<p>BUT ELECTRICAL VEHICLES CAN'T DRIVE FARAWAY</p>
<p>Open to all especially non EVs, the market will provide.</p>
<p>Ad blue vehicle And DPF install vehicle's have same outcome as ULEV AD Blue and DPF Install Vehicle's Must be Consider as will.</p>
<p>This should be agreed across the country not just CWACC</p>
<p>The concern of lack of local rapid chargers for EVs is an issue. For taxi drivers very few EVs would maintain enough charge to last a full working day. Whilst cheap charging is an option through the night, through the day, the current cost of charging from rapid chargers may be prohibitive.</p>

Appendix 3 All comments received to question 3

<p>with the condition of modern vehicle and the lower emissions this seems reasonable not sure if 16 years is a bit to long</p>
<p>No absolutely not, the owner of the Vehicle has had either 10 or 15 years to consider getting a replacement. Everybody else has observed the rules and it would be grossly unfair on the people who have obeyed the rules, in fact it would make any existing rules a complete nonsense</p>
<p>An extra 2 years would be better even if it ment an extra test for the taxi I'm sure people wouldn't mind paying for an extra test if it ment they can keep the car for an extra year after all covid hit everyone's financial plan if covid didn't happen I would of had 2 years where my current vehicle would of been paid off and I could of saved for an new ulez friendly vehicle</p>
<p>The age of a car should not matter if the vehicle is in good working condition and can pass the councils vehicle test.</p>
<p>Some of the older vehicles emissions are absolutely rank, some Hackney drivers don't seem to care about the emissions they are releasing, but you are looking into hybrids how they are ran</p>
<p>The vehicles go through a twice yearly stringent m.o.t. and the majority of owners look after their vehicles . As long as they are road worthy and comfortable for passengers that is all that matters</p>
<p>I agree with the extension but it should be for all vehicle plated in the area not just some because alot of drivers have upgraded and spent there savings on a newer vehicle and if you extend the older vehicles the ones who have upgraded have wasted there hard earned money for no reason and definitely needs to be for more than a year , we have cross border hiring in this area and some of these vehicles are approximately 20 years old i have seen alot of times so dosent seem fair that this council allows these vehicles to work in this area but we pay the council alot of money a year and get discrimated against</p>
<p>Should be longer than a year for all</p>
<p>Do away with the age limited , liverpool has no age limit & the cabs are motd twice a year</p>
<p>Again for us, we do not keep cars beyong 10 years old. And the wear and tear on a car being driven locally or on more motorway miles basis, is high after 5 years usage, more so on local driving. It's not right to allow a vehicle to run for that length of time as whether EV or ICE, it's so environmentally bad. We should all be heading for EURO 6 ratings over the next couple of years at least.</p>
<p>If the vehicle has a valid MOT then its is fit for service regardless of age, Buses are allowed to any age as long as it has valid MOT so why not Taxis</p>
<p>I think we should get longer with the state of the country financially. And the time what has been missed due to covid. I think we are pushing more drivers to be licensed else where but still be working Chester</p>
<p>Very strongly agree , If will give driver more opportunity and time to save for a deposit or find some kind of finance for new vehicle .</p>
<p>Just please help the drivers.</p>

<p>As the pandemic was 2 years + and still affects our business today with less customers using public transport I think the age limit should be dropped for a better quality check if the vehicle passes stringent tests why the need to scrap it</p>
<p>I think that 3 years would be more beneficial to enable the current drivers to create a plan on how they will finance another vehicle or find alternative employment - Most drivers who are reaching the exit age policy for their cab will not of had the facility to make provision to save or afford (payments) on a much newer vehicle due to the restrictions posed through Covid and the current Economic crisis / Cost of Living Increases</p>
<p>My view is that any private hire vehicle that has been licenced for six years, should no longer be used for transporting members of the public.</p>
<p>Stop moving the goalposts and stay consistent in fairness to people who have already changed vehicles as per policy.</p>
<p>The current policy is perfectly adequate and does not need changing.</p>
<p>Putting an age limit on WAVs which are rudicolouslg expensive , along with the emissions requirment will take WAVs of the road owing to the finances</p>
<p>All phv WAVs should be exempt from Age. And should be classed as a specialist vehicl</p>
<p>I believe it should be three years</p>
<p>I DRIVE PRIVATE HIRE SINCE 10 MONTHS I HAD DRIVE 1 TIME OF DISABLED PEOPLE</p>
<p>Open to all, market will provide.</p>
<p>The cost of renewing any vehicle is not going to change with in one year as long as the vehicle passes a test then it should be allowed to operate</p>
<p>As vehicle's engine are not good after 150k millage</p>
<p>We need to keep fleet of cars newer with better emissions, CWACC are losing licences to Flintshire because of their older vehicle licensing policy</p>
<p>The age policy should be even more than 11 years lost probably 15 years . Think about the facts with uber cars from Flintshire ,Liverpool ,Wirral even from Wolverhampton works in Chester almost everyday . Those councils grants plates to 10 till 15 years old cars ,which are currently working in Chester . As things is we the cheshire phv driver we feel the unfairness of the whole situation. We are being trained to keep high standards and also to buy a new car till 7 years paying higher prices and having to compete with cars that costs in cases 1/3 of a cheshire phv price is totally unfair. Concluding I believe that excuses like environmental reasons for not changing the years policy are void in Cheshire area , considering that cars 15 years old from other councils provide the taxi service in the area through Uber.</p>

