



Chelmsford City Council Regulatory Committee

DATE: 1st June 2023

TAXI LICENSING POLICY AMENDMENTS

Report by: Director of Public Places

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Purpose

The Committee is requested to consider an exemption from the requirement for all vehicles to be Euro 6 Compliant as from the 1st April 2024.

Recommendations

Members are recommended to consider amendments to the Taxi Licensing Policy.

1. Background & Introduction

- 1.1 On 16th July 2019 Chelmsford City Council declared a Climate and Ecological Emergency, to deliver the commitments set out within the declaration it was recognised that the Council must work with public service transport providers and regulated transport providers, such as taxis, to ensure that wherever possible vehicles used in Chelmsford are low emission and/or compliant with at least Euro 6 emission standards.
- 1.2 In 1992 EU-wide standards on vehicle emissions were introduced. The first standard was known as Euro 1 with subsequent standards named Euro 2, Euro 3 etc...

- 1.3 Euro 6 was introduced for all vehicles that were registered on or after 1st September 2015. The biggest difference between the Euro 5 and Euro 6 standard was the limit on the amount of nitrogen oxides diesel vehicles could produce. The Euro 6 limit of 0.08g/km of nitrogen oxides was a significant reduction of the Euro 5 limit of 0.18g/km.
- 1.4 Nitrogen dioxide is the only statutory air quality limit that the UK is currently failing to meet and has caused many local authorities, including Chelmsford City Council, to declare air quality management areas at pollution hotspots.
- 1.5 On the 13th February 2020 members of the regulatory committee resolved that:
 - the licensing conditions for taxis and private hire vehicles be amended to require them to be Euro 6 compliant by 1st April 2024 and;
 - the licensing conditions for any replacement taxis or private hire vehicles replaced after 31st March 2020 be amended to require them to be Euro 6 compliant.
- 1.6 These conditions are contained in Section 3.4.4 of the Taxi Licensing Policy. The Policy can be viewed at the following link
<https://www.chelmsford.gov.uk/media/hnyifts2/taxi-licensing-policy.pdf>

2. Requests for Exemption

- 2.1 On March 20, 2023, a licensed taxi driver submitted a request for an exemption from the requirement that all vehicles be Euro 6 compliant by April 1, 2024. A further 3 requests/representations have been received, at the time of writing this report, from 3 other licensed drivers. All requests are attached to the report as Appendix A.
- 2.2 Rather than deal with individual requests for exemption the Committee are asked to consider whether to keep, remove or amend the condition relating to Euro 6. The Committee's decision will then apply to all Euro 5 vehicles.

3. Impact

- 3.1 The Licensing department have checked all licenced vehicles first registered before 2017 through a company called Solera which is an HPI Euro Emission Standards Checker. If section 3.4.4 remains in the policy, a total of 76 out of 175 hackney carriages will be impacted, with 51 of them being wheelchair accessible, and 13 out of 85 private hire vehicles.
- 3.2 If the condition in the policy is removed, all licensed vehicles will achieve Euro 6 compliance by 2027. This is in accordance with the policy's requirement that licensed vehicles must not exceed 12 years since their initial registration.

4. Options

4.1 Members have the following options:

- 4.1a Remove the requirement for all licensed vehicles to be euro 6 compliant by 1st April 2024
- 4.1b Keep the requirement that requires all licensed vehicles to be Euro 6 compliant by 1st April 2024
- 4.1c Amend the date for when all licensed vehicles are to be euro 6 compliant

Appendices:

- Appendix A – Representations for exemption from requirement for all vehicles to be Euro 6 compliant

Background reading:

Taxi Licensing Policy

Corporate Implications

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: None

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: If the requirement is removed there will be a negative impact on the environment, this will be negligible due to the low number of vehicles affected compared to the overall number of vehicles in use.

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None.

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: None

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Appendix A - Requests for Exemptions

Dear Mr Brookes,

Firstly please excuse me if i ramble, go off point so to speak.
I am not the most eloquent of People, but will endeavour to do my best.

I purchased my current vehicle in 2015 in the belief that i could licence it for 12 years.
I am now (with others) faced with the prospect of having 3 years of my vehicles working useful life taken away, this is not right and fair and i object most strongly.

I draw your attention to a comment you made in a letter you sent to Vicky Ford MP.
" THE CITY COUNCIL ARE DECLARING A CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY"
so this would suggest the council is more concerned with a few Euro 5 Taxis trying to make an honest living,
than the devastation caused by the Beaulieu and Channels Estates to the environment, building on a Golf Course...
really!?!?

