
Taxi Strategy – progress update

Neighbourhood Services Scrutiny Commission

Decision to be taken by: n/a

Meeting on: 12 January 2023

Lead director/officer: Sean Atterbury

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: All
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- Report version number: 1

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Taxi Strategy was confirmed on 29 April 2022 but has not yet been published on the council's website. The strategy describes the council's vision for the taxi trade in the city. It sets the overall tone for taxi licensing in the coming years and will steer policy development.
- 1.2 Some aspects of taxi licensing require further consultation before they are taken forward, such as the possible introduction of CCTV in licensed vehicles.
- 1.3 As the strategy is not currently published on the website there is the opportunity to further review the new work undertaken between April and October 2022 focussed on both the hackney and private hire industries.
- 1.4 Vehicle licensing impacts on air quality and therefore policies on vehicle age and emissions will be tied to Climate Change proposals.

2. Recommended actions/decision

- 2.1 Scrutiny is asked to:
 - a) note that a new action has been added to the action plan to reflect our commitment to annually review the hackney fares structure to ensure that charges reflect the cost of operation, and
 - b) note the report.

3. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

- 3.1 The taxi strategy was prepared in consultation with Cllr Clair, DCM for Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services and following separate consultation with the public and with stakeholders on various proposals for taxi drivers, vehicles and private hire operators flowing from the overarching strategy.
- 3.3 Cllr Clarke, DCM for Environment and Transportation was also consulted on the strategy.

4. Background and options with supporting evidence

- 4.1 The Taxi Strategy was confirmed on 29 April 2022 but has not yet been published on the council's website. The strategy describes the council's vision for the taxi trade in the city. It sets the overall tone for taxi licensing in the coming years and will steer policy development.
- 4.2 Some aspects of taxi licensing require further consultation before they are taken forward, such as the possible introduction of CCTV in licensed vehicles.
- 4.3 As the strategy is not currently published on the website there is the opportunity to further review the new work undertaken between April and October 2022 focussed on both the hackney and private hire industries.
- 4.4 Vehicle licensing impacts on air quality and therefore policies on vehicle age and emissions will be tied to Climate Change proposals.

5. Detailed report

- 5.1 The Taxi Strategy document is attached at **Appendix A**.

5.2 The vision in the Taxi Strategy is: “... for the hackney and private hire sectors to provide a safe and superb customer service within an integrated sustainable transport system, whilst contributing to the economy with minimal environmental impact.”

5.3 The strategy sets out the role of the licensing authority and states that the council will apply its taxi policies with a clear focus on ensuring a safe and suitable taxi service within the city.

5.4 Progress on the actions is shown in the table below:

	Action	Target date	Notes	Reviewed Target
1	Clear comprehensive standards for drivers and operators	July 2022	<p>In progress Work has begun to develop initial proposals for comprehensive driver standards. Information has been collated to inform standards. There is a significant amount of work to bring all aspects to fruition.</p> <p>Next steps</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DBS update service • Consider medical provider • Update pre-licensing training • Update policy on convictions • Knowledge test to be combined with practical driving assessment • DBS for PH Operator staff • Provision of post-licensing information 	July 2023
2	Updated vehicle conditions of fitness that are environmentally and economically sustainable	July 2022	<p>In progress A new draft of the vehicle conditions of fitness is being developed.</p>	March 2023
3	Elected taxi driver and operator representatives on a Consultation forum administered by Leicester City Council	July 2022	Completed July 2022	
4	Open and easy access to our driver and vehicle records for police and licensing authorities	July 2022	<p>Completed July 2022 LCC is now signed up to the National Register of Refusals and Revocations</p>	
5	Commitment to joined up operations	July 2022	<p>Ongoing commitment We are working with the City of Wolverhampton Council and licensing authorities in the county and will continue to work with colleagues in the East</p>	Ongoing

			Midlands through the life of the strategy.	
6	Cashless payment option in all Leicester City Council licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles	Aug 2022	In progress The cost of card machines has been factored into hackney fares and now that these have been implemented (Nov 2022) this will be progressed.	March 2023
7	Arrangements for the sharing of statutory powers to regulate 'out of town' drivers	Oct 2022	In progress This work is ongoing. Closer relationships with Wolverhampton have been developed at both strategic and officer levels. Joint compliance operations are ongoing. Colleagues in Leicestershire are interested in being involved too and an officer meeting is pending.	March 2023
8	Explore opportunities for shared services in taxi licensing and regulation	Oct 2022	In progress This piece of work will commence from October 2023 following the establishment of firm partnerships / close working arrangements with other East Midlands authorities.	March 2025
9	Enhanced arrangements for training and development of officers in Leicester and Leicestershire	Oct 2022	Delayed Planned to commence from March 2023	October 2023
10	Online application/renewal/booking and payment arrangements, and communication [as the norm]	Mar 2023	In progress The main application types are online and bookings for vehicle inspections are online. Other application types are on hold pending implementation of new software.	June 2023
11	Highway use benefits for hackney cab vehicles licensed by Leicester City Council	Aug 2023	This action to allow wheelchair accessible vehicles to use bus lanes is planned for commencement in 2023.	Aug 2023
12	An exercisable choice between booking an ultra-low emission vehicle or diesel vehicle	Mar 2025	In progress Work on this action is ongoing in liaison with colleagues in Transport Strategy. This is in connection with the introduction of ultra-low / zero emission vehicles in the city and is linked to the Climate Emergency action plan.	Mar 2025

