

Outcome of the Proposed amendment to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2030 with respect to protected plates and accessibility Consultation

Background

The [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2030](#) sets out the approach that will be taken by West Berkshire Council (WBC) when determining if a private hire, hackney carriage or operator licence will be granted and provides information for applicants, licence holders, the business sector and the citizens of and visitors to the district in respect of taxi licensing. The policy also explains the principles that guide decision-making, the standards expected of license holders, and the processes for compliance and enforcement. It recognises that Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade is an essential part of the local transport network, providing safe, reliable, and accessible services to residents, businesses, and visitors and seeks to strike a careful balance between safeguarding passengers while supporting a competitive and thriving industry.

Following a public consultation in May 2025, the policy was approved by the [Licensing Committee on 15 December 2025](#) subject to some minor amendments being delegated to Officers in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman. The decision was also subject to an agreement to undertake a review of the application of the policy with respect to 'protected plates' within the next six months with a view to implementing any changes proposed at the time of the first annual review.

Prior to the adoption of the policy, the trade was licensed subject to a set of terms and conditions in relation to each licence type as well as a convictions policy. The Department for Transport (DfT) issued a set of [Statutory Standards](#) which stated that local authorities should produce a 'cohesive policy document' that brings all procedures together.

The council licenses five different types of vehicles:

- Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV)
- Non-Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (NWAV)
- swivel-seated vehicles

- stretched limousines
- novelty vehicles

The Council has two Hackney Carriage Licensing Zones.

Prior to 2002 the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licenses that were issued in the zone that covered the former Borough of Newbury (the 'Town Zone') were capped in number. The 'District Zone' which covered the remainder of the West Berkshire Council administrative area had no limit applied.

In 2002, the Council made the decision to remove the limit on the number of licences that could be issued in the 'Town Zone', and in doing so implemented a condition that all new licences granted for this zone would require the vehicle to be wheelchair accessible. All those that had been issued with a licence prior to 1 April 2001 were allowed to continue to operate saloon vehicles whilst they remained the licence holder. These became referred to as 'protected plates'.

In April 2005 the Licensing Committee considered a proposal to allow the 'protected plates' to be transferred to immediate family thus creating the so called 'family exemption' along with other proposals. The proposals were adopted at the [Licensing Committee meeting on Tuesday, 26 April 2025](#).

The effect of this was to update the council's Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions as follows:

1. If a taxi proprietor transfers in whole or in part his interest in a hackney carriage proprietor's licence, that transfer shall, subject to the family exemption, be treated as a grant of a new licence for the purpose of the applicability of the disabled access condition. Therefore, the disabled access condition requiring the provision of a fully wheelchair accessible vehicle will be applied to that licence with immediate effect from the date that the licence is transferred.

The Family Exemption

2. Any transfer by a hackney carriage proprietor of an interest in his licence, in whole or part, which is limited to a transfer of such interest to a member of the proprietor's immediate family as defined below, shall not be affected by the disabled access condition to any greater extent than the licence would have been affected had the transfer not occurred. Therefore, upon a transfer to a family member of an interest in a hackney carriage proprietor's licence, the relevant disabled access condition applicable to that licence immediately before the transfer was affected will remain in force.

3. For these purposes, 'immediate family' shall mean the:

- mother or father
- spouse or partner
- children
- brothers or sisters
- step-mother or step-father
- step-children
- step-brothers or step-sisters of the hackney carriage proprietor but shall not extend to any additional family member

4. Where it is claimed upon the transfer of an interest in a hackney carriage proprietors' licence that the family exemption applies, it shall in every case be for the proprietor of the licence to prove that a family relationship exists within the above definitions.

At the time of this consultation there are still 35 number Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences that the saloon car protection and 'family exemption applies'.

What we proposed

We consulted on proposed changes to the "protected plate" arrangements for pre-2001 hackney carriages to ensure our taxi licensing policy remains lawful, fair and accessible. Maintaining long-standing exemptions from wheelchair-access requirements may create inconsistency and competitive advantage within the trade. As a licensing authority we must have due regard to our Public Sector Equality Duty under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, including the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and improve access for disabled people. We are therefore seeking views on options (including a time-limited phase-out of the current exemption) that would promote a consistently accessible fleet while mitigating undue hardship for existing proprietors. This engagement will enable licence holders, user groups and local disability and accessibility organisations to inform the final approach before any decision is taken.