Appendix 4 All comments received to question 4

<p>not as nice but if low or no emissions and helps keep the numbers or wheelchair usable vehicles its worth the compromise.</p>
<p>Again, absolutely not, again, people such as myself have paid a great deal of money to comply with the regulations so it would, again, be grossly unfair to let lesser quality vehicles be licensed. Also this would cause a huge increase in the already saturated Hackney business as drivers apply for Hackney Plates to try and avoid the new tax rules that a coming in shortly.</p>
<p>There isn't any issues with side loading it's safer than rear loading and if the driver can't perform this 90 degree turn then they shouldn't of passed the medical and are not fit and proper for the job the rear of the car is for luggage a disabled person is not luggage and deserve side entry like every one else and most side loading Hackney's are owned by massive fleets who could afford to do the change</p>
<p>Ulev should be irrelevant. If you want more wheelchair accessibility then dont restrict the use of traditional vehicles and reduce the cost of plate for them.</p>
<p>The whole point of having a petitioning is for the drivers protection . I already know a private higher driver who has left the trade due to someone threatening with a knife when asked for payment. As already stated , not enough room on the ranks and also not very comfy for a wheelchair passenger sitting over the back axle going over all the road ramps around the area</p>
<p>If these have to be electric vehicles to meet ulez i disagree with all electric vehicle changes</p>
<p>Not relevant to our business</p>
<p>As said Most wheelchair users use rear access to there own vehicles . So it makes perfect sense to allow them to be used as Hackney's</p>
<p>The disadvantages seem to far outweigh the advantages</p>
<p>These vehicles are not properly equipped hackney carriages. If you change the policy to include these vehicles you might as well allow normal saloon cars to be used.</p>
<p>I think they are dangerous, not only as you have to find a dropped kerb to put the wheelchair on the road, you are endangering their lives and your own by standing in the road to do so.</p>
<p>May be worth putting a limit on how many of these types of cab can be in use in any area in a bid to ensure that both side loading and rear loading types are available.</p>
<p>Open to all, market will provide.</p>

Appendix 5 All comments received to question 5

<p>seems to make sense but if no documents no licence is harsh but this is a protected role so as in some lines of employment there have to be restricts and this is one of them no certificates no licence</p>
<p>I think everyone should be treated the same and should have to provide a fully enhanced DBs check from birth .</p>
<p>I don't think it's goes far enough.</p>
<p>I have a suggestion, if a person resides in the uk from the last 10 years they do not need to produce a COGC, enhanced CRB will cover his/her good conduct, if they are outside the uk for more than 3 months you can ask for, to produce COGC from his home country. Thanks</p>
<p>Do the council know what car drivers are driving who are licensed, I believe there are drivers out there driving who shouldn't be. I think the area in general is being overran, rude drivers to customers, also car sharing when the driver possibly isn't insured for the vehicle, council do not have the time or effort to catch these people, also we have all seen the number of U er drivers coming into the city at weekends, cross border job taking is killing the city and licensed drivers takings immensely, needs too be stopped</p>
<p>I agree if they cannot provide evidence of a criminal record check they SHOULD NOT HAVE A LICENCE because they could be hiding any sort of background</p>
<p>Should be treated same as a british citizen , if you cant prove a clean criminal record then no license . Public safety must come first . Why make special allowences for non uk nationals , also a lot of countries dont have the same standards for reported crimes etc</p>
<p>If said person which is Allowed a Lic based on ceac criteria , if they then go on to commit a crime will cwac be held responsible for there actions . We know the checks are different for people who have lived abroad, which actually allows those people a chance to cover tracks if they wish to do so. This puts British residents at a disadvantage as all evidence is there to be seen as it should be for any persons working in public domain Licensed by cwac .</p>
<p>For example, I have lived in the UK for 20 years now. Before this I have lived 5 years outside UK since I became an adult. It will be difficult for me to obtain such a certificate from that country of residence proving my conduct over 20 years ago. I believe you can adopt a "minimum time period lived in the UK" after which a driver wouldn't need to provide COGC.</p>
<p>If a driver as been operating for over so many years (5 or 6) without major incident then CWAC would be the Authority to offer a good conduct review</p>

