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# Helping West Berkshire Taxi Trade Go Greener

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Executive
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	22 September 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Steve Ardagh-Walter
<b>Date Portfolio Member agreed report:</b>	04 April 2022
<b>Report Author:</b>	Jenny Graham/Sean Murphy/Moira Fraser
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	EX4215

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 Members of the Licensing Committee are being asked to consider options available to the Council to assist the local taxi trade to 'go greener' and provide incentives to entice them to switch to ultra-low emission vehicles.
- 1.2 The discussion will also assist with formulating a response to the motion tabled at the 18 January 2022 Council meeting for the Executive to consider. The motion sought to introduce a fee based incentive scheme to help all forms of vehicles licensed by West Berkshire for public transport to go green.

## 2 Recommendations

The Licensing Committee are asked to:

- 2.1 **CONSIDER** the options set out in this report and **DISCUSS** any additional incentives to recommend to the Executive.

In particular the Committee are asked to consider:

- (a) Whether or not to agree that a fee based incentive (similar to that set out in paragraph 5.30) should be introduced in respect of the 2023/24 budget.

If so

- (i) If a subsidy should be in place for hybrid and or fully electric vehicles.
- (ii) What the level of subsidy should be.
- (iii) How long the subsidy should be in place for.
- (iv) What criteria will be applied to the subsidy.

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- (b) Whether Members would support the capping the cost of EV rapid charges for taxis licensed on our network (see paragraph 5.23) and if so where that cap should be set at and how this could be accommodated.
- (c) Whether Members would support providing access to free parking (paragraph 5.25) with charging points to assist drivers that could not charge their vehicles at home.
- (d) Whether Members would support a budget bid to provide cash grants to support the trade to purchase electric vehicles and if so the level of the grant and the timescales attached to it.
- (e) Whether or not Members would support a budget bid to purchase electric vehicles which would then be loaned to the trade.
- (f) Whether or not Members would support a budget bid to set up a fund so that the Council could act as a lender to the trade to purchase electric vehicles.

2.2 **CONSIDER** and if appropriate amend the response set out in paragraph 5.48 to the Helping West Berkshire Taxi Trade Go Greener Motion and provide a recommendation to the Executive to consider at the 22 September 2022 meeting.

### 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	<p>The financial implications of this report will depend on the range of options that Members propose to put forward. If any of these proposals are accepted by Members then they would need to form part of the budget setting process, and the prioritisation of these proposals would need to be considered against other Council priorities and the wider financial position that the Council faces when setting its budget.</p> <p>In respect of the response to the Motion it should be noted that discretionary fees and charges relating to licences and registrations are based on cost recovery, and should they not reflect the cost of providing the service, there is a risk of generating a surplus or deficit. If Members agree that the fees be modified the modifications would need to take the form of a subsidy which will need to be met from the Council's budget and not from the Public Protection Partnership's (PPP) budget.</p> <p>The financial implications of the report have been discussed with the S151 Officer and the Senior Finance Manager and advice has also been sought from external financial consultants.</p>

	<p>In respect of financial support the Council could offer to encourage the trade to purchase electric vehicles there are three main options:</p> <p>The Council could</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. buy the vehicles and lease them to the drivers;</li> <li>2. provide them with some form of grant (cash grant or loan) to subsidise them leasing or buying themselves;</li> <li>3. or providing a guarantee on a loan they take out and lower the cost by giving them access to the Council's strong credit position.</li> </ol> <p>There would be a number of financial and legal considerations that would need to be taken into consideration in respect of each of these options. The simplest approach is likely to be the provision of a cash grant (see paragraphs 5.36 to 5.41 of the report)</p>
<p><b>Human Resource:</b></p>	<p>There are no HR implications associated with the production of this report.</p> <p>If Members were minded to buy electric vehicles and lease those to the trade consideration would need to be given as to who would administer the scheme and what the resource implications of this decision would be.</p>
<p><b>Legal:</b></p>	<p><b>Fees for drivers licences</b></p> <p>Section 53 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976: "...a district council may demand and recover for the grant to any person of a licence to drive a hackney carriage, or a private hire vehicle, as the case may be, such a fee as they consider reasonable with a view to recovering the costs of issue and administration and may remit the whole or part of the fee in respect of a private hire vehicle in any case in which they think it appropriate to do so."</p> <p>Section 53 above therefore limits the cost of a driver's licence to the council's administration costs associated with the "...the Licensing Fees and Charges 2022/23 Report West Berkshire Council Licensing Committee 8 November 2021 grant to any person of a licence to drive a hackney carriage, or a private hire vehicle...".</p> <p><b>Fees for vehicle and operators' licences</b></p> <p>Section.70 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976: "...a district council may charge such fees for the grant of vehicle and operators' licences as may be</p>