13	A choice between wheelchair accessible hackney and private hire vehicles	Mar 2025	Long term action	Mar 2025
14	All licensed vehicles have GPS and CCTV	Mar 2025	Long term action	Mar 2025
15	Taxi strategy fully implemented	Mar 2025	Long term action	Mar 2025
16	Hackney carriage fares		Initial review of hackney carriage fares and a commitment to annual reviews to represent the real cost of the industry.	October 2022

- 5.5 There have been resourcing challenges that have added some pressure on meeting the strategy targets. However, most objectives have been completed or are underway and due for completion within the target set.
- 5.6 Some targets are linked to other key LCC workstreams and the ability to achieve the desired outcome within the target is influenced by new developments and policy. For example, the links to air quality/climate challenge and emission standards, the developing links with the City of Wolverhampton Council and the potential for shared services within the county.
- 5.7 The targets have been reviewed to ensure that progress is measured against realistic timescales but within the overall implementation target for the strategy.
- 5.8 It is proposed that the revised targets replace the original targets when the document is published.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

There are no direct financial implications of the strategy for the Council. Detailed aspects of the strategy may result in additional costs in carrying out licensing activities, and this would need to be reflected in the licensing charges in due course. Any additional requirements placed on drivers and/or operators could increase the cost of providing a taxi service, and, consequently, taxi fares.

Stuart McAvoy – Acting Head of Finance, Ext. 4004

6.2 Legal implications

The purpose of the taxi strategy is to protect the public. That is Leicester City Council's overriding duty when carrying out its functions in relation to taxi licensing. On taking account of all relevant considerations, it is for the Council to reach its own decisions on overall policies and strategies.

John Moss, Legal Services 373010

6.3 Equalities implications

When making decisions, the Council must comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) (Equality Act 2010) by paying due regard, when carrying out their functions, to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between people who share a 'protected characteristic' and those who do not.

In doing so, the council must consider the possible impact on those who are likely to be affected by the recommendation and their protected characteristics.

Protected groups under the Equality Act 2010 are age, disability, gender re-assignment, pregnancy/maternity, marriage and civil partnership, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

Whilst the Taxi strategy is a strategic overarching document setting out the role of the licensing authority and how the council will apply its taxi policies. The actions listed for progressing the various strands of the strategy will be used to monitor delivery and track progress, and equality considerations should be embedded throughout these. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) are carried out as appropriate on identified areas, for example where aspects of taxi licensing will require further consultation before they are taken forward, such as the possible introduction of CCTV in licensed vehicles, etc, to ensure any impacts are identified and addressed, and mitigating actions put in place.

The equality impact assessment is an iterative process that should be revisited throughout the decision-making process and updated to reflect any feedback/changes due to consultation/engagement as appropriate.

Sukhi Biring, Equalities Officer, 454 4175

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Transport is responsible for around 25% of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019, and it's aim to achieve carbon neutrality, addressing transport-related emissions is a vital part of the council's work. This is particularly important in those areas where the council has influence, including through its licensing activities.

This is reflected within the Taxi Strategy, which sets out the ambitions for Leicester to have an efficient and sustainable taxi trade, and features low emission services as one of the five strategic objectives. This includes two of the actions, around enabling a choice of an ultra-low emissions vehicle and updating vehicle conditions of fitness to be environmentally sustainable. Further opportunities to support these aims should be considered as appropriate, for example through engagement activities to provide or refer drivers to grants and guidance on the purchase of low emission vehicles.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

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7. Background information and other papers:

8. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Taxi Strategy

9. Is this a private report (If so, please indicate the reasons and state why it is not in the public interest to be dealt with publicly)?

No

10. Is this a “key decision”? If so, why?

No

Leicester City Council

Taxi strategy 2022-2025

CONTENTS

	Page
Foreword	2
The Vision	2
The Role of the Licensing Authority	3
Policy Statement	4
The Strategic Objectives	4
Licensing Policies and Procedures	5
The Deliverable Outcomes	5
Timescales	12

FOREWORD

Leicester has an ambition for an effective, efficient and viable taxi trade and we have developed a taxi strategy to help realise this goal. The trade should provide an excellent service to the travelling public, with a competent, trusted and welcoming workforce that is regulated by a fair licensing authority that applies its policies and procedures in a consistent and appropriate way.

The draft Leicester Transport Plan 2021-2036 focusses on a sustainable transport vision supporting a high quality of life and travel experience for people and a vibrant local economy. We encourage people to use more active travel such as cycling and walking as well as to make public transport their first choice for longer journeys. The taxi sector supports the city's public transport provision by providing a flexible and accessible door to door service and playing an essential role in the night-time economy when other forms of transport are not available.