The options were:

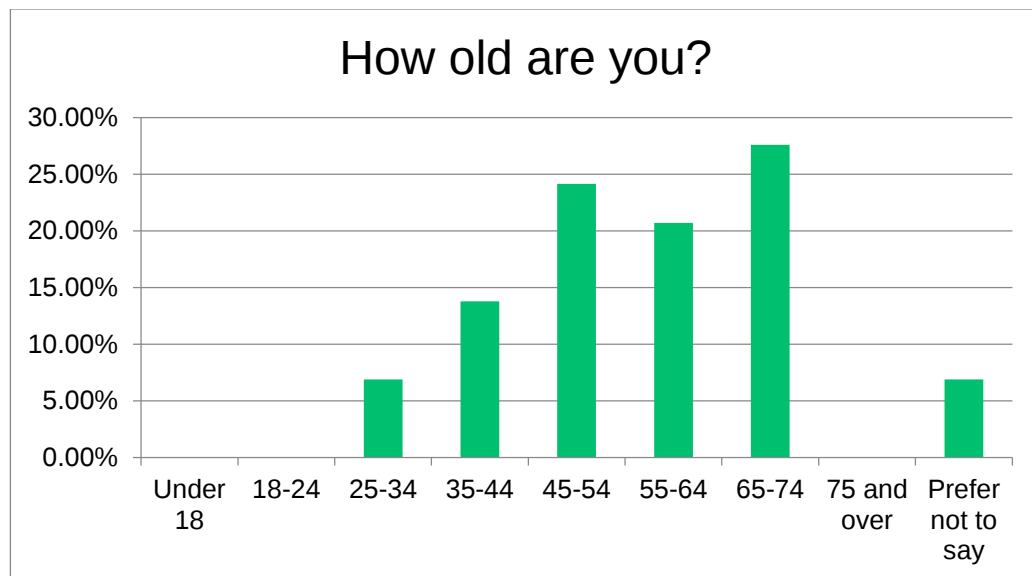
- Phasing out the 2001 exemption for all licences renewed after **1st January 2029**.
- Phasing out the 2001 exemption for all licences transferred to any party from **1st January 2027**.
- Retain the current 2001 exemption but remove the ability to transfer to a family member.
- Retain the current 2001 exemption and continue to allow the plates to be transferred to an immediate family member.

Who and How we Consulted

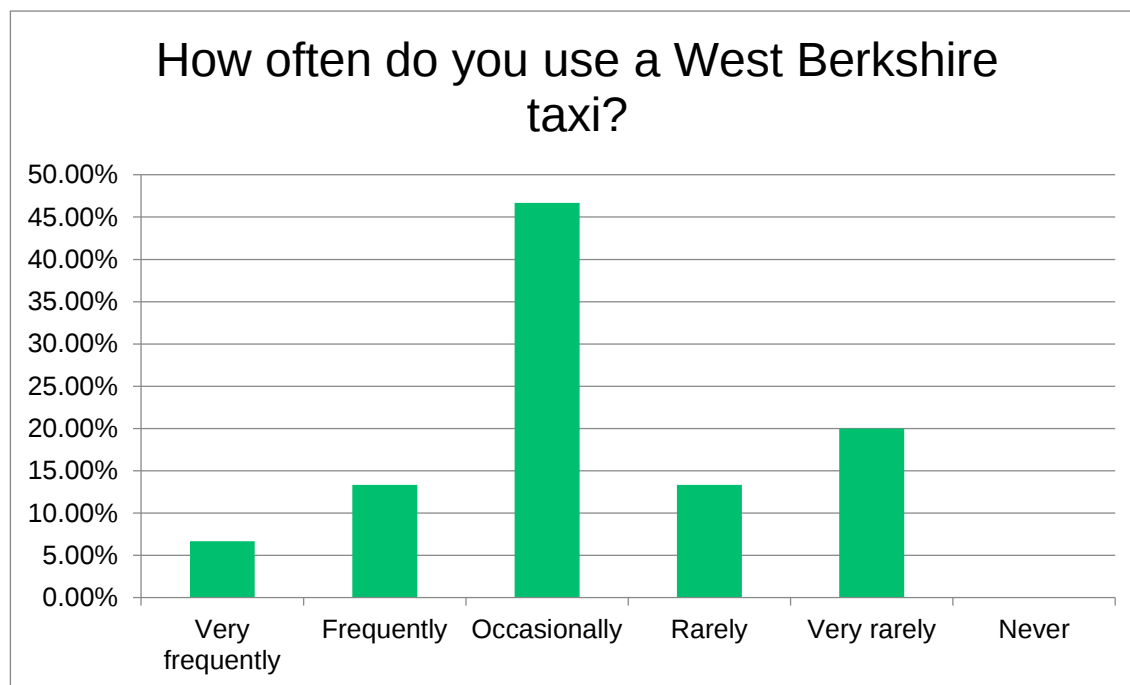
- The consultation ran from 27 March 2026 to 15 May 2026.
- The consultation was posted on the West Berkshire Council website on the 27 March 2026.
- A link to the consultation was emailed individually to the trade for their comments on the 30 March 2026.
- A link to the consultation was emailed to all parish Councils on the 01 April 2026.
- The consultation was promoted via a press release on the 02 April 2026 and Social Media posts on 30 March 2026.

