

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 11 MAY 2021

Report of the Head of Shared Regulatory Services

Green Fleet Taxi Pilot: A Request for Full Livery

1. Background

- 1.1 A request has been made by Welsh Government for full livery on entirely electric, wheelchair accessible, Nissan Dynamo hackney carriage vehicles as part of a Green Fleet Pilot scheme. The scheme seeks to encourage the taxi trade to switch to zero-emission vehicles.
- 1.2 Currently the authority only permits full livery on hackney carriage vehicles that meet the London Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness e.g. London style taxis such as TX1s, FX4s etc.

2. Issue

- 2.1 Condition 5.2 (f) of Cardiff Council's Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions states:

“Full external advertising livery for one product is permitted on the whole of the vehicle subject to the advertisement being approved by the authority, in writing, prior to its use. This condition applies only to purpose-built vehicles which meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness”.

- 2.2 Vehicles that meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness include London Taxis International FX4, London Taxis International TX1/2, London Taxis International TX4, Reliant Metrocab, and Mercedes Bens Vito Taxi.
- 2.3 The Welsh Government are 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.

- 2.4 On completion of the trial, drivers will be asked to complete an evaluation survey and be provided with information on schemes/assistance available for long term ownership/lease of zero-emission vehicles.
- 2.5 The pilot is intended to assist Welsh Government in achieving its target of de-carbonising 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.
- 2.6 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 livery is detailed in ***Appendix A***.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In order to assist the public in identifying licensed vehicles, hackney carriages in Cardiff are required to be coloured black with a white bonnet, apart from vehicles that meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness which can be all black without the white bonnet (other than subject to advertising as permitted by the Conditions).
- 3.2 When determining an application for a full livery in 2001, the Public Protection Committee gave consideration to the fact that vehicles that meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness have a distinctive shape and are easily recognisable to the public as taxis. Therefore, the colour of vehicles that meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness is less of a significant factor in terms of identifying the vehicle as a licensed hackney carriage compared with standard saloons and other wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- 3.3 Wheelchair accessible vehicles that do not meet Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness such as Peugeot Partner and Eurocab etc. are not as instantly recognisable as taxis from their shape, and these vehicles are commonly used as domestic vehicles. Due to a request from the licensed trade in 2001, the Committee resolved to further distinguish between appearance of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles of this type by approving a condition that required all licensed hackney carriages that do not meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness to be black with a white bonnet.
- 3.4 Over the last few years there has been a large increase in the number of vehicles licensed by other local authorities legitimately working in Cardiff.

The black with a white bonnet colour scheme adopted in Cardiff is unique in Wales, so vehicles are easily recognisable as Cardiff hackney carriages. Consideration should be given to whether allowing full livery would make Cardiff hackney carriage vehicles less recognisable to the public.

- 3.5 As the Green Fleet Pilot Scheme will be operating in multiple areas in Wales, it is acknowledged that there may be confusion if several authorities license similar looking vehicles. In order to minimise confusion for the public, it is proposed that vehicles licensed under this scheme will also be required to display door stickers identifying them as a Cardiff Hackney Carriage.
- 3.6 As full livery advertisements have been permitted in Cardiff since 2001, the public will be familiar with licensed vehicles that are completely covered by advertising slogans. It could be said that allowing this type of advertising on all wheelchair accessible vehicles would not have an impact of the identification of these vehicles. However commercial advertising of this kind on vehicles is not purely restricted to the taxi trade.
- 3.7 The Committee may also wish to consider the overall impact on the appearance of the licensed fleet. There are presently 9 licensed vehicles that meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness which are the only ones permitted to display this form of advertising present, whereas there are around 500 wheelchair accessible hackney carriages in total.
- 3.8 A comparison of full livery restrictions in some other local authorities is detailed in the table below:

Local Authority	Full Livery Restrictions
Swansea	Advertising allowed on the bottom of the rear doors. No full livery allowed.
Bridgend	All vehicles to be white from new except wheelchair acceptable vehicles which can be sprayed white. No full livery.
Vale of Glamorgan	Rear wing advertising only. No full livery.
Birmingham	London type taxi's can be any colour as they are instantly recognised as taxis so full livery is allowed as it would not affect any colour code. All other vehicles must be black.

Manchester	Full livery permitted on hackney carriages.
Oxford	Full livery permitted on purpose-built vehicles only.
Sheffield	Full livery allowed on any hackney carriage vehicle.
Southampton	Full livery permitted but white body colour must predominate (no less than 65% of total area excluding windows and bumpers)
Newcastle	Full livery permitted on wheelchair accessible vehicles, but not saloon vehicles
Leeds	Full livery permitted on wheelchair accessible vehicles, but not saloon vehicles or private hire vehicles
Newport	No full livery.

- 3.9 If the Committee are minded to grant this application, it is recommended that as with all other types of vehicle advertising the applicant must submit details of the advert to the Licensing Section for approval prior to its use.
- 3.10 It should be noted there is an intention to undertake a complete review of the Taxi Licensing Policy, including standardising and improving the appearance of licensed vehicles. The Committee may wish to take this into consideration when determining this application.

4. Achievability

- 4.1 This report contains no equality personnel or property implications.

5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 Under Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 the Council may impose such conditions upon hackney carriage licences as it may consider reasonably necessary.
- 5.2 In particular, the Council may require any hackney carriage licensed by it to be of such design or appearance or bear such distinguishing marks as shall clearly identify it as a hackney carriage.

5.3 It should also be noted that under Section 48 of the same Act a private hire vehicle cannot be of such a design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage. It is considered that if the application for full livery advertising for hackney carriage vehicles is granted it would not then be possible to grant any future similar application for private hire vehicles.

6. Consultation

6.1 The trade consultation procedure was undertaken in accordance with the consultation procedure on any policy matters. The draft reports intended for consideration were made available at the licensing offices for any interested party to provide written submissions.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

8. Recommendation

8.1 It is recommended that the Committee determine the request by Welsh Government to allow full livery on all the fully electric, wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles involved in the Green Fleet Pilot scheme.

8.2 It is recommended that the committee give delegated authority to an Operational Manager of the Shared Regulatory Services to approve door stickers that will be used to identify Cardiff Hackney Carriages.

8.3 If the Committee resolve to approve the application, it is recommended that Condition 5.2 (f) of the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions is amended as follows:

“Full external advertising livery for one product is permitted on the whole of the vehicle subject to the advertisement being approved by the authority, in writing, prior to its use. This condition applies to purpose-built vehicles which meet the Metropolitan Police Conditions of Fitness, along with fully electric vehicles involved in the ‘Green Fleet Pilot’ scheme’ that also display approved door stickers identifying them as a Cardiff Hackney Carriage.”

This report has been prepared in accordance with procedures approved by Corporate Managers.

Background papers:

None.