



CCTV in Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles

To:

Licensing Committee 12/09/2022

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 Under the powers conferred to Cambridge City Council under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, (as amended), Cambridge City Council has responsibility for licensing Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Dual Licence Drivers as well as vehicle proprietors and Private Hire Operators within the City.
- 1.2 As a responsible licensing authority Cambridge City Council seeks to carry out its licensing functions with the view of promoting the following objectives;

- i) The safety and protection of the public;
- ii) Vehicle safety, comfort and access;
- iii) The prevention of crime and disorder;
- iv) The promotion of environmental sustainability;
- v) Protection of children and adults at risk from harm

1.3 The mandatory installation of CCTV within Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles was agreed by members in October 2017. Supporting objectives i), iii) and v).

1.4 In implementing CCTV in licensed vehicles, further objectives can be met;

- The protection of licensed drivers.
- The protection of the travelling public.
- To ensure that licensed drivers continue to be 'fit and proper' in line with licence conditions.
- To enable investigations to be fully supported with evidence in a secure and retrievable form.

1.5 Members of the Licensing Committee in September 2020 agreed an implementation date of 1st April 2022 whereby all taxi and private hire vehicles would have CCTV installed.

- 1.6 Due to delays in the identification of an approved supplier and the Covid 19 pandemic, the 1st April 2022 implementation date was not met.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to approve the implementation of CCTV in licensed vehicles in a phased and manageable approach. Any grant of a new vehicle licence or renewal of an existing licensed vehicle from 1st April 2023, vehicle must be fitted with CCTV. This would see all licenced vehicles installed with CCTV by 31st March 2024.
- 2.2 Members are recommended to approve a review of CCTV in licenced vehicles every 5 years. Next review would be 2029, 5 years from date all licenced vehicles will have CCTV installed.

3. Background

Cambridge City Council Journey

- 3.1 There is no doubt a vulnerability relating to Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (PHV). Members of the public enter into a Taxi/ PHV putting themselves under the control of a stranger in a confined space with no physical control over where they are taken. Furthermore, drivers also entrust members of the public into their vehicles, transporting them during unsocial hours, and sometimes visiting poorly lit routes.

- 3.2 CCTV systems can act as an additional safeguard, providing protection, confidence and reassurance to the public when they are travelling in a taxi or PHV, as well as to drivers who can also be victims of violence, and abuse.
- 3.3 CCTV systems can act as a deterrent to those with intentions of committing an offence to both drivers and passengers, but also where an offence has been committed images/audio recordings can capture evidence used in both a criminal and enforcement investigations.
- 3.4 Local authorities in recent years have considered the benefits of CCTV systems. Some authorities have made it a mandatory condition, whereas others have offered it as a voluntary requirement.
- 3.5 In October 2017, Cambridge City Council members agreed to make the installation of CCTV a mandatory condition, due to the seen benefits in safeguarding members of the public but also in the protection of drivers.
- 3.6 Although attempts have been made in the past in respect to the implementation of the mandatory requirement, due to securing a suitable supplier and Covid-19 pandemic, implementation has been delayed.
- 3.7 In September 2020, members agreed for an implementation date of 1st April 2022, in which all licensed vehicles would be required to have installed a CCTV system, following successful procurement.

3.8 Due to procurement issues, agreed implementation date was not met.

Government Guidance and recommendations

3.9 In July 2020, The Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards was released. Within the document it detailed that local authorities who mandate CCTV as a condition of a license, will require an appropriately strong justification as to why they mandate CCTV systems in licenced vehicles and keep this under regular review.

3.10 Furthermore, The Home Office 'Surveillance Camera Code of Practice' advises that government is fully supportive of the use of overt surveillance cameras in a public place whenever that use is:

- in pursuit of a legitimate aim;
- necessary to meet a pressing need;
- proportionate;
- effective, and;
- compliant with any relevant legal obligation

Cambridge City Council next step

3.11 As the mandatory requirement of CCTV for Cambridge City Council in its licensed vehicles was agreed in October 2017, and although the Statutory guidance does not specify duration between reviews, it was felt due to the delay in CCTV implementation, before confirming implementation date, it would be beneficial to conduct a review into the installation of CCTV in licenced vehicles.

3.12 In March 2022, Members agreed to a review into CCTV installation in licenced vehicles, considering two points referenced by the Home office Surveillance Camera Code of Practice' ;

1. Necessary to meet pressing need,

2. and Proportionality

3.13 Future reviews will also consider the effectiveness of CCTV.

Review

3.14 In order to complete the review, information and data was collected from various sources including Cambridge City Council, and Cambridgeshire Constabulary. Information collected was on incidences/crimes reported which involved a licenced driver or a passenger (Appendix A).