What you Told Us

We received 37 online responses, and one comment was emailed directly to the Service during the consultation period. Of the 38 respondents 12 described themselves as taxi proprietors, one as both a proprietor and a driver, 8 as taxi drivers, 16 as members of the public and one as a taxi user. Two thirds of the respondents identified as male and 96% of the respondents that answered the question said they lived in West Berkshire. One of the respondents stated that they were holder of a Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Plate which is not subject to a condition relating to disabled access. The age range of the respondents is set out in the table below.



The response to the question 'How often do you use a West Berkshire taxi?' was answered by 15 people and their responses are set out below.



The 37 responses to the questions asked in the online consultation are set out below.

Question 4 - Were you aware of the current exemption for pre-2001 licensed taxis regarding wheelchair accessibility?

Options	Responses
Yes	25
No	11
Skipped	1

Question 5 - To what extent do you support or oppose the following proposed changes to our Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2025-2030, specifically regarding exemptions for pre-2001 licensed taxis and wheelchair accessibility requirements?

Option 1 - Phase out the pre-2001 exemption for all licences transferred to any party from 1 January 2027.

Options	Responses
Strongly Oppose	10
Oppose	2
Neutral	1
Support	1
Strongly Support	16
Not Sure	0
Skipped	7

View on this option

Options	Responses
Oppose	12 (40%)
Support	17 (56.7%)
Neutral/ Not sure	1 (3.3%)

Ref No	Option	Comments Received
1.1	Strongly Oppose	Saloon vehicles must be maintained to maintain a mixed fleet of accessibly vehicles for all disabilities. The words within the question " transferred to any party " are incorrect as any licences are restricted to Family only, this council has failed, allowing licences to be abused.
1.2	Strongly Oppose	For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone. There are different needs.
1.3	Strongly Oppose	After working in this trade it felt like a kick in the teeth that when you build a business or invest in one the council decide to take our businesses and throw them away taking what we have worked for and looking forward to be able to have a retirement income that we have put many things on hold until we retire now gone out the window. I cannot see why when you have a business that you have the right to say it is worthless (which is basically you are saying) .

1.4	Strongly Oppose	I paid a lot of money for my plate. If I was to loose my plate I would have to buy a new plate & vehicle. There is more than enough wheelchair taxis out there. Unfortunately a lot of drivers would not pull on rank if there is a person in a wheelchair. I have on occasions a person in a wheelchair where the wheels come off. Would rather get in a normal car as it makes them feel normal. Also some taxi companies will not take pre bookings for wheelchair taxis. This is the reason I chose option 4. I would also like to mention that elderly people also like to get in a normal car as wheelchair vehicles they have difficulty getting into them
1.5	Strongly Oppose	These plate have cost the propriators thousands of pounds, this should not even be a discussion as it says in your letter that there are only 35 grandad plates left. Compared to many more wheelcair access vehicles. Maybe you should be consentrating on the drivers in wheelchair vehicles that refuse to carry a wheelchair. And will drive past the ranks to avoid picking them up. If this continues i can see the council have a few court cases on there hands. You cant punish the propriators that have paid thousands of pounds for there plates when you can buy a wheelchair plate for £333.00. Then you are exspecting them propriators to spend thousands more on a wheelchair vehicle. You will be putting people out of work for no reason what so ever. For these reasons i am against your proposal and choose option 4. Many thanks for your time.
1.6	Strongly Oppose	The Hackney Carriage Ranks needs a fixed fleet, this is the only way to achieve this.
1.7	Strongly Oppose	As a driver of 42 years, I have seen in 3 taxi areas the rush to wav only vehicles. This being done so that was vehicles will be available for wheelchair users. It doesn't work. Drivers will leave ranks to avoid doing the wheelchair job, or make up some excuse. This area and the other2 areas that I have worked have an abundance of wav taxis. But cannot find one when they need one. Several reasons for this, but unless you consult properly, you will never know all the reasons.
1.8	Strongly Oppose	Saloon vehicles must be maintained to maintain a mixed fleet of accessibly vehicles for all disabilities. The words within the question " transferred to any party " are incorrect as any licences are restricted to Family only, this council has failed, allowing licences to be abused.
1.9	Strongly Oppose	For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone. There are different needs.
1.10	Oppose	It is already difficult for licensed taxis to adhere with the legistation and compete with unlicensed operators such as Uber. Taxi firms should be allowed to offer two levels of service - one that includes wheelchair users and another that does not. In my opinion this would result in a much fairer system.