The current system creates too many delays, I agree that checks should take place but I think that when it gets to the GLSC stage it needs to be more simplified to enable a meeting within days as opposed to weeks or months.

Also could we not include the requirement for references from people that are known to the applicant, perhaps offer a temporary licence in the interim based on balance of probabilities.

I think public safety is paramount, CWAC has very high standards and these should remain we going out side just for hollydays and maximum four weeks no longer

Far too complicated, drivers to have proper licences and qualifications

We need to keep safe guarding procedures at the highest level, if we are seen as a 'soft touch' we will soon be flooded with applications from potential abusers, violent and dishonest applicants - potential drivers from our own residents have difficulty getting DBS through, even though they have had one done in past month, because one for Bus and other for Taxi, additional cost £48

8.7 - Obtaining a CoGC from some countries takes longer than 6 months and in most circumstances, the timeline is out of the driver's control. We suggest this time frame be extended or that the 6-month cut-off only be implemented if the driver is unable to provide evidence that they actively seeking to progress their CoGC.

8.8 - If the driver can substantiate their refugee status, taking into account their unique circumstances, it may be financially burdensome for them to incur the expenses associated with acquiring a Statutory Declaration. For many refugees, the primary motive behind obtaining a driver's licence is to secure employment and financial stability, which they may not have the means to afford upfront.

8.10 - In alignment with our comments under 8.7, we suggest that the 3-month cut-off be extended pending the provision of evidence that the driver is actively seeking to progress their CoGC.

Cost of living rise and extra money and time to apply for another documents is very bureocracy .if someone live more then 3 months which is most his home country, he can provide criminal records, but process of translate will cost money again.

Appendix 6 All comments received to question 6

just old fashioned it not London
You simply cannot drive taxis whilst relying on a satellite navigation device. How do you negotiate road closures with no local knowledge?
If this is removed I would like the fee I paid to do one refunded please. Also my badge doesn't state I can drive an hackney as well, which I am licensed to do. Absolute joke, you may has well get rid of licensing and let anyone be a taxi driver
I agree you should have to do a knowledge test to drive a Hackney
This should be a requirement and should be made harder. Hackney drivers have always be renowned for knowing where they are going
Common sense would tell anyone that a taxi driver should know local knowledge & routes without the need for gadgets . Sat nav is sometimes wrong & it can take you the long route not the shortest . I got n a private & he never knew where blacon was ! I get loads of public complaining but they cant be bothered informing licencing
sat nav dont always take the shortest route
I agree that most use Sat Nav. However, I have had plenty of drivers in UBER or Taxis who rely too much on this and can actually drive dangerously when focusing on their phone or sat nav which means people take their eyes off the road. It's actually quite dangerous. I don't beleive you should know every road in the area, but I believe you should have something. Maybe combining the driving test part with an assesment of their ability to drive safely when using sat nav because that's practical in action testing. Follow that up on the NVQ with a shorter basic Topographical test like, what road is the entrance to Chester racecourse on or what's the main road to chester station. Something that shows they've looked. We all use sat nav but we shouldn't be 100% reliant on it else or ficus is not on the road.
This is of the topic a bit, but any driver at least should be able to communicate in good English. At the test at least it is possible to check their ability to communicate in English. There are drivers who I have no idea how they have passed their taxi NVQ Qualification, if they have ever passed one at all.
I still use my sat nav for directions even in local areas sometimes following a decent nav gives road conditions and closures which can be conveyed to the customer allowing them to agree to directional change
I still think that the driver of any licensed vehicle should have a basic knowledge of the City in which they are licensed. We have an aging population that are using taxi services more frequently but do not necessarily have knowledge of postcodes or mobile apps to refer to when travelling. It is much more customer friendly if people feel comfortable when in a cab/ taxi that they can give a destination without being questioned regarding the postcode.
It's not London!!

