

# Cheltenham Borough Council

## Cabinet – 15 July 2025

### Review of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy

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**Accountable member:**

Councillor Victoria Atherstone, Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities

**Accountable officer:**

Michelle Bignell, Licensing and Public Protection Manager

**Ward(s) affected:**

All

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**Key Decision:** Yes

**Executive summary:**

In Spring 2025, the authority consulted on proposed changes to bring Cheltenham Borough Council's taxi and private hire licensing policy up to date with best practice, to mandate card payment machines and to deliver an updated vehicle licensing policy to deliver carbon emission aspirations in the Borough.

**Recommendations: That Cabinet:**

1. following consultation, adopts the draft policy attached at Appendix 2 from 24 July 2025 (after call-in period);
  2. notes the feedback regarding the vehicle emissions policy and further review is required as set out in 3.5 of the report.
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## **1. Implications**

### **1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications**

None arising directly from this report.

**Signed off by:** Ela Jankowska – Finance Business Partner

### **1.2 Legal implications**

Cheltenham Borough Council may set its own standards for driver, vehicle and operator licensing whilst also taking statutory guidance and best practice into account.

Consultation must be carried out fairly and the council will need to carefully and thoroughly assess the impact of introducing the proposed policy, including the effect on the supply of taxis and private hire vehicles in the area. They should also bear in mind the need for a proportionate approach, ensuring that those licence holders that would not meet the criteria can adapt or change their vehicle within a reasonable time.

Consultation on the policy should include not only the taxi and private hire vehicle trades, but also groups likely to be the trades' customers.

**Signed off by:** One Legal, [legalservices@onelegal.org.uk](mailto:legalservices@onelegal.org.uk)

### **1.3 Environmental and climate change implications**

The proposed policy still ensures that all licensed vehicles will be of at least Euro 6 emissions by their renewal date in 2026. All new vehicles must be of at least Euro 6 emissions standards.

Further consultation will be carried out with regards to the proposed 2030 delivery date for carbon neutral/zero emissions as set out in 3.5 of the report.

The final version of this policy, after consultation later this year will be assessed using the CIAT.

**Signed off by:** Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, [Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk](mailto:Maizy.mccann@cheltenham.gov.uk)

### **1.4 Corporate Plan Priorities**

This report contributes to the following Corporate Plan Priorities:

- Working with residents, communities and businesses to help make Cheltenham #netzero by 2030

- Ensuring residents, communities and businesses benefit from Cheltenham's future growth and prosperity
- Being a more modern, efficient and financially sustainable council

### **1.5 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Implications**

As outlined in Appendix 6 of this report.

### **1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review**

Through normal service delivery.

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## **2 Background**

- 2.1 The authority's [current policy](#) was adopted in 2021. There has also been an interim review during that time (2023) with regards to vehicle emission and wheelchair accessibility [requirements](#) resulting in two standalone policies.
- 2.2 A review of the current policy was undertaken, and a consultation was carried out in Summer 2024, however due to staff changes within the service the work has not been completed.
- 2.3 In Spring 2025, the team reviewed the previous proposals in line with best practice and carried out a further consultation.

## **3 Draft taxi and private hire licensing policy**

- 3.1 A copy of the draft taxi and private hire licensing policy is attached at Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The proposed changes result from government best practice, service feedback and a need to deliver a vehicle emissions policy fit for delivering the Borough's aspiration of being carbon neutral.
- 3.3 The proposed changes are outlined in the consultation document set out in Appendix 3.
- 3.4 A summary of the consultation feedback, along with officer appraisal is attached at Appendix 4. The Licensing Committee feedback is attached at Appendix 5.
- 3.5 All proposals have been recommended for adoption, except for the zero-emissions aspiration date due to various reasons including lack of infrastructure, timescale and cost to the trade which are struggling at present. Following discussions with the cabinet member, there will be a further review

with the following stakeholders to gather views on a carbon neutral approach:

- CBC's climate change team
- CBC's air quality team
- Gloucestershire County Council
- CBC's Cabinet members

This review will be conducted in July 2025 with a view to adopt the revised policy wording by October 2025.

The taxi and private hire trade will be updated with this information.

- 3.6 The proposal that all vehicles can be replaced like-for-like are to be adopted. For example, a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) must always be replaced with a WAV.

## **4 Reasons for recommendations**

- 4.1 The recommendations are necessary for full consideration of the consultation feedback and to enable Cabinet to make decision on the adoption of the policy amendments.

## **5 Alternative options considered**

- 5.1 The Cabinet can decide not to adopt any, or some, of proposals outlined in the report.

## **6 Consultation and feedback**

- 6.1 A 6-week consultation was carried out in Spring 2025 with the following stakeholders:

- All taxi and private hire licence holders
- CBC's elected members
- CBC's licensing committee
- Gloucestershire licensing authorities
- Gloucestershire County Council
- Gloucestershire Police
- Cheltenham BID
- Cheltenham Safe
- Local MP's
- Taxi meter providers
- Disability awareness groups
- CBC's marketing team

- National Taxi and Private Hire Trade Association

## **7 Key risks**

7.1 As outlined in Appendix 1.

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### **Report author:**

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### **Appendices:**

1. Risk Assessment
2. Draft taxi and private hire licensing policy
3. Proposed changes – consultation document
4. Consultation responses
5. Licensing committee response
6. Equality Impact Assessment

### **Background information:**

- [Current private hire and taxi policy](#)
- [Licensed vehicle emission and wheelchair policy 2023](#)
- [DfT Best Practice Guidance](#)

Appendix 1: Risk Assessment

Risk ref	Risk description	Risk owner	Impact score (1-5)	Likelihood score (1-5)	Initial raw risk score (1-25)	Risk response	Controls / Mitigating actions	Control / Action owner	Deadline for controls/ actions
	If Cabinet does not resolve to adopt the policy, the policy direction will remain unclear and uncertain for the licensed trade.	Licensing and Public Protection Manager	2	2	3	6	Accept	Adopt recommendations	Immediate effect except where dates are specified in policy

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