

**LICENSING COMMITTEE**

19 March 2018  
10.00 - 11.50 am

**Present:** Councillors Bird (Chair), Abbott, Gawthrope, Gehring, Holt, McPherson, R. Moore, Pippas, Sinnott and Smart

Councillor Sinnott left after the vote on 18/15/Lic, before item 18/14/Lic was debated

**Officers**

Environmental Health Manager: Yvonne O'Donnell  
Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager: Jo Dicks  
Team Manager (Commercial & Licensing): Karen O'Connor  
Legal Advisor: Nathan Mountney  
Committee Manager: James Goddard

**Present for the Applicant**

Technical Officer: Luke Catchpole

**Other Persons**

Cambridge Licensed Taxis: Andy Vines  
Hackney Carriage and Cambridge Taxi Association: Rashel Mohammed  
Police Sergeant: Jim Stevenson  
Police Constable: Claire Metcalf  
Romsey Ward Councillor: Dave Baigent  
Trade Representative: Paul Bradley

**FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL**

**18/9/Lic Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Adey, Benstead and T. Moore.

**18/10/Lic Declarations of Interest**

No declarations of interest were made.

**18/11/Lic Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2018 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**18/12/Lic Public Questions**

There were no public questions.

**18/13/Lic Re-Ordering Agenda**

Under paragraph 4.2.1 of the Council Procedure Rules, the Chair used her discretion to alter the order of the agenda items. However, for ease of the reader, these minutes will follow the order of the agenda.

**18/14/Lic Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Vehicle Policy**

The Committee received a report from the Environmental Health Manager.

The report set out the proposed incentives to support the update of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet.

There is a need to reduce polluting emissions to improve poor air quality in City Locations dominated by emissions from buses, taxis and service vehicles. This must be achieved whilst maintaining sufficient levels of access and capacity for travel in the City, for the vehicles using those areas.

The UK government has a long term vision for all new cars and vans to be zero emission by 2040 and for nearly every car and van to be zero emission by 2050. These recommendations fit with national policy.

At Full Council on 22 February 2018, it was agreed that financial support would be committed in order to help effect the change to ultra-low and zero emission licensed vehicles over the next 5 years.

The Officer's report further detailed the proposed implementation scheme in order to encourage an incentivised cost effective shift to ultra-low and zero emission licensed vehicles.

The Environmental Health Manager corrected a typographical error on P18 of her report. #8 "Further to option 7 (above), currently the market does not provide **many** Ultra-low or Zero Emission Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles."

The Committee received representations.

1. Mr Vines raised the following points:
  - i. Expressed concern about setting a date when all new licensed saloon vehicles should be zero or ultra-low emission.
  - ii. Suggested the policy guessed when technology would be in place for vehicles to meet criteria.
  - iii. The taxi fleet did not have any plug-in electric vehicles, but did have hybrid ones that used electric power to travel around the city.
  - iv. Requested the implementation date be deferred as there were no suitable alternative vehicles at present.
  - v. Lots of drivers travelled to the city from other areas. Electric vehicles did not have the range to facilitate this. Hybrid vehicles did.
  - vi. Queried if the proposed exclusion zone would cover all vehicle types or just taxis.
  - vii. Reducing the amount of wheelchair accessible vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet from 65% to 50% seemed a small reduction ie 15%.

The Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager responded:

- i. Plug-in hybrid vehicles were in development by 20+ companies so future availability would not be an issue.
- ii. Purely electric vehicles that could travel 200 miles on a single charge would also be available soon. They would be in place for the 2020 policy timescale.
- iii. City Council Officers were discussing the vehicle restriction with county partners. The city could only control licensed taxi and private hire vehicles, but hoped to influence others such as buses. The restriction would apply to all vehicle types.