- 3.15 Officers have considered the data regarding incidents/crimes within licenced Hackney Carriages Vehicles and Private Hire Vehicles. Based on the data collected, it is considered that there is adequate justification to continue to mandate the installation of CCTV in licenced vehicles and roll out the implementation of it. Section 3.16 – 3.18 shall detail further why adequate justification was determined by officers.
- 3.16 Cambridge City Council officers dealt with approximately 628 enforcement cases between January 2017 and July 2022, that were categorised as ‘driver complaints’ and ‘driver complaints – conduct’. These include reports of driving recklessly, not complying with council policy requirements, plying for hire, over charging and cherry-picking fares. Of these, 80 incidences were identified to fall into the category of sexual advances/assault, violent assault, child sexual exploitation, aggressive/threatening behaviour, and inappropriate conduct (Table 1, Appendix A). These incidences are those when driver, passenger or both were within the vehicle, at time of incident. This equates to approximately 13% of cases dealt with by licensing officers.
- 3.17 Table 2a of Appendix A, shows incidents across all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, broken down into districts. These incidents involve a taxi driver being stated as the suspect of an incident. Between January 2021-February 2022, 80 incidents were reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary, of those reported 19 (24%) of incidents occurred within a vehicle. Table 2b, breaks down the 19 incidents that occurred within vehicle, into type of incident.
- 3.18 Table 3a of Appendix A, shows incidents across all of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, broken down into districts. These incidents are

those where the taxi driver was stated as victim in incident. Between January 2021-February 2022, a total of 140 incidents were reported to Cambridgeshire Constabulary. 55 (40%) of these incidences are reported to have occurred within a vehicle. Table 3b, breaks down the 55 incidents which occurred within vehicles, into type of offence.

3.19 Figures detailed within sections 3.16 – 3.18 provide adequate justification, in the mandating and installation of CCTV in licenced vehicles. It is deemed that the introduction of CCTV will deter incidents/ crimes from occurring, which will reduce in number being reported. Of those reported, CCTV footage should aid in providing strong evidence. Thus, supporting CCTV objectives detailed in section 1.4.

Partnership

3.20 Cambridge City Council continue to work closely with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC) on both the policy and CCTV specification. SCDC have also considered pressing need and proportionately and have deemed their evidence to also demonstrate adequate justification to mandate the installation of CCTV in licenced vehicles, however Executive hire vehicles are exempt.

3.21 SCDC are also looking to take a pragmatic approach, introducing the CCTV system requirement in a phased manner to enable effective installation (and administration) on the new regime.

CCTV specification

- 3.22 Appendix B, presents the CCTV specification which has been developed working with South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), CCTV providers and various councils who have mandated or voluntary approved installation of CCTV systems in licenced vehicles.
- 3.23 Both SCDC and Cambridge City Council look to take the same approach in which vehicle proprietors will be able to source their own systems, but it must meet or exceed the Council's requirements.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

South Cambridgeshire District Council, have identified one provider who suggested that installation costs can be estimated at between £75 to £100 for a single camera system, and £100-£125 for a two-camera system, with units costing around £320 (excluding VAT) for a single camera unit with one panic button, to around £500 for a two-camera unit with two panic buttons. A further two Cambridgeshire based companies have quoted £500 per unit.

The number of cameras installed, and audio buttons will be dependent on size of vehicle, and whether 90 or 180 degree cameras are used. For example, if using a 180 degree angle camera, standard 5 seater saloon vehicles may only require 1 camera and 1 audio button, where as a larger 8 seater vehicle may require up to 4 cameras and 2/3 audio

buttons to meet the needs of both driver and passenger and capture the whole vehicle.

b) Staffing Implications

1. Licensing officers will be required to undertake training on how to securely retrieve data from camera systems.
2. Garage Staff who complete Certificate of Compliance checks will also be required to be trained to test CCTV systems are in good order.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

Nil.

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

Nil.

e) Procurement Implications

Nil.

f) Community Safety Implications

The mandatory installation of CCTV within Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles will support licensing objectives i), iii) and v), detailed on section 1.7.

Further objectives can be met;

- The protection of licensed drivers.
- The protection of the travelling public.
- To ensure that licensed drivers continue to be 'fit and proper' in line with licence conditions.

- To enable investigations to be fully supported with evidence in a secure and retrievable form.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

Nil.

6. Background papers

1. [Statutory & Best Practice Guidance for taxi and PHV licensing authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

7. Appendices

1. Appendix A – Crime and Incident Data
2. Appendix B - CCTV Specification

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Wangari Njiiri, Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, 01223 458533, Wangari.njiiri@cambridge.gov.uk