

## **Meeting of the Regulatory Committee of the City of Edinburgh Council, 1 May 2023**

Note in Support of Motion by Councillor Neil Ross (Item 9.1 of Agenda) by Central Radio Taxis (Tollcross) Limited, City Cabs (Edinburgh) Limited, the Scottish Taxi Federation and Unite the Union, as representatives of the taxi trade (Trade)

1. The Trade takes note of the terms of Councillor Ross' motion at item 9.1 of the Agenda for this meeting and write to express support for its terms.
2. As Committee will be aware, Covid hit the taxi trade particularly hard, with considerable loss of revenues suffered by every taxi operator in the City. This in itself caused hardship to those seeking (or requiring) to replace their licensed vehicle in order to comply with the Licensing Authority's Age and Emissions Policy. The difficulties wrought by Covid were exacerbated by the decisions of several companies who carried out conversions of Mercedes/Ford and Peugeot vehicles into Wheelchair Accessible Taxis, to cease such conversions. In consequence of those decisions, there is now only one model of approved taxi vehicle which can be bought new: the LEVC TXE. The cost of the TXE is around £70k, price which is beyond the reach of many existing operators.
3. The lack of supply of new vehicles has created significant distortions in the market for second hand vehicles which comply with policy, namely those of a Euro 6 emission standard. The cost of a compliant second-hand taxi is now approximately 35-40% higher than it was pre Covid. Lenders giving taxi finance are reticent to lend to overvalued vehicles, which is simply another barrier to compliance for those genuinely seeking to upgrade to meet policy goals.
4. A further issue experienced by the Trade at this time is the lack of drivers, meaning many operators can no longer double shift their vehicles. This has led to decreases in revenues and, in a not insignificant number of cases, taxis lying idle outside operator's homes as there is no driver available and willing to drive it.
5. All of these factors have converged giving rise to considerable anxiety amongst the Trade given the deadlines for moving to Euro 6 standard have now passed.

6. The Trade welcomes the engagement of elected members and their willingness to listen and seek to understand the current difficulties being experienced by the Trade.
7. The Terms of the motion provide some much-needed breathing space to members of the Trade, particularly those with Euro 5 vehicles which would otherwise be prohibited from continuing to operate beyond 2024. The measures proposed strike an appropriate balance between achieving the clean air targets which the policy was passed to secure and allowing well maintained and ostensibly suitable vehicles to continue to be licensed to serve the public for a longer period than hitherto. The Trade will continue to monitor the situation closely and make such suitable representations about further assistance as circumstances may warrant.
8. The Trade also supports the other aspects of the motion concerning closer and more frequent engagement. This can only serve the interests of the Trade and Licensing Authority well and assist in facilitating fully informed and timely decisions on policy to ensure that Edinburgh continues to have a taxi fleet of which it can be proud.
9. For all of the foregoing reasons, the Trade endorses the motion and asks that elected members lend it their support.