1.11	Oppose	Tha cabs are expensive to run therefore expensive to use
1.12	Support	I would agree with phasing it out, but would be concerned of the cost implication to make the required changes by Jan 2027. It may disadvantage some lower-income taxi operators who would need to save and /or make changes to the way they operate their business.
1.13	Strongly Support	"I strongly support this proposal. Existing protected plate holders who are actively working within the trade should be allowed to retain their exemption while they continue operating. However, the exemption should not transfer to family members, third parties, or new owners after transfer. The current system is unfair as some protected plates are effectively rented out for financial gain rather than being used by the original working driver. This creates an uneven playing field and restricts fair competition within the trade. Licensing policy should focus on active service provision, accessibility, and fairness rather than allowing protected plates to become inheritable or tradable assets."
1.14	Strongly Support	i can never get a wheelchair taxi when trying to transport my elderly father.
1.15	Strongly Support	The current Policy is discriminating disabled access requirements under the Equality Act 2010. Why is West Berkshire Council honouring the protected plates policy, who is this benefiting? If you are disabled you should be able to call a taxi and expect the same access requirements over the fleet. This exemption is a nonsense, policy should be equal to all operators not just for a few. Surely this exemption creates extra work for a cash strapped Council.
1.16	Strongly Support	we need to have a level playing field with no commercial advantage for some.
1.17	Strongly Support	The protected plates are enabling discrimination against the disabled. If I have a need for accessible taxis I want all of them to be accessible.
1.18	Strongly Support	Simplify & update legacy rules
1.19	Strongly Support	The introduction of the exemption policy has been in place for sufficient decades that proprietors have had time to prepare their individual business policy to support all users by moving to operating disability-friendly vehicle(s).
1.20	Strongly Support	To try to make cars more easily accessible for all irrespective of access requirements
1.21	Strongly Support	This proposal combined the second option. No family transfer from January 2027 with a view for all licences renewed after 2029 to not have the exemption. This then stops the family transfer earlier but also gives existing protected plate drivers time to to plan ahead.
1.22	Strongly Support	It's deeply unfair to the wider taxi community. Not only are ordinary drivers being discriminated against, but the protected plates system is being exploited in ways that

		completely undermine its original purpose. These plates—intended to support genuine family needs—are now being sold on for profit, rented out, or used by people with no family connection whatsoever. Meanwhile, drivers with smaller cars are benefiting from privileges that those operating WAVs simply don't get, despite WAV drivers carrying the heavier financial and operational burden. The imbalance is stark. What was meant to be a safeguard has turned into a loophole. The “full protection” status is being abused, monetised, and manipulated. Owners are charging fees, transferring plates informally, and allowing unrelated individuals to operate under protections they were never entitled to. This isn't just unfair—it's a systemic failure that harms compliant drivers, distorts the market, and rewards those who misuse the system. It needs urgent scrutiny and reform.
1.23	Strongly Support	I have always argued that ALL Hackney in west Berkshire should be on an equal playing field I.e. wheelchair accessible!!!
1.24	Strongly Support	“I strongly support this proposal. Existing protected plate holders who are actively working within the trade should be allowed to retain their exemption while they continue operating. However, the exemption should not transfer to family members, third parties, or new owners after transfer. The current system is unfair as some protected plates are effectively rented out for financial gain rather than being used by the original working driver. This creates an uneven playing field and restricts fair competition within the trade. Licensing policy should focus on active service provision, accessibility, and fairness rather than allowing protected plates to become inheritable or tradable assets.”

Option 2 - Phase out the pre-2001 exemption for all licences renewed after 1 January 2029.

Options	Responses
Strongly Oppose	12
Oppose	3
Neutral	1
Support	2
Strongly Support	12
Not Sure	0
Skipped	7

View on this option

Options	Responses
Oppose	15 (50%)
Support	14 (46.7%)
Neutral/ Not sure	1 (3.3%)

Ref No	Option	Comments Received
2.1	Strongly Oppose	Saloon vehicles must be maintained to maintain a mixed fleet of accessibly vehicles for all disabilities. Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles are not the same, Officers are incorrect saying Private Hire Saloon vehicles represents a mixed fleet
2.2	Strongly Oppose	The protected plates are enabling discrimination against the disabled. If I have a need for accessible taxis I want all of them to be accessible.
2.3	Strongly Oppose	This exemption should be retained so that licensed taxi firms can compete with unlicensed firms.
2.4	Strongly Oppose	This will enable proprietors that have recently entered into new vehicle lease contracts to gain the benefit of the agreement and not be too adversely financially impacted, however, I don't recall being in a new vehicle operated as a taxi, so I doubt there is little need for extending the policy by 2.5 years
2.5	Strongly Oppose	For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone. There are different needs.
2.6	Strongly Oppose	Customers do not want to sit in Wheelchair Vehicles.
2.7	Strongly Oppose	You need the protected plated saloons, elderly customers struggle with the Wav vehicles. Again consult properly.
2.8	Oppose	I oppose this proposal because existing active protected plate holders who continue working within the trade should be permitted to retain and renew their licences. Many long-serving drivers have operated under the current system for many years and should not suddenly lose their exemption while still actively providing a service. However, I support ending the transfer of protected plates to third parties or family members, as the exemption should remain linked to the original working driver only. This would provide a fair balance between protecting existing livelihoods and preventing protected plates from becoming permanent transferable assets.
2.9	Oppose	in the last 20 years i believe the Council has had no interest in the trade.
2.10	Support	Delay in implementation of phasing out not ideal

