

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO HEALTH & HOUSING COMMITTEE

Agenda Item No.

meeting date: THURSDAY, 1 SEPTEMBER 2016
title: ABANDONED VEHICLE POLICY
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1. PURPOSE

1.1 To outline the procedures to deal with abandoned vehicles.

1.2 Relevance to the Council’s ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives }
 • Corporate Priorities } The Council aims to be a well-managed authority
 and this procedure supports this objective
 • Other Considerations }

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Nationally, the problem of abandoned cars has increased dramatically in the last few years, due to the fall in used car prices and the collapse in the price of scrap metal, resulting in owners receiving nothing for unroadworthy vehicles, or having to pay for their removal and destruction. Abandoning vehicles is a criminal offence under the Refuse Disposal (Amenity) Act 1978, and local authorities have a duty to remove vehicles that have been genuinely abandoned.

2.2 The table below highlights the number of abandoned vehicles removed by the Council since 2011.

YEAR	2011/12	2012/13	2013/14	2014/15	2015/16
NO OF VEHICLES	16	17	11	8	16

2.3 Many vehicles that are reported to the Council are not actually abandoned.

2.4 All potential abandoned vehicles should be reported to the police. They can investigate whether the vehicle has been stolen and establish who the current keeper is.

2.5 If the vehicle is confirmed to be abandoned, the police will contact the Council requesting the issue of a 24 hour removal notice.

2.6 All abandoned vehicles are a nuisance but not all nuisance vehicles are abandoned. Abandoned vehicles may appear for a variety of reasons:

- Death of owner.
- Owner moved away.
- Long term residency outside UK.
- Detained at her Majesty's pleasure.
- Insurance fraud.
- Vehicle breakdown.

Notification of nuisance vehicles by the general public is rapidly increasing and there is little or nothing the local authority can do about nuisance vehicles such as:

- poorly parked vehicles;
- vehicles causing obstruction;
- neighbour disputes;
- residential parking disputes;
- vehicle breakdown.

The service operates in accordance with the prescribed procedures and was developed in partnership with the Police.

3. PRIVATE LAND

3.1 If a vehicle has been abandoned on private land, the local authority must give landowners or occupiers 15 days' notice and can only remove vehicles with their permission.

3.2 Authorities don't have to remove abandoned vehicles if the cost of moving them to the nearest highway is unreasonably high (for example, if special machinery is needed), unless the vehicle is on a carriageway.

4. REMOVAL

4.1 Vehicles are collected and dealt with by a registered recovery vehicle company. They recover and store the vehicle whilst undertaking an HPI check. This scrutinises the history of any motorised vehicle registered in the UK including cars, vans and motorbikes. Any information held against the vehicle by finance and insurance companies, the DVLA and/or the Police will then be followed up by the company.

4.2 Once all checks have been completed, if the vehicle has not been claimed, it will either go to auction or be destroyed.

5. ISSUES

5.1 Many authorities have concluded that affixing a notice to a car which is then left for any period is effectively an invitation to vandalise.

6. RISK ASSESSMENT

6.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:

- Resources – None.
- Technical, Environmental and Legal – None.
- Political - The recommendations in this report are an extension of principles already agreed by this committee.
- Reputation – None.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 This report is intended to provide Committee with an overview of this Council's procedure for dealing with abandoned vehicles.

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BACKGROUND PAPERS – None

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