

CLLR INCH			X
CLLR JAMES	X		
CLLR McGEOUGH			
CLLR McKENZIE	X		
CLLR WISEMAN	X		

(Vote: For 5, Abstentions 2)

Councillor McGeough JOINED the meeting.

Matters Arising

Minute 73 – Consideration of the Forward Plan

Councillor Bushby requested an update on the signage for the taxi feeder rank on the quay. The Lead Licensing Officer reported that this had been discussed with the relevant officers, however, there had been delays due, amongst other things, to pending resurfacing works to the quay, which had not yet been costed.

This was not considered a satisfactory response to the need for signage. The Lead Licensing Officer will revisit the action and provide the members with a written response before the next meeting of the Licensing Committee.

76. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Members were reminded that declarations of interest should be made as and when the specific agenda item to which they related was under discussion.

77. AGREEMENT OF AGENDA ITEMS PART I AND II

There were no Part II items.

78. URGENT MATTERS OF INFORMATION TO BE BROUGHT FORWARD WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CHAIR AND THE COMMITTEE

There were no urgent matters.

79. REVIEW OF TAXI POLICY

The Lead Licensing Officer advised that an informal consultation with the taxi trade had been undertaken during February. Response had been low so the deadline had been extended until 12 March. The primary areas of concern had been the proposal around vehicles with reduced emissions and the financial impact this would have in light of the difficult year the taxi trade had experienced because of Covid.

The results of the consultation with the Councillor Climate Emergency Working Group were set out in Appendix B of the report. The Lead Licensing Officer had also spoken with the Taxi Driver Liaison Group who had echoed the concerns of the trade with regard to the proposed timescale for the introduction of the restrictions in relation to carbon emissions together with the lack of infrastructure and indeed on reflection of the poor year of trading.

Other points for consideration:

Safeguarding – There were concerns about whistle-blowing as drivers are easily identifiable by their name badge and licence plate, and this might lead to repercussions. The Lead Licensing Officer pointed out that the policy does state the information is confidential, but drivers needed reassurance.

It was noted that the 48 hour notification requirement was the statutory standard. The Lead Licensing Officer was reluctant to move away from this to 72 hours but offered assurance that e-mails sent in over a weekend but not opened until the Monday were deemed to be within the 48 hours.

Dress Code – Some drivers wear shirts and t-shirts and whilst the policy clearly states the parameters for this type of clothing it might need tighter enforcement or further review. To be further considered at policy review.

The next stage of the process is the formal review which will commence on 1 April and the consultation will run for 8 weeks. The Lead Licensing Officer directed members to Appendix B which provided the proposed items for consultation.

Members discussed the responses to the informal consultation and the proposal for the formal review. Members acknowledged that it had been a difficult year and commented that electric vehicles are very expensive. In order to help finance alternative vehicles, it was suggested that consideration could be given to:

- Discounted licence charges for electric and hybrid vehicles.
- The authority purchasing a few vehicles for drivers to trial.
- The authority providing loans or grant funding for the purchase of electric vehicles.

To assist with the infrastructure problems, an electric charging point could be provided at the taxi rank.

It was noted that the new taxi charges had not been updated on the website – The Lead Licensing Officer will double check and update as required.

Following the debate the Lead Licensing Officer and the Head of Legal & Governance & Monitoring Officer provided clarification as follows:

- If a vehicle trial scheme were to be considered it would need to clearly state the scheme is open to all and whether to operate such a scheme; or whether to offer loans would be a consideration for Full Council.

- The proposals from the Councillor Climate Emergency Working Group were suggestions for inclusion in the consultation document and not items to be implemented necessarily.
- The deadlines of April 2026 and April 2030 fitted with government policy but there was potential for change in respect of the April 2022 deadline.
- The authority dealt with 3 types of licence application – brand new people with new vehicles; renewals from existing (annual) and sometimes drivers applied to change a vehicle. Although complicated, it might be possible to implement the 2022 deadline in respect of new people with new vehicles but exclude existing drivers needing to replace vehicles. Alternatively, the deadline could be pushed out to 2023 with a review in 6 or 12 months.
- The Lead Licensing Officer told the committee that the government had provided grant funding in relation to clean air schemes. He will do some research to see if there is anything similar available.
- As the Licensing Department is self-funding, discounting licence charges might prove difficult.

It was proposed by Councillor Bushby, seconded by Councillor McGeough and –

Resolved:

That the following sentence be removed from the proposed items for consultation, as detailed in Appendix B -

From January 2022, all vehicles being licensed for the first time must meet or exceed Euro 6 emissions standard (or recognised UK equivalent).

A recorded vote was taken.

COMMITTEE MEMBER	FOR	AGAINST	ABSTAIN
CLLR BRIGHT	X		
CLLR BUSHBY	X		
CLLR CLARKE			
CLLR HACKETT	X		
CLLR HAMES			
CLLR INCH	X		
CLLR JAMES	X		
CLLR McGEOUGH	X		
CLLR McKENZIE	X		
CLLR WISEMAN	X		

(Vote: For – unanimous)

80. CONSIDERATION OF THE FORWARD PLAN

To be added:

Response from taxi drivers and any information relating to grant funding for electric vehicles.

The meeting commenced at 10.00 am and closed at 10.33 am.

Chair:

Date: