

## Record of Officer Decision

This form is the written record of a key or significant operational decision taken by an officer.

<b>Decision type</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Key Decision	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Significant Operational Decision
<b>Contact person:</b>	Andrew White Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Manager	Telephone number: 0113 3781562
<b>Subject<sup>1</sup>:</b>	Renewing existing taxi and private hire licences	
<b>Decision details:</b>	<p>What decision has been taken?<sup>2</sup></p> <p>To address the 2,100 licences temporarily extended by up to three months to 30 June (for licences expiring between 23 March and 12 June which had not already been renewed by 24 March) by offering licence holders the chance to apply for a licence for the remaining period of their licence, with the anniversary falling on the usual date of the year:</p> <p>3 years or 1 year (drivers) 5 years or 1 year (operators) 1 year (vehicles)</p> <p>And to charge a licence fee for the remaining licensed period (part of 1 year, 3 years or 5 years), not for the full period.</p>	
	<p>A brief statement of the reasons for the decision<sup>3</sup></p> <p>On 24 March, aware of the council's decision to close all non-essential services, the council made a significant operational decision to renew existing taxi and private hire licences for drivers, vehicles and operators expiring during the period 23 March to 13 June) to 30 June 2020.</p> <p>Under this instruction, around 2,100 licences have been extended for a period of between 3 and 14 weeks, with no application form required, few checks made before the licence was issued, and no fees requested.</p>	

<sup>1</sup> If the decision is key and has appeared on the list of forthcoming key decisions, the title of the decision should be the same as that used in the list

<sup>2</sup> Set out all necessary decisions to be taken by the decision taker including decisions in relation to exempt information, exemption from call in etc.

<sup>3</sup> Include any significant financial, procurement or legal implications

The council needs to decide how to deal with those licences extended for a short period in March, April and May, as well as those expiring in June.

It is considered that giving licence holders an opportunity to apply to renew their licence but for the remainder of their licence period, would be the fairest way, e.g. a vehicle licence expiring in April 2020, was temporarily extended to June, and would be offered the chance to renew to April 2021, for 10/12 of the licence fee. This would also prevent an annual spike in licensing where potentially 2000 driver licences and 2000 vehicle licences would require renewal one month each year, when one takes into account the licences which are due to expire in the second half of June and first half of July.

At the time of advising licence holders of the decision taken by the council, it was communicated that 'no charge will be required'. The lost income to the council over this period amounts to around £51k. However, it would be difficult to retrospectively recover this amount, and it can be funded from the amount in the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing reserve, which is carried forward from one financial year to the next.

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>DRIVER LICENCES EXTENDED TO 30 JUNE</b>	<b>VEHICLE LICENCES EXTENDED TO 30 JUNE</b>	<b>OPERATOR LICENCES EXTENDED TO 30 JUNE</b>
MARCH	7	21	0
APRIL	314	311	6
MAY	498	413	5
UNTIL JUNE 12	216	162	2
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1036</b>	<b>907</b>	<b>13</b>

A separate Significant Operational Decision sets out the council's specific approach to licensing vehicles which it may not be possible to inspect before the expiry date of the licence, owing to lockdown/isolation/distancing requirements.

	<p>Brief details of any alternative options considered and rejected by the officer at the time of making the decision</p> <p>Two alternatives were considered.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Renew for a further 3 months without any further checks or application forms.</b> This option was viewed as simply delaying, rather than addressing the licensing need, ahead of phased removal of the lockdown. The taxi and private hire licensing team can now undertake the majority of driver checks (DBS, DVLA) working remotely. This option also did not return the council's licensing team to financial viability by seeking a licensing and compliance fee. Renewal fees compose around 75% of the service's income.</li> <li>2. <b>Renew licences for a full licence period, as stated in the council's licensing policies.</b> This option was viewed as possible, but had the drawback of creating a large spike in demand for licences, effectively by requiring all the temporary licences issued during lockdown to be issued as soon as lockdown ended, creating an unmanageable demand for licensing services (licensing, background checks, vehicle inspections) this year, and in future years.</li> </ol>
<b>Affected wards:</b>	
<b>Details of consultation undertaken<sup>4</sup>:</b>	<p>Executive Member Cllr Lewis on 18/19 May 2020</p> <p>Ward Councillors</p> <p>Others Legal services – 15 May 2020 Finance services – May 2020 Cllr Garner, Chair of Licensing Committee, 18/19 May 2020</p>
<b>Implementation</b>	<p>Officer accountable, and proposed timescales for implementation Andrew White</p> <p>All licence holders would be written to during May, and asked to apply to renew, but for the remainder of a normal licence period.</p> <p>The renewals could take place during May and June, and then the service</p>

<sup>4</sup> Include details of any interest disclosed by an elected Member on consultation and the date of any relevant dispensation given.

	could approach resumption of a more business-as-usual-approach for all future licensing, for licences expiring after 12 June.	
<b>List of Forthcoming Key Decisions<sup>5</sup></b>	Date Added to List:-	
	If <b>Special Urgency or General Exception</b> a brief statement of the reason why it is impracticable to delay the decision	
	If <b>Special Urgency</b> Relevant Scrutiny Chair(s)	
	Signature	Date
<b>Call In</b>	Is the decision available <sup>6</sup> for call-in?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
	If <b>exempt from call-in</b> , the reason why call-in would prejudice the interests of the council or the public:	
<b>Approval of Decision</b>	Authorised decision maker <sup>7</sup> John Mulcahy, Chief Officer Elections and Regulatory	
	Signature 	Date 19 May 2020

<sup>5</sup> Complete this section for key decisions only

<sup>6</sup> Significant operational decisions are never available for call in. Key decisions are always available for call in unless they have been exempted from call in.

<sup>7</sup> Give the post title and name of the officer with appropriate delegated authority to take the decision.