As hackney carriage are available for immediate hire they do not have the opportunity to pre plan a route. The topographical test is not a comprehensive knowledge of the area but just the basic level required. If a driver can not pass this test then should he/she really be available for immediate hire. The public have basic expectations of Hackney carriage drivers that need to be met.

Absolutely not, one of the major differences is that the public expect hackney carriage drivers to have a good local knowledge of the area without needing to resort to sat nav's etc. stop watering down the rules to make it easier for people to become licensed without them having to put any effort into the job at all.

People rely in the immediate hiring of a Hackney . Usually on the spur of the moment and flagged down or waiting at the rank .

The driver has to accept this fare . It's expected that Hackney carriage drivers are professionals with a good knowledge of the area . Visitors to the area will want to be taken to place of interest or work places . They may have limited information on the destination. When you drive round your area . You see road signs displaying road names , not post codes . I would like to think that if I came to

Your area as a visitor . I could flag a cab . , let them know my destination and they would be able to take them

Private hire vehicles are controlled by an app , this doubles as a sat nav . In the instances that the company does not have an app based system . The driver is given the job . , he then has the chance to look it up under his map . And check the destination and route and if needed able to put it on the sat nav . It's expected that a phv does this .

Certainly the app based dispatch systems have very good mapping . However when you book a taxi this is in person and not via the app

Satnav's aren't infallible, we've all read enough horror stories about vehicles ending up in rivers! We, as Hackney drivers are quite often visitors to Chester's first experience of Chester, I don't think its professional to ask for a postcode to a destination, especially if it's within the city centre area.

Could there be a low level test perhaps? Private hire cabs I agree they are using sat navs/google maps anyway but for me, if I get in a hackney cab, I know that they know where they are going. You can just get in and they will know where to go without any hesitation on the best way. If you remove the requirement, is it not a risk that people may become licenced and then end up not knowing where to go. For many local passengers this may be ok but for none locals, this will become an issue and especially for wheelchair users who can't see where they are going anyway, how are they meant to direct a driver who may not have a sat nav.

Re not having complaints in 2009-2013, I don't think many people know how to report taxi drivers and even if they wanted to complain, they wouldn't know the process and it would be a faff. People who have a bad experience with a driver tend to just not book that firm again rather than complain to the council. I don't think that is a valid justification for cutting the requirement. I know in the past when drivers haven't known where they are going, I have just directed them. I've not taken notes of the driver number and stuff to email and report them.

Customers on ranks expect us to know where we're going without the use of satnavs. Towns would be over run with Hackney vehicles therefore diluting the work

Not applicable in this area.

satnav one way direction if a road is close sat nav will still come the same way special on country side road. if a person have knowledge of area can avoid road works, traffic etc

Agreed we all use SatNav and its easy - but all Hackney drivers should have a reasonable knowledge for getting around the borough

Everyone uses sat nav so this policy to have a topographical knowledge test is anachronistic

If someone was private hire driver in Cheshire for 3 years, his knowledge is good to don't to do test.

Appendix 7 Comments received on any other areas of the policy not directly covered by the consultation.

<p>I was very impressed with the convictions policy it reassures me that no one with this convictions will be working as a driver</p>
<p>I would consider capping the hackney and private hire licences in this borough as drivers are having to work long hours to make ends meet meaning tiredness while driving which is dangerous for the driver and the general public. I would also consider how to deal with all the Uber drivers from other boroughs working in the area the licencing officers should be able to check there vehicles as they do ours as they are working in our borough also they are continually picking people up illegally from the streets and parking in taxi ranks designated for hackney vehicles.</p>
<p>On numerous occasions, I have observed and personally experienced XXXXX staff exhibiting monopolistic behavior XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX This includes directing drivers from other companies to leave the area, even when they have customers in their cars.</p> <p>Such actions not only create an unfair advantage for XXXXXXXXXXXX but also contribute to an uncomfortable and unprofessional atmosphere for drivers from other companies and their customers.</p> <p>I request that the council thoroughly investigates these allegations and takes appropriate action to ensure fair competition and adherence to operational guidelines within the designated area.</p> <p>Your prompt attention to this matter is highly appreciated, and I trust that the council will address this issue to maintain a level playing field for all taxi service operators in the community.</p>
<p>Hello! Just a humble request to change this vehicle age and change it like in Flintshire council !! Thanks</p>
<p>I think the Hackney exit age should be pushed longer so they are a load to stay on the road for a extra 3-5 years as they are much more expensive to buy an mostly owned by the driver not hired so are probably better looked after an spent more money on repairs bodywork etc .</p>

