

LICENSING COMMITTEE

30 September 2019

10.30 am - 1.05 pm

Present: Councillors Bird (Chair), Gehring, Massey, Moore, Pippas, Porrer, Sargeant, Summerbell and Johnson

Officers

Environmental Health Manager: Yvonne O'Donnell

Legal Adviser: Shirley Tracey

Scientific Officer (Air Quality) Annie Hindley

Committee Manager: Sarah Steed

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**19/14/Lic Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors McPherson, Summerbell, McQueen and Thittala. Councillor Johnson attended as Councillor Thittala's alternate.

19/15/Lic Declarations of Interest

Councillor	Item	Interest
Massey	19/19/Lic	Results referred to by public speaker were undertaken by Cllr Massey with residents of South Petersfield. She lived in area that the public speakers had spoken about.

19/16/Lic Minutes

Following the meeting held on the 18 July 2019, it was drawn to the Committee's attention that the reference to card payments should in resolution 19/13/Lic – Review and update of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Licensing Policy refer to cashless payment and not card payments (deleted text ~~struck through~~ and revised text underlined).

i. The mandatory requirement of ~~cash~~ cashless payment methods to be applicable for both Hackney and Private hire vehicles.

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2019 were approved as a correct record subject to the correction above and signed by the Chair.

19/17/Lic Petition

A petition has been received containing over 100 valid signatures stating the following:

We the undersigned (residents of the South Petersfield) petition the council and Cambridge City Council Licensing Committee to point out that our neighbourhood suffers some of the worst air pollution in Cambridge. We strongly support the policy that all new taxis and private hire vehicles should be electric or plug in Hybrid from April 2020 and object to any change or delay to this policy.

A representative presented and spoke in support of the petition.

The following points were made:

- i. 125 people had signed the petition, there were 90 letters from residents in the area supporting the petition including from the Head Teacher at St Matthews School.
- ii. Expressed concerns regarding air quality and stated that residents had been concerned for a long time.
- iii. There were 11.5 million passenger journeys at Cambridge Train station.
- iv. Based on information collected in 2017, between 8am-6.30pm there were 3700 taxi movements.
- v. He lived on a residential street, which had high levels of pollution as a result of taxi movements.
- vi. Referred to the Ricardo report (an air quality report) which had been presented to the Greater Cambridge Partnership recently.
- vii. Air quality results were sent away once a month for analysis.
- viii. There was no safe limit on air pollution; there was a statutory limit which was an annual average.
- ix. The Brookgate development had equipment which measured air quality every 15 minutes.
- x. 60 was not the limit for air quality it was 40.
- xi. If the Committee did not go ahead with the policy commented that taxi drivers would move to South Cambridgeshire.

- xii. Referred to the City of Wolverhampton Council and their Licensing practices.
- xiii. Commented that the taxi trade had taken 18 months to raise issues with the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy.
- xiv. A Nissan leaf vehicle could be ordered within 4 months.

In response to members questions the Scientific Officer (Air Quality) said the following:

- i. 200µg of nitrogen dioxide is the hourly mean not to be exceeded on more than 18 occasions during a calendar year. This is an Air Quality Limit Value from the Air Quality Standards Regulations 2010 which local authorities are obliged to meet as part of their Local Air Quality Management Duties under the Local Air Quality Management Regulations. However there was not a lot of data to clarify at what point people were affected by air pollution.

19/18/Lic Public Questions

Members of the public raised a number of issues, as set out below.

1. Councillor Green raised the following points:

- i. Hoped the Petitioner's presentation had been taken on board by the committee.
- ii. The crucial issue was Great Northern Road (GNR) and Tenison Road. A lot of vehicles would circulate this route and would leave their engines idling. This was an issue which was regularly raised by residents.
- iii. Residents were buying their own air quality monitoring equipment.
- iv. 200 deaths in Cambridge were attributed to air pollution.
- v. Commented that new vehicle licences should not avoid meeting standard licensing requirements.
- vi. Queried whether taxis could display a badge or a banner to indicate if they met the air quality requirements contained in the taxi conditions.

2. A member of the public raised the following points:

- i. Was a resident of Petersfield.
- ii. Referred to the Clean Air Zone Feasibility Survey, which referred to deaths and respiratory diseases resulting from poor air quality.
- iii. Based on a residents' survey believed that taxis contributed between 70-80% of air pollution.
- iv. Had purchased an air purification device, which monitored micropollutants. Had placed the device in their home with their windows

shut and noted that the levels detected were not that different to those outside.

- v. Had seen an increase in pollutant levels.
- vi. Peaks in measurements were the same as those measured by Brookgate's air quality monitoring devices.
- vii. Asked the committee to stick to the original timetable and encouraged rapid spending on electric vehicle charging points.

