



**REPORT of
DIRECTOR OF SERVICE DELIVERY**

to
**STRATEGY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
29 JANUARY 2020**

AIR QUALITY ACTION PLAN – IMPROVING TAXI EMISSIONS

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Council is in the process of preparing an Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) for Market Hill and the wider district, which will come to Members for review prior to public consultation later in 2020.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to consider:

- an action for that plan to improve emissions from taxis by introducing an age limit for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to meet air quality objectives in the soonest possible time;
- installing electric vehicle charging points in Maldon for taxi drivers.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- (i) That, in relation to the age restriction, the Council introduces an age limit for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles:
- From 1 January 2021, licensed vehicles can continue to be licensed until they reach 12 years of age or 15 years for a purpose built taxi.
 - From 1 January 2021, all newly licensed vehicles will be of a Euro 6 standard for both petrol and diesel vehicles.
 - From 1 January 2026, all newly licensed vehicles will be of an electric hybrid or ultra-low emission standard
- (ii) That, in relation to Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points, that EV charge points to support taxi drivers are approved and a further options report be brought to a future meeting of the Strategy and Resources Committee to consider locations and tariffs.

3. SUMMARY OF KEY ISSUES

3.1 Maldon District Council (MDC) declared an Air Quality Management Area (AQMA) on Market Hill in December 2018, when assessments of air quality predicted that the annual mean objective for the pollutant nitrogen dioxide would not be met.

- 3.2 Section 84 of the Environment Act 1995 requires local authorities to develop Air Quality Action Plans within 12 months of declaring an AQMA, and detail measures to tackle the problems causing exceedances.
- 3.3 In exercising this function, regard must be had to the Secretary of State's guidance. Action Plans must be submitted to, and approved by, Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA).
- 3.4 The Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) will set out the measures that the council intends to take to improve air quality in the borough between 2020 and 2025.
- 3.5 **Proposed Action – Reduce Taxi Emissions.**
- 3.5.1 This action will introduce an age limit for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles as follows:
- From 1 January 2021, licensed vehicles can continue to be licensed until they reach 12 years of age or 15 years for a purpose built taxi.
 - From 1 January 2021, all newly licensed vehicles will be of a Euro 6 standard for both petrol and diesel vehicles.
 - From 1 January 2026, all newly licensed vehicles will be of a electric hybrid or ultra-low emission standard.
- 3.5.2 In 2014, the taxi trade raised the issue of the age restriction on taxi and private hire vehicles with the Council, and requested that the 10-year age restriction for hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, as set out in pre-licensing conditions issued by the Council, be reviewed.
- 3.5.3 Following a consideration of options, the Planning and Licensing Committee at its meeting on 16 January 2014 resolved (Minute No. 705 refers):
- (i) that no age restriction is imposed and the licensing conditions are amended to reflect this;
 - (ii) that the restricted parking area is maintained as it is.
- 3.5.4 Since 2014, air quality has emerged as a public health emergency, and with the declaration of an AQMA in 2018, it is considered an appropriate time to review this decision and take actions which reduce Nitrogen Oxide (NOx) emissions locally.
- 3.5.5 The Licensing Authority can set an age restriction in order to promote a modern, smart, taxi fleet in the Maldon District, and to maintain high standards. This in turn promotes consumer confidence when choosing to use a taxi or private hire vehicles.
- 3.5.6 Most local authorities across Essex have imposed age restrictions. Colchester has introduced standards for taxi and private hire vehicles based on euro emission categories. Chelmsford has age limits but are looking at introducing emission limits.

3.6 **Proposed action – Electric Vehicles (EV) chargers at taxi rank**

- 3.6.1 Electric Vehicle provision in the council will require a corporate steer in the long term, to ensure residents have access to support the growing trend in purchasing electric vehicles, which is promoted by the government white paper; “The Road to Zero”.
- 3.6.2 In the short term, partnership working and stand-alone initiatives, can support specific improvements close to the AQMA, and also support local businesses to upgrade their fleet for economic benefits.

4. **CONCLUSION**

- 4.1 Imposing an age restriction on vehicles will lead to reduced emissions and an improvement in air quality, allowing the council to comply with national objectives.
- 4.2 Installing EV chargers for taxi use will enable early adoption of less polluting vehicles and support taxi drivers in obtaining compliant vehicles.
- 4.3 If approved, the actions will be included in the AQAP which will go to public consultation during 2020.

5. **IMPACT ON STRATEGIC THEMES**

- 5.1 The reasonable age restriction on vehicles contributes to the corporate thematic strategy of Place by protecting and improving the environment for residents and visitors, with improved air quality.
- 5.2 The addition of electric vehicle chargers also contributes to the corporate thematic strategy of Place by delivering sound and tested environmentally friendly initiatives.

6. **IMPLICATIONS**

- (i) **Impact on Customers** – Improved air quality for residents. This action may financially affect the taxi trade as they will be required to update a small amount of vehicles in a slightly shorter time frame. However, the provision of EV chargers will present a cost saving opportunity over the long term.
- (ii) **Impact on Equalities** – Evidenced based air quality measures create a healthier town where inequalities are reduced. The young and elderly are most at risk from poor air quality.
- (iii) **Impact on Risk** – It is a statutory duty to produce an AQAP where an AQMA has been declared. If not produced, DEFRA has broad powers of intervention under Section 85 of the Environment Act 1995. The European Commission has formally launched infraction proceedings against the UK for breach of nitrogen dioxide limit values under the EU Air Quality Directive. DEFRA has discretionary power in Part 2 on the Localism Act under which the

government could require responsible authorities to pay all or part of an infraction fine.

- (iv) **Impact on Resources (financial)** – Grant opportunities and other commercial partnerships will fund the EV infrastructure.
- (v) **Impact on Resources (human)** – The role or department responsible for delivering each action is stated in the plan, having been identified through the steering group.
- (vi) **Impact on the Environment** – Air pollution is both an environmental and health issue and the report considers the most effective way of following statutory guidance to document the air quality issues in Maldon and provide evidence on the need to mitigate. Improved air quality and reduction in associated health issues.
- (vii) **Impact on Strengthening Communities** – Healthy communities ensure that vulnerable children and residents are protected from poor health outcomes.

Background Papers

Report from Planning and Licensing Committee 16 January 2014: Age of taxis and taxi rank provision.

The Road to Zero – Next steps towards cleaner road transport and delivering our Industrial Strategy.

Environment Act 1995 Annual Status Report 2016 Local Air Quality Management Technical Guidance (16) Defra Local Air Quality Management Policy Guidance (16) Defra.

<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/documents/LAQM-TG16-February-18-v1.pdf>

<https://laqm.defra.gov.uk/documents/LAQM-PG16-April-16-v1.pdf>

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