

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

13 JULY 2021

REPORT OF THE CHIEF OFFICER - LEGAL, HR AND REGULATORY SERVICES

GREEN FLEET PILOT SCHEME: A REQUEST FOR VEHICLES INVOLVED IN THE SCHEME TO BE EXEMPT FROM SPECIFIC HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE CONDITIONS

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 This report is to seek approval for full electric, wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles involved in the Welsh Government's Green Fleet Pilot Scheme to be exempt from the specific hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report relates to a regulatory function and as such has no link to the corporate well-being objectives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Welsh Government is introducing a Green Fleet Pilot Scheme in three areas across Wales. The scheme will operate a 'try before you buy' initiative, allowing taxi drivers to try a fully electric, wheelchair accessible vehicle for 30 days free of charge. The trial will include free electric charging, insurance, vehicle licensing and breakdown cover funded by Welsh Government. The hackney carriage in question is a wheelchair accessible Nissan Dynamo.
- 3.2 On completion of the trial, drivers will be asked to complete an evaluation survey and will be provided with information on schemes/assistance available for long term ownership/lease of zero-emission vehicles.
- 3.3 The pilot is intended to assist Welsh Government in achieving its target of decarbonising the taxi fleet entirely by 2028 as it is hoped it will help taxi drivers to realise the financial and environmental benefits of zero-emission vehicles and in turn contribute to the transition from diesel/petrol vehicles to zero-emission vehicles. The scheme will run for 2-3 years.
- 3.4 A full livery has been requested for the hackney carriages involved in this pilot scheme to ensure the initiative is advertised across the area and to encourage others to be a part of the scheme. A copy of the requested advertisement is detailed in **Appendix A**.

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 In order to facilitate the licensing of vehicles under the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme, it will be necessary to amend the current Bridgend County Borough Council licence

conditions for hackney carriages in respect of livery, placement of the Licensing Authority's identification door stickers and roof signs. It is proposed that the relaxation would only apply to those vehicles which form part of the Pilot Scheme.

4.2 Condition 1 of Bridgend County Borough Council's hackney carriage conditions states:

"All vehicles shall be white in colour."

Hackney carriages in Bridgend are easily recognisable as the all white colour scheme is unique in Wales. The proposed livery as detailed in **Appendix A** is all black with half wrap livery advertising.

In order to enable licensing of the Green Fleet Pilot vehicles it is proposed that the condition is amended to:

"All vehicles shall be white in colour except for those vehicles included in the Welsh Government's Green Fleet Pilot Scheme".

4.3 Condition 2 of Bridgend County Borough Council's hackney carriage conditions states:

"All Adhesive signs shall be affixed on the upper part of the driver and front passenger side doors indicating that the vehicle is licensed by the Council with the number of the vehicle in letters no smaller than 3" in height."

It is important to have the Bridgend Council logo on the Green Fleet Pilot vehicles to enable the public to be able to distinguish and identify hackney carriages from the authority. Details of the technical placement of the logo are still under consideration and it is for this reason we are proposing that condition 2 be amended to enable placement of the Bridgend Council logo to differ from what is currently required. The following amendment is proposed:

All Adhesive signs shall be affixed on the upper part of the driver and front passenger side doors indicating that the vehicle is licensed by the Council with the number of the vehicle in letters no smaller than 3" in height except for those vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

4.4 Condition 32 of Bridgend County Borough Council's hackney carriage vehicle conditions states:

"The hackney carriage must be fitted with an illuminated roof sign, so constructed to bear the word "TAXI" in plain letters at least two inches in height, with a further fluorescent sign of similar dimensions bearing the words "FOR HIRE" such sign being affixed to the front windscreen of the vehicle and wired to the taximeter so as to enable it to be extinguished during the carrying of a fare, for which the meter is in operation. The design of these signs is to be approved by the Council. This condition will not relate to the 'London type Taxi' where the flag indicating "FOR HIRE", attached to the meter is plainly visible."

The vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme are equipped with built-in roof signs, displaying only a front side showing the word 'TAXI' it is therefore proposed that the condition is amended to the following:

The hackney carriage must be fitted with an illuminated roof sign, so constructed to bear the word "TAXI" in plain letters at least two inches in height, with a further fluorescent sign of similar dimensions bearing the words "FOR HIRE" such sign being affixed to the front windscreen of the vehicle and wired to the taximeter so as to enable it to be extinguished during the carrying of a fare, for which the meter is in operation. The design of these signs is to be approved by the Council. This condition will not relate to the 'London type Taxi' where the flag indicating "FOR HIRE", attached to the meter is plainly visible. This condition does not apply to those vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

Consultation

- 4.5 A 7 day consultation was carried out with the taxi trade via the private hire operators. The consultation set out the proposed changes and asked for any comments. One response was received to the consultation which stated:

"Sounds good :) we would like to try one out please, get a few calls for wheel chair accessible buses"

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

- 5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 An initial EIA screening has identified that there would be no negative impact on those with one or more of the protected characteristics, on socio-economic disadvantage or the use of the Welsh language. It is therefore not necessary to carry out a full EIA on this policy or proposal.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The well-being goals identified in the Act were considered in the preparation of this report. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable impacts upon the achievement of well-being goals/objectives as a result of this report. The proposal supports the collaboration principle within the five ways of working set out in the Act.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

9. Recommendation(s)

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee:

- a) determine the request by Welsh Government for those vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme to be exempt from certain hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions.
- b) give delegated authority to Chief Officer of Legal, HR and Regulatory Services to determine matters of details in respect of livery, advertising and door stickers should they arise during the period of the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

9.2 If the Committee resolve to approve the request by the Welsh Government it is recommended that the following hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions are amended as follows:

Condition 1

All vehicles shall be white in colour except for those vehicles included in the Welsh Government's Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

Condition 2

All Adhesive signs shall be affixed on the upper part of the driver and front passenger side doors indicating that the vehicle is licensed by the Council with the number of the vehicle in letters no smaller than 3" in height except for those vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

Condition 32

The hackney carriage must be fitted with an illuminated roof sign, so constructed to bear the word "TAXI" in plain letters at least two inches in height, with a further fluorescent sign of similar dimensions bearing the words "FOR HIRE" such sign being affixed to the front windscreen of the vehicle and wired to the taximeter so as to enable it to be extinguished during the carrying of a fare, for which the meter is in operation. The design of these signs is to be approved by the Council. This condition will not relate to the 'London type Taxi' where the flag indicating "FOR HIRE", attached to the meter is plainly visible. This condition does not apply to those vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme.

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Background documents:

None.