	<p>resolved by them from time to time and as may be sufficient in the aggregate to cover in whole or in part:</p> <p>(a) the reasonable cost of the carrying out by or on behalf of the district council of inspections of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles for the purpose of determining whether any such licence should be granted or renewed;</p> <p>(b) the reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands; and</p> <p>(c) any reasonable administrative or other costs in connection with the foregoing and with the control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.”</p> <p>The licensing costs recoverable by a district authority in respect of vehicles and operators is limited to vehicle inspection costs for the specific purpose of determining their suitability to be licensed, reasonable cost of providing hackney carriage stands, reasonable administration costs for processing the licence application and finally reasonable costs associated with “...control and supervision of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.”</p>			
<b>Risk Management:</b>	<p>Fees are potentially subject to legal challenge. It is therefore important that the fees and methodology are subject to ongoing review.</p> <p>The Council would need to ensure that it did not confer an advantage on one organisation over another using Council resources (State Aid).</p>			
<b>Property:</b>	<p>There are no property implications associated with this report.</p>			
<b>Policy:</b>	<p>Any modification of the Licensing Fees will be undertaken in accordance with Section 53 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976</p> <p>Any relevant changes to policy will also be reflected in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy which is in the process of being updated.</p>			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				

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<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		No evident contribution to inequality in relation to this report. Any options put forward would need to take into consideration disabled people's use of taxis and private hire vehicles. Officers would also need to consider the impact that any proposals would have on any other people with protected characteristics.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		See above.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>	✓			If Members are minded to make changes to the vehicle fleet this might have a positive impact on the environment.
<b>Health Impact:</b>	✓			If Members are minded to make changes to the vehicle fleet this might have a positive impact on air quality which could then have a positive impact on the health of residents.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		✓		No impact.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		✓		The PPP's Website and Social Media outlets will be used to raise awareness of any opportunities for the trade to 'go greener'.
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	✓			Support businesses to start develop and thrive in West Berkshire.  Maintain a Green District.  Ensure sustainable services through innovation and partnerships.
<b>Core Business:</b>		✓		The Public Protection Service Delivery Plan 2021-23 acknowledges that all partner Councils have developed agendas

				around climate change and it therefore requires the PPP to work with taxi and private hire operators to encourage / incentivise the move to electric vehicles (EVs).
<b>Data Impact:</b>		✓		No impact
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	The Licensing Committee are asked to consider and discuss options around incentivising the local taxi trade to make the move to ultra-low emission vehicles. These options will be discussed with the Taxi trade at a Liaison Group meeting.			

## 4 Executive Summary

- 4.1 In April 2021, West Berkshire Council undertook a Private Hire and Taxi Driver Survey to understand driver work routines and interest in ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs). The survey of Private Hire and Taxi Drivers received 72 responses. Drivers shared their concerns around going electric and what incentives would encourage them to do so.
- 4.2 In accordance with Section 70 (1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council is required to undertake a statutory 28 day consultation when variations to operators and vehicle licence fees are proposed. This process is undertaken annually by the Public Protection Partnership (PPP). During the statutory consultation on the 2022/23 fees, which took place at the end of the 2021 calendar year, two responses were received requesting that the Council amend the fee structure to incentivise the taxi trade to move to Electric Vehicles (EVs).
- 4.3 In addition a Motion was tabled at the 18 January 2022 Full Council meeting urging the Council to introduce a licence fee scheme that would introduce a zero-licence fee tariff for any taxi that is powered fully by electricity and a 50% reduction of the licence fee for any taxi that can do a minimum of 50 miles on electric power before switching to fossil fuel.
- 4.4 This report seeks to consider the barriers raised by the trade to switching to ULEVs and possible incentives that the Council could introduce to encourage the trade to do so.
- 4.5 The incentives were discussed at a cross party Environment Advisory Group (EAG) meeting on the 04 April 2022. Members were supportive of identifying a range of options to incentivise the trade for discussion by the Licensing Committee albeit that they requested that input was sought from the Finance Team. Officers have met with Finance colleagues and advice has also been sought from external financial consultants Arlingclose Limited.