As a blind regular user of taxi services in the borough, I feel that this consultation, and thereby presumably the policy, does not address any of my concerns as a blind person, for example, that all vehicles should have the facility for a blind or partially sighted person to read their licence or taxi number and access their meter. In terms of driver requirements, drivers need to have sufficient knowledge of the English language to understand verbal requests for assistance or directions given by a blind person. Also, booking systems such as apps need to be made accessible for those of us who use speech on mobile phones such as IOS Voiceover. Currently, the app for our largest local taxi company runs a completely inaccessible app. Even though the carriage of guide dogs in taxis is governed by law, there are still too many drivers refusing guide dog owners with their service dogs. This is unacceptable.

Sadly I think the general state of taxi driving in Chester has hit rock bottom. It's now just a free for all. Both Hackney and Private hire drivers just ignore the rules. Everyone is doing exactly as they please.

I've seen Hundreds of taxis plated from Wolverhampton that are working in cwac and most vehicles are older than 10 years and classing themselves as uber I think any job that starts or ends in cwac arrea the vehicles must be compliant with cwac conditions for Hackney and private hire and that also goes for schools within the cwac if your taking up a school contract in cwac arrea then your car must meet all cwac conditions it shouldn't be one rule for one and another for everyone else I do a school run in cwac arrea and there is cars from Cheshire East and from flintershire that are over 10 years old doing a school run in cwac its out of order when we have to stick to all the rules

Council process is for the most part completely flawed and of no benefit to the drivers, only for box ticking exercises that give false measures of the industry.

If the council actually make an effort to interact with drivers on a human level the industry would work 100x more efficiently.

Reduce the fees. Remove the silly and pointless red tape. Stop settle firms testing their own vehicles and bring all vehicle testing for settle companies in house, having used 4 cars from 3 firms i can assure you they are NOT fit to be in the job.

Thank you

I believe there are drivers passing on there contact details privately for airport transfers, too which they are not licensed to do so.

I believe there are drivers, driving vehicles when they are not insured on the vehicle, they may have a badge but no insurance.

I believe the council needs more feet on the ground checking drivers on a more regular basis. Some drivers may be untouchable or people scared to say anything or report drivers, due to there attitude, driving manners, inappropriate comments to young girls, dirty cars, smelly cars etc these are just a few comments I've heard from customers.

Hackney fares should should go up every year, not every 2 years, it confuses the customers,

I am seeing on main stream media that people are having trouble affording the insurance on electric vehicles due to costs of parts and the high fire risk.

I have also learnt that Ford motor company and Toyota are not going to make electric vehicles anymore because of the high costs.

Toyota and V.W have developed a hydrogen engine and on a test of the V.W model it ran 2000 km on one fill with no emissions.

J.C.B are running their next generation machines on hydrogen and engines which have already been developed.

Lets see what the next coming years bring before actually jumping ship to early

There needs to be some change in the cross border hiring because in my opinion there will be no Hackney drivers left in a few years because we struggle every day to earn a living why all the cross border hiring is happening as you stated at start of this email there is approximately 2000 private hire and Hackney plated in area we don't need cross border hiring aswell . Also the taxi ranks are getting fewer and fewer or made smaller we dont even have a rank at the town hall anymore we have 1 for approximately 3 taxi by story house and that was changed recently so there is a loading bay infront of the rank so no customers can see the taxis on the rank.

why is it c w a c

seems to be the only council with an age exit for cabs why not have more test per year

To be honest, I'm well onboard with how CWAC operates its licensing. I do think there's issues with bad drivers being passed at the colleges from feedback and experience and good drivers are hard to find because the process is putting them off becoming a driver. But you guys probably don't see that. From my point of view, the colleges tend to treat the applicants as a money maker and it's harder to fail than pass and I fear we're all going to be overrun with Uber drivers and the like and in turn putting more cars on the road when we want to reduce emission and make people think about their transport.