Mr Vines raised the following supplementary points:

- i. Taxi drivers naturally gravitated towards the most efficient vehicles. These were currently hybrids.
- ii. The taxi age limit was 9 years.
- iii. The policy could impact on when vehicles needed to be replaced. Suggested this should be at the end of a vehicles natural life (9 years) rather than having a cut off as a specific year.

The Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager said the specific cut-off date allowed drivers to plan and forecast their decision making based on the council's 10 year plan.

2. Mr Mohammed raised the following points:
  - i. Referred to recommendation 2.2.7 "To reduce the total number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet from 65% to 50% (213 to 163 ) and those 50 plates to be replaced by Zero emission vehicles. Consideration should be sought to review this in 3 years."
  - ii. Most taxis worked out of the railway station.
  - iii. They had to turn away business when people (usually elderly and less mobile) wanted to use wheelchair accessible vehicles.
  - iv. Wheelchair users made a majority of journeys by private hire rather than taxis.

Councillor Bird responded that a range of vehicles to suit all people's needs should be available. 50% of the fleet being wheelchair accessible was acceptable if this covered the level of demand. Disabled people had to wait disproportionately longer for vehicles than other people as there were fewer of these vehicles.

The Environmental Health Manager said she was seeking comments from the taxi trade as to whether 50% of the fleet being wheelchair accessible was acceptable, too many or too few.

3. Mr Bradley raised the following points:
  - i. Replacing taxis with hybrid saloon cars would reduce emissions.
  - ii. Expressed concern about replacing hybrid vehicles with purely electric ones by the proposed cut-off date as current technology did not meet the need.
  - iii. Expressed concern about banning petrol and diesel cars until appropriate alternative (technology) vehicles were in place.

As a supplementary point, Mr Bradley hoped that saloon cars would be more affordable in future.

The Environmental Health Manager said:

- i. The recommendations were for discussion. They were not a policy already in place.
- ii. The policy proposed a 10 year plan. This could be reviewed if technology was not in place in future. However it was expected to be.

The Environmental Health Manager said she appreciated there were very limited options for wheelchair accessible electric cars at present, so

the aim was to start a modal shift by encouraging low emission saloon cars then moving towards other types of vehicles.

The Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager responded:

- i. There were 2 electric makes of vehicle available at present that were wheelchair accessible. These were mandated for taxis in London.
  - ii. More types of these vehicle were expected in future at more affordable prices. These should be available for the City Council policy proposed deadline for replacing taxis with zero or ultra-low emission vehicles.
4. Councillor Baigent (Romsey Ward Councillor) raised the following points:
- i. Queried percentage taxis contributed towards city pollution levels.
  - ii. Larger vehicles were generally wheelchair accessible. It was proposed to replace these with saloon cars. Not all disabled people used wheelchairs.
  - iii. People had difficulty getting into vehicles with high steps. Saloon cars may address this issue.
  - iv. 2028 was the target date to reduce emissions and pollution by. A review would occur in 2026.
  - v. Queried who would be covered by the vehicle restriction eg Uber.

The Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager responded:

- i. 15% was the ball park average pollution level from private hire vehicles and hackney carriages. This came predominantly from diesel vehicles.
- ii. If the proposed vehicle restriction was accepted then it would cover all vehicles entering the city, not just city licensed (taxi/private hire) vehicles.
- iii. The aim was to improve air quality. Vehicles that met the city's criteria would not be fined for entering the restricted area. Automatic number plate recognition technology would be used to police the restricted zone.

Councillor Baigent raised the following supplementary points:

- i. Taxis were replaced every 9 years.
- ii. Current ones were unlikely to be hybrids. Could the council extend the policy time limit to allow drivers to replace vehicles nearer the 9 year vehicle age limit based on individual's circumstances.

The Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager acknowledged the 9 year age limit point. Drivers had 10 years to factor this into their buying decision for replacement vehicles. He recommended imposing a deadline for action.

