



Chelmsford City Council Regulatory Committee

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Incentivising Electric Vehicles into the Taxi Fleet

Report by:
Director of Public Places

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Purpose

For Members to consider allocating a number of hackney carriage plates for the sole use of electric vehicles

1. Background

- 1.1. On 16th July 2019 Chelmsford City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency. To deliver the commitments set out within the declaration it was recognised that the Council must work with public service transport providers and regulated transport providers, such as taxis, to ensure that wherever possible vehicles used in Chelmsford are low emission and/or compliant with at least Euro 6 emission standards.
- 1.2 The Council's Taxi Licensing Policy, approved by the Regulatory Committee, contains a condition that states '*the Council may provide incentives, financial*

or otherwise, to encourage electric vehicles within the fleet. Such vehicles may be exempt from the requirement to be wheelchair accessible taking into account equality and diversity requirements.'

- 1.3 Electric vehicles directly impact, in a positive way, local air quality, although the additional initial expense compared to a petrol or diesel vehicle can be prohibitive.

2. Taxi Fleet

- 2.1 Chelmsford City Council operates a mixed fleet in respect of wheelchair accessibility, this takes into account user's different preferences for vehicles, with some elderly, less mobile users, finding saloon type cars easier to use. Saloon type cars are non-wheelchair accessible, and the Council currently limits the number of hackney carriages that can be non-wheelchair accessible to 76. Newly registered hackney carriage must be wheelchair accessible.
- 2.2 Currently, the fleet is approximately 55% wheelchair accessible and 45% saloon type vehicle.
- 2.3 Although common practice for a customer to use the first vehicle on a taxi rank they can chose to take another vehicle if they had a preference or need for a saloon or wheelchair accessible vehicle.

3. Proposal

- 3.1 To encourage electric vehicles into the fleet it is proposed to allocate up to 10 hackney carriage plates to operators.
- 3.2 There will be no requirement for the vehicles to be wheelchair accessible, this is for two reasons:
 - i. the current potentially prohibitive cost of a wheelchair accessible vehicle (approx. £60k).
 - ii. as saloon vehicles are cheaper to buy and operate and it is no longer possible to licence an additional vehicle the availability of these 'non-wheelchair accessible' hackney carriage plates should incentivise some operators to consider using a fully electric vehicle.
- 3.3 As saloon vehicles can no longer receive a hackney carriage plate, plate numbers 1 - 76 have a value to the operator that can be 'sold' within the trade. To prevent any potential profiteering from this initiative any plates issued to fully electric vehicles will not be able to be transferred to another operator for 10 years, although they can be replaced between vehicles owned by the operator as long as the new vehicle is fully electric.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Council recognised that to deliver the commitments set out within its Climate and Ecological Emergency declaration it must work with regulated transport providers, such as taxis, to ensure that wherever possible vehicles used in Chelmsford are low emission.
- 4.2 Fully electric vehicles have a direct positive impact on local air quality, but the high initial cost relative to fossil fuel alternatives can be a barrier to them being used as a taxi.
- 4.3 The release of up to 10 hackney carriage plates with no requirement for them to be wheelchair accessible may provide the necessary incentive for operators to incorporate them into their fleet.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 Allocate ten hackney carriage plates for the use of fully electric vehicles, the vehicles can be saloon type vehicles. No plate can be transferred to another operator within 10 years of being issued.

6. Options

- 6.1 Members can either:
 - i. Approve the recommendation
 - ii. Not approve the recommendation
 - iii. Approve an amended recommendation

List of appendices:

None

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: Positive impact on local air quality

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: Currently consulting with the Council's Access Officer

For new or revised policies or procedures has an equalities impact assessment been carried out? If not, explain why)

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:

Access Officer

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

Taxi Licensing Policy