It's worth saying that vehicles are hard to find and the premium guys like Merc and BMW are making it harder by taking full central control of their used stocks now. In short, price fixing. Therefore access to older vehicles are key. I would also like to see the Twice yearly MOT's put back on premium vehicles or at certain mileages. I think it's when a car is over 3 years old it needs 2 MOT's a year, and I'd like to see that changed or considered to be once a year and we provide servicing docs to prove car is being run correctly.

We're getting 3 services a year on our running and it's all motorway, and that second MOT and extra licensing is unnecessary. I understand why you use it but I don't feel it adds any extra safety if we are getting the vehicle properly serviced at MFU regulated intervals? Just a thought anyway. Thanks for listening! :-)

My Vehicle is 13 years old, From September 2025 I am unable to use this vehicle as a Hackney Carriage, I will be 66 then, I can not get finance due to my age and the cost's are prohibitive to replace my vehicle with a newer one, I would like to be able to continue working for CWAC in my current capacity completing School Contracts (only) which I have done for many years, The Vehicle is Mot'd every six months, Has regular servicing and is kept to a very high standard (As noted by my Mot garage) I would love to be able to continue working after 66 in a job I have done for over 30 years but due to current policy this will not be available to me.

It's unfair on Driver/Owners as vehicles from outside the county are currently operating in Chester and have no age restrictions imposed, Also buses are allowed to operate over 15 years of age so why not Taxis

I think there's a real problem within the rules at the moment where there's drivers who are considering going over to Flint to be licensed and still being able to work for the likes of xxxxxxxxxx. It is a lot cheaper because of the age rule of the vehicles and is going to stop a lot of drivers from getting into dept. Before we know it Chester is going to be full of drivers who aren't licensed by our council

I would like the licencing team to be lead by facts and data and nit just because someone else has done it. They should be leaders and followers and this should be data driven.
we need policies to help introduce new drivers into the borough.
There needs to be separate policies for School contract only vehicles and for vehicles that undertake contract hire work.
There are a lot of sectors to our job and you try to cover it with a blanket policy which is not fit for purpose, but because this is a minority sector you choose to ignore it.

Please reopen winsford office to help reduce car journeys from Northwich and winsford thereby reducing poisonous gases being pumped into our air .
You can not profess about Lez and ulez to aid air quality and then force these drivers to do 60miles round trip to visit ellesmere port offices .
When there,s a perfectly good office space within 5miles of where they live .
Your policy is contradictory of reducing non compliant vehicles while you then force those 60mile journey,s .
I would also like you to make sure you address the policy of cross border vehicles especially those registered in Wolverhampton which we are seeing in increasing numbers due to there low Licensing costs and less vehicle restrictions.
Also near me the current difference in aged vehicles that are used but registered in Flintshire as there age policy is very different and for us who live and work in Cwac area means we fight to making a living with 1 arm tied behind our backs enforced by you are cwac Council.
It's absolute madness.
At some point in the future all Private and maybe Hackney will be registered elsewhere unless you take some action now while you still can .
Adding more rules and regulations will make things worse not better.
We need to help and support drivers and operators in the cwac area not punish them for living and operating there .

I think local licence officers should be able to inspect and penalise taxi/PH drivers of any UK borough that are undertaking work in the area of that local licencing authority.

I think local authorities are tunnel visioned on net zero and don't give the drivers a second thought. It is a tough way of earning a living with long hours. Not many drivers can afford there own car let alone an electric car which in my opinion don't work as a taxi in rural areas. Until technology gives better range. Until the inferstructure is there to charge the cars. Until the astronomical prices come down I think the councils of this country should take there blinkers off and see what us really going on with taxis.
Try and help the drivers not continually make it more expensive year after year.

increase the age from 15 years extend another 3 years to help drivers like myself be able to continue driving a hackney cab in chester without having to lay out more expense my taxi is in perfect working order has m o t every 6 months .sadly if you do not extend then you are taking my livelihood off me .afterserving the hackney trade for 40 years and comply with hackney rules and regulations i certainly cannot afford to get into more debt by having to replace my taxi cab due to age restrictions you have implemented.