## 5 Supporting Information

### Introduction

- 5.1 The PPP has received a number of requests to look into options and incentives to encourage taxis to switch to more environmentally friendly vehicles in West Berkshire. Throughout the report taxis are taken to mean both hackney carriages (which are vehicles licences to ply for hire on ranks or that can be hailed in the street) and private hire vehicles (which are vehicles licensed by the Council which must be pre-booked). Licence fee refers to those fees associated with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licences, plus Private Hire Operators (PHO) licences for both new vehicles / operators and renewal of licences.
- 5.2 It was agreed, at Full Council in January 2022, that initial discussions on proposals relating to the motion tabled at that meeting should take place at the EAG. A report was considered at the 04 April 2022 meeting. Members were supportive of identifying incentives that might induce the trade to move to more environmentally friendly vehicles while recognising the barriers that the trade had raised about switching to ULEVs.
- 5.3 The EAG noted that there were some barriers that the Council could influence such as the local charging infrastructure network, taxi policy and fee based incentive schemes. Issues such as the cost and types of vehicles and the range the vehicles could cover were not something the Council could address. Officers were however asked to look into funding streams that could potentially be accessed to assist drivers with lease or purchase costs of vehicles or costs associated with installing charging points.
- 5.4 Full Council also agreed at the January meeting that the Licensing Committee should consider the response to the motion (see paragraph 5.48) before a final determination would be made by the Executive. Officers recommend that in addition to the response to the motion it would also be useful to address the responses to the consultation on fees and the wider issue of incentivising the trade to 'go greener' in a single report.
- 5.5 It should be noted that licence fees are set by the Joint Public Protection Committee on a cost recovery basis. It is then up to the partner authorities to determine if they wish to subsidise the fees in any way. These subsidies have to be met from the partner authority's budgets (in this case West Berkshire Council) and not those of the PPP. Any additional incentives would also need to be funded by the Council unless external funding streams can be identified.
- 5.6 A number of initial discussions and a consultation have already taken place with the trade to determine what their perceived barriers to switching are and what incentives might persuade them to make the changes.
- 5.7 Officers have looked at the types of initiatives that have been introduced in other authorities to see if any of them could usefully be employed in West Berkshire.

### Background

- 5.8 As at the 31 March 2022 the Council had granted the following number of licences:

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	Licence Type	No Issued
<b>Vehicle</b>	Hackney Carriage Vehicle	123
	Private Hire Vehicle	138
<b>Driver</b>	Dual Driver Licence*	184
	Private Hire Driver	100

\* WBC issues two types of drivers licence: either a dual licence which permits you to drive either HC or PH vehicle or a purely PH Drivers licence.

5.9 The Licensing Team cannot confirm the number of electric vehicles that are currently operated in West Berkshire as this information is not specifically recorded but there are at least four Private Hire vehicles operated by a company that only use EVs.

