

AMENDMENT TO ENVIRONMENTAL CONSIDERATION OF THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE TAXI POLICY

To:

Licensing Committee 29/01/2024

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to consider the Environmental Considerations vehicles policy within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet and review the decision made with effect of June 2022 to allow saloon vehicles standard hybrids with emission levels of 120g/km of CO₂ until June 2024.
- 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 (less than 75g/km of CO₂)
 - Extended Range electric vehicles (E-REV) (less than 75g/km of CO₂)
- 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 Saloon Vehicles standard hybrids with emission levels of less than 120g/km of CO₂ were allowed to be licensed with effect of June 2022 until June 2024 when it would be reviewed.
- 1.7 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.
- 1.8 The Central Government Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) provides funding to support a rapid electric charging infrastructure for taxis.
- 1.9 Financial support for rapid charging infrastructure for taxis was committed by the City Council at Full Council in February 2016.
- 1.10 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.
- 1.11 However, due to Brexit and the pandemic and the crisis in Ukraine, the availability of such vehicles were becoming more difficult to obtain, and there was also a waiting period of up to a year to purchase those type of vehicles and therefore there was a need to build in flexibility into the policy to allow standard hybrids with emissions of less than 120g/km of CO₂.
- 1.12 This change was to be reviewed by June 2024.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are recommended to remove the inclusion of standard hybrids within the policy with emissions of less than 120g/km of CO₂ with effect of June 2024. The proposed Environmental Considerations part of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy is attached to this report as Appendix A.

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 The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as agreed at Licensing Committee in September 2023 for Environmental interventions within the taxi fleet is attached to this report as Appendix B.
- 3.5 One of the reasons that the amendment to the policy was introduced in June 2022, was due to the lack of availability of ultra low and zero emission vehicles.
- 3.6 Officers in the Licensing and Support team carried out a check on Auto-trader on 21st December 2023 and found the following:
- 414 Silver Saloon Electric vehicles (zero emissions) available nationally;
 - 350 Silver petrol plug in hybrid vehicles (up to 75g/km CO₂ emissions) available nationally;
 - 8000 non-silver electric vehicles available nationally;
 - 4742 non-silver petrol plug in hybrid vehicles (up to 75g/km CO₂ emissions) available nationally.

Further details and information on the search criteria and results can be seen in Appendix C.

- 3.7 As of the 20th December 2023, Cambridge City Council licensed 372 vehicles - 279 Hackney Carriages (HCVs) and 93 Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs).
- 3.8 Of these 372 vehicles, 83 are standard hybrid vehicles with emissions up to 120g/kg. 52 are HCVs and 31 are PHVs.
- 3.9 Out of the remaining 289 vehicles, it was established that 77 saloon type vehicles are petrol or diesel. 44 are HCVs and 33 are PHVs.
- 3.10 The current policy also has an age limit on vehicles and their ability to be licensed. Only vehicles under the age of 11 years will have its licence renewed.
- 3.11 Looking at the period between 1st July 2024 and 30th June 2026 only 10 vehicles would not have the licence renewed as they would be 11 years old and above.
- 3.12 Further information regarding the make up of the fleet and ages of certain vehicles can be found in Appendix C.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

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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) Net Zero Carbon, Climate Change and 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 as we will require emissions to be less than 75g/km 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 and 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

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A - Proposed Environmental Interventions table for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Policy

Appendix B - Current Environmental Interventions table for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Policy

Appendix C - Information relating to research carried out by Licensing and Support Team.

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Luke Catchpole, Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, tel: 01223 - 457818, email: luke.catchpole@cambridge.gov.uk.