

**REPORT TO:** Licensing Sub-Committee  
**MEETING DATE:** 12 January 2023  
**BY:** Head of Corporate Support  
**SUBJECT:** Changes to the Taxi and Private Hire Car Guidance



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**1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The report seeks approval to amend the existing Taxi and Private Hire Car (PHC) guidance to mirror neighbouring Council schemes, thereby meeting updated accessibility standards, reducing the industry carbon footprint and encouraging a better public perception of the taxi trade in East Lothian.

**2 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 Restrict the type of vehicle that can be licensed as a taxi and include features deemed essential under the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) as amended phased in by 1 April 2025.
- 2.2 Restrict the type of vehicle that can be licensed as a Private Hire Car. This recommendation would reduce Private Hire Car CO2 emissions significantly, phased in by 1 April 2025.

**3 BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 East Lothian Council's Taxi and PHC guidance notes are under review to bring them in line with current legislation. This proposed change would take effect immediately in relation to replacement taxi vehicles. The first consideration is that of suitable vehicles for use as a taxi meeting the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. Motor vehicles of a type or model which holds a valid European Whole Vehicle Type Approval as an M1 vehicle, is purpose built for use as a Licenced Vehicle, and is Euro 6 emissions compliant will be deemed suitable. A list of currently available base vehicles is as follows;

- Mercedes-Benz Vito
- Ford Transit Custom
- LTI TX5
- Renault Traffic

- 3.2 In addition, these vehicles can only be licensed as taxis if they meet the new accessibility standards. These standards require that all vehicles must have the following features installed to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority:
- Side-loading access
  - Wheelchair access by means of a suitable ramp
  - Hi-visibility interior features
  - Interior grab rails
  - A step
  - A loop system for the hard of hearing
  - Auto door locks which operate when the vehicle is moving.
- 3.3 In relation to the arrangements for taxis converting to the new standard, the Council should recommend that all taxi vehicles must be changed for one of the approved vehicle types and comply with the above accessibility standard by 1 April 2025. Licenses for taxi vehicles not meeting the new standards, as at that date, will be suspended. Current restrictions on vehicle age at replacement will still stand.
- 3.4 In relation to restricting the type of vehicle used as a private hire car in line with neighbouring council bodies, the approved criteria for PHC vehicles are that they must have a minimum of four separate doors (excluding rear-facing doors), have exactly four passenger seats if it is a saloon vehicle, or exactly eight passenger seats for multi passenger vehicles (MPVs).
- 3.5 A saloon car type vehicle must have a minimum back seat cushion width of 125cm.
- 3.6 Diesel/petrol powered vehicles and alternative fuelled vehicles such as electric and hydrogen will have a minimum power output of 94 hp/75PS.
- 3.7 All saloon type vehicles should have a maximum CO2 emission level of 150g/km for diesel vehicles and a maximum CO2 emission level of 165g/km for petrol vehicles and be Euro 6 compliant. This includes hybrid solutions.
- 3.8 Vehicles with 8 seats (MPVs) must have a CO2 emission level not exceeding 225g/km for either diesel or petrol powered vehicles and be Euro 6 compliant. This includes hybrid solutions.

## **4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5 INTEGRATED IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 5.1 The subject of this report does not affect the wellbeing of the community or have a significant impact on equality, the environment or economy.

## **6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Financial – None.  
6.2 Personnel – None.  
6.3 Other – None.

## **7 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- 7.1 Conditions of Fitness of Taxis and Private Hire Cars in East Lothian, May 2021.  
7.2 Disability Discrimination Act (2005) as amended.  
7.3 The Equality Act (2010) as amended.  
7.4 Statutory Guidance, Access to taxis and private hire vehicles for disabled users, published 20 June 2022.

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