

## Cabinet

13<sup>th</sup> July 2021

### Public Questions (1 total)

1.	<b>Question from Nick Fisher, Cheltenham Hackney Carriage Association to the Cabinet Member Customer and Regulatory Services, Councillor Martin Horwood</b>
	<p>I refer to the recent petition submitted to the Council and note that any change in the decision to amend the WAV taxi policy lies with the cabinet. I would therefore ask that the cabinet reconsider the implementation of this policy. I see from the minutes of the council meeting that many of your colleagues were sympathetic to the taxi drivers and could understand the difficulties we are experiencing. I would like to correct you on some of the information you quoted. I understand that you are new to this position so were probably only using information provided by you predecessor. It was mentioned that 40,000 taxi drivers had so far switched it was not mentioned that that figure was 45,759 (2015) and has been steadily decreasing every year latest figures from the ONS 38,915 (march 2020 pre pandemic) You say that for disabled passengers in London, Birmingham or anywhere in the West Midlands, every single taxi was wheelchair accessible , the first 2 are correct as they are both cities but according to the ONS the average for the west midlands is 0.6 per 1000 people, exactly the same as Cheltenham. (adjusted to reflect Cheltenham figures provided by licencing) According to the ONS the national average per 1000 people for Urban with town or city is 0.5 per 1000 people Cheltenham already exceeds this figure. You said that with the National Star college campus in Cheltenham we have a relatively large disabled population. The majority of Wheelchairs at the star college are motorised and either will not fit or are too heavy to go in the vehicles we are expected to provide. The Star college have their own fleet of vehicles specifically to meet the needs of their students. You commented that you believed electric WAV would fall sharply in price and become more widely available. To follow that comment to its conclusion. Drivers are expected to purchase a WAV vehicle now that will be almost exclusively diesel and they would need to be replaced in the very near future and that the vehicles they will purchase now will have little or no value on the second hand market as they would be superseded by EV's.</p> <p>My question is: given all the facts above, are you still in support of this policy considering the climate emergency that has been declared, the difficulties the trade has undergone through this pandemic and knowing the number of drivers this will put out of business?</p>
	<b>Response from Cabinet Member</b>
	<p>The data cited in the last Council meeting was taken from the Department for Transport data sheet Taxi0104 dated 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020, but this has now been updated as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2021 (<a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taxi-statistics">https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/taxi-statistics</a>).</p> <p>The latest data shows a dramatic drop of 48,594 (-16%) in the overall number of licensed vehicles in England &amp; Wales in the last year. The largest numerical drop</p>

	<p>of 38,755 (-17%) was amongst non-WAV private hire vehicles.</p> <p>The drop amongst wheelchair accessible vehicles was 7,247 (-18%) but this reduces to 1,709 (-8%) if London is taken out. The fall amongst London cabs alone, all of which are wheelchair accessible, was 5,538 (-29%).</p> <p>Longer term data from the Department for Transport shows the overall number of licensed vehicles rising steadily in recent years before the sharp drop in the last year. This almost certainly demonstrates a major economic impact on the trade from the pandemic. Although hackney cabs had been declining slightly in recent years, including in London, the drop in the last year was more pronounced. The relative decline in hackney cabs may reflect the rise in app-based competition and other pre-pandemic factors.</p> <p>In Cheltenham, the data shows a drop of 51 (-30%) in the last year amongst private hire vehicles, almost all of which are non-wheelchair accessible. The fall amongst non-wheelchair accessible vehicles was 24 (-14%) but the number of wheelchair accessible vehicles rose by 8 (+15%).</p> <p>The data shows that the following authorities in England had achieved at or near 100% WAV hackney cab fleets (figures in brackets show WAVs, non-WAVs):</p> <p>Blackburn with Darwen (70, 0)  Burnley (33, 0)  Preston (187, 0)  West Lancs (34, 0)  Knowsley (221, 0)  Liverpool (1426, 0)  St Helens (55, 0)  Wirral (217, 0)  Bolton (102, 0)  Bury (47, 0)  Manchester (1084, 0)  Salford (92, 0)  Stockport (135, 0)  Tameside (150, 0)  Trafford (119, 0)  Cheshire West &amp; Chester (305, 0)  Kingston upon Hull (170, 0)  Bradford (215, 0)  Doncaster (164, 0)  Sheffield (648, 0)  Derby (190, 0)  Nottingham (420, 0)  Rushcliffe (18, 0)  Lincoln (30, 1)  South Holland (36, 0)  Leicester (300, 0)  Corby (114, 0)  Kettering (51, 0)  Northampton (110, 0)</p>
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	<p> South Staffs (2, 0)  Shropshire (62, 1)  Telford &amp; Wrekin (21, 0)  West Midlands (2117, 0) includes Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley, Sandwell, Solihull, Walsall &amp; Wolverhampton  Wyre Forest (61, 0)  Norwich (208, 0)  Peterborough (122, 0)  Luton (165, 0)  Bedford (63, 0)  Central Beds (178, 0)  Hertsmere (6, 0)  Three Rivers (14, 0)  Harlow (48, 0)  London (13423, 0)  Oxford (107, 0)  Bracknell Forest (52, 0)  Reading (216, 0)  Wokingham (69, 0)  Basingstoke &amp; Deane (55, 0)  Rushmoor (109, 0)  Epsom &amp; Ewell (36, 0)  Dartford (74, 0)  Maidstone (48, 0)  Chichester (33, 0)  Bristol (455, 2)  Plymouth (319, 0) </p> <p> On 15 July this week, I will be meeting both the licensed trade's representatives and also, separately, National Star amongst others at the Accessibility Forum. I will be happy to discuss both the further issues raised in the question. Further meetings with the trade are also being scheduled. Council unanimously endorsed my response to the petition that confirmed the policy implementation on 31 December 2021 but which also promised to continue engagement and dialogue on the issue. </p>
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