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

- i. Supported the report recommendations.
- ii. Public health was being affected by pollution in the city.
- iii. The market and range of vehicles available was changing/improving.
- iv. The deadline for policy implementation could be reviewed to ascertain it was fit for purpose eg appropriate technology being available.
- v. Other European cities had already adopted more radical measures.
- vi. Oxford was already preparing to restrict City Centre Access only to ultra-low and zero emission Licensed Vehicles by 2022.
- vii. Vehicles that did not meet the Cambridge City low emission criteria should be banned. This included cars buses and lorries.
- viii. The city council was looking at suitable low emission or electric vehicles to replace waste vehicles in future.
- ix. The City Council's high standards for vehicles should be promoted as a benchmark for others and to promote branding to encourage use instead of other (lower standard) providers.
- x. It was better for people to travel in the city by taxi rather than private car.
- xi. Expressed concern about the trade-off between disability and pollution. Disabled friendly vehicles were being replaced with lower emission vehicles. Queried if diesel powered wheelchair accessible vehicles would be exempt from the restriction zone if low emission vehicles were not available. Otherwise people would face travel restrictions.
- xii. Accessible vehicles were not always suitable for non-wheelchair users. Alternatives were preferred.
- xiii. Taxis were running their engines whilst stationary ie waiting for trade. This was against the law. Taxi trade representatives present at the meeting were asked to feedback councillors' concerns to other drivers.

In response to Members' questions the Environmental Quality and Growth Team Manager said the following:

- i. The report set out a range of policies officers would like adopted. Councillors would discuss the merits of these prior to approval/refusal. One proposal was that vehicles that did not meet the same criteria as city licensed vehicles would be restricted. The restriction zone would be considered by Greater Cambridge Partnership, but if Members accepted

- the proposal today, it would give officers a mandate to negotiate with the Greater Cambridge Partnership.
- ii. 2020 was suggested as the implementation date rather than 2018 as a courtesy to give the taxi trade forewarning of proposals and allow them to business plan the implementation in line with other measures such as standard livery.
  - iii. The breakdown of pollution constituents was as follows:
    - a. Inner city: 80% derived from vehicles. Of the 80%; 50% came from buses, 15-20% from delivery vehicles, 15-20% from taxis, the remainder came from other sources.
    - b. Ring roads: Buses and taxis were a lower proportion of pollutants.
  - iv. The council was close to meeting its objective about air pollution in the city. A steady improvement had been made in air quality. As the city grew there would be more demand for transport. Greater Cambridge Partnership were looking at transport and congestion issues. For example, bus transport numbers were expected to rise by 60%, and so was the level of pollution if diesel vehicles were used, hence the need for alternative vehicle types.
  - v. The city council could only control/affect vehicles it licensed. Greater Cambridge Partnership were responsible for buses.
  - vi. The running costs for electric vehicles were 3p a mile (whilst charging at home over night), whereas diesel vehicles were 17p a mile. The city council proposed to put in rapid chargers around the city which could give a 80% battery charge in 20 minutes. This would work out at 6p a mile. By charging at home and using one rapid charge the cost of electric vehicles would be less than diesel. The cost of the rapid charge would be factored into service costs to always be below diesel.
  - vii. Rapid chargers were expected to be in place in the city soon. An operator was in place. Work would start early April and finish in September.
  - viii. A new electric saloon vehicle was expected to cost circa £55,000. There were (circa £10,000) discounts available to incentivise the purchase for disabled passengers. Circa £2,500 discounts were available for hybrid cars.
  - ix. It was rare for trade drivers to buy new vehicles. Hopefully second hand vehicles would be cheaper as more low emission and electric vehicles became available. The high purchase price could be offset by lower running costs compared to petrol/diesel vehicles.