3. A member of the public spoke on behalf of Great Northern Road Resident's Association and raised the following points:

- i. An air pollution survey had been undertaken during August and September which covered the whole of the CB1 area.
- ii. 90% of residents were concerned about pollution and particulates and felt the situation would only get worse.
- iii. 27% of residents lived in a house where someone suffered from breathing related problems.
- iv. Quite a few children and elderly residents lived in flats in the area.
- v. A medical professional had said 200 deaths in Cambridge were attributable to pollution levels but thought the number of deaths attributable to pollution levels was likely to be higher.
- vi. Wanted members to bear in mind that human health was being traded in relation to air pollution.

4. A taxi trade representative raised the following points:

- i. Was Chair of Cambridge City Licensed Taxis (CCLT).
- ii. Reference had been made to the Nissan Leaf vehicle, being available for taxi drivers however Nissan did not have good diagnostic technology. A new battery was on a 3-4 week turnaround.
- iii. It was claimed that the Nissan Leaf could drive 168 miles, however drivers were finding that they could only get 100 miles out of the vehicle and it was therefore proving to be impractical.
- iv. The cost to charge an electric vehicle at a public charging point was £6 whereas at home it would only cost £3.
- v. Insurance companies did not always have the infrastructure to offer like for like replacements.
- vi. Noted that multi-sector vehicles were not affected by the policy.
- vii. Asked that the timetable for implementation of the electric taxi vehicle policy was kept to that in the officer's report.

In response to Member's questions the taxi trade representative said the following:

- i. Agreed that the trade needed to move forward but that the infrastructure was not ready.
- ii. 31 drivers had electric vehicles but feedback from driver's was that having such a vehicle affected a driver's earnings.
- iii. Some drivers who had an electric vehicle had swapped their vehicle with colleagues (ie: back to petrol / diesel) as they found driving them unaffordable. This did not reduce the number of electric vehicles in the taxi fleet.
- iv. Hybrid vehicles were more affordable than electric vehicles.
- v. The taxi trade was not against electric vehicles they were just not affordable at this moment in time.

The Environmental Health Manager responded:

- i. The Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy referred to electric or ultra-low emissions, conventional hybrids (ie: vehicles with stop / start technology) were not included within the policy.

5. A member of the public raised the following points:

- i. Had been a taxi driver for 25 years.
- ii. Was Vice-Chair of CCLT.
- iii. Embraced change as this was good for drivers and was good for the travelling public.
- iv. The last vehicle he had purchased was a 3 year old Volvo for £13,500, which had under 30,000 miles. Had looked at a BMW 5 series hybrid and this cost £25,000. The cost of the vehicle was almost double the price of his current vehicle.
- v. Would have to stop every 25 minutes to charge an electric vehicle's battery.
- vi. Electric vehicles were great for commuting but not as a taxi vehicle.
- vii. The road tax for his current vehicle was £20, it was £130 for the BMW he had previously referred to.
- viii. Noted a driver who had an electric vehicle had swapped with a colleague so that he could drive a multi-licence vehicle.
- ix. The luggage space was limited in an electric vehicle.
- x. Taxi drivers who drove an electric car could not take on some jobs as they did not have enough power left in their electric battery. Electric cars were not proving to be practical.

The Scientific Officer (Air Quality) asked for the cost of the vehicles to be repeated.

In response to Member's questions the member of the public said the following:

- i. It took about 2 years to break even on a taxi vehicle investment.
- ii. Noted comments which had been made by councillors about other countries having electric taxis and commented that other countries gave bigger tax breaks for electric vehicles.
- iii. Noted councillors concerns about the potential for the trade to ask for another deferral but commented that the taxi trade did not think that the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy made the taxi business viable for taxi drivers.

The Environmental Health Manager responded:

- i. 43 taxi vehicles would be affected by the Zero / Ultra low emission Taxi Vehicle Policy, 13 vehicles would not be affected as they were accessible taxis and were therefore exempt from the policy for all new saloon vehicles to be zero or ultra-low emission vehicles by 1st April 2020.
- ii. There were 3 electric vehicle charging points available and she hoped another 3 would be available by the end of the year. Delays arose if there were land ownership issues. It was hoped that there would be 9 further electric charging points by the end of 2020.

6. A member of the public raised the following:

- i. Had been a taxi driver for 10 years.
- ii. The Nissan Leaf could not accommodate wheelchairs.
- iii. Further charging points were required, currently there were few facilities to be able to use.
- iv. Asked that the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy implementation period was kept to 2028 as originally planned.
- v. Noted that taxis were the only mode of transport being forced to change their vehicles to fully electric vehicles.

Members noted:

- i. There were a higher number of taxis in the Great Northern Road / Tenison Road area as there were not as many buses in that area.
- ii. The City Council could not control taxis which drove around Cambridge which were not licensed by them (ie: taxi which were licensed by other councils).
- iii. Referred to vehicles they had found on the Autotrader website, which cost less than those quoted by public speakers.

The Environmental Health Manager responded:

- i. When the Zero / Ultra low emission Taxi Vehicle Policy was introduced consideration was given to conventional hybrids and plug-in hybrids but the policy only relates to zero and ultra-low emission vehicles.
- ii. Members wanted an aspirational policy.
- iii. Air quality is a priority for this council.
- iv. Work was being done with the County Council, to see whether other modes of transport could be changed to electric vehicles.
- v. The trade had been supportive of the policy, but acknowledged concerns due to uncertainty of supply of zero / ultra-low emission vehicles created by UK leaving the EU.