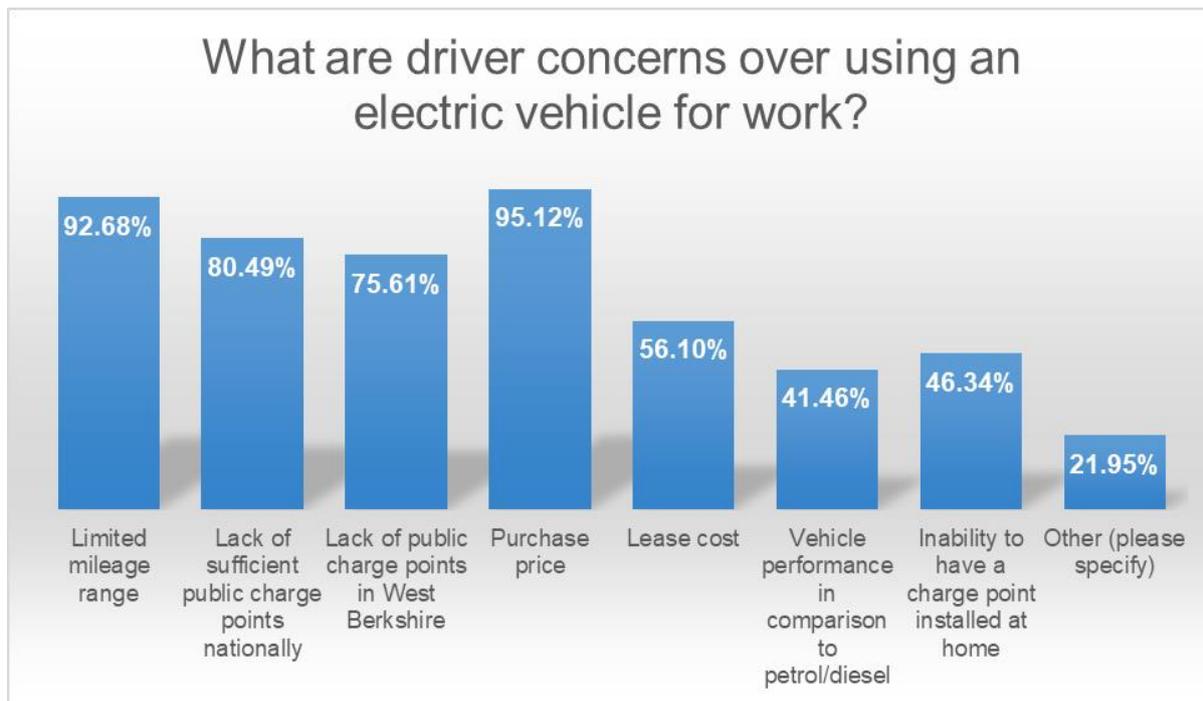
5.10 The following Fees and Charges were agreed at the Budget Council meeting in 2022:

Vehicle Licences	2022/23 Fee
Hackney Carriage Vehicle – New	£266
Hackney Carriage Vehicle – Renewal	£236
Private Hire Vehicle – New	£266
Private Hire Vehicle – Renewal	£236
<b>Driver Licences</b>	
Driver – New	£301
Driver –Renewal	£272

5.11 In April 2021, West Berkshire Council undertook a Private Hire and Taxi Driver Survey to understand driver work routines and interest in ULEVs. The survey of taxi drivers received 72 responses. Drivers shared their concerns around going electric and what incentives would encourage them to do so.

5.12 Of those that responded to the consultation over 83% of the drivers owned their vehicles, with the remaining drivers leasing. Nearly all drivers have diesel vehicles (nearly 95%), there were no electric vehicles and just one non plug-in hybrid respondent. Around 60% of respondents were intending to change vehicles within the next three years.

5.13 The survey highlighted the following reasons for not using an electric vehicle for work:



- 5.14 When asked what would incentivise using an electric vehicle, avoiding congestion charges, free/reduced parking, government grants and tax incentives were high on the list of reasons. Assistance with the upfront cost of the vehicle was also another frequently stated desirable incentive.
- 5.15 Detailed feedback on the survey of the taxi trade can be found at Appendix A to this report.
- 5.16 In accordance with Section 70 (1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council is required to undertake a statutory 28 day consultation when variations to operators and vehicle licence fees are proposed. This process is undertaken annually by the PPP. During the statutory consultation on the 2022/23 fees, which took place at the end of the 2021 calendar year, two responses were received requesting that the Council amend the fee structure to incentivise the taxi trade to move to electric vehicles. The full responses are set out in Appendix B to this report. Where objections are received the Licensing Committee is required to consider the comments received and then make a recommendation to full Council. It should be noted that fees are set on a cost recovery basis and the Council is not permitted to increase the fees for petrol and diesel vehicles to cover the cost of ULEV or EVs.
- 5.17 The consultation responses were discussed at the 31 January 2022 Licensing Committee where Members determined that the 2022/23 fees should be recommended to full Council without modification. The then Chairman, at the meeting indicated that he was however in favour of trying to incentivise the trade to move to greener vehicles where possible, using the levers available to the Council such as fees and the availability of fast charging points on taxi ranks within the district. He therefore requested that officers undertake the necessary research to propose a potential scheme that could be included in the 2023/24 fee setting process.

