

Vehicle emissions consultation feedback

Consultation:

We have recently conducted a consultation with regards to our aspirations in relation to taxi and private hire vehicle emissions. The proposed wording was:

'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'.

Due to feedback, we have revised the wording and ask for your views on the wording being implemented 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'.

Stakeholder comments:

Cllr Paul Baker:

I am very supportive of this proposed change. It gives our taxi drivers more time and is a much more flexible approach which I hope other districts will follow. It also goes some way to helping us achieve our Net Zero ambitions in a more collaborative way,

Gloucestershire County Council:

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on Cheltenham Borough Council's revised proposal regarding taxi and private hire vehicle emissions.

I've reviewed the policies currently in place across Gloucestershire's district councils and compiled a comparative summary to support our response. Based on this review, I would like to offer the following observations:

- **Stroud and Tewkesbury** have adopted clear, phased approaches that transition both new and renewal applications toward ULEV and EV standards, with defined timelines and review points.
- **Cheltenham's revised proposal** aligns with this direction in principle, but its implementation is conditional on neighbouring authorities adopting similar standards. The 2029 review clause, as currently framed, feels more like a fallback than a firm commitment to regional collaboration.
- **Cotswold and Forest of Dean** continue to apply age-based licensing policies, with no defined emissions targets or transition plans.
- **WAV exemptions** are common across districts but vary in application, contributing to inconsistency in enforcement.

Whilst Cheltenham's proposal is broadly in line with the long-term direction of travel, it would be helpful to see a clearer commitment to working with other districts to support a joined-up approach. This would not only benefit current coordination efforts but would also help facilitate smoother transitions as governance structures across the county evolve.

That said, it's important to acknowledge that not all areas of the county are in the same position. More rural districts may face greater challenges in transitioning to EV taxis due to limited charging infrastructure and longer travel distances. We would therefore like to see Cheltenham take a leading role for Gloucestershire. A flexible approach that allows for local variation whilst aligning review points and long-term goals could help reduce licence shopping, support fairer competition, and contribute more effectively to GCC's wider decarbonisation objectives.

Cllr Richard Pinegar, CBC

Thank you for sharing the revised proposal on taxi and private hire vehicle emissions. My apologies that this response is slightly delayed compared to the deadline but importantly, it has been prepared in consultation with the climate team.

I appreciate the thoughtful adjustments made in response to consultation feedback, and I am broadly supportive of the revised wording. While the inclusion of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles (ULEVs) beyond 2030 does represent a shift from the original ambition of zero-emission-only licensing, I believe we can still achieve a **net zero taxi fleet by 2030** through proactive engagement and regional collaboration.

My priority is to ensure that we **transition to zero-emission vehicles wherever possible**, without destabilising the taxi trade in Cheltenham. Taxi drivers are a vital part of our community, and any policy must balance environmental ambition with economic realism. I believe the market will naturally favour electric vehicles by 2030 due to improvements in affordability and range, and I am committed to working with the trade to support that transition.

To strengthen our position and maintain public trust, I recommend the following additions to the policy wording:

"The authority will work towards ensuring that all licensed hackney carriages and private hire vehicles operating in Cheltenham are zero-emission vehicles by 2030, in line with the borough's Climate Emergency commitment. While ULEVs may be licensed during the

transition, the council will actively support and incentivise the shift to full zero-emission compliance.”

“A formal review will be conducted in 2029 to assess progress toward full zero-emission licensing. This review will consider market conditions, regional alignment, and the readiness of the trade, and will inform any necessary policy adjustments to meet the 2030 net zero target.”

Note that these will require some tracking of vehicles to allow a formal review in 2029, I trust that this is feasible.

I also intend to work closely with **Climate Leadership Gloucestershire** to encourage alignment across neighbouring authorities. A coordinated approach will help prevent licence shopping and ensure that our climate goals are met without disadvantaging local operators.

Thank you again for your work on this important issue.