2.11	Strongly Support	i can never get a wheelchair taxi when trying to transport my elderly father.
2.12	Strongly Support	we need to have a level playing field with no commercial advantage for some.

Option 3 - Retain the current pre-2001 exemption but remove the ability to transfer to a family member.

Options	Responses
Strongly Oppose	21
Oppose	2
Neutral	2
Support	2
Strongly Support	3
Not Sure	0
Skipped	7

View on this option

Options	Responses
Oppose	23 (76.7%)
Support	5 (16.7%)
Neutral/ Not sure	2 (6.6%)

Ref No	Option	Comments Received
3.1	Strongly Oppose	all plates should be phased out to improve the overall standard of vehicles permitted to transport the west berks public. This should also allow more space on ranks for fully accessible wheel chair vehicles.
3.2	Strongly Oppose	i can never get a wheelchair taxi when trying to transport my elderly father.
3.3	Strongly Oppose	Nothing wrong with this to allow transfer to a family member the criteria is already in place
3.4	Strongly Oppose	the whole fleet should be disability friendly in this day and age to eliminate discrimination.
3.5	Strongly Oppose	The protected plates are enabling discrimination against the disabled. If I have a need for accessible taxis I want all of them to be accessible.
3.6	Strongly Oppose	This exemption should be retained so that licensed taxi firms can compete with unlicensed firms.
3.7	Strongly Oppose	Full compliance with providing non-discriminatory transport is overdue

3.8	Strongly Oppose	For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone. There are different needs.
3.9	Strongly Oppose	I say please leave the protected plates as they are and allow owners the right to be able to transfer thier business to another interested party Knowing that the company can keep the saloon status but if they resale then there would not be any Grandfather rights to them and the new owner/company would have to go WAVs therefore trying to keep saloon taxis available for the public. where they find it difficult to climb into a restricted entrance on some cars or climb into a MPV after being in this trade since the early 1980sthere has not been enough thought to the taxi trade and its customer usage
3.10	Strongly Oppose	Have had too many experiences of not being able to source suitable vehicle
3.11	Strongly Oppose	I think it is a good idea being able to leave my plate to family members not only that point but I think we should be able to sell them to other taxi drivers as it would help with drivers retirement
3.12	Strongly Oppose	All Hackney should be wheelchair accessible so there is no unfairness!!!
3.13	Oppose	Would need more assurance the service would be maintained to standard
3.14	Neutral	Doing this would mean that the pre 2001 exemption would run out eventually anyway when the current licence holder passes away and so in some cases this could work, but it does kick the can down the road still somewhat.
3.15	Strongly Support	"I strongly oppose continuing family transfer rights for protected plates. Allowing plates to pass to family members would continue the unfairness within the trade and effectively create permanent inherited privileges unavailable to other drivers. Licensing policy should prioritise fairness, accessibility, and active participation in the trade rather than allowing protected plates to operate as transferable family assets."
3.16	Strongly Support	I believe this is fair. The Protected Plates currently could finish, when the Plate is no longer required. Plate should not be allowed to move to other members of blended/extended family, especially if these people are not in the trade. Currently PPP/Licensing are allowing these plates to be rented out within the Trade, which is not right.

Option 4 - Retain the current pre-2001 exemption and continue to allow the plates to be transferred to an immediate family member.