- 5.18 In addition a Motion was tabled at the 18 January 2022 Full Council meeting urging the Council to introduce a licence fee scheme that would introduce a zero-licence fee tariff for any taxi that is powered fully by electricity and a 50% reduction of the licence fee for any taxi that can do a minimum of 50 miles on electric power before switching to fossil fuel.
- 5.19 The motion proposed by Councillor Adrian Abbs and seconded by Councillor Lee Dillon is set out in full in Appendix C to this report.
- 5.20 The Chairman advised that Council would not debate the Motion at the Council meeting and, in accordance with Procedure Rule 4.9.8, this would be referred to the Environment Advisory Group for consideration as the detail of the Motion falls within the remit of the Executive. A report would be considered at the Environment Advisory Group, in consultation with the Licensing Committee, and the Executive and the outcome of that would be reported to Council. Officers are seeking a view from Members as to whether a fee based incentive should be introduced in respect of the 2023/24 budget.
- 5.21 The Councils [Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy](#) notes that the Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 with a stated aim of net zero emissions for the district by 2030. It recognises that transport emissions make up a large part of the districts overall emissions and that taking steps such as providing electric vehicle charging infrastructure, all road users passing through the district can be assisted with the switch to cleaner fuels.
- 5.22 The Strategy includes commentary that, in respect of the taxi trade initial efforts will focus around driver/operator engagement and information sharing, additional requirements to licences or incentives for ULEV use will later be considered. To kick start this process a driver education event, run by the Energy Saving Trust, was arranged by Officers on the 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021. The event comprised an online seminar covering all the key issues such as EV range, costs and recharging and also afforded the opportunity to test drive some vehicles. Officers will continue to seek out more opportunities for these type of engagement events.
- 5.23 There is a specific action within the ULEV Strategy for the Council to undertake infrastructure feasibility surveys for taxi ranks and these surveys are currently planned to be included as part of the next phase of the current EV Chargepoint installation programme. There is an external website called Zap Map (<https://www.zap-map.com/>) that is generally the accepted site to go to if you want to look up where public charge points are in an area. All the recent points installed by the Council are on there, as well as other points from private providers. An option to encourage the trade to switch could include capping the cost of EV rapid charges for taxis licensed on our network (Cambridge City Council have done this).
- 5.24 Anecdotal information suggests that installing rapid charging infrastructure is not straightforward and there are many significant constraints on locating chargers electricity supply critical amongst them. There is also some resistance from drivers who believe that in the long term they have a negative impact on battery life.
- 5.25 The taxi trade have commented that it needed to be recognised that not all drivers could charge vehicles at home when installing infrastructure. Access to free parking with charging points might assist this group of drivers. This would need to be discussed as

part of the recently launched Parking Strategy but there may be potential to look at this for overnight parking in specific Council public car parks that have charge points. This would present more of an issue during the day.

5.26 The trade also suggested that access to charging points should be free to all taxi drivers not only those licensed in an area as those that had travelled the furthest were most likely to need to be able to recharge their batteries. This would require national co-operation.

5.27 In addition to reviewing the regulatory framework to integrate emission considerations, including: licensing emission standards, low emission taxi ranks and procurement decisions the ULEV Strategy proposes

- Consideration of reduced licence fees for taxis;
- Consideration of introducing a requirement for a percentage of ULEVs in operators' fleets;
- Investigating the introduction of ULEV only taxi ranks.

5.28 A number of authorities have already introduced licence fee exemptions for zero emission vehicles and offered licence fee discounts for ultra-low emission vehicles (Malvern Hill District and Cambridge City Councils for example).

5.29 If Members are minded to implement a fee subsidy in West Berkshire they will need to agree what the level of subsidy should be, how long the subsidy should remain in place for and what the criteria should be. Most plug in vehicles that can be used for 'Private Hire' typically have 'theoretical' emissions less than 40g/Km CO2. Consideration could also be given to the inclusion of additional criteria such as 'electric only' range. 'Hackney Carriage' vehicles would be harder to deal with due to need to be wheelchair accessible and a lot of current low emission vehicles are not capable of being converted.

5.30 By way of an example should the Council be minded to fully subsidise the vehicle fees for a three year period for the first ten adopters each year of low emission capable Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles for or each of the next three years up to and ending on 31st March 2026 this would require a subsidy as set out below, which would also be subject to any annual adjustment to the fees:

2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
£2660	£2360	£2360		
	£2660	£2360	£2360	
		£2660	£2360	£2360
£2660	£5380	£7740	£4720	£2360

5.31 The introduction of a fee subsidy alone is however unlikely to convince the trade to switch to EVs given that their concerns locally referred to prohibitive cost of vehicles, the lack of choice, the range of vehicles being insufficient, the lack of infrastructure and the length of time to charge the batteries.