The council is the licensing authority for Leicester with a duty to protect the public. In order to meet this obligation, we have several policies and procedures in place to ensure the suitability of both the people and the vehicles working in the taxi trade. This strategy document sets out how we will operate in the coming years to improve and enhance the service provided, working in tandem with relevant strategies to improve air quality and sustainability.

Cllr Piara Singh Clair
Deputy City Mayor
Culture, Leisure, Sport and Regulatory Services

THE VISION

Leicester City Council's vision is for the hackney and private hire sectors to provide a safe and superb customer service within an integrated sustainable transport system, whilst contributing to the economy with minimal environmental impact.

Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are an important part of the city's public transport system. Leicester's taxi drivers provide a demand responsive, 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, year-round service catering to a wide range of individuals' needs. It is one of the most flexible elements of the transport system and operates on a completely commercial basis.

In Leicester, hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are integral in their support to the local economy by transporting people to their places of work and customers to places of business. The services are a primary mode of passenger transport for people for whom mainstream public transport is not an option and help support many disabled and vulnerable people to live more independent lives. Taxis play an important part in the city's night-time economy by providing people with a safe and secure mode of transport. Taxi services are also commissioned by the council to transport children, young people and vulnerable adults, for example to and from school, day centres and hospital appointments.

A thriving, efficient and affordable taxi sector contributes to the local economy and benefits local residents, businesses, and visitors to Leicester.

The City Mayor and Leicester City Council are committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality and reliability of Leicester's transport network through the integration of buses, taxis, cycling and walking to deliver economic benefits whilst contributing to a sustainable and healthy low carbon economy.

THE ROLE OF THE LICENSING AUTHORITY

Leicester City Council is a unitary authority and therefore the licensing authority for the city. As such the council must regulate the quality of service and safety standards of hackney carriages (taxis) and private hire vehicles. The council issues a combined driver's licence so that all licensed drivers may driver either a hackney carriage or a private hire vehicle. The distinction between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles is that hackney carriages ply for work from a rank, can be hailed in the street and can undertake pre-booked work. Private hire vehicles can only be pre-booked via a licensed private hire operator. The driver, vehicle, and operator must all be licensed by the same licensing authority.



The council is also the highway authority and so has a responsibility to implement taxi ranks on the public highway, reasonably close to where people want to travel from, including key interchange points with bus and rail networks. The number of hackney carriage licences can be limited by the council, but the number of driver or private hire licences cannot be restricted.

The council is responsible for ensuring certain children, young people and vulnerable adults are safely transported on pre-arranged journeys. This service is commissioned by the Social Care and Education department via a Dynamic Purchasing System. The scheme is independent of the taxi strategy.

“When formulating a taxi and private hire vehicle policy, the primary and overriding objective must be to protect the public. The importance of ensuring that the licensing regime protects the vulnerable cannot be overestimated.”

Department for Transport - Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards

“The overriding aim of any Licensing Authority when carrying out its functions relating to the licensing of Hackney or Private Hire Drivers, Vehicle Proprietors and Operators, must be the protection of the public and others who use (or can be affected by) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire services.”

Institute of Licensing – Guidance on determining the suitability of applicants and licensees in the hackney and private hire trades

“It is for individual licensing authorities to reach their own decisions both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters, in the light of their own views of the relevant considerations.”

Department for Transport – Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance

“The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public. Local licensing authorities will also be aware that the public should have reasonable access to taxi and PHV services, because of the part they play in local transport provision. Licensing requirements which are unduly stringent will tend unreasonably to restrict the supply of taxi and PHV services, by putting up the cost of operation or otherwise restricting entry to the trade. Local licensing authorities should recognise that too restrictive an approach can work against the public interest – and can, indeed, have safety implications.”

Department for Transport – Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance

POLICY STATEMENT

The purpose of the taxi strategy is to protect the public. This is the overriding duty of the licensing authority in carrying out its functions relating to taxi licensing.

The licensing authority is responsible for determining that hackney and private hire drivers, vehicles, vehicle proprietors, and private hire operators are safe and suitable. To do so, the authority will apply appropriate policies to ensure that decision making is consistent, transparent and proportionate.

Leicester City Council will apply its taxi policies with a clear focus on ensuring a safe and suitable taxi service within the city.

THE STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Our strategy has five strategic objectives to ensure that our licensed taxi sectors are:

- **Trusted:** The public rate them consistently high for customer service and safety
- **Safe:** Provide services in a safe manner to passengers, other road users, the public generally and the drivers themselves
- **Low Emission (Environmentally Sustainable):** Providing a service with ultra-low emissions

- **Viable:** Operators and drivers can operate on a viable commercial basis and have confidence to invest in their service
- **Supported and well regulated:** Leicester City Council's engagement with the taxi sectors enjoys a high degree of public confidence; that support and regulatory interventions are targeted, proportionate, consistent; and the council is transparent in, and accountable, for its plans and commitments

Leicester City Council will actively lead and shape the services provided in Leicester by taxis and work with taxi and private hire operators and other key stakeholders.

We will work with neighbouring authorities to deliver a level and competitive playing field and will take action – including legal action – to ensure fair trading and public safety.

