

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

**To:**

Licensing Committee 24/06/2024

**Report by:**

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**Wards affected:**

All

## 1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to review the decision made by the Licensing Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 regarding the Environmental Considerations vehicles policy within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet. The decision made confirmed that as of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024, all saloon vehicle standard hybrids with emission levels of 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> would no longer be licensed by Cambridge City Council. This was in line with the decision made in June 2022 to allow standard hybrid vehicles to be licensed until June 2024.
- 1.2 The taxi trade have requested via a petition signed by 177 taxi drivers and 10 impact statements that the decision made on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 to be reviewed and for the licensing of standard hybrid vehicles to be extended past June 2024 to June 2026

## **2. Recommendations**

2.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are recommended:

- i) to confirm the decision made on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024 and remove the inclusion of standard hybrids within the policy with emissions of less than 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> with effect of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2024.
- ii) to note that 14 standard hybrid vehicles are affected by the policy from 1 July to 30 June 2026 – the date the trade have suggested to delay implementation.
- iii) to agree the Environmental Considerations part of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy as attached to this report as Appendix A.

## **3. Background**

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 This can only be achieved by intervening to ensure uptake of Ultra-low and Zero emission technologies within those vehicle fleets.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 Under the current policy, vehicles which are Ultra-Low emission are:
  - Plug in hybrid vehicles (less than 75g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>)
  - Extended Range electric vehicles (E-REV) (less than 75g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>)
- 3.5 Zero emission vehicles are those which emit no emissions during their operation. These vehicles are:
  - Electric only vehicles
  - Fuel cell vehicles (e.g. hydrogen)

- 3.6 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.
- 3.7 The Central Government Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) provides funding to support a rapid electric charging infrastructure for taxis.
- 3.8 Financial support for rapid charging infrastructure for taxis was committed by the City Council at Full Council in February 2016.
- 3.9 The Policy was implemented in 2018, and in April 2020 all new Licensed Saloon Vehicles were to be Zero or Ultra-Low Emission
- 3.10 However, due to Brexit, the pandemic, 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 to support the taxi trade there was a need to build in flexibility into the policy to allow standard hybrids with emissions of less than 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>.
- 3.11 Saloon Vehicles standard hybrids with emission levels of less than 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> were allowed to be licensed with effect of June 2022 until June 2024 when it would be reviewed.
- 3.12 A review took place and evidence indicated that the availability and waiting time to obtain electric or ultra-low emission vehicles had improved. In addition, the relative cost of electricity has been falling, which has improved the real or inflation adjusted cost of operating an electric vehicle.
- 3.13 On 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024, members of the Licensing Committee unanimously voted to remove the inclusion of standard hybrid saloon vehicles within the policy with emissions levels of less than 120g/km of CO<sub>2</sub> with effect of June 2024. A copy of the minutes from the meeting is attached to this report as Appendix B.
- 3.14 Following communications with the trade over this decision, members of the trade met with the Chief Executive, the chair of the Licensing

Committee and the Environmental Health Manager on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024 to discuss the decision made and the impact it would have on the trade.

3.15 Ahead of this meeting further information was collated by the Environmental Health Manager and this was presented at the meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024. The table of findings is attached to this report as Appendix C. A further search was carried out on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024 and showed the following average cost for the following vehicles:

- Electric; Nissan; Silver; 5,000 miles to 50,000 miles; 2013 onwards; **£12,819**
- Ultra-Low Plug In; Toyota; Silver; 5,000 miles to 50,000 miles; 2013 onwards; **£32,140**
- Standard Hybrid; Toyota Corolla; Silver; 5,000 miles to 50,000 miles; 2013 onwards; **£18,550**

3.16 At the meeting it was agreed that the trade would provide any further evidence which could give additional context about how this decision would impact drivers. The trade were given until 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024 to submit additional information.

3.17 By the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024, 10 impact statements had been provided. These statements are attached to this report as Appendix D. The main points raised in the impact statements are the financial difficulties that this decision would cause the trade and replicate the concerns raised in the petition. Some of the impact statements also question the effectiveness of ultra low vehicles compared to standard hybrid vehicles in regards the emissions and the actual impact this has on air quality.

3.18 Also by the 17<sup>th</sup> May 2024, a petition was received. The petition was signed by 177 taxi drivers, who strongly oppose the decision to extend the June 2024 deadline for standard hybrid vehicles due to the financial implications on drivers and their families. A copy of the petition is attached to this report as Appendix E.

3.19 South Cambridgeshire District Council have a section on Environmental Considerations as part of their Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy. Their policy states that all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles licensed by South Cambs will be zero or ultra-low emission by 1<sup>st</sup> December 2028. The same date is also set for all Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles to be zero or ultra-low emissions. This would tie in with our current policy of restricting City Centre Access to ultra-low and zero emission licensed vehicles only by December 2028. South Cambs currently licence around 1400 vehicles, with the vast majority being Private Hire Vehicles.

## **4. Implications**

### **a) Financial Implications**

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There are no financial implications for the Council.

### **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 CO<sub>2</sub> and polluting emissions as we will require emissions to be less than 75g/km of CO<sub>2</sub>.

### **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 – Minutes from Licensing Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

Appendix C – Table of Findings presented at meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Appendix D – Impact statements from trade

Appendix E – Petition from trade

## **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](mailto:luke.catchpole@cambridge.gov.uk).