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

- i. Referred to the 2016 Licensing Committee report on consultation principles for vehicle types and how many should be disability friendly.
- ii. There had been an on-going trade-off between low emission and accessible vehicles. The demand survey looked at the need for accessible taxis and suggested the number could be reduced from 65% to 50%.
- iii. The recommendations only covered zero emission and ultra-low vehicles, not hybrids as there many types of these that may/not meet criteria set out in the report.
- iv. South Cambridgeshire District Council did not support the city Council low emission vehicle report recommendations as their had different vehicle standards due to the number of long distance journeys for which electric vehicles were currently unsuitable.
- v. Reiterated the report recommendations were options for discussion and approval.
- vi. Said there was no implementation timeline in the recommendations so councillors were referred to table (2.3) of the Officer's report.

The Licensing Committee stated they were happy to follow the timeframe for implementation of incentives.

#### The Committee:

#### **Unanimously resolved by those present (10 votes to 0):**

- i. The following incentives should form part of the environmental considerations in the Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy in order to encourage and reward the uptake of ultra-low and zero emission vehicles within the licensed vehicle fleet as set out in the table in paragraph 3.2.2 (P16-18) of the Officer's report:
  - A licence fee exemption for zero emission vehicles.
  - A licence fee discount for ultra-low emission vehicles.
  - An extended age limit for zero emission vehicles.
  - An extended age limit for ultra-low vehicles.
  - A set date for all New Licensed Saloon vehicles to be ultra-low or zero emission.
  - A set date for all Licensed Saloon Vehicles to be ultra-low or zero emission.
  - To reduce the total number of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet from 65% to 50% (213 to 163 ) and those 50 plates to be replaced by zero emission vehicles. Consideration should be sought to review this in 3 years.
  - A set date for all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to be ultra-low or zero emission as and when the market allows.

- To restrict City Centre Access to ultra-low and zero emission Licensed Vehicles only.
- ii. Agreed the timeframe for implementation of incentives as set out in the table in paragraph 3.2.2 (P16-18) of the Officer's report.

### **18/15/Lic Review of Cumulative Impact Policy Consultation**

The Committee received a report from the Team Manager (Commercial & Licensing).

The report stated the Statement of Licensing Policy was recently reviewed, approved by Licensing Committee on 17 October 2017, and subsequently full Council on 19 October 2017.

The Special Policy on Cumulative Effect (the Cumulative Impact Policy) was contained within the Licensing Policy. During the consultation period Cambridge Constabulary responded to say that based on the figures provided in Appendix 3 of the Statement of Licensing Policy it was questionable whether the Romsey area of Mill Road should remain as part of the Cumulative Impact Area.

Licensing Committee therefore requested officers to undertake a further twelve week formal consultation on whether to remove the Romsey area of Mill Road from the Cumulative Impact Area, or not.

The formal consultation took place between 13 November 2017 and 4 February 2018. Twenty nine responses were received all supporting keeping the existing Cumulative Impact Area (CIA).

The Committee received a representation from Councillor Baigent as a Ward Councillor.

The representation covered the following issues:

- i. There had been a considerable reduction in crime as a result of the CIA so he saw no reason to remove it.
- ii. He supported comments from the police.
- iii. There were many places to buy alcohol in Romsey so the CIA was needed to reduce alcohol related crime.
- iv. More student flats were expected in Mill Road in future. Students drank no more than other people, but the number of residents in the area would increase.

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

- i. Things were improving due to the CIA, but problems had not been solved, so the CIA should be maintained.
- ii. Romsey was an up and coming area so more dwellings were expected in future. The CIA was needed to mitigate this.
- iii. Mill Road had a good sense of community. The CIA helped this and helped the police to address street drinking. Residents supported the CIA.

Councillor Gehring sought clarification why the police suggested leaving the upper end of Mill Road out of the CIA. Sergeant Stevenson said the police assessment was based on statements of fact. His own view was “if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it”. IE keep the CIA as it.

The Committee:

Members considered the results of the public consultation exercise as summarised in Appendix E of the Officer’s report and **unanimously resolved** the Cumulative Impact Policy should remain as it is.

The meeting ended at 11.50 am

**CHAIR**