

**Report to:** Licensing Committee

**Date:** 15<sup>th</sup> January 2024

**Title:** Supporting the transition to lower or zero emission vehicles in the taxi and private hire sector.

**Report of:** Chief Executive

**Ward(s):** All

**Purpose of report:** For Members to consider the results of the study into supporting the transition to lower and zero emission vehicles

**Officer recommendation:** (1) The Licensing Committee agrees that, the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, be amended so that new and relicensed vehicles defined by the Vehicle Certification Agency as low, hybrid, ultra-low or zero emission vehicles shall be age exempt

**Reasons for recommendations:** To support the transition to lower and zero emission vehicle

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## **1 Introduction**

- 1.1 Eastbourne Borough Council is responsible for the licensing of drivers, vehicles and operators in relation to the hackney carriage and private hire trade.
- 1.2 In exercising its discretion in carrying out its licensing functions, the Licensing Authority shall have regard to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance.
- 1.3 The current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance applies to all drivers, vehicles and operators and was implemented on the 4<sup>th</sup> April 2022.

## **2 Background**

- 2.1 On 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022 the Licensing Committee agreed that a taxi survey (referred to originally as a feasibility study) into all options to support the transition to low and zero emission vehicles be undertaken for the taxi and private hire sector in Eastbourne. The study took place between May to July 2023 across all authorities in East Sussex. The Energy Savings Trust were granted funding

from Defra for this activity on behalf of local authorities. There was no cost implication to Eastbourne Borough Council. 297 responses to the survey were received across East Sussex, 85% of engagement was from the taxi trade.

2.2 The results of the taxi survey undertaken for Lewes and Eastbourne are presented in Appendix 1. Members are asked to note that Page 8 of the results shows that hybrid vehicles are listed as popular vehicles for both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles.

2.3 The Department for Transport taxi and private hire best practice guidance has been recently updated on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2023. In relation to vehicle age the guidance states:

*“The setting of an arbitrary age limit may be inappropriate, counterproductive and result in higher costs to the trade and ultimately passengers. For example, a maximum age for first licensing may have adverse unintended consequences. A 5-year-old used electric vehicle will produce less emissions than a new Euro 6 diesel or petrol car – enabling the trade to make use of previously owned vehicles will assist it to transition more rapidly to zero emission vehicles and improve air quality.*

*Licensing authorities should not impose age limits for the licensing of vehicles instead they should consider more targeted requirements to meet their policy objectives on emissions, safety rating and increasing wheelchair accessible provision where this is low”.*

2.4 Members are advised that there are now 3 sites for charge points of vehicles in Eastbourne located at Hyde Gardens and Devonshire Park each with 6 publicly available chargers and at the Redoubt with 2 publicly available charge points. There are also a number of new private sites which can be found on zap-map.com. There are a number of different locations throughout Eastbourne which include supermarkets, petrol stations and public car parks there is estimated to be 10 rapid charging points and 18 fast charging points located throughout the town.

2.5 Eastbourne Borough Council continues to work in partnership with colleagues from East Sussex County Council in supporting the increased take up of electric vehicles.

2.6 Members are asked to note that plug in taxi grants are also available by government. The plug-in taxi grant is an incentive scheme which is designed to support the uptake of purpose built ULEV taxis. The scheme offers a discount on eligible taxis of up to a maximum of £7,500 or £3,00.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plug-in-taxi-grants-eligibility-and-applications/plug-in-taxi-grant-eligibility-and-applications>

### **3 Recommendations**

3.1 The following is the recommended change, at page 6 of the Guidance:

- For new and relicensed vehicles defined by the Vehicle Certification Agency as *Low Emission, Hybrid*, Ultra Low Emission Vehicles and Zero Emission Vehicles shall be age exempt. From 15 years of age onwards vehicles are subject to additional checks in the form of an annual emission certificate check and provision of an emission certificate.

### **4 Financial appraisal**

4.1 There are no financial implications with this report.

### **5 Legal implications**

5.1 The Legal Section considered this Report on 3 January 2024 (IKEN 12610-EBC-MW).

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

6.1 There are no implications around risk.

### **7 Equality analysis**

7.1 There are no implications around equalities.

### **8 Environmental sustainability implications**

8.1 This report supports a more sustainable environment and reduction of emission of vehicles.

### **9 Appendices**

9.1 Appendix 1 - Taxi Survey Results.

### **10 Background papers**

10.1 [Licensing Committee Report on Supporting the Transition to Low Vehicle or Zero Emission Vehicles - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2022](#)