7. Councillor Davey raised the following points:

- i. The Committee had heard about the impact on resident's health in the Petersfield ward however the impacts of air quality would affect other streets around the city and not just Great Northern Road and Tenison Road.
- ii. There was an aspiration to have clean air in the city. The Committee should not deviate from their policy. Urged the Committee to reject the recommendation to delay the implementation of the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy.

19/19/Lic Review and Update of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy in Regards to the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy

The Committee received a report from the Environment Health Manager regarding the review and update of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy in relation to the Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. South Cambridgeshire District Council had moved their Electric Taxi Vehicle Policy implementation date to December 2021 on the basis of consultation responses and queried whether the City Council could do the same.
- ii. Disagreed with the recommendation in the report and could not see why the council should move away from its adopted policy. Referred to large scale demonstrations which had taken place on climate change. The Council itself had declared a Climate Emergency. Noted that only certain electric cars had been included within the officer's report and queried why some electric cars had not been included within the officer's report.
- iii. Was swayed by the comments made by Petersfield residents.

- iv. Was not convinced by the arguments put forward by the taxi trade. The committee had made a decision last year regarding the policy and the policy should not be changed.
- v. Noted the points made by both the taxi trade and residents. The taxi trade had problems with the slow diagnostics at Garages and the lack of replacement vehicles if there was an insurance claim. However the health of children and the arguments made by residents was more persuasive.
- vi. Air quality concerns were taken seriously, would comment that issues arose due to the design of the area (at Great Northern Road / Tenison Road) and this was not in the control of the Licensing Committee.
- vii. Buses needed to be looked at in relation to their impacts on air quality.

In response to Members' questions the Environmental Health Manager said the following:

- i. 6 monthly checks were carried out on vehicles, if vehicles degraded this should be flagged during these checks.
- ii. New taxi vehicles undergo certain checks to ensure the vehicle is compliant with taxi vehicle conditions. Officers would also check the vehicles V5 document.
- iii. Vehicles could be re-sprayed to ensure that they met taxi colour conditions (ie: taxi vehicles were silver with a green stripe).

The Committee:

Unanimously rejected officer recommendations 2.2 and 2.3:

- i. To change the implementation date for "all new Licensed Saloon Vehicles to be Zero or Ultra-Low Emission" from 1 April 2020 to 1 April 2021. The final date of 2028 will remain in place.
- ii. However, if the vehicle manufacturing market has not improved over the next 12 months to give delegated authority the Environmental Health Manager to review the above recommendation in consultation with the Chair of Licensing Committee

Unanimously approved officer recommendation 2.4:

- iii. The removal of the 4 year maximum age limit for new licensed vehicles, which are Zero Emission and Ultra Low emissions (less than 75g/km of CO₂)

19/20/Lic Operator Door Signage

The Committee received a report from the Environmental Health Manager regarding Operator door signage.

The Committee made the following comments in response to the report:

- i. The issue was important in relation to community safety.
- ii. Questioned how this would work for drivers who were also their own Operator (i.e. sole traders).
- iii. Asked how many operators were registered within the city.
- iv. Asked if operator's website details could be included on private hire vehicles.
- v. Given current technology for example QR codes queried whether the requirement for a telephone number to be included on a private hire vehicle was a step back.
- vi. Asked if the Council's telephone number could be used instead of the operator's number.

In response to Members' questions the Environmental Health Manager said the following:

- i. Operators were required to have an office and a telephone. This would mean that drivers would end up taking complaints about themselves if they were sole traders.
- ii. It was an operator's responsibility to ensure that private hire vehicles registered with them complied with the licensing conditions.
- iii. There were 17 operators registered within the city.
- iv. The purpose of the report was to ensure that an operator's telephone number was displayed on private hire vehicles for public safety reasons. Potentially other information (including website details) could be included.
- v. Confirmed that private hire vehicles already had to display the city council's telephone number in the vehicle. The Environmental Health Manager also confirmed that her number was also displayed in every private hire vehicle.

An amendment was proposed to change the wording of recommendation 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 to substitute registered for working (deleted text ~~struck through~~, additional text underlined)

2.1.2 Operators to provide door signs with their telephone number to private hire drivers/vehicles that are ~~registered~~ working with them.

2.1.3 All vehicles that are ~~registered~~ working with an operator, to display door sign with contact telephone number as of 1 January 2020.

On a show of hands the amendment was carried by 7 votes to 0.

The Committee:

Resolved (by 7 votes to 0):

- i. To amend the policy to require the mandatory display of a contact telephone number on operator door signs for private Hire Vehicles.
- ii. Operators to provide door signs with their telephone number to private hire drivers/vehicles that are working with them.
- iii. All vehicles that are working with an operator, to display door sign with contact telephone number as of 1 January 2020.

The meeting ended at 1.05 pm

CHAIR