LICENSING POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

We have reviewed our policies and procedures against the strategic objectives to ensure that they are fit for purpose. The existing policies cover matters such as:

- Driver licensing
 - Application process
 - Pre-licensing requirements including criminal record checks, medicals, knowledge test, English assessment, training
 - Code of conduct
 - Display of licence
 - Licence conditions
- Vehicle licensing
 - Application process
 - Pre-licensing requirements including conditions of fitness, vehicle age and emissions
 - Vehicle inspections
 - Display of licence, including door signs and external plate
 - Advertising
 - Licence conditions
- Operator licensing
 - Application process
 - Record keeping
 - Licence conditions

The updated policies and procedures aim to improve standards and clarity, and take account of the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles Standards produced by the government. They will also will help us to achieve a number of key deliverables under the taxi strategy.

THE DELIVERABLE OUTCOMES

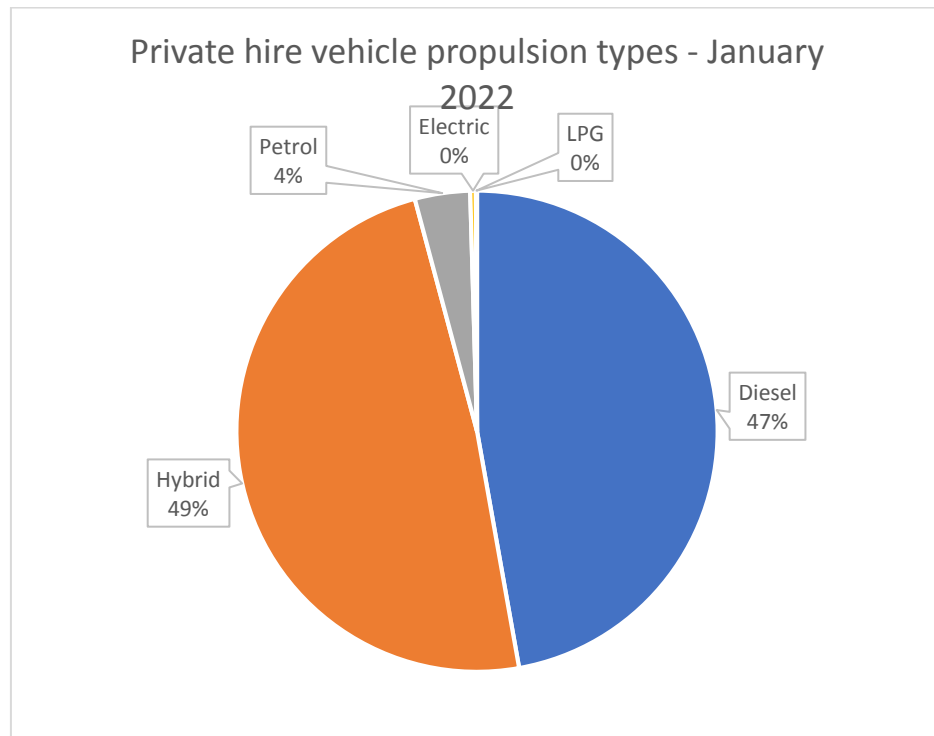
By 2025 we will have achieved the following:

For the public using taxi services in Leicester:

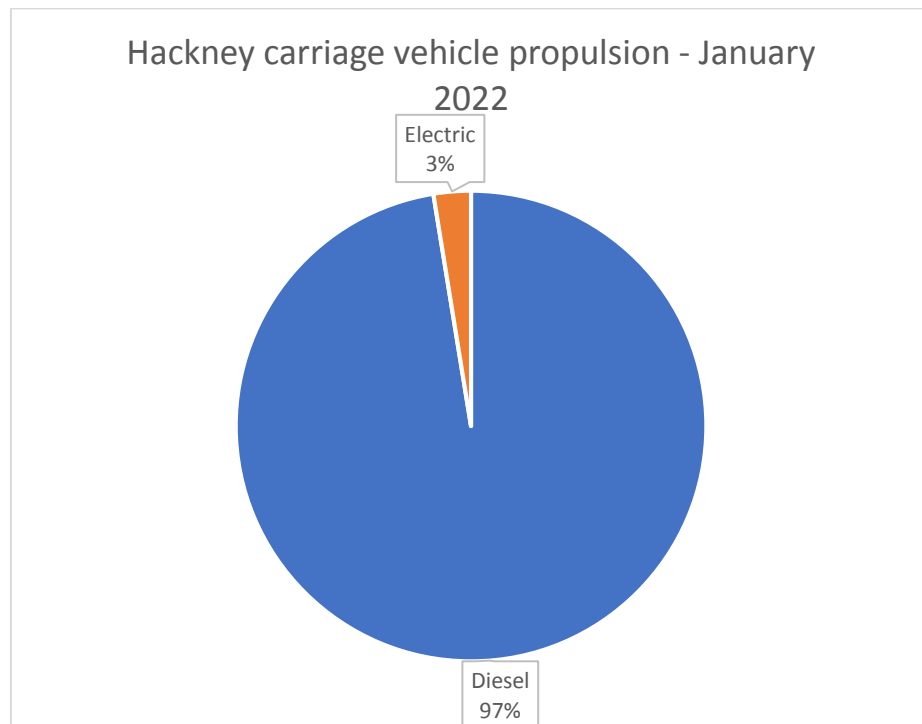
- 1 A choice between booking an ultra-low emission vehicle or diesel vehicle

Passengers should be given the option of choosing a vehicle type at the time of booking or hiring. The vehicles will need to be identifiable as **ultra-low emission vehicles**. This could be done through markings on vehicles and through vehicle type being an option at the time of advance bookings.

