

LICENSING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 4
18 JUNE 2015	PUBLIC REPORT

Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor North, Cabinet Member for Communities and Environment Capital	
Contact Officer(s):	Regulatory Officer Ian Robinson	Tel. 453541

PROPOSED VARIATION OF PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Licensing Dept. Regulatory Officer Ian Robinson	Deadline date: N/A
<p>1. To consider a variation of private hire vehicle requirements (highlighted in bold) to permit the licensing of hybrid or electric vehicles (EVs).</p> <p>2. To consider the removal of the 1300cc stipulation.</p> <p>3. To amend the aforesaid private hire vehicle requirement 1(c) accordingly to read:</p> <p>1(c) The cubic capacity of the engine is not less than 1300cc, unless the vehicle in question is a diesel "Fortwo" Smart Car, or alternatively powered by electricity or hybrid technology.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">or</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Remove private hire vehicle requirement 1(c) altogether.</p>	

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

1.1 This report is submitted to the Committee following a referral from the Licensing Department.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 This report has been submitted to allow the Committee to consider under its Terms of Reference No. 2.5.1.1a) "hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licensing" and 2.5.1.4 namely "To approve (and periodically review) the standard conditions to be attached to any licence/permit/consent issued by the Council".

2.2 The council has received an approach from a licensed operator to amend our requirements to enable him to licence a Nissan Leaf electric vehicle (EV) as a private hire. The conditions, as they stand are out of date and refer to a minimum engine size of 1300cc. As an EV, the vehicle's capacity is not measured by cc. Rather than return to committee with each and every new vehicle appearing on the market, it is anticipated to amend the requirements to allow for new technologies.

3. TIMESCALE

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If Yes, date for relevant Cabinet Meeting	N/A
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4. MAIN BODY OF REPORT

- 4.1 One of our licensed Operators is committed to being Peterborough's first truly environmentally friendly private hire company, advertising that his vehicles produce the lowest emissions. He currently operates Toyota Prius and Mercedes Hybrids and now wishes to expand his fleet to include a Nissan Leaf, a fully electric vehicle (EV).
- 4.2 As it currently stands the Operator would be prevented from licensing the vehicle as the vehicle requirements state:
- 1(c) The cubic capacity of the engine is not less than 1300cc, (unless the vehicle in question is a diesel "Fortwo" Smart Car).**
- 4.3 The conditions (**Appendix A**) currently assume that licensed vehicles will be powered by liquid petroleum or diesel fuel, with a minimum engine size of 1300cc, thereby prohibiting by default any other means of power, such as hybrids or EVs. The conditions therefore require updating to accept new technological developments. It is anticipated that the committee would wish for all other criteria to remain the same to ensure the vehicle still has suitable ingress and egress and the same comfort level. The 1300 cc engine size requirement ensured the licensed vehicles were sufficiently powerful to enable them to undertake the role, whilst ensuring the customer was afforded the necessary comfort. It is acknowledged that the motor industry has improved both economy and engine efficiency, although the committee may still feel that the 1300 cc engine capacity is relevant to ensure the vehicle is fit for purpose and should remain in place.
- 4.4 Our strategic priorities include the desire to create the UK's environment capital. With that in mind, any request to license more environmentally friendly vehicles as a taxi or private hire vehicle should be encouraged. The Nissan Leaf, as with other EVs produce no direct CO₂ emissions, and as electricity can be produced from sustainable sources, these vehicles can be considered to be extremely environmentally friendly.
- 4.5 Electric taxis / private hires are currently already operating throughout Europe, which includes UK firms. A number of authorities including Nottingham, Cornwall, Blackpool, Blyth and Wigan have already amended their conditions to allow the licensing of EVs. The Council itself have invested in a number of EVs, used by our Civil Enforcement Officers and as pool vehicles for council staff.
- 4.6 The Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) offer support and grants to local businesses considering the addition of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV). This support /funding coupled with the savings on vehicle excise duty and fuel, makes it understandable that a local private hire firm has expressed an interest in licensing an EV. The council are also currently looking at the feasibility of grants and subsidies for this type of vehicle and the possibility of reduced licensing fees to encourage their uptake.
- 4.7 The Licensing Department would not wish to remove the requirements laid down in paragraph 4.2, as they serve to ensure the private hire fleet provides a level of comfort and safety to the passenger. It is anticipated that the committee would amend the vehicle requirements to allow the licensing of EVs and other new hybrid technology.
- 4.8 The Government's guidance regarding the specification for vehicle types that may be licensed states: "the legislation gives local authorities a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can licence as taxis or private hire vehicles. The appropriate paragraph from these guidelines is attached to the report as **Appendix B**.
- 4.9 It is acknowledged that EVs still have a limited range. Nissan state the Leaf's range is around 124 miles on a full charge, although Peterborough's Travelchoice indicate the council Leafs are averaging around 80 miles per charge. The Operator anticipates installing a 30A or 63A charger, with charging times of 2-4 hrs and 1-3 hrs respectively, the

council themselves have installed a number of charging points around the city and there are fast charging points at the Nissan dealers in Bretton and A1/A605 services, which offer an 80% charge in 30 minutes. OLEV state by the end of 2014 there was a rapid charge point at every motorway service station and a network of over 500 rapid chargers across the country by March 2015. In researching the feasibility of using an EV as a private hire, the operator has driven a Leaf to Stanstead Airport and back, utilising a 30 minute rapid charger at a motorway service station, although it is highly likely that the Leaf would be used locally.

5. CONSULTATION

- 5.1 The Peterborough Hackney Driver Federation.
All Peterborough Private Hire Operators
Notification placed on council website.
Sara Thompson, Passenger Transport Operations, Peterborough City Council.
Travelchoice
Amey
Greater Peterborough Partnership
Peterborough Environmental City Trust
- 5.2 The Consultation Letter and single response originating from it can be found in **Appendix C.**

6. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES

- 6.1. It is anticipated that Members of the Licensing Committee will approve the recommendations, amending the vehicle requirement to facilitate the licensing of electric and hybrid vehicles.

7. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 As detailed in paragraphs 2 – 2.2.

8. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 8.1 The committee may decide not to amend and retain the current private hire vehicle requirements. However that would appear to be a contradiction of our strategic priorities i.e. the desire to create the UK's environment capital.

9. IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 There is no direct financial impact on the council and the potential environmental benefits would support the Council environmental commitment.
- 9.2 Should the Committee decide not to amend and retain the current requirements, the Operator could appeal against the decision to the Magistrates Court within 28 days of the decision being made.
- 9.3 There are no equalities impact arising from any decision relating to the content of this report. An initial Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and attached as **Appendix D.**

10. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985)

Section 48(1&2) Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (attached).

Peterborough City Council Private Hire Vehicle requirements (Condition 1c).

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