

REPORT TO:		Council	
DATE:		07 November 2024	
REPORT AUTHOR:		Julian Joinson, Member Services Manager	
TITLE OF REPORT:		Question Time 1) Engagement with Taxi Drivers and Operators	
EXEMPT REPORT:	No		
KEY DECISION:	No	If yes, date of publication:	n/a

Questions to Council

Questions for the Leader of the Council, a member of the Cabinet, or a Committee Chair may be submitted by councillors or by member of the public, under Council Procedure Rule 2.2(vi).

Procedural Note

- The questions will be read out by the Mayor/Deputy Mayor
- The Leader or other councillor, as appropriate, will give an oral answer.
- The questioner, if a councillor, may ask a supplementary question, if it is directly related to the original question

The following question has been submitted:-

1) Engagement with Taxi Drivers and Operators

To the Leader of the Council (Councillor Munsif Dad BEM JP)

At a recent Cabinet meeting the Council agreed changes to the taxi testing arrangements in Hyndburn. Taxi drivers like everyone else are struggling to make ends meet so these changes will be welcome.

Hyndburn Council has aspirations to contribute to net zero and play its part in tackling global warming/climate change and continue to improve air quality