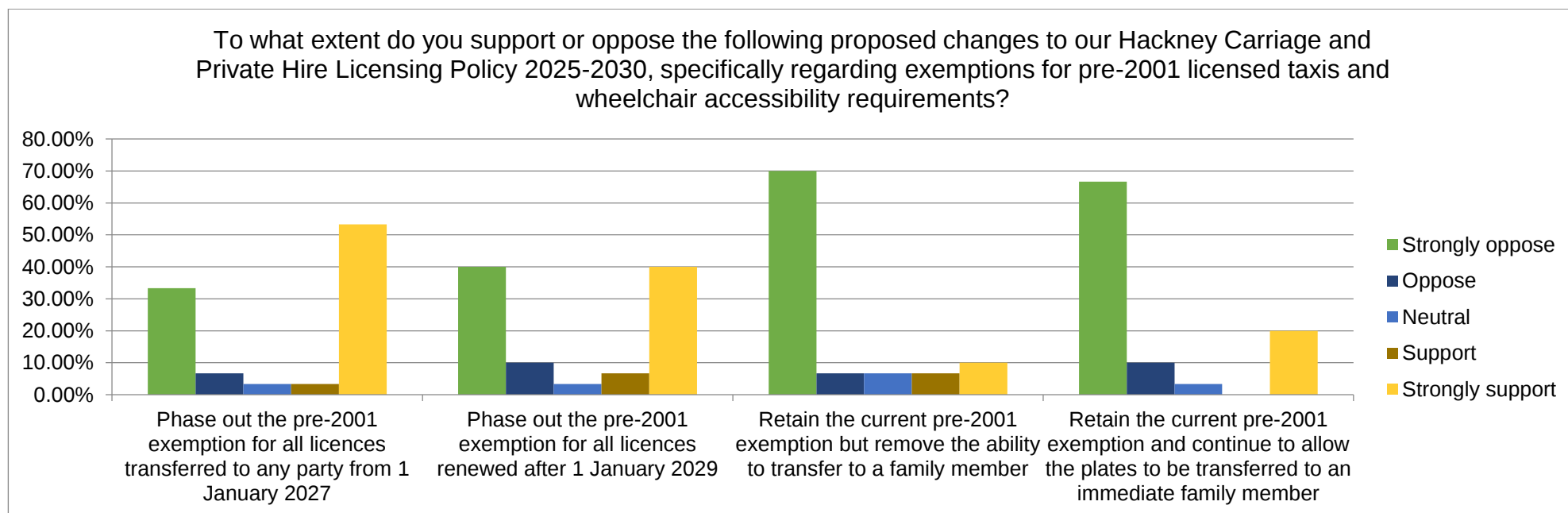
Options	Responses
Strongly Oppose	20
Oppose	3
Neutral	1
Support	0
Strongly Support	6
Not Sure	0
Skipped	7

[View on this option](#)

Options	Responses
Oppose	23 (76.7%)
Support	6 (20%)
Neutral/not sure	1 (3.3%)

Ref No	Option	Comments Received
4.1	Strongly Oppose	"I strongly oppose continuing family transfer rights for protected plates. Allowing plates to pass to family members would continue the unfairness within the trade and effectively create permanent inherited privileges unavailable to other drivers. Licensing policy should prioritise fairness, accessibility, and active participation in the trade rather than allowing protected plates to operate as transferable family assets."
4.2	Strongly Oppose	The main thing you need to stop are these plates being rented out by holders to any random driver.
4.3	Strongly Oppose	i can never get a wheelchair taxi when trying to transport my elderly father.
4.4	Strongly Oppose	the whole fleet should be disability friendly in this day and age to eliminate discrimination.
4.5	Strongly Oppose	The protected plates are enabling discrimination against the disabled. If I have a need for accessible taxis I want all of them to be accessible.
4.6	Strongly Oppose	Full compliance with providing non-discriminatory transport is overdue
4.7	Strongly Oppose	For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone. There are different needs.
4.8	Strongly Oppose	Not sure this clause has been correctly applied
4.9	Strongly Oppose	Remaining as current keeps a level of uncertainty for less able people.

4.10	Strongly Oppose	Members should be more involved and understand their decisions. Members should find a way of getting a fixed fleet on Hackney Carriage Ranks. Hackney Carriage are losing work to the Private Hire Fleet, which is how passengers can sit in a vehicle which is a saloon vehicle.
4.11	Strongly Oppose	As commented above, because the fraud and discrimination will continue
4.12	Strongly Oppose	Time to stop this and make all things equal!! It's not fair for new drivers to purchase wheelchair vehicles when these past rules apply to exemption plates- How can this be Equal for drivers and customers who need access to Taxis that provide wheel chair access !!! It's about time this changed and a stop is put this!!
4.13	Oppose	I wanted to think that after all these years of being serving the people of west berkshire it could have done more for the taxi trade
4.14	Strongly Support	As above, also maybe lift the family exemption and let the propriators have a right to sell on there plates to whoever. Many councils allow this, i find this will allow the older drivers to retire and have a nice life and cash in on there investment.



Question 6 - What do you think the impact of the proposed changes would be on, for example, you, your business, accessibility for disabled passengers and/or competition within the trade?

The responses suggested general support for reforms that increase fairness and accessibility, particularly through reducing reliance on protected plates and encouraging WAV provision. However, there are notable concerns about the impact on certain drivers, business models, and costs, highlighting the need to balance equity with practical implementation.

