

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE	17 JULY 2019	5

CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE FOR ELECTRIC TAXIS

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

The report is submitted to inform members of the Committee of an initiative the Technical Support Manager and Licensing Officers have been involved in with regards to a funding bid relating to a charging infrastructure for electric taxis. It is likely that as the initiative progresses updates to the current Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy will be required. Any updates will require thorough consultation and the information is provided to appraise members of the current situation and advise on the likely proposals to be considered.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Public Protection committee:

1. Supports the taxi electric charging joint project led by Lancaster City Council
2. To recommend to the Operational Management Committee to agree that Fylde Council continue to be involved with the taxi electric charging joint project and to request the Operational Management committee to consider and recommend a fully funded addition to the Capital Programme at its next meeting for the project.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

There are no previous decisions in this matter.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

1. In 2018 a grant bid opportunity via the Department for Transport's Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Round 2 Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Taxi Infrastructure Competition became available to seek funding for electric charging points for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. Led by Lancaster City Council, six Lancashire authorities, including Fylde Council, came together to make a bid for a grant to provide charging infrastructure for electric taxis. This process included various officer-led discussions, surveys and presentations involving the taxi trade. The bid was successful and the six authorities were awarded £630,000 for the provision of 24 rapid charging points (the type most suitable for taxis) across the 6 local authority areas. The formal grant offer was received on the 9 April 2019.
2. As part the submission the six authorities (and West Lancashire) agreed at officer level to pursue the implementation of agreed common vehicle licensing policies and incentives to promote the uptake and anticipated transition of the taxi fleets to electric vehicles over the next few years.
3. The grant award presented an opportunity to the 6 local authorities to progress a more harmonised approach between all local authorities in Lancashire region and potentially beyond. Standardisation in this area offers the prospect better of air quality in Lancashire and benefits arising from a common shared approach to both councils and the trade.
4. 3 main reasons were identified to focus on hackney carriage and private hire vehicle to improve air quality:
 - i) Taxis, as a consequence of operating intensively in urban areas where air quality is at its poorest, are considered a significant contributor to poor air quality.
 - ii) Local authorities have regulatory powers to encourage and/or enforce the take-up of low emission vehicle taxis.
 - iii) Through exposing more of the population to the benefits of ultra-low emission vehicles, taxis can play an important role in influencing the wider take-up of such vehicles.
5. Given the cross boundary nature of taxi work (airport runs etc.) and also that that the current system makes it possible for a driver to choose a licensing authority; for policy requirements to be effective there is a need to consider a common approach to licensing on a regional (Lancashire) basis or even a shared approach across neighbouring regions (Yorkshire, Greater Manchester and Cumbria). A common approach will have effective emission reduction/air quality improvement benefits across the region. A fragmented approach will most probably mean that changes will be piecemeal and their effectiveness impaired as a consequence.
6. In some cases a different approach has developed through an adopted choice e.g. the required use of a black cab/London Taxi for Hackney Carriage use. These variations on approach should not inhibit the pursuit and adoption of a more harmonised approach. Any licensing requirement change must take place over a reasonable transitional period to accommodate and minimise the impact of any agreed change resulting from a harmonised approach.
7. A number of the local authorities (including Fylde) have engaged a company to carry out a survey of taxi movements to inform suitable locations for electric taxi charging infrastructure and inform the taxi trade of the potential benefits of changing their vehicle to an electric one. A survey of the trade (to gather their opinions) also took place as part of information gathering to inform the charging infrastructure grant application. This process has enabled officers to identify potential locations that electric charging points can be installed subject to technical restrictions. In Fylde, the 4 charging points are likely to be spread out with one point in each of St Annes, Lytham, Warton or Freckleton and Kirkham or Wesham.
8. In terms of progressing the matter, the Committee will be aware that different authorities have adopted different approaches and have different priorities. Some Lancashire local authorities will have more significant air quality issues than others i.e. some have Air Quality Management Areas and some do not, however emission reductions will lead to air quality improvements in all local authority areas with related health benefits.
9. In order to develop a harmonised Lancashire approach (and potentially an approach which will harmonise with our neighbouring regions) it is likely that amendments will be required to our Hackney Carriage and Licensing Policy which will require consultation.

10. Whilst the Authority is not at the stage of going to consult on such amendments, matters for consideration may include:
- All fleet Euro 6 compliant by 2022 (older vehicles can be retrofitted to meet Euro 6 emission standard)
 - All newly licensed vehicles to be a maximum 5 years of age when first licensed. Policy to apply from 2020.
 - Only newly license zero emission taxis from 2028
 - Using air quality or other council budgets to pay for licence fee for zero emission taxis (available for 3 years from 2019)
 - Investigate the use of business rate relief for taxi operators running zero emission vehicles
 - Investigate the provision of local authority provided interest free/low interest loans to assist with the purchase of zero emission vehicle
 - Investigate opportunities for group procurement of zero emission vehicles to reduce purchase cost.
11. Members are therefore requested to support the taxi electric charging joint project led by Lancaster City and to note that further updates will be provided in due course.
12. Members are requested to recommend to the Operational Management Committee to agree that Fylde Council should continue to be involved with the taxi electric charging joint project and for the Operational Management Committee to make a request to the Finance and Democracy committee at its next meeting to authorise the expenditure of approximately £105,000 as a fully funded addition to the Capital Programme once sites for the charging points have been confirmed and procurement of the charging points has been completed with Lancaster City Council and other Lancashire Districts involved in the project.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	As referred to in the report.
Legal	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Community Safety	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	There are no implications arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	Whilst there are no Air Quality Management Areas within Fylde, supporting the provision of electric vehicles is beneficial in terms of reducing air pollution from licensed vehicles
Health & Safety and Risk Management	There are no implications arising directly from the report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
None		