There has already been a shift in the private hire trade towards lower emission vehicles. On 13 February 2019 there were 456 licensed private hire vehicles that were classed as electric, hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles. This equated to 31% of all licensed private hire vehicles. By 28 January 2022 there were 648 licensed private hire vehicles in the same categories, equating to 49% of all licensed private hire vehicles.



Work is ongoing in relation to ultra-low emission hackney carriages. A temporary relaxation of the 11-year age policy was put in place in 2018/19 to bridge the gap between the replacement of old vehicles and the availability of approved ultra-low emission vehicle hackney carriages. A grant scheme was also in operation to assist with the purchase price. However, as of 28 January 2022 there were only six licensed ultra-low emission vehicle hackney carriages and the grant scheme had ended.

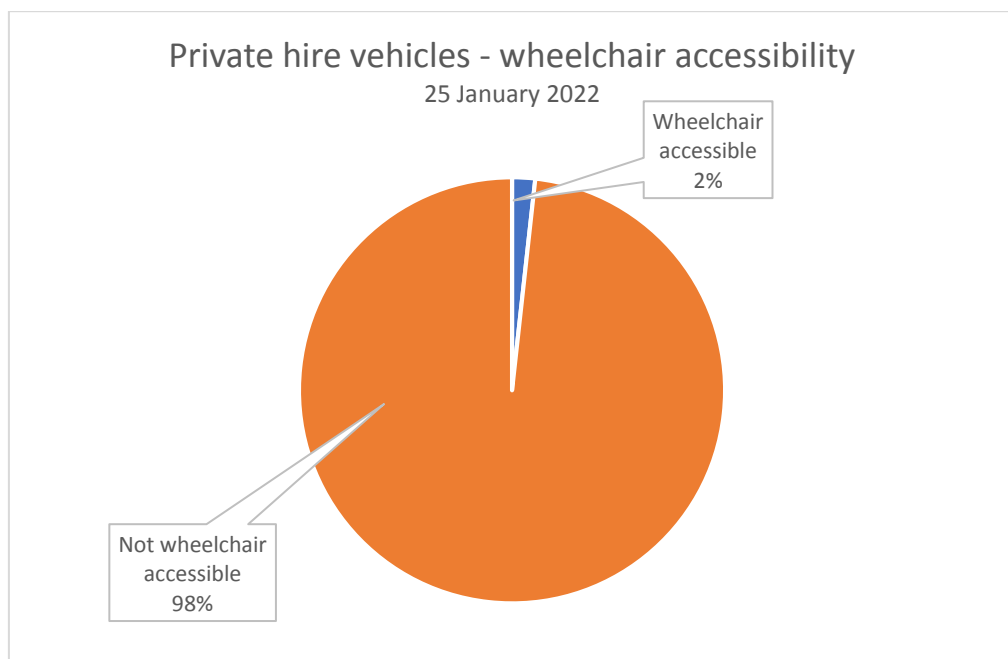


The council is working on plans in response to the Climate Emergency declaration and the policy on vehicle licensing will be developed in conjunction with this work. This is likely to involve changes to the current policies on vehicle age and vehicle emissions. The taxi strategy and supporting policies will be subject to the council's ambitions on air quality and climate change.

2 A choice between wheelchair accessible hackney and private hire vehicle.

All hackney carriages in Leicester are wheelchair accessible.

In January 2022 only a handful of private hire vehicles (23) were wheelchair accessible and this can create problems for wheelchair users.



The hackney booking apps enable wheelchair users to make advance bookings of vehicles that they know are wheelchair accessible. However, there may be active measures that can be taken to bring

more wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles into the private hire trade. Measures for investigation include positive incentives such as a charter mark/accreditation for the driver and/or operator, discounted fees, or conditions for operators such as a percentage of their fleet being wheelchair accessible.

3 Considered requiring CCTV and GPS in all licensed vehicles

The Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards give a cautious endorsement to mandatory CCTV in licensed vehicles. However, there are significant responsibilities associated with CCTV and if the council decides to require it in every licensed vehicle then the council will be a Data Controller, alongside the vehicle owner/operator. A separate piece of work is necessary to scope whether CCTV should be made mandatory. This will involve further consultation with the trade, consideration of the data protection implications, and detailed consideration of what the requirements should be. A data protection impact assessment will also be completed. As an alternative, CCTV would not be mandated but the council would set out minimum standards for any CCTV system that a vehicle owner chooses to install.

