

**Report to:** Licensing Committee

**Date:** 29th February 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 vehicles

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## 1 Introduction

- 1.1 Lewes District 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) to support the transition to low and zero emission vehicles be undertaken for the taxi and private hire sector in Lewes. The study took place between May to July 2023 across all authorities in East Sussex. The Energy Savings Trust was granted funding from Defra for this activity on behalf of local authorities. There was no cost implication to Lewes District 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 of 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 64 chargepoint (7kw fast) installed or scheduled to be installed in Lewes District Council carparks. Lewes District Council now have 5 sites for charge points of vehicles in Lewes District in Bay Bue Newhaven; Mountfield Road and Lower East Street in Lewes; Sutton Road and West Street in Seaford. There are five additional sites for Barcombe, Friars Walk and West Street (Needlemakers), Phoenix Causeway and Saxon Lane in Lewes which will be completed in 2024.

2.5 Lewes District 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 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Guidance, under section ‘Maximum age of vehicle’:

Recommended amended text to read:

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.

#### **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 8 February 2024 (Iken 12711-LDC-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 1. [Licensing Committee Agenda Reports Pack, 7 July 2022.](#)  
Specifically Item 7: Supporting the transition to low vehicle or zero emission vehicles in the taxi and private hire sector Report and Appendices (pages 9-102)