

## LOW EMISSION AND ELECTRIC LICENSED VEHICLES

REPORT OF: Tom Clark, Solicitor & Head of Regulatory Services

Contact Officer: Jon Bryant, Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Officer  
Email: [jon.bryant@midsussex.gov.uk](mailto:jon.bryant@midsussex.gov.uk) Tel: 01444 477076

Wards Affected: All

Key Decision No

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### Purpose of Report

- 1 To advise the Licensing Committee regarding the options available to encourage the use of low emission and electric vehicles as licensed vehicles.

### Summary

- 2 The purpose of this report is to consider the proposed implementation of incentives to support the uptake of Ultra-Low and Zero Emission vehicles within the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet.
- 3 If members are minded to adopt any of the incentives, then a timeframe will need to be set for implementation.

### Recommendations

- 4 **To seek the views of the committee on the introduction of licensed electric hackney carriages in the District.**
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### Background

- 5 Mid Sussex District's air quality is generally good but recently there has been a lot of media coverage about the impact of air pollution in the UK. Across the nation it is reported that poor outdoor air quality results in around 40,000 premature deaths a year from air pollution related illnesses and currently costs business and health care services around 20 billion pounds per annum. The main causes of pollution in towns and cities are nitrogen oxide and nitrogen dioxide (collectively referred to as nitrogen oxides), which are produced in the emissions from petrol and diesel vehicles. Diesel also produces minute 'particulates' that are harmful to health. Particulate matter comes not only from exhausts but also from tyres, brakes and road dust.
- 6 The 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. Taxi and private hire vehicles can be part of the solution, by showcasing the potential for low emission vehicles and 'normalising' their use to the thousands of passengers they carry each year.

- 7 Zero emission vehicles emit zero emissions in their life-cycle. The range of electric only vehicles is typically around 100 miles but this can be higher depending on the vehicle model and manufacturer. Electric vehicles require less maintenance than hybrid or conventional vehicles as they require little or no regular maintenance of their battery, motor or associated electronics. In addition there are fewer fluids to change and less moving parts. The regenerative braking system also means there is less wear and tear on the brakes.

Fuel cell vehicles typically have a range of up to 300 miles depending on the model and can be fuelled within quickly. As with purely electric vehicles they emit no emissions during their life-cycle.

Ultra-Low emission vehicles (Hybrid and E-REV) use a conventional engine to either act as an additional fuel source for the vehicle or as a fuel source for the battery. Hybrids and E-REV have lower CO<sub>2</sub> emissions as a result of improved fuel economy and the ability to operate in electric only mode. Typically CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are between 15-30% less than conventional models when not in electric only mode. Hybrid vehicles and E-REV's still have a combustion engine and therefore require a similar maintenance schedule as for conventional vehicles. As with electric only vehicles they often use a regenerative braking system which reduces wear and tear on the brakes.

- 8 There are a number of barriers to the introduction of electric and low emission vehicles. It is recognised that many proprietors buy vehicles as a long term investment, particularly taxi vehicles, the investment might be over 10 years and therefore there is a need to strike a balance between improving the emission standards, whilst still allowing time for drivers to make financial adjustments and decisions about vehicles that they may be purchasing in the near future.
- 9 The 10 year age policy for vehicles has recently been introduced which has meant a substantial investment for some drivers and the livery policy comes into force on the 1st October 2022 which will mean further expenditure for a section of the licensed trade. The 10 year vehicle age policy has already made a noticeable impact by reducing the number of older, more polluting vehicles from the fleet.
- 10 Although the price of electric vehicles has been falling they still present a significant investment for drivers additionally the government has recently reduced the grant available for the purchase of new electric vehicles.
- 11 There is currently very little infrastructure in the Mid Sussex area in respect of publically available rapid charging points for electric vehicles and it will be some time until there is sufficient coverage. Currently there are 4 charging points across the entire District which are located in public Car Parks. These are not in practical locations for licensed vehicles to use. The recent unmet demand survey showed that 90% of customers for the Hackney trade were from the three railway station ranks which are on private property. There are a few other charging points which are either on private railway car parks or at selected locations for the use of customers with a certain make of vehicle. These would not be available for licensed vehicles.
- 12 However currently WSCC is consulting on new parking policy to introduce charging point requirement, Sussex Air Quality Guidance requires large new

developments to include mitigation measures, of which EV charging infrastructure is key and MSDC now has an EV group to discuss strategy for charging points which should mean an improvement of charging availability in the future.

- 13 The Council has a limited influence over the types of car which taxi and private hire operators buy. However, the local authority could implement policies which may provide incentives for the take up of an Ultra-Low Emissions Vehicles (ULEV). These suggestions are detailed below:
- Following the unmet demand survey which was presented to Licensing Committee in May 2018 where it found that there is no significant unmet demand and therefore the limit on the numbers of hackney carriage vehicles remains at 154. Consideration could be given to licensing a further 15 saloon vehicles as hackney vehicles (10% extra) with the condition that the licence is an ULEV specific licence and can only be issued to these types of vehicles.
  - Southampton City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council offer a Low Emission Taxi Incentive Scheme which offers a cashback for the replacement of a more polluting Private Hire or Hackney Carriage vehicle with a low emission alternative. The cashback available is up to £3,000 for a full electric vehicle. Funding for this type of scheme would have to be found from Council funds.
  - Consideration could be given to applying different licence fee levels for different types of vehicles, to offer incentives to purchase newer and more eco-friendly vehicles, similar to how the road tax duties are calculated on emissions. However, it is not clear at this present time if it will be lawful to set the licence fee level based on the emissions of the vehicle.
  - Other authorities have introduced a vehicle emissions policy which restricts licensed vehicles to only those which can comply with Euro petrol and diesel emission standards. The current standard is Euro 6 which has applied to most new registrations from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2015. Consideration could be given to introducing these standards but the trade has already had a financial cost with the introduction of the 10 year age policy.

### **Policy Context**

- 14 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as amended, and the Transport Act 1985 places a duty on the Council to carry out its licensing functions in respect of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles.

### **Financial Implications**

- 15 None identified in this report. Any incentives or changes to the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle licensed by the council would need to be costed and considered by the Scrutiny Committee for Community, Housing and Planning.

### **Risk Management Implications**

16 None identified.

**Equality and customer service implications**

17 None identified within this report.

**Background papers**

18 None