A number of CCTV providers have already made contact in relation to being approved for use in licensed vehicles. The council could either procure a preferred supplier(s) or to set out minimum standards for CCTV systems in licensed vehicles, which would allow the vehicle owner to choose which system to install.

Some CCTV systems are linked to GPS, as are existing and proposed booking apps. GPS tracking could be investigated further alongside the CCTV work. Officers will carry out a feasibility study and submit a report at a later date.

4 Cashless payment option in all licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles

Many booking apps are linked to payments systems and therefore this would allow a joined-up approach. The benefits to drivers and passengers are significant and the cost is relatively low. This payment method could be achieved through a condition as part of the vehicle licence.

The coronavirus pandemic has impacted the taxi trade enormously and contactless payment became more important. The council will work with the trade to further encourage the take up of contactless payment systems.

For taxi operators and drivers operating in Leicester:

1 Online application/renewal/booking and payment arrangements, and communication [as the norm]

This is part of the digital transformation programme currently being implemented at Leicester City Council. Online applications are already available for new and renewal driver applications, new and renewal vehicle applications, and new and renewal private hire operator applications. Other application types are in development (e.g. change of vehicle, transfer of ownership). An online booking system for the Vehicle Testing Station has been developed and went live in January 2022.

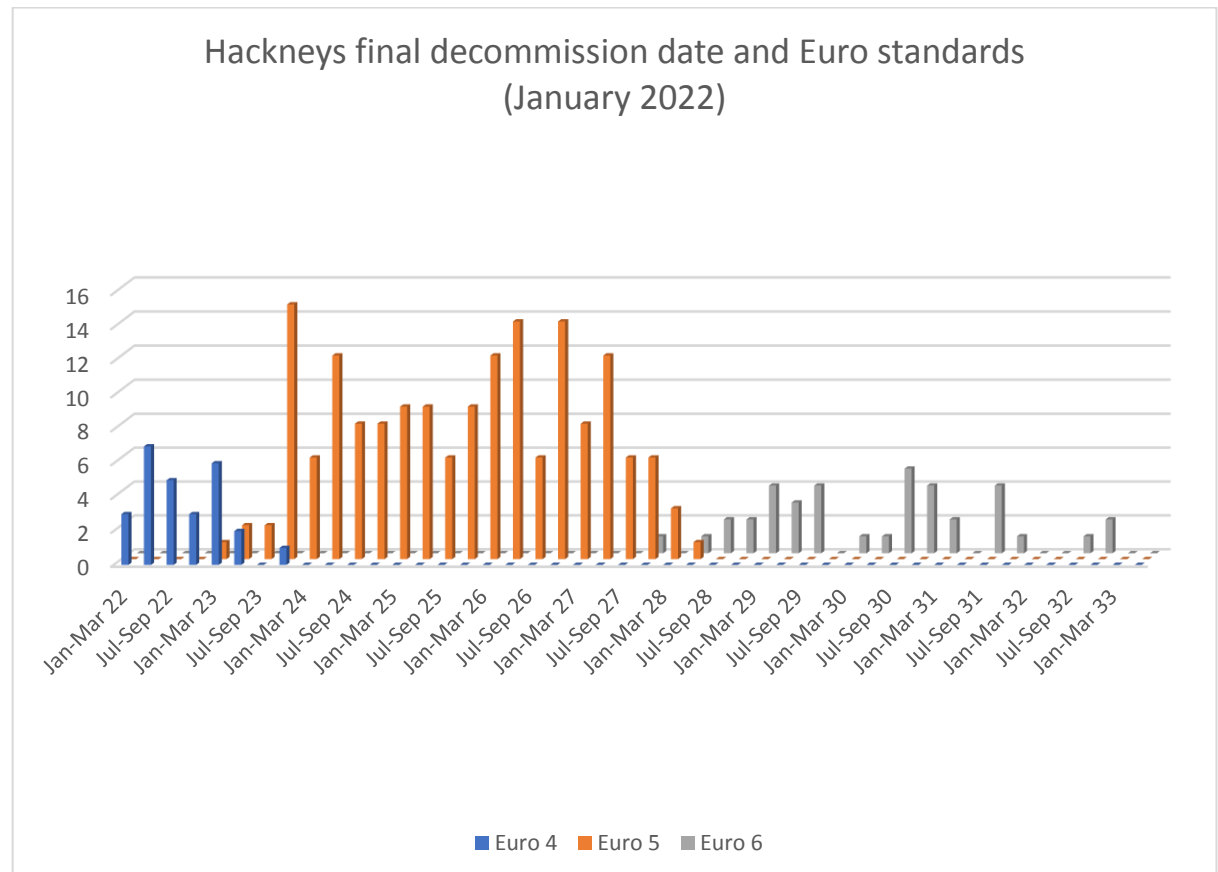
2 Clear comprehensive standards for drivers and operators