I would like the council to look into stopping cross border hiring
it is having a very negative effect on our trade
we have enough private and hackney taxis in the city
we do not need help from other areas ranking and plying for hire

The fine for fowling a vehicle is, at £25, far to low in vale royal. The charge in Chester is £100.

The hire charge in Vale royal is also very low compared to surrounding areas and should be increased to support drivers with higher vehicle and fuel costs.

I wish to make the comment that I feel there are too many old, high mileage or unsuitable by their size vehicles operating in Chester XXXXXXXX have monopolised the market and kept out the likes of Uber who tend to operate with modern clean and low emission vehicles. I am pleased to see Uber are now here and should be encouraged as they present a modern image.

I have approximately 4 years before I can retire and qualify for my Pension. I do not have a personal plan so will only be able to claim my state pension when I am 67. I am extremely worried regarding my final years of employment as my cab is due to expire under the exit age policy in 2024 - I am not in the greatest of health, however as I am self employed I am able to choose the times of day that I work to reflect a medical condition. I would not be able to financially afford to replace the cab due to recent changes to interest rates and the cost of living , I am still paying a mortgage and can not find any additional income to put towards the cost of another cab. Extending the exit policy by another 3 years would benefit me immensely - My cab is well maintained and obviously passes all the required testing so would definitely last longer than 15 years which the current exit limit is set at. I really do not want to become unemployed at the age of 63 - I have worked all my life and would like the opportunity to continue with my cab for another 3/4 years to relieve the anxiety that the exit policy is currently causing me.

There is a growing number of vehicles licensed outside of Cheshire West and chester operating in our area, including school contracts. How do CWACC monitor this ? The vehicles might not necessarily meet the licensing rules of CWACC if licensed elsewhere

With regard to drivers, it is essential that training includes all aspects of the Equality Act 2010, including a practical session where drivers demonstrate that they can safely load and secure a wheelchair with a passenger. This needs to be an important part of the Council's conditions and needs to be backed up by a rigorous complaints procedure. Any complaints regarding drivers and operators who refuse to carry passengers in wheelchairs should be investigated thoroughly. Any failures identified should result in prosecution and/or action under the policy/conditions.

It is time that this council acknowledges that lots of drivers have invested time and money into this job and try to be professional. We offer good service to the public and find it disheartening when the vocal but lazy ones who don't want to buy new cabs or learn how to do the job properly always seem to have more sway than the rest of us. Stop watering down the regulations to enable the laziest to prosper. Give us some pride in our job back.

As hundreds of taxi cars coming from different councils such as Flintshire, Knowsley, Sefton and Wolverhampton in Chester for work and having no exit age policy. They are all allow to drive any car in Chester area. So we as Chester council license holder buy expensive electric car will not any effect on the environment because there are many taxies from differing councils also working in Chester . Law should be same for everyone all drivers in Chester.

Chester's Hackney fleet is of a very high standard. The problem is the lack of availability of new, or decent second hand wheelchair accessible vehicles. (WAV's) allowing rear loading vehicles on to the fleet is not the answer, it's a watering down of our very high standards. I believe extending the exit age to eighteen years is a good way to ensure that we don't continue to see the trend of Hackney drivers moving over to private hire were there are plenty of Low Emissions vehicles available at modest cost. If the trend continues I can't see there being a Hackney fleet in ten years, and certainly not to the high standards we have. If there are any concerns about older vehicles on the fleet, most drivers would be happy to increase the total of inspections to three a year for vehicles over fifteen years. I believe that we could revisit the issue in three years or so and see what availability is out there for Hackney drivers.

just request .if is possible then 10 years old viechel accept for taxi drivers and 1 mot per year please

Would like the Council Licensing to look into the removal of out-of-town plated vehicles which are working in the city centre et cetera. These vehicles have not paid a license fee to Cheshire West and Chester, but yet continue to earn their living on the same streets of Chester plated vehicles. every time I bring up this subject, I seem to get the same answer from Licensing, which is there's nothing which we can do. I find this hard to believe when there is no Uber or the likes working in Wales. look forward to your comments.

The use of 100% electric vehicles to be used as Hackney vehicles. Perhaps having electric charging points on ranks would encourage the purchase of such vehicles. Electric WAVs are way too expensive and are too heavy to have a decent range for working

The market will provide.

