
Report To: General Purposes Board

Date: 11 November 2015

Report By: Head of Environmental and Commercial
Services

Report No:
ERC/ENV/IM/15.252

Contact Officer: Jim Bradley

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Subject: Licensed Vehicle Engine Capacity

1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide information and guidance on the current licensed vehicle engine capacity requirements and how technical advances have progressed since the current requirements were adopted.
- 1.2 That consideration should be given to the introduction of a minimum power output (bhp) limit or equivalent power/weight ratio for low carbon vehicles in place of a minimum engine cubic capacity for licensed vehicles.

2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Currently Inverclyde Council's licensed vehicle technical requirements state that all licensed vehicles have a minimum engine size of 1600 cubic capacity (cc).
- 2.2 The current requirements have been in place since the early 1980's.
- 2.3 Technical advances in engine development have been significant since the 1980's and particularly so in the past five years. Both in terms of power output per cc and in reducing emission levels.
- 2.4 A 1990 vehicle of the type most commonly used for public hire/private hire use produced approx. 75 bhp from a 1600cc engine.
- 2.5 Many vehicles exist on the market at present that are of a size to meet all our other specification requirements but with a smaller engine size than 1600cc. The majority produce more than 75 bhp and are more than capable of propelling the fully loaded vehicle adequately whilst providing the operator with increased fuel consumption and producing lower exhaust emissions.
- 2.6 The move towards a minimum power output in place of a minimum cubic capacity would have the benefit of allowing operators to take advantage of technical advances and the associated lower running costs without compromising the vehicle being fit for purpose.
- 2.7 It is proposed to allow low carbon vehicles to be licensed if the power/weight ratio is equivalent to its comparative petrol/diesel vehicle which meets our power output requirement.
- 2.8 It is proposed that the 'Guidelines for vehicles to be used as Taxis or Private Hire' be modified from stating 'The vehicle will have a minimum engine capacity of 1600cc' to 'The vehicle will have a minimum power output of 75bhp or equivalent power/weight ratio in respect of a low carbon vehicle using an electric or hybrid power unit'.
- 2.9 No vehicles currently licensed falls below the proposed 75bhp limit.
- 2.10 The taxi trade are supportive of the proposals.

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the 'Guidelines for vehicles to be used as Taxis or Private Hire' be modified from stating 'The vehicle will have a minimum engine capacity of 1600cc' to 'The vehicle will have a minimum power output of 75bhp or equivalent power/weight ratio in respect of a low carbon vehicle using an electric or hybrid power unit'.

Ian Moffat
Head of Environmental and Commercial Services

4.0 BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Currently Inverclyde Council's licensed vehicle technical requirements state that all licensed vehicles have a minimum engine size of 1600 cubic capacity (cc).
- 4.2 The current requirements have been in place since the early 1980's.
- 4.3 Technical advances in engine development have been significant since the 1980's and particularly so in the past five years. Both in terms of power output per cc and in reducing emission levels.
- 4.4 A 1990 vehicle of the type most commonly used for public hire/private hire use produced approx. 75 bhp from a 1600cc engine.
- 4.5 Many vehicles exist on the market at present that are of a size to meet all our other specification requirements but with a smaller engine size than 1600cc. The majority produce more than 75 bhp and are more than capable of propelling the fully loaded vehicle adequately whilst providing the operator with increased fuel consumption and producing lower exhaust emissions.
- 4.6 In today's terms, the most popular licensed vehicle is the Skoda Octavia. The lowest power 1600cc derivative of this vehicle produces 110bhp. Other vehicles which meet all our specification requirements such as the Skoda Rapid are produced in smaller engine derivatives. The 1400cc Skoda Rapid produces 90bhp and whilst we licence a number of these vehicles with larger engines the most efficient derivative in terms of both economy and emissions cannot be licensed due to our engine size requirement.
- 4.7 The move towards a minimum power output in place of a minimum cubic capacity would have the benefit of allowing operators to take advantage of technical advances and the associated lower running costs without compromising the vehicle being fit for purpose.
- 4.8 A number of low carbon vehicles are now on the market which meets all our vehicle specifications with the exception of the engine size requirement. These include both electric and hybrid vehicles.
- 4.9 We would propose to allow low carbon vehicles to be licensed if the power/weight ratio is equivalent to its comparative petrol/diesel vehicle which meets our power output requirement.
- 4.10 We propose that the 'Guidelines for vehicles to be used as Taxis or Private Hire' be modified from stating 'The vehicle will have a minimum engine capacity of 1600cc' to 'The vehicle will have a minimum power output of 75bhp or equivalent power/weight ratio in respect of a low carbon vehicle using an electric or hybrid power unit'.
- 4.11 No vehicles currently licensed falls below the proposed 75bhp limit.
- 4.12 Using a power output requirement in place of a cubic capacity future proofs our specification whilst allowing operators to take advantage of technical advances.
- 4.13 The inclusion of the latest low carbon technologies in our specification will help to reduce the carbon emissions from our licensed vehicles.
- 4.14 The taxi trade are supportive of the proposals.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS

Finance

5.1 There are no financial implications.

Financial Implications:

One off Costs

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	Budget Years	Proposed Spend this Report	Virement From	Other Comments
N/A					

Annually Recurring Costs/ (Savings)

Cost Centre	Budget Heading	With Effect from	Annual Net Impact	Virement From (if Applicable)	Other Comments
N/A					

Legal

5.2 There are no legal implications.

Human Resources

5.3 There are no human resource implications.

Equalities

5.4 There are no equalities implications.

Repopulation

5.5 There are no repopulation implications.

6.0 CONSULTATIONS

6.1 The taxi trade have asked for the current engine size requirement to be reviewed and are supportive of the proposal to introduce a minimum power output in place of a minimum cc requirement.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

7.1 N/A