Midlothian

General Purposes Committee
10 November 2015
Item No 5(b)

Taxis and Private Hire Cars – Vehicles powered by Electricity and engines with a capacity of less than 1500cc

Report by Director, Resources

1 Purpose of Report

To appraise the Members of recent enquiries relating to the feasibility of licensing vehicles powered by electricity as opposed to fuel oil, as taxis and private hire cars.

2 Background

Currently, in terms of the conditions of licensing, all vehicles have to have engines with a capacity of at least 1500cc. The assumption is that they will be use fuel oil, which makes no allowance for the introduction of vehicles which are powered by electricity which have no less power than conventional vehicles or vehicles which have an engine capacity of less than 1500cc which in terms of power generated may be as effective as vehicles with a higher engine capacity. The electric cars produce no effluent and the energy source comes at least to some extent from renewable sources. Support is available through the Energy Saving Trust to licence – holders who wish to make the change. In addition, savings can accrue to them in respect of Vehicle Excise Duty and the reduced cost of fuel. Such vehicles are currently being used as hire cars throughout Europe and the UK. No special equipment is required to test electric vehicles so there would be no resource implications.

3 Lower Engine Capacity

In terms of the power to weight ratio, it is also possible that vehicles with an engine capacity of as low as 1400cc may be suitable for use as Hire Cars; and as long as the vehicles were considered suitable by the Taxi Examination Centre, there would appear to be no particular drawbacks.

4 Report Implications

4.1 Resource

There are no resource implications arising from the consideration of this issue.

4.2 **Risk**

The risk relates to the failure to consider the potential.

4.3 **Single Midlothian Plan and Business Transformation**

Themes addressed in this report:

☐ Community safety

☐ Adult health, care and housing

☐ Getting it right for every Midlothian child

☒ Improving opportunities in Midlothian

☒ Sustainable growth

☐ Business transformation and Best Value

☐ None of the above

4.4 Impact on Performance and Outcomes
There is no impact.

4.5 Adopting a Preventative Approach

By adopting this course of action, the Committee is preventing recourse.

4.6 Involving Communities and Other Stakeholders

The Midlothian Taxi Owners' and the Private Hire Car Associations have not been consulted.

4.7 Ensuring Equalities

The report ensures equality.

4.8 Supporting Sustainable Development

The action contributes to sustainable development.

4.9 IT Issues

There are no IT issues arising.

5 Conclusions

The Committee is asked to review the approach to this issue. The power to weight measurement ie the brake horse power of the engine of the vehicle divided by the weight of the vehicle recommended by the Taxi Examination Centre is 0.0648kg, as illustrated in the **Appendix**.

Consultation should take place with Midlothian Taxi Owners' and Private Hire Car Associations.

6 Recommendation

It is recommended that the Committee:-

(a) note the report;

(b) agree to be minded in principle to alter the conditions of licensing to provide for electric hire cars; and permit the licensing of vehicles with an engine capacity of 1400cc and above ; and

(c) authorise appropriate consultation.

21 October 2015

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Background Papers: **File CG 10.7( ) (RGA/MT)**

The vehicles listed below are common Private Hire Cars currently used and licensed by The Council.

The calculation for working out power to weight is

Brake Horse Power (power) divided by KG (vehicle weight)

Vehicle	Brake Horse Power	Vehicle weight	Power to weight ratio
Ford Mondeo 1.8 tdci Zetec	125 bhp	1548 kg	0.0807 hp per kg
Ford Mondeo 2.0 tdci Zetec	140 bhp	1559 kg	0.0890 hp per kg
Skoda 1.9 tdi	105 bhp	1500kg	0.0700 hp per kg
Peugeot 407 2.0 hdi	136 bhp	158 kg	0.0860 hp per kg
Toyota Avensis 2.0 d4d	126 bhp	1440 kg	0.0875 hp per kg
Volkswagen Passat 1.9 tdi	105 bhp	1616 kg	0.0648 hp per kg
Volkswagen Passat 2.0 tdi	140 bhp	1648 kg	0.0849 hp per kg
Toyota Auris 1.4 d4d Tourer	90 bhp	1290 kg	0.0690 hp per kg