5.32 Some authorities have introduced schemes to assist the trade with purchasing or leasing new vehicles. Portsmouth City Council have for example introduced a [Clean Air Fund](#) offering financial support (up to £1,500 per vehicle) to help drivers upgrade or replace any non-compliant vehicles with cleaner, greener ones.

- 5.33 Oxford City Council have introduced a scheme (funded by Energy Superhub Oxford Project) which provides a £5000 grant for Oxford city licensed Hackney Carriage drivers to transition to an EV. The grant provides a contribution towards the costs of purchasing a new Ultra Low Emission Hackney Carriage.
- 5.34 Nottingham City Council have introduced a scheme whereby hackney carriage drivers are able to trial new electric vehicles. The Council bought the three vehicles (following a successful bid to the government's Early Measures Fund) and then a further three vehicles in January 2020. Drivers are able to loan the taxis for 30 days at a time. More information can be found at: <https://www.transportnottingham.com/driving/electric-taxi-trial/>. If Members are minded to support this approach other funding streams would need to be identified as this one off funding stream is no longer available.
- 5.35 While these city councils do not share the same demographics as rural West Berkshire they do highlight some options to explore albeit that they would require significant financial investment from the Council unless grant funding streams could be accessed. The taxi trade is also able to get a discount of up to £1500 on the price of brand new low-emission vehicles through the [Plug-in-Grant](#) which the government pays to vehicle dealerships and manufacturers on behalf of the purchaser. The grant has been extended until at least April 2024 for new electric taxis. There is also funding in this scheme to get a grant of up to £2500 towards the cost of converting a passenger vehicle into a wheelchair accessible vehicle. There are however limitations on the number of grants and the vehicles that it applies to.
- 5.36 One of the options put forward at the Taxi Trade Liaison Group was around making use of existing partnerships for providers of electric vehicles. Should Members be minded to explore these options and agree a scope the financial implications would be clarified. Locally the trade have also commented that a scheme where the Council purchased the vehicles and leased the EVs to the trade might make the scheme more attractive to them.

### Financial and Policy Considerations

- 5.37 If Members are minded to consider proposals around buying, leasing or providing grants to the trade to procure electric vehicles there are a number of financial, resource and legal considerations that will need to be taken into account. More detailed advice will be sought if a preferred option is put forward.
- 5.38 If, for example, it was agreed that the Council would procure electric vehicles and then lease them back to the trade Officers would need to establish what, if any credit licences the Council will need. There are also a few complex accounting elements that will need to be factored in depending on whether an operating lease or a finance lease would be put in place. Credit losses would have to be considered as part of the financial management around the scheme. In addition additional resources are likely to be needed to administer and manage the scheme. The Council could opt to act as an intermediary and make use of a professional leasing company but this would require a high degree of caution as there are rules around acting as an intermediary in this way.
- 5.39 The Council could also act as a lender and while this would negate some of the complex accounting and requirements around asset management of the scheme the Council

would need to seek legal advice around a number of issues including the ramifications of providing credit.

- 5.40 The financial advice received suggests that the simplest option might be to provide operators with a cash grant. This use of finances would need to weigh up any benefits to the Council and its residents and businesses against other schemes which would contribute to the green agenda. If Members were minded to pursue this option careful consideration would need to be given to the conditions associated with the grant.
- 5.41 If Members decided that the best option would be to provide a guarantee, it should be noted that Council is only permitted to guarantee up to 80% of the total value of the loan, and the expected value of the guarantee would need to be included in the annual accounts.
- 5.42 One of the concerns raised at the EAG meeting was around state aid. This is something that would need to be considered in respect of all three options. However, this is unlikely to be a large barrier as there is a general carve out for dealing with individuals, and a de minimis of £300,000 per rolling three year period per operator.
- 5.43 The Council is in the process of amending its Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy. The draft policy is included as a discussion item on the Licensing Committee agenda. The draft policy includes a requirement that all vehicles must meet the Euro 5 or Euro 6 emissions standards if they are being submitted for grant or renewal of a licence.
- 5.44 The trade have commented that EVs cannot easily be converted into wheelchair accessible vehicles. An option that could be explored would be a change in policy requirements around Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles in the Hackney Carriage Fleet where for example this requirement could be removed for a percentage of the fleet where the vehicles were replaced with EVs. Members are encouraged to submit responses to the consultation on the draft policy prior to its adoption later in the year.
- 5.45 Any changes would however have to take into consideration requirements of existing equalities legislation. It should also be noted that on 28 June, the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022 (“The 2022 Act”) took effect in England, Scotland, and Wales. It will amend the Equality Act 2010 to introduce new, and amend existing, duties for local authorities and taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers and operators. The 2022 Act is designed to ensure that disabled people can use taxi and PHV services with confidence that they will not be discriminated against. More information about the impact of this legislation is set out in the Annual report which is also on this agenda.
- 5.46 A new report, [A Fare Shake: Reforming Taxis for the 21st Century, from the Adam Smith Institute](#) argues that the Government should move to overhaul current taxi cab legislation, creating a more dynamic and equitable sector to better serve the needs of Britons as they get moving after Covid. They also recommend the introduction of policies offering incentives for hackney carriage and private hire drivers to switch to green vehicles through offering discounts on green vehicles, and raising capital through a Green Taxis and PHVs Fund to subsidise faster transition away from combustion engines.

5.47 The Licensing Committee is asked to consider the options put forward and suggest any additional options that Officers could explore.

### Response to the Motion

5.48 In light of the discussion at the EAG meeting the following responses to the requests set out in the motion are proposed:

Motion: The Council Commits to:	Response
Introducing the subsidised incentive scheme within next year's budget.	Officers are proposing that a fee based incentive scheme be introduced from 01 April 2023. The Licensing Committee is asked to consider and agree the parameters, scope and duration of the scheme.
Providing (where practical) fast charging points next to taxi ranks to remove range anxiety for taxi drivers.	The Environment Delivery Team have a target to install Chargepoints in approximately 25 car parks this financial year so this will be a significant undertaking and impact on ability to consider taxi ranks as well. Depending on feasibility studies it may be that rapid charging points are installed in Public Car Parks, instead of or alongside fast chargers.

### Proposals

5.49 It is proposed that Members consider the introduction of an exemption/subsidy to vehicle licence fees for EVs or ULEVs. The level of subsidy, duration of the scheme, what criteria should be adopted and how the subsidy should be funded will need to be specified. The level of subsidy set out in paragraph 5.30 would not create a significant financial burden to the Council.

5.50 Infrastructure feasibility surveys for taxi ranks to be undertaken and reported back to the EAG and Licensing Committee.

5.51 A consultation event be arranged with the Taxi Trade to consult on any proposals put forward.

## 6 Other options considered

6.1 The report sets out a range of options that members might wish to consider. Other options may be suggested by Members at the meeting for Officers to explore.

6.2 Although current government policy and incentives appear to be tied to electric vehicles as the answer to transport emissions, the Council should not lose sight of the fact that there are other potential solutions out there that over time, as technology and

infrastructure develops, may provide alternative means of ‘greening’ the district’s taxi vehicle fleet, e.g. Hydrogen.

## 7 Conclusion

- 7.1 Ongoing meaningful consultation with the trade is essential to the successful outcome of this project. It should be noted that while the number of electric car models priced under £35k has increased by almost 50% since 2019 the purchase of an EV would still constitute a significant financial outlay for the trade at a time when they have had to contend with the ramifications of the Covid pandemic and then more recently the increasing cost of fuel. The latter might however be seen as a driver for change. It will therefore be important to put together a basket of measures to incentivise the trade to help the Council achieve its stated aim of aim for net zero emissions for the district by 2030.
- 7.2 There is an expectation that as the second hand market grows used EVs will also become available at lower prices which could also be a determining factor for the trade.

## 8 Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix A – Feedback on the Private Hire and Taxi Driver Survey (ULEV)
- 8.2 Appendix B – Responses to the Annual Fee Consultation
- 8.3 Appendix C – Motion to Council

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### Background Papers:

None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

- The item is due to be referred to Council for final approval
- Delays in implementation could have serious financial implications for the Council
- Delays in implementation could compromise the Council’s position
- Considered or reviewed by Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee or associated Task Groups within preceding six months
- Item is Urgent Key Decision
- Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All

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