

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Age Policy

To: Licensing Committee 11/09/2023

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1) Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider a recent petition received from a trade representative (Appendix A). The petition requests the council look at current vehicle age limits.
- 1.2 Request:
 - Increasing the age limit for currently licensed hackney carriage vehicles to 11 years
 - Wheelchair accessible vehicles should be minimum of Euro 6 standard instead of the 4 year limit
- 1.3 Following the request, officers made the decision that although this request is specific to Hackney Carriage vehicles, the council would

consider request for both Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

- 1.4 The inclusion of vehicle age limits within policy of licensed vehicles has been based on the need to ensure vehicles comply with a minimum standard of emissions and also on the understanding, licensed vehicles are utilised significantly more than household vehicles. As vehicles are utilised significantly more, these vehicles will emit greater overall emissions.
- 1.5 The councils policy aims to support the 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 however, achieved whilst maintaining sufficient levels of access and capacity for travel in the City, for the vehicles using those areas.
- 1.6 In order to support the councils aims for reducing pollution within the city, an intervention was formulated to support and ensure the uptake of ultra-low and zero emission technologies within those vehicle fleets.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 This included amending policy to incentivise the licensing of ultra- low emission. These included:
 - plug in hybrid vehicles
 - extended range electric vehicles (E-REV)
- 1.9 In addition zero emission vehicles:
 - electric only vehicles
 - fuel cell vehicles (e.g. hydrogen)

- 1.10 Since the incentives, to increase the above type vehicles was introduced and implemented in 2020, due to Brexit, Covid -19 pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine, the availability and affordability of such vehicles became difficult. This led to the introduction and approval of licensing standard hybrid vehicles, following Licensing Committee in 2022 for a two year period.
- 1.11 Although the availability of electric, and ultra-low vehicles has been looked into and addressed, the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) has also seen difficulties in availability.

2) Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are recommended to approve the amendment of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing policy and handbook, in relation to age limits as follows, with immediate effect;
- a) Removing the 4 year minimum age limit for newly licensed vehicles. Therefore, amended policy states;
- i) a new vehicle licence will not be granted in respect of a vehicle unless it meets the Euro 5 standard or higher.
- b) Increasing the age limit for licensed vehicles from less than 9 years old to less than 11 years old. Therefore, amended policy states;
- ii) a vehicle licence will not be renewed unless the vehicle is less than 11 years old.

The above recommendations are only applicable to petrol and diesel and Standard hybrid vehicles.

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 and later amended by members in June 2022 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 | Full Licence Fee Exemption is available for Zero Emission Vehicles ONLY. The exemption could potentially be for up to 5 years. This is dependent on funding availability. | With effect from 1 April 2018 |
| 2 | Licence Fee Discount for Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (not standard hybrids) | 50% Licence Fee discount is available for Ultra-Low emission vehicles. The exemption could potentially be for up to 5 years. This is dependent on funding availability. | With effect from 1 April 2018 |
| 3 | Extended Age Limit for Zero Emission Vehicles | Zero Emission Vehicles can have an age limit of up to 15 years. | With effect from 1 April 2018 |

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| | | This is subject to obtaining a Certificate of Compliance every 6 months. | |
| 4 | Extended Age Limit for Ultra-Low Vehicles (not standard hybrids) | Ultra-Low emission vehicles can have an age limit of up to 12 years. This is 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 | This allows proprietors/ potential proprietors to focus on planning to move to Zero or Ultra Low emission vehicles by a set date. | With effect from 1 April 2020 |
| 5a | A set date for new Saloon Vehicles standard hybrids with emission levels of less than 120g/km of CO2 | This is a temporary inclusion whilst there is a lack of availability of electric and ultra-low vehicles. A new standard hybrid vehicle licence will not be granted in respect of a vehicle unless it is less than 4 years old. A vehicle licence for standard hybrid vehicles will not be renewed unless the vehicle is less than 9 years old. | With effect from June 2022 to June 2024 when it will be reviewed |
| 6 | A set date for all Licensed Saloon Vehicles to be Zero or Ultra-Low Emission (Battery electric vehicles and plug in hybrids only) | This allows proprietors/ potential proprietors to focus on planning to move to Zero or Ultra Low emission vehicles by a set date and allows adequate business planning. | By December 2028 |
| 7 | To reduce the total % of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet to 50% | The % of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV) to be reduced to 50% within the fleet. Proprietors will be offered the chance to 'give up' their Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle on the | With effect from 1 April 2018 |

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| | | <p>condition it is replaced with a Zero emission saloon vehicle.</p> <p>This will reduce the number of wheelchair accessible taxis from 213 to 163.</p> | |
| 8 | A set date for all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to be Ultra-Low or Zero Emission as and when the market allows | <p>Further to option 7 (above), currently the market does not provide Ultra-Low or Zero Emission Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles.</p> | 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 To support the Councils Air Quality Action Plan minimum age limits and Euro Standards will be maintained and new policy incentives to encourage the uptake of zero and ultra-low emission vehicles will be implemented over a ten year period:

iii) a new vehicle licence will not be granted in respect of a vehicle unless it is less than 4 years old, and it meets the Euro 5 standard or higher.

iv) a vehicle licence will not be renewed unless the vehicle is less than 9 years old and it meets Euro 4 standard or higher.