[View on this question](#)

Options	Responses
Negative Impact	19%
Positive Impact	42%
Neutral / Unknown	19%

The comments are set out in the table below.

Response 6.1 - The proposed changes would create a fairer and more balanced licensing system within the trade. Existing active protected plate holders should be allowed to continue working and retain their exemption while they remain active in the industry. However, protected plates should not continue to be transferred to family members, third parties, or rented out for financial gain.

The current system is unfair because some protected plates are effectively treated as assets that can be leased or passed on indefinitely, giving certain individuals long-term advantages over other working drivers and operators. This restricts fair competition and creates an uneven playing field within the trade.

Removing transfer rights while protecting existing active drivers would improve fairness without unfairly impacting those who have worked in the industry for many years. It would also encourage greater investment in accessible and compliant vehicles by ensuring that all future licence holders operate under the same standards.

Overall, I believe the proposed changes would support a more transparent, sustainable, and fair licensing system while still respecting existing active drivers who currently hold

Response 6.2 - The removal of the plates will improve the overall standard of vehicles on the rank & create a level playing field among drivers in regards to value of the vehicles they can purchase. This will also allow for a greater selection of Wheel chair vehicles access to the rank in town where they are most required.

Response 6.3 - This would allow a fairer trade for all taxis operators but also benefit the customers and especially disabled people

Response 6.4 - Fairer playing field for businesses and better wav provision for disabled passengers
Response 6.5 - There is no need to make any changes, There are enough WAV to serve the district a mixed fleet is WAV and Saloon / Estate vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Trade. All my regular customers request saloon / estate type vehicle my business is a mix of the OAP with and with out disability's and corporate clients No taxi rank work and never flagged So if you make changes, that take away the ability to work within the Hackney Carriage trade, using a saloon / estate vehicles, What happens to the drivers!
Response 6.6 - In in this day and age it is unbelievable that all taxis are not wheelchair and disability enabled.
Response 6.7 - I believe protected plates should be phased out. From my perspective, the current system already places post-2001 licence holders at a disadvantage compared to drivers and families who hold protected plates purely because they entered the trade before 2001. Protected plates come with a racial inequality which has existed within the licensing system for many year. Instead, I believe consideration should be given to creating a pathway for drivers to acquire wheelchair exempt plates.
Response 6.8 - it should create a level playing field and improve availability of cars with wheelchair access.no longer would when you entered the trade or your age provide an advantage or disadvantage to making a success of your business.
Response 9.9 - It would make it more difficult for reliable taxi firms to compete with Uber and other, similar services.
Response 6.10 - I think there are enough accessible cabs available
Response 6.11 - I'm unclear on the benefits of the proposed changes
Response 6.12 - Better competition and a more even playing field
Response 6.13 - Moving to fully compliant, non-discriminatory transport options for all users is long overdue. A single, standard model and policy will simplify council processes and should improve speed of licence approvals/renewals
Response 6.13 - Negative on all but the disabled- who are relatively few in terms of wheelchairs.
Response 6.14 - the loss of saloon cars will be inevitable i believe that more and more people will not go out and get into a taxi on a rank because the would struggle to get into a multi MPV or a WAV I believe all taxis should carry a swivel seat base instead of a fire extinguisher or a first aid kit
Response 6.15 - Make more vehicles available for elderly with mobility issues
Response 6.16 - The changes would be positive as it improves accessibility.
Response 6.17 - Protected Plates should not be completely removed.

If Hackney Carriage Stands are only Wheelchair Accessible vehicles, then Council should advertise this, so visitors know to get a Private Hire Number as they do not want to not be able to sit in Wheelchair Vehicles. Wheelchair Vehicles are expensive.

Response 6.18 - There would be no impacts as they will be in lines with the rest of the taxi drives after being given notices to implement changes

Response 6.19 - Not going to effect me as I am retiring.

Response 6.20 - It will be fair and disabled passengers will have more access to wheelchair vehicles

Response 6.21 - It would be Great for the disabled passengers as more Taxis will be suitable for them to access and as for my business I will accept equal opportunity for ALL Taxi drivers who will all need to supply wheelchair accessible cars for the trade!!!

Question 7 - Do you have any further comments?

The comments are set out in the table below.

Response 7.1 - I believe the Council should aim to create a fair and balanced licensing system that protects accessibility while also ensuring equal treatment for all drivers and operators within the trade. Existing active protected plate holders who have served the community for many years should be respected and allowed to continue operating while they remain active in the industry. However, protected plates should not continue indefinitely through transfers to family members or third parties.