What about the Buses and Trades peoples vehicles what punitive measures do you have in store for them?
The irony is of course that i could still drive around for years in this vehicle privately with the plates and roof sign off.

I have been driving a licensed taxi in Chelmsford for over 30 years, and have an unblemished disciplinary record,
and have provided a professional and courteous service to many happy customers who have become friends and would
be unhappy if i couldn't continue for the full 12 years. I can provide you with their testimonials if you think fit.

I hope that i have made a compelling case and that "**EXTENUATING CURCUMSTANCES**" apply in my matter.

Lastly i understand that a cohort lead by the inimitable *redacted* will be making their own representations for you to consider.

I hope i didn't meander too much and look forward to your comments.

With Kind Regards,

Redacted

My name is *redacted* and I live in *redacted*. I am a taxi driver and I purchased my taxi around 5 years ago (Euro 5) which was licensed until 2026. However, since purchasing the taxi, the licensing policy in Chelmsford has changed - I can only use my taxi until 2024, which means that I lose 2 years of driving a licensed taxi and consequently lose my work which I've been doing for 15 years.

Under the new licensing policy, only Euro6 will be licensed. The licensing department in Chelmsford told me that they wouldn't allow me to retro fit my Euro5 taxi to fit Euro6 specifications as "I could spend that money on a new taxi". To retro fit a taxi to Euro6 standards would cost around ~£2,000 and a new taxi costs around ~£50,000.

I totally agree with having vehicles that produce lower emissions, however there are many taxi drivers in Chelmsford who are missing out on 2 years of taxi driving under the new licensing policy. When we bought our taxi's, we were told by licensing that we would have our license until at least 2026. Government policy is that all diesel vehicles are to be scrapped by 2030 and there are incentives such as the diesel scrappage scheme that has allowed diesel drivers to switch to a lower emission vehicle. I am not sure why Chelmsford council has decided that 2024 for my taxi to be scrapped when government policy gives 7 more years for diesel cars to be phased out.

There needs to be some mitigation in place for the drivers who are going to lose out and cannot afford (or want) to buy a new Euro6 taxi, especially those who have taxis who were originally permitted until 2026. Many taxi drivers will simply not be able to afford to buy a new taxi that fits the new licensing requirements and therefore be out of work, this points towards discrimination on the basis that individuals cannot continue to work simply because they cannot afford to spend a considerable amount on a new taxi.

Perhaps a scrappage scheme for diesel taxis or allowance to retro fit existing taxi's to Euro6 standards would assist taxi drivers greatly.

I am happy to discuss this further with you.

Thank you for your time. I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards,

Redacted

Good morning,

i am writing to you to make a representation against the introduction of requiring all taxis/private hire vehicles to be euro 6 compliant by April 2024. When this ruling was introduced, although disappointed that the possible 12 years usage of my vehicle *redacted* had been reduced by 3 years, it would only probably effect the resale value of the vehicle as I was intending to replace it sooner than 12 years. In fact my plans were to replace it in the summer of 2020.

As the result of the Covid pandemic, new taxis are not readily available, waiting time was approximately 12 months dependant on make/model etc, It is impossible to get any discounts on new vehicles keeping the purchase price high.

I have had to keep my vehicle longer than I intended. Also added to that is the current cost of living crisis I will not be in a position to replace my vehicle in April 2024.

I recently had communication from TFL, through my congestion charge account, that they have introduced a scrapage scheme for private residents and businesses, I think its £9000 for my type of vehicle? If this was introduced for Chelmsford then I think that I would be in a position to order a brand new Euro 6 compliant vehicle sooner.

If you are unable to assist in the scrapage scheme idea? then I request that the April 2024 deadline be removed and changed to any new/used vehicles replacing current vehicles need to be Euro 6 compliant. Although this would in theory mean that i could run my vehicle to 2027 I would be looking to change it as soon as it is financially viable for me to do so.

Kind Regards

Redacted

I've recently bought my vehicle and merely new to the taxi business. I've purchased my vehicle for £5000, £2000 insurance, £340 road tax and my concern is to give it up the following year due to being Euro 5. I've got my self in debt to have this money as I see a great need for taxi services and disability access vehicles.

I appreciate the councils view for cleaner air, but with all do respect this isn't the time, not only will be a shortage of disability vehicles but also 6 seater.

With the cost of living and prices of new and second hand cars sky rocket, 50k + for a new electric car is just too expensive.

I regret to say but I have to look for a new career if the council decision to replace euro 5 vehicles goes a head.

I sincerely hope the council and the representatives make the right decision.

more years for all euro 5 vehicles due to the war in Ukraine ~~UA~~ due to the cost of living and the uncertainty of the world financial crisis.

Sincerely

Redacted