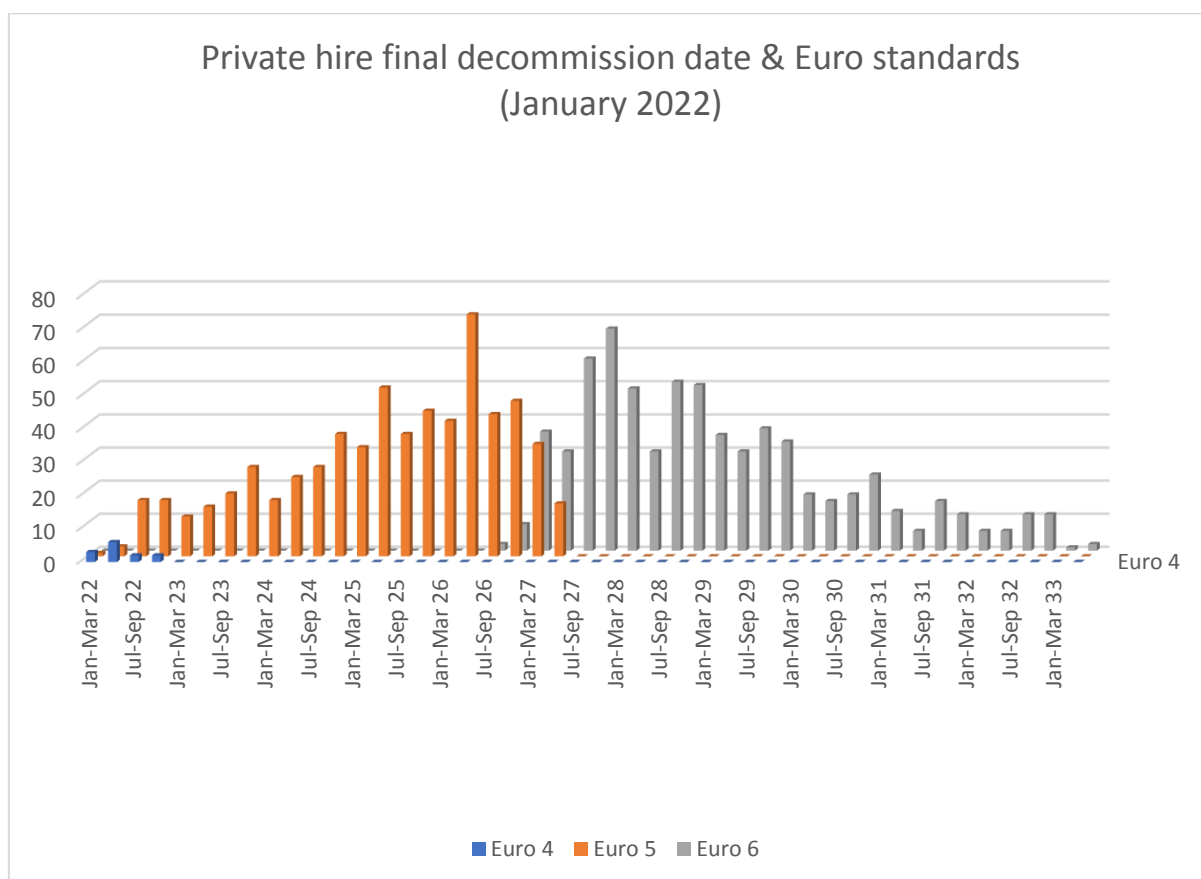
Many of our existing policies and procedures had not been formally reviewed for some time. There were some grey areas and other areas that needed bringing up to date following developments in law and practice. This essential piece of work directly related to customer and driver safety.

Consultation took place in 2019 and 2020 but the outcomes were delayed until 2021 due to the coronavirus pandemic. This work has now been completed and some new policies and procedures are being introduced alongside this strategy document, whilst others will be introduced once the preliminary steps have been put into place. One of the measures is to produce post-licensing guidance for drivers to ensure they are fully aware of their duties and responsibilities.

3 Updated vehicle conditions of fitness that are environmentally and economically sustainable

The vehicle conditions of fitness also required review. Licensed vehicles must be fit for purpose – safe, comfortable, practical, environmentally sound, and economical to operate. The conditions of fitness have been brought up to date. The intention to review the vehicle age and emissions policies has been deferred to become part of a wider strategy to improve air quality in Leicester (see above). The following charts illustrate the current make-up of the hackney and private hire fleets and when the older, more polluting vehicles are due to be replaced.





4 Highway use benefits for hackney carriage vehicles licensed by Leicester City Council

Discussions with the highways department are in progress and when resources permit highways will work with the licensing authority to move this forward. Initial considerations include a change of use to the bus lanes in the city so that instead of permitting all hackney carriages (taxis) only wheelchair accessible hackney carriages will be permitted. This will mean all Leicester hackneys will remain exempt but not the saloon vehicles licensed as hackneys by other licensing authorities.

Highways will also be considering whether other measures can be introduced to aid traffic flow and reduce pollution, whilst benefitting taxis licensed by Leicester City Council.

5 Elected taxi driver and operator representatives on a consultation forum administered by Leicester City Council

A previous survey of the hackney trade asked who they wanted to represent them in discussions with the council. 85 of 328 vehicle licence holders replied (26%). 72 respondents (90.6%) said they wanted Leicester Black Cab Association to represent them, six respondents (7.1%) identified the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT), one (1.2%) said nobody and one (1.2%) said they wanted to represent themselves.

