

## CAMBRIDGE CITY COUNCIL

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REPORT OF: Head of Refuse & Environment

TO: Licensing Committee

28/1/2013

WARDS: All

### **LICENSING OF VELOTAXIS AS PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES OR HACKNEY CARRIAGES**

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#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 A request has been made by Veloform UK that the Council considers whether it would be prepared to consider, in principle, licensing motorised trishaws, known as Velotaxis, for both pre-booked tours of Cambridge and also as “hailed” taxis and, if so, to consider adopting standard conditions for such vehicles.
- 1.2 Representatives from Veloform UK have been invited to give a short presentation to Members at the meeting.

#### **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Members are requested to consider whether Velotaxis should, in principle, be licensed as Hackney Carriages in Cambridge City.
- 2.2 Members are requested to consider whether Velotaxis should, in principle, be licensed as Private Hire Vehicles in Cambridge City.
- 2.3 If Members are minded to agree to the principle of licensing in respect of either or both 2.1 or 2.2 then it is recommended that a period of consultation be undertaken regarding the conditions to be attached to licences specifically for Velotaxis, before implementation of the scheme.

#### **3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 Velotaxis are electrically assisted three-wheeled tricycles that are powered by a 36v, 250w electric motor, driving the front wheel and with a top speed of 25 kph. (approx 15 mph).

- 3.2 The vehicles can have a payload of up to 300 kg. Up to 3 passengers occupy a rear seat, behind the driver in a lightweight polyethylene cabin.
- 3.3 Vehicles are tested and approved by VOSA, insured as vehicles for the carriage of passengers in the UK and taxed by DVLA and they bear number plates. Drivers must be over 17 years and hold a motorcycle or car licence.
- 3.4 In order to offer pre-booked tours, the vehicle would require a licence as a Private Hire Vehicle (PHV). However, in order to offer a service in which vehicles could be hailed in the street and used for A to B journeys, a Hackney Carriage (HC) Licence would be required.
- 3.5 For the Council to licence Velotaxis as either HCs or PHVs, it must be satisfied that such vehicles are safe to carry passengers.
- 3.6 Drivers of vehicles would be required to hold a HC, PH or Dual Driver licence, as for standard types of HCs and PHVs, and this would entail all of the checks, tests and certification which that requires currently, unless Members determine that any of those elements need not be provided in the case of a driver licensed only to drive a Velotaxi.
- 3.7 The requirements for HC and PH drivers are contained in the Cambridge City Council's Taxi Guide. The relevant parts of the Guide are summarised in Appendix A.
- 3.8 If Members are minded to dispense with any of the normal requirements, in respect of Velotaxis or drivers, these should be clearly understood, agreed and determined and the reasons for doing so recorded clearly.
- 3.9 Council policy states that new HCs are required to be wheelchair accessible. This would, clearly, not be possible for a Velotaxi and Members would have to determine that this rule, in particular, would not apply to Velotaxis.
- 3.10 Pre-bookings would have to be made by a licensed Private Hire Operator and relayed to the driver by the operator. Veloform would need either to seek its own Operator Licence or to enter an agreement with an existing licensed Operator to undertake the booking process on its behalf.

#### 4. **CONSULTATIONS**

- 4.1 No consultation has been undertaken for the preparation of this report, but Members may decide that they would wish to consult interested parties before reaching a final conclusion on the issues.

#### 5. **OPTIONS**

- 5.1 Members should determine whether the City Council should, in principle, consider it appropriate to license Velotaxis:

- i) as Hackney Carriages to be hailed in the street as taxis
- ii) as Private Hire Vehicles to offer pre-booked tours of Cambridge

- 5.2 If either option i) or ii) above is considered appropriate, then Members will need to determine which, if any, conditions applied to HCs and to PHVs as standard policy may not be required for licences granted for the use of Velotaxis under either designation. Members reasons for disapplying such conditions should be clearly recorded.
- 5.3 Members should also consider whether the requirements to hold a driver licence are all appropriate for the driver of a Velotaxi.

## 6. **CONCLUSIONS**

- 6.1 In order for Velotaxis to be able to operate in Cambridge, they would require licensing, either as HCs or as PHVs, depending on the nature of the agreed operation. Drivers would need to hold the appropriate driver licence.
- 6.2 Because the construction of Velotaxi vehicles is significantly different to the vehicles currently licensed, it is clear that they could not meet some conditions applied to HCs and PHVs, as standard.
- 6.3 Members would need to determine whether any conditions could be disapplied without affecting the principles under which vehicles are licensed. Such consideration should, also, take into account whether disapplication is fair and equitable to the existing licensed trade.

## 7. **IMPLICATIONS**

### (a) **Financial Implications**

Fees for the processing of licences for Velotaxis should cover the cost of the work required, but on a non-profit basis.

### (b) **Staffing Implications**

There should be no significant staffing implications

### (c) **Equal Opportunities Implications**

If Velotaxis are to be licensed, it will be apparent that some people will not be able to use them. An EqIA has been undertaken.

### (d) **Environmental Implications**

Nil

### (e) **Consultation and communication**

To be determined by committee

## **APPENDICES**

### Appendix A

Summary of parts of Cambridge City Council's Taxi Guide

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:** The following are the background papers that were used in the preparation of this report:

Proposal document by Veloform UK  
Equality Impact Assessment

To inspect these documents contact Robert Osbourn on extension 7894

The author and contact officer for queries on the report is Robert Osbourn on extension 7894.

**Report file:** M:LICENSE/Licensing Committee mtgs/2013/Committee Report – Velotaxis for 28.1.13

Date originated: 18 January 2013

Date of last revision: 18 January 2013