

LICENSING AND REGISTRATION COMMITTEE

7 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR [OPERATIONAL SERVICES]

A.3 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing – Reduction in Licence Fee For Environmentally Friendly (Lower Emission) Vehicles (Report prepared by Emma King)

PART 1 – KEY INFORMATION

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The Licensing and Registration Committee is asked to consider whether it is reasonable to allow a reduced annual licence fee to be charged in respect of lower emission vehicles and, if so, agree that this review should be subject to public consultation and scrutiny.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Licensing Committee is asked to consider and determine a request submitted by Mr Colin Bennet, for the Council to consider a reduced annual licence fee to be charged, as an incentive to help contribute towards reducing greenhouse gas emission and air pollution on our roads.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

- (a) Members are asked to give their view as to whether they consider it appropriate to encourage greater use of environmentally friendly (lower emission) vehicles as Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles, by introducing a reduced licence fee for these vehicles.
- (b) If Members agree with (a) above, public consultation is undertaken over a 28 day period, and the results reported back to Members for a definitive decision at the next scheduled meeting.

PART 2 – IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

DELIVERING PRIORITIES

A reduction in fee for the licensing of lower emission vehicles as Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, would help to support and promote an improved quality living environment, by contributing towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution on our roads; and by supporting the business growth of the taxi trade in the District which as a trade sustains large direct and indirect employment.

FINANCE, OTHER RESOURCES AND RISK**Finance and other resources**

Should a decision be made to allow a reduced fee to be charged for the licensing of environmentally friendly (lower emission) vehicles as Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles, an assessment would likely need to be made on the impact on the licensing budget. Also, any proposed adjustments to be made to the licensing fees for certain vehicle types would need to be advertised under statutory procedures, the cost of which can be met from within the Hackney Carriage revenue budget for 2018/2019.

Risk

A disadvantage to lower emission vehicles technology is linked to the manufacturing and ultimately disposal of the vehicles' batteries which are costly in terms of energy and the processes needed to produce them; they also contain substances that are harmful to the environment which have to be disposed of by specialists in that field.

LEGAL

The action proposed is within the Council's discretionary powers.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Consideration has been given to the implications of the proposed decision in respect of the following and any significant issues are set out below.

Crime and Disorder / Equality and Diversity / Consultation/Public Engagement.

CRIME AND DISORDER

There are no Crime and Disorder implications

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

There are no Equality and Diversity implications.

AREA/WARDS AFFECTED

All wards

CONSULTATION

The initial consultation for the proposed reduction in fee will be advertised in the local press for the statutory 28 days and existing licence holders will be consulted with to gain their perspective on the proposal.

PART 3 – SUPPORTING INFORMATION**BACKGROUND**

Since the last revision of the licence fees for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles (13 Dec 2013), hybrid and electric vehicles have come to the market. Advantages of these environmentally friendly vehicles include low road tax, improved air quality and noise levels, no emissions when an electric motor is in use, and additional miles per gallon with newer kinetic energy versions which in effect charge the electric motor whilst the vehicle is in motion, storing any excess energy for later use.

Whilst all environmentally friendly vehicles offer lower emissions, the Government Department for Transport has argued that meeting UK climate goals will require the almost complete "de-carbonisation" of road transport, and is promoting the increased adoption of next generation 'ultra-low emission' technologies.

As Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles operate much of the time in busy town centres and urban areas, it could be argued that using such technology may reduce the amount of fuel used compared to conventional vehicles, thus leaving a smaller “carbon footprint”. Efficient use of the power sources provided by this type of vehicle gives better than normal performance.

The annual licence fee is currently £334 for a one year licence for all vehicle types. Members may wish to consider what they determine is a suitable reduction in fee should they decide to grant this option.

The current licence fee of £334 takes into consideration the cost of two mechanical tests per year (£55 per test), the costs to supply the required plate and brackets (£18), the printing and stationery costs (approx. £101) and the number of Officer hours to produce the licence (£105). The amount of work undertaken will not differ from between a standard vehicle and a lower emissions vehicle.

The Council’s Workshop which carries out the mechanical tests have confirmed that there would no difference in how the vehicles would be tested.

Members may now wish to consider whether it is reasonable to allow a reduced annual licence fee to be charged in respect of lower emission vehicles. Should members be minded to allow a reduced fee, Officers consider that it would be reasonable to allow a lower fee to apply to vehicles with a co2 emission reading of not greater than 110. This approach would potentially encompass the majority of the lower emission vehicles available on the market.

CURRENT POSITION

There is nothing in the legislation governing the licensing of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles that restricts the use of hybrid or other lower emission vehicles for such purpose. There are currently two lower emission vehicles licensed with this Authority, namely a Toyota Prius and a Hyundai Ioniq.

Research conducted by Officers show that in the Tendring District there is currently 1 charging point for electric vehicles on public land; this is located in the High Street car park, Clacton on Sea. There are 4 other locations throughout the district, however these are private car parks and permission may be required from the land owner before the charging point can be used. There is a proposed site at Harwich Quay for a further charging point with one dedicated charging bay. However, the charger itself has the capability of charging up to four vehicles at a time.

BACKGROUND PAPERS FOR THE DECISION

None

APPENDICES

Letter from Mr Colin Bennet