

Item

Amendment to Environmental Consideration of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Policy

To:

Licensing Committee

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the relaxation of Ultra-Low and Zero Emission vehicles policy within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 This can only be achieved by intervening to ensure uptake of Ultra-low and Zero emission technologies within those vehicle fleets.
- 1.4 Under the current policy, vehicles which are Ultra-Low emission are:
 - Plug in hybrid vehicles
 - Extended Range electric vehicles (E-REV)

- 1.5 Zero emission vehicles are those which emit no emissions during their operation. These vehicles are:
- Electric only vehicles
 - Fuel cell vehicles (e.g. hydrogen)
- 1.6 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.
- 1.7 The Central Government Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) provides funding to support a rapid electric charging infrastructure for taxis.
- 1.8 Financial support for rapid charging infrastructure for taxis was committed by the City Council at Full Council in February 2016.
- 1.9 In October 2016 Members amended the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy to include a commitment to implement changes to increase the uptake of Ultra-Low and Zero emission vehicles, such as hybrid and electric.
- 1.10 However, due to Brexit and the pandemic and now with the crisis in Ukraine, the availability of such vehicles are becoming more difficult to obtain, and there is also a waiting period of up to a year to purchase these type of vehicles and therefore there is a need to build in flexibility into the policy to allow standard hybrids with emissions of less than 75g/km of CO₂.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are recommended to approve the inclusion of standard hybrids within the policy with emissions of less

that 75g/km of CO2 with a review of this in June 2024.(Attached as Appendix 1)

3. Background

- 3.1. In March 2015 the City Council set a policy direction for pursuing a low emission strategy for Buses and Taxis within Cambridge over a period of 10 years through its Air Quality Action Plan.
- 3.2 In pursuance of this aim for Taxis, the Council’s Environmental, Quality and Growth team successfully won a bid from the Central Government Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to provide funding to support a rapid electric charging infrastructure for Taxis.
- 3.3 As part of the bid process, the Council was granted a funded Taxi Scheme Feasibility Study which was completed in March 2016 and gave recommendations in order to support the local environment policy for taxi licensing.
- 3.4 Currently, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as agreed at Licensing Committee in October 2016 for Environmental interventions within the taxi fleet is outlined in the table below:

Item	Option	Rationale	Timeframe/ Implementation
1	Licence Fee Exemption for Zero emission, Vehicles	In order to encourage proprietors to licence a Zero emission vehicle, it is proposed that a full licence fee exemption be offered for Zero emission vehicles licensed for up to 5 years dependent on funding availability.	With effect from 1 April 2018
2	Licence Fee Discount for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles	In order to encourage proprietors to licence a Ultra-Low emission vehicle, it is proposed that a 50% discount be offered for Ultra-Low emission vehicles licensed for up to 5 years dependent on funding availability	With effect from 1 April 2018

3	Extended Age Limit for Zero Emission Vehicles	It is proposed that Zero Emission Vehicles have an age limit of up to 15 years, subject to obtaining Certificate of Compliance every 6 months.	With effect from 1 April 2018
4	Extended Age Limit for Ultra-Low Vehicles	It is proposed that Ultra-Low emission vehicles have an age limit of up to 12 years, subject to obtaining Certificate of Compliance every 6 months.	With effect from 1 April 2018
5	A set date for all new Licensed Saloon Vehicles to be Zero or Ultra-Low Emission	In setting a date after which traditional internal combustion engine vehicles could not be newly registered as a licensed vehicle in Cambridge City would focus proprietors/ potential proprietors to plan for moving to Ultra-Low or Zero emission vehicles.	With effect from 1 April 2020
6	A set date for all Licensed Saloon Vehicles to be Zero or Ultra-Low Emission	Currently the age restrictions on licensed vehicles mean that no vehicle will be licensed if it is over 9 years old. In setting a back stop date where all City licensed saloon vehicles must be Zero or Ultra-Low emission vehicles means that Proprietors have reasonable notice of the change to allow adequate business planning.	By December 2028
7	To reduce the total % of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet to 50%	<p>Following a demand survey which was undertaken in 2017, it was found that there is no significant unmet demand. The current vehicle policy states that any new Hackney Carriage Vehicles must be wheelchair accessible. This takes the proportion of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in the Hackney Carriage Fleet to 65%.</p> <p>In order to encourage the uptake of Zero emission vehicles, the council could introduce a policy that the % WAV to be reduced to 50% Proprietors will be offered the chance to 'give up' their Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle on the condition it is replaced with a Zero emission saloon vehicle. This reduces</p>	With effect from 1 April 2018

		the number of wheelchair accessible taxis from 213 to 163	
8	A set date for all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to be Ultra-Low or Zero Emission as and when the market allows	Further to option 7 (above), currently the market does not provide Ultra-Low or Zero Emission Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.	By December 2028. Subject to review in 2026
9	To restrict City Centre Access to Ultra-Low and Zero Emission Licensed Vehicles only	<p>This is an important factor in ensuring compliance with the Ultra-Low and Zero Emission criteria.</p> <p>The Greater Cambridge Partnership project considers traffic restrictions on key access routes. This policy is outside the Licensing powers and would only be deliverable with the co-operation of the County Council. However, considering changes that have come into effect regarding access management of the City Centre to Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) there is the potential that this could be delivered.</p>	By December 2028

3.5 Following the pandemic, together with Brexit and crisis in Ukraine, it was apparent that there was a lack of availability of motor vehicles within the industry and especially electric and ultra-low emission vehicles.

3.6 Officers in the Environmental Quality and Growth Team, carried out some research to determine if the evidence supported this.

3.7 Some of the findings included that manufacturers have been affected by production issues of global semi-conductor shortages. Industry research indicates that it could take until 2024 for the global supply of semi-conductors to meet the demand.

3.8 Demand for electric vehicles is up by 32% in August 2021 compared to August 2020. This is about 10% of the market for new cars.

3.9 Waiting times is between 6 – 12 months for vehicles and there is limited availability of second hand electric and ultra-low emission vehicles.

3.10 The situation has led to the taxi trade struggling to meet the Hackney and Private Hire Taxi Policy in relation to the environmental interventions. Therefore, it is proposed that we allow for standard hybrids with emission levels of less than 75g/km of CO₂ for a 2 year period, with a view to review the market after this time as outlined in appendix 1

3.11 This will allow greater flexibility in vehicle availability, but it will also contribute to the improved air quality we are trying to achieve.

4. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

There are no financial implications

(b) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications.

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

There will be a positive impact on public health, in particular benefitting those who live in areas of poor air quality.

(d) Environmental Implications

The proposals have been assessed with a Medium Positive +M rating- This will reduce the overall use of Fossil Fuels and will reduce local CO₂ and polluting emissions substantially as we are still requiring the emissions to be less than 75g/kg of CO₂

(e) Procurement Implications

Any projects that require the engagement of external contractors will be subject to the Council's procurement and contract procedure rules.

(f) Community Safety Implications

Any of the incentives and the vehicles involved would be required to meet all the mandatory mechanical fitness tests.

There would be some benefit to community health which would be as a result from the improvements in pollutant levels.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Representatives of the trade have expressed concern about the lack of availability of electric and ultra low vehicles. They have requested

whether standard hybrids would be an acceptable alternative whilst the market settles which may take a couple of years.

6. Appendices

Appendix A – Amended Environmental Interventions table for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Policy

7. Queries on the report

If you have a query on the report please contact Yvonne O'Donnell, tel: 01223 - 457951, email: yvonne.odonnell@cambridge.gov.uk