The current system can create unfair advantages where protected plates are treated as financial assets and, in some cases, rented out for profit rather than being operated by the original licence holder. This restricts fair competition and creates barriers for newer drivers entering the trade under modern accessibility requirements.

I support a balanced approach that protects current active drivers but gradually phases out transferable exemptions over time. This would improve fairness, encourage investment in accessible vehicles, and ensure that future licensing standards are applied consistently across the trade.

Response 7.2 - Allow uber and other ride sharing apps

Response 7.3 - Information from institute of licensing

House of Lords reject mandatory taxi accessibility proposals

The House of Lords has voted down a proposed amendment that would have required all taxis in England to meet minimum accessibility standards within three years, dealing a setback to campaigners seeking stronger protections for disabled passengers.

Amendment 268 to the English Devolution and Community Empowerment Bill aimed to compel the government to implement long-standing but unused provisions of the Equality Act 2010. These provisions would allow ministers to introduce national minimum accessibility requirements for taxis, an area where standards currently vary significantly between local authorities.

Supporters of the amendment argued that the measure was necessary to address persistent inequalities in transport access. They highlighted that, despite existing legal powers, successive governments have failed to fully enact nationwide accessibility standards, leaving many disabled passengers unable to rely on taxis for safe and dignified travel.

The amendment would have required any national taxi standards introduced under the Bill to include these accessibility requirements and set a three-year deadline for compliance.

However, peers rejected the proposal by 117 votes to 46.

Opponents did not dispute the importance of accessibility but were understood to favour a more flexible approach, allowing the government discretion over how and when to introduce such standards. Concerns were also raised about the potential financial burden on taxi operators and local licensing authorities.

The defeat means the Bill will proceed without a binding requirement to enforce nationwide accessibility standards, leaving the issue to future policy decisions rather than embedding it directly in legislation.

Response 7.4 - for far to long now these old plates have been abused as a way to use cheap cars with no disabled access to operate a Hackney carriage..a large amount of these plates are rented to drivers who use them to get around wheelchair accessible vesicle requirements .

WBC needs to make sure that everyone gets accessible transport. As soon as possible.

Printed plates are obviously a form of discrimination and should be illegal.

Response 7.5 - Let Uber loose.

Response 7.6 - For longer journeys disabled taxis are uncomfortable. Salon cars far far better. Not every vehicle has to be available to everyone.

There are different needs.

Response 7.7 - Yes I cannot understand why this is up for consultation as there is only 35 plates to be discussed

Response 7.8 - The Taxi Policy is full of errors. Adopted by Members who did not read/understand what they herd voted in.

Response 7.9 - Consult in person with the time served drivers

Response 7.10 - I have always argued for this and will continue to do so!!

Response 7.11 - It seems clear the focus is on phasing out the protected plates, rather than offering any route for post-2001 licence holders to gain similar protections. Given that, I'm concerned this leaves newer licence holders at a permanent disadvantage despite being the group expected to make the largest financial investment into the trade.

I also note that, historically, many of these protected plates are held by long-established white British proprietors. While I fully respect the contribution those drivers have made to the industry, fairness and equal opportunity should also be considered for newer entrants from all backgrounds. Could the Council consider an additional option that creates a pathway for newer proprietors to achieve similar long-term stability, so that accessibility goals are approached on a more level playing field for everyone?

Using my own situation as an example, I am currently looking at purchasing an 8-seater vehicle in order to continue operating and also help meet public demand for larger-capacity transport. However, the financial reality of the proposed requirements is becoming extremely difficult.

A decent Euro 6 compliant 8-seater that is under five years old can already cost in excess of £30,000. If a wheelchair-accessible conversion is then required on top of that, this can easily add another £5,000 or more before licensing, plating, insurance, and ongoing operating costs are even considered.

I believe there needs to be a more balanced and practical approach that allows both the Council and drivers to work together rather than pushing existing proprietors out of the trade. One possible solution could be to provide exemptions or alternative requirements for larger 8-seater vehicles, recognising the additional passenger capacity and the important role they already play in serving the public, airport transfers, families, and group transport.

At present, many drivers are being asked to make extremely large investments with little long-term security or protection in return. The concern is that drivers may simply leave the hackney carriage trade altogether and move into private hire instead, where vehicle entry costs can be significantly lower. For example, I could purchase a suitable private hire vehicle for considerably less than the combined cost of a compliant wheelchair-accessible 8-seater hackney carriage.

I fully support improving accessibility standards, but I believe there should also be realistic pathways that take into account affordability, sustainability for drivers, and the long-term viability of the trade itself.

What happens next

The feedback we have received is being reviewed and will inform an updated version of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy 2026, which will be considered by the Licensing Committee at their meeting on the 06 July 2026. If approved, the updated policy will be published on the PPP website and WBC [Strategies, Policies and Plans webpage](#).



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