My personal opinion on the whole licensing situation is the cross boarder hiring through apps, the general public are totally unaware that there driver and vehicle are not locally licensed and may not be as safe as a CWAndC driver and vehicle. Our cars are tested more regular and at approved testing stations, for example Wolverhampton are about to change to one MOT a year at any MOT station. With the relaxing of these rules how safe are they!!!!!!

The application process is taking too long - can take up to month to get appointment with Unite for their assessment. Then have to travel to Liverpool on 3 separate days to complete the course. Having booked the driving test (for a HGV driver doing a taxi badge - why needed???) his booking was in Leyland near Preston, had to drive all that way, obviously did not know area - does not make sense when last question was about a knowledge test in Chester. Something is needed more local and with quicker process, drivers are lost taking up to 2 months to complete badge. Flintshire must be laughing at us - they are getting all the income from drivers licenses and vehicle plate (which I suppose keeps my council charge down because I live in Flintshire!)

We are doing this consultation now about ULEV (very important to have cleaner air) and all drivers will be running around in 15 year old Flintshire cars

I am very concerned about the amount of Uber vehicles now working on a daily basis in and around the Chester area who do not hold a Chester West and Chester private hire licence, as a licence holder for 15 years I have to adhere to some strict licensing conditions which include a vehicle age policy, door stickers for passengers to be able to identify private hire vehicles to help improve passenger safety, in car QR codes so passengers can scan and email direct the licensing any concerns or complaints and the inability of licensing enforcement being able to inspect or suspend these drivers or there vehicles, along with the considerable impact they are having on our daily takings.

Thank you for the opportunity to engage with this consultation. If you have any questions about our response, please reach out to me directly

In those 3 years+ after Covid we have seen world changing events that have an immediate impact in our way of thinking, living and even planning for the future. The council as a responsible entity to ensure and provides us with confidence to keep doing the private hire drivers job should and must adjust quickly in the new situation.

Firstly we should address few problems that destroys both the reputation and lowers the taxi service standards in the area : 1) Uber to be permitted to work around the area without restrictions , the council could say to uber for example that it can work only with cheshire plate cars in the borough and block cars from the other areas taking a piece of work . 2) The slow pace in changes being addressed and implemented can be considered a part of the problem . The year policy for a car is a big problem . How does the council thinks that the CWaC plates and badge can be considered attractive for us the PHv drivers and competitive against other councils that have 15 year minimum age policy ? and their drivers works in chester with a 1/3 of the investement that we are being called to make in order to drive . Concluding the council should stop “punish” us and start to listen to us if it wants to keep a safe, always reliable and competitive taxi service in the area.

I hope that through our comments you will make the taxi services ce of the area attractive and competitive against the other councils

Additional Email received outside the online consultation

Dear Cheshire West and Chester council,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to you on behalf of the black cab drivers of Chester West and Cheshire regarding the upcoming decision regarding the extension of the black cab age restriction policy.

First and foremost, I would like to draw attention to the current economic challenges facing black cab drivers in our region. The ongoing cost of living crisis in the UK has resulted in a significant decline in the usage of taxi services. As a result, black cab drivers are experiencing a reduction in their earnings, making it increasingly difficult for them to afford the purchase of a new taxi within the existing timeframe stipulated by the council.

Furthermore, the transition to electric vehicles has been hindered by the insufficient infrastructure for charging points in Chester. With limited access to charging facilities, the adoption of electric black cabs becomes a challenging endeavor for

drivers who wish to comply with environmental regulations while ensuring operational feasibility.

It is also worth noting that many other councils across the UK have opted not to impose age restrictions on black cabs. Given this context, an extension of the age restriction policy in Chester may put our local drivers at a disadvantage compared to their counterparts in neighboring areas.

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on the livelihoods of black cab drivers. The sharp decline in passenger demand forced many drivers to seek alternative sources of income to sustain themselves and their families during these difficult times. As our community strives to recover from the pandemic's economic repercussions, flexibility in regulatory policies is crucial to supporting the resilience of our local taxi industry.

Lastly, the emergence of ride-sharing platforms such as Uber has introduced heightened competition in the transportation sector. Black cab drivers are facing increased pressure to remain competitive while navigating regulatory constraints and economic uncertainties.

In light of these considerations, I urge the council to carefully evaluate the implications of extending the black cab age restriction policy. I respectfully request that you take into account the challenges faced by our drivers and consider alternative measures to support their livelihoods while promoting sustainable transportation practices.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. I am available to provide any further information or clarification that may assist in your deliberations.