A similar survey of the private hire trade indicated no preference for any representee.

The hackney trade has traditionally been represented by the RMT so the above survey suggests a significant change in attitudes. Most private hire drivers have had no representation other than via private hire operators.

We will carry out annual surveys of licensed drivers to find out which organisations they want us to consult with on their behalf.

With our Partner Public Authorities

1 Open and easy access to our driver and vehicle records for police and licensing authorities

As a licensing authority it is right that we share information that will assist our partners in the police and other licensing authorities, subject to the requirements of data protection and GDPR. It is proposed that our current processes and procedures are reviewed to ensure they are correct and operations can be done easily. This could be by developing an online request form to ensure the correct information is captured, and/or by allowing restricted access to our records for specific partners.

A national database of driver refusals and revocations became live in 2018 following a delay due to GDPR. There is a significant amount of preparatory work to be done before signing up to add our own records and to view details provided by other authorities. The use of this database will enhance driver licensing because it will allow checks to be made on individual applicants, who may not be truthful about previous refusals or revocations.

2 Commitment to joined up operations

Given the cross-border nature of the taxi trade it is inevitable that vehicles and drivers licensed elsewhere will be in Leicester, and vice versa. Participating in joint operations in a regular and planned way will allow us, and partner authorities, to make best use of resources and to deal with vehicles and drivers that are not up to standard even if they are not licensed in Leicester. The reverse is also true, as council enforcement staff would participate in operations outside Leicester (e.g. at East Midlands airport or at motorway checkpoints) to deal with our licence holders.

Initial discussions with authorities in Leicestershire indicate that this suggestion would be welcomed.

3 Arrangements for the sharing of statutory powers to regulate 'out of town' drivers

Reports are received regularly that 'out of town' drivers are flouting the law safe in the knowledge that the authorities are unable to do anything about it, and that as a result the regulatory system is not a level playing field. Sharing statutory powers would be an extension of joint operations, where council enforcement staff are given delegated authority by other licensing authorities to deal with drivers and vehicles that they have licensed. This would allow us to stop and check vehicles and drivers licensed in, for example, Oadby & Wigston and Wolverhampton and to refer any breaches back to the relevant authority. The reverse would also be true, so that other authorities could deal with our licence holders in their area and report any issues for us to deal with.

Initial discussions with authorities in Leicestershire indicate a willingness to engage with us on this suggestion.

4 Explore opportunities for shared services in taxi licensing and regulation

Shared services would be another step further from joint operations and shared powers, which would involve the merging of taxi licensing and regulation with one or more neighbouring authorities. This has been considered in the past and there was a limited appetite for change. Nonetheless at this time it is appropriate to revisit this as an option.

5 Enhanced arrangements for training and development of officers in Leicester and Leicestershire

Training is an important element of the licensing function to ensure that staff are up to date and confident in their roles. The cost of providing suitable training is often prohibitive. With planning and co-ordination, it would be possible to organise a training schedule for the city and county to share and reduce costs and improve joint working. We will look to establish this in partnership with other Leicestershire authorities, subject to budget.

TIMESCALES

The timescales for introducing various strands of the strategy are:

	Action	Target date	Strategic objective(s)
1	Clear comprehensive standards for drivers and operators	May 2022	Trusted; Safe; Supported and well regulated
2	Updated vehicle conditions of fitness that are environmentally and economically sustainable	May 2022	Trusted; Safe; Low Emission (Environmentally Sustainable); Viable; Supported and well regulated
3	Elected taxi driver and operator representatives on a Consultation forum administered by Leicester City Council	May 2022	Trusted; Supported and well regulated
4	Open and easy access to our driver and vehicle records for police and licensing authorities	May 2022	Trusted; Safe; Supported and well regulated
5	Commitment to joined up operations	May 2022	Supported and well regulated
6	Cashless payment option in all Leicester City Council licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles	Jun 2022	Trusted Safe
7	Arrangements for the sharing of statutory powers to regulate 'out of town' drivers	Aug 2022	Supported and well regulated
8	Explore opportunities for shared services in taxi licensing and regulation	Aug 2022	Supported and well regulated
9	Enhanced arrangements for training and development of officers in Leicester and Leicestershire	Aug 2022	Supported and well regulated
10	Online application/renewal/booking and payment arrangements, and communication [as the norm]	Jan 2023	Trusted; Safe; Supported and well regulated
11	Highway use benefits for hackney cab vehicles licensed by Leicester City Council	Jun 2023	Supported and well regulated
12	An exercisable choice between booking an ultra-low emission vehicle or diesel vehicle	Jan 2025	Low Emission (Environmentally Sustainable)
13	A choice between wheelchair accessible hackney and private hire vehicle	Jan 2025	Trusted; Viable
14	All licensed vehicles have GPS and CCTV	Jan 2025	Trusted; Safe
15	Taxi strategy fully implemented	Jan 2025	Trusted; Safe;

			Low Emission (Environmentally Sustainable); Viable; Supported and well regulated
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