- v) from 1 April 2020 all new licenced saloon vehicles will need to be zero or ultra-low emission vehicles.
- vi) from June 2022 to June 2024 all new Saloon Vehicles to be either Zero or Ultra-Low Emission (plug- in) or standard hybrids with emission levels of less than 120g/km of CO2.
- vii)by 31 December 2028 all licensed saloon vehicles will be zero or ultra-low emission vehicles.
- viii) by 31 December 2028 all wheelchair accessible vehicles will be zero or ultra-low emission as and when the market allows (this is subject to review in 2026).
- ix) by 31 December 2028, the City Centre will restrict access to zero and ultra-low emission licensed vehicles only.

3.6 Due to the current policy, the proposed amendment to policy does not impact age limits for Electric and Ultra-low emission vehicles.

3.7 The current recommendations are only applicable to current and newly licensed petrol, diesel and standard hybrid vehicles.

3.8 For currently licensed vehicles on the fleet. This includes;

- HCV; 49 saloon and 122 Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) and 46 standard hybrid vehicles
- PHV 28 standard hybrid vehicles and 38 petrol/ diesel Private Hire Vehicles (PHV)

3.9 A consultation was conducted between 4th August and 27th August 2023, to collect views to proposed vehicle age amendments (Appendix B). A total of 170 responses were received to survey in addition to 72 comments (8 comments were not in reference to current amendments)

3.10 82% of responders agreed to increasing maximum age limit for vehicles to be licensed from less than nine years old to less than 11

years.

- 3.11 75% of responders supported the removal of the requirement that any new vehicle licence will not be granted in respect of a vehicle unless it is less than four years old
- 3.12 The recommendation follows on from the councils previous, exemption to policy in which vehicles due for renewal between 19 July 2021 and 18 July 2023, that would otherwise be deemed too old to renewal, were granted 1 additional year on their vehicle. This was following the Covid pandemic to provide licence holders additional time to generate funds to purchase new vehicles.
- 3.13 Increasing the vehicle maximum age for vehicles to 11 years, will support with additional time to generate funds to purchase new vehicle. The vehicle will still be required to complete two certificates of compliance (COC) a year to ensure the vehicles safety.
- 3.14 Removing the 4 year minimum age limit for new vehicles, will increase the number of second hand vehicles available to purchase for proprietors. It will also support Hackney Carriage Vehicle proprietors in their search for vehicles which meet the council livery.
- 3.15 The majority of vehicles impacted by this change are HCV WAV (Paragraph 3.7), removing the 4 year age limit will increase purchase choice for those within the trade. Currently, there at 16 vacant plates (4 have been offered out) and 12 plates 'on hold' pending the purchase of a new vehicle as previous vehicle was too old to renew or vehicle written off. With more choice of vehicles and various price ranges, the council hope to increase the number of WAV on the road.

4) Implications

a) Financial Implications

There have been no council financial implications identified.

There will be financial implications for proprietors within the trade. For those owning current petrol and diesel vehicles and hybrid will be able to continue to license their vehicle for an additional 2 years, enabling them to save monies towards new vehicles.

Those looking to purchase new vehicles, will have more choice to select from other than vehicles only under 4 years of age.

b) Staffing Implications

There are no staffing implications.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An EQIA has been completed - Appendix C

d) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and Environmental Implications

The proposals have been assessed with a Nil rating, stating the proposal has no climate change impact. Rating is based on; this proposal will have more of an impact on wheelchair accessible vehicles. The current policy for zero emission/hybrid/ultra-low emission vehicles does not apply to WAV due to the WAV market.

e) Procurement Implications

No procurement implications

f) Community Safety Implications

All vehicles will still be required to meet all the mandatory mechanical fitness tests. Mechanical fitness checks in the form for Certificates of Compliance will be required to be competed twice a year.

5) Consultation and communication considerations

A public consultation was undertaken to seek comments and feedback from the trade and other stakeholders in relation to the proposed age limit amendments (Appendix B).

Consultation was held from 4th August 2023 – 27th August 2023.

Members of the trade were e-mailed advising of the consultation. Consultation was advertised in the council consultation platform Citizenlab.

A total of 170 (with 72 additional comments (8 of which were not in reference to current proposals) responses were received (Appendix B)

6) Background papers

- a) Cambridge City Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy
- b) Cambridge City Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Handbook
- c) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy: Licensing Committee Report – 17 October 2016
- d) Amendment to Environmental Consideration of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Policy – June 2022

7) Appendices

Appendix A – Summary of Petition from Cambridge city Licenced Taxis and Cambridge Taxi Drivers union

Appendix B – Consultation survey results

Appendix C – EqiA

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, tel: 01223 - 453833, email: wangari.njiiri@cambridge.gov.uk.