

Cheltenham Borough Council

Full Council – 15 December 2025

Review of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy (Emissions Policy)

Accountable member:

Councillor Victoria Atherstone, Cabinet Member for Safety and Communities

Accountable officer:

Michelle Bignell, Licensing and Public Protection Manager

Ward(s) affected:

All

Key Decision: Yes

Executive summary:

Following the adoption of the revised Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy in July 2025, a review of the proposed 2030 emissions policy has been conducted and concluded. Revised wording was sent to key stakeholders (para. 4.1) and cabinet members for feedback. Comments received have informed the revised emissions policy for approval which has been included in the draft policy.

Recommendations:

Council is recommended to:

1. Adopt the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy attached at Appendix 2
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1. Implications

1.1 Financial, Property and Asset implications

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Signed off by: Ela Jankowska – Finance Business Partner **Dated:** 27.10.2025

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.

Signed off by: One Legal, legalservices@onelegal.org.uk

1.3 Environmental and climate change implications

Whilst this adjusted wording in policy may lead to Greenhouse Gases being emitted in the short term, the overall policy supports the long-term transition away from fossil fuel use within the borough. It is recognised that taxi and private hire trade is people's livelihoods within the borough, creating employment and providing services which supports economic activity. The council will continue to work to reduce barriers for licensed taxis and private hire vehicles operating in Cheltenham to be zero-emission vehicles by 2030, in line with the borough's Climate Emergency Action Plan. Efforts through Climate Leadership Gloucestershire will also be made to ensure that there is alignment across the county. The Climate Impact Assessment Tool provides further detail (attached at **Appendix 4**).

Signed off by: Maizy McCann, Climate Officer, 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 5** of this report.

1.6 Performance management – monitoring and review

Through normal service delivery.

2 Background

2.1 The authority's [current policy](#) was adopted by Cabinet in 2025 after a full consultation. As part of this review, the emissions policy was reviewed, and the proposed wording was considered:

'For hackney carriage vehicles, all vehicles from their renewal date in 2026 must be at least Euro 6 emissions or better and the Authority will only permit replacement applications for existing licence holders from 1st January 2030 and renewal applications from 00:01 hours on 1st January 2030, where the vehicle subject to the application emits zero emissions.

For private hire vehicles, all vehicles from their renewal date in 2026 must be at least Euro 6 emissions or better and it is the Authority's aspiration that it will only permit replacement applications for existing licence holders from 1st January 2030 and renewal applications from 00:01 hours on 1st January 2030, where the vehicle subject to the application emits zero emissions'.

2.2 Due to feedback received during the consultation, the proposed wording was revised for consideration by key stakeholders with a view to implementing later this year:

'The authority will only licence new hackney carriages and private hire vehicles from 1st January 2030 where they are ultra-low emission or zero emission vehicles. Ultra-low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) produce less than 75g/km of CO₂ tailpipe emissions and have a zero-emission range of at least 10 miles. It is proposed that 1 January 2030 is the date from which new vehicle licence applications would no longer be accepted for vehicles emitting 75g/km of CO₂ or more.

This lead period gives time for the trade to prepare, whilst allowing other neighbouring licensing authorities time to consult on and approve this requirement, ensuring a level playing field in the industry across the county and wider regions. If this is approved, there will be a review of the situation in 2029. If other Gloucestershire licensing authorities have failed to implement a restriction on non-ULEVs vehicles, then it will be recommended that the policy should not be implemented. This is because the authority's own policy will simply be circumvented by the trade 'licence shopping' and applying elsewhere. Thereby, the authority will lose control of those working in the Borough and emissions would not be reduced. The authority will proactively work to encourage neighbouring authorities to implement the same ULEZ or zero-emission vehicle policy'.

3 Current taxi and private hire licensing policy

3.1 The current emissions policy can be viewed on pages 20/21 and 25/26 of the [current policy](#) which demonstrates a commitment to reducing carbon emissions by vehicles licensed by the authority.

4 Review of emissions policy

4.1 The following stakeholders were consulted on the review:

- Cheltenham Borough Council's air quality team
- Cheltenham Borough Council's climate team
- Gloucestershire County Council decarbonisation team
- Cheltenham Borough Council's cabinet members

4.2 The feedback is attached at **Appendix 3**.

4.3 Council is asked to approve the draft policy which has been updated with following wording for vehicle emissions:

Cheltenham Borough Council aims to be carbon neutral by 2030.

- *1 April 2028 - The authority will review the above vehicle policy to consider whether a move to EV or ULEV is appropriate.*
- *1 April 2030 (provisional) – Ambition that new vehicle applications and change of vehicle applications will be ULEV or EV.*
- *1 April 2033 (provisional) - Ambition that renewal vehicle applications will be ULEV or EV.*

EVs are pure electric vehicles with zero tailpipe emissions. ULEVs are currently defined as having less than 75 grams of CO₂ per kilometre (g/km) from the tailpipe.

More information is on the [vehicle certification agency website](#)

The [web page](#) also lists all vehicles that meet the EV and ULEV criteria.

5 Reasons for recommendations

- 5.1 The proposed wording is the same policy that Stroud District Council and Tewkesbury Borough Council have adopted. This demonstrates alignment and therefore three out of the six district councils in Gloucestershire would have consistent policy approaches to emissions standards.
- 5.2 Moving forward, there will be a commitment to keeping this approach under review working alongside the licensed trade, the council's climate team and Climate Leadership Gloucestershire and working with the other cabinet members in neighbouring authorities.
- 5.3 With LGR (local government reorganisation) on the horizon it is a sensible approach to adopt a similar approach as two other authorities that have the highest standard in terms of emissions policies.
- 5.4 Cabinet resolved to approve the wording and recommend to Council the policy for adoption at their meeting on 18 November 2025.

6 Alternative options considered

- 6.1 Council can decide not to adopt the proposal outlined in the report. However, the revised wording will promote the borough's ambition to be net zero and will provide clarity for the trade.

7 Key risks

- 7.1 As outlined in Appendix 1.

Report author:

Michelle Bignell, Licensing and Public Protection Manager michelle.bignell@cheltenham.gov.uk

Appendices:

- i. Risk Assessment
- ii. Draft policy for adoption
- iii. Review feedback
- iv. Climate Impact Assessment Tool
- v. Equality Impact Assessment

Background information:

- Current private hire and taxi policy

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 approve the wording the direction will remain unclear and uncertain for the licensed trade.	Head of Public Protection	2	2	3	6	Adopt policy	Licensing and Public Protection Manager	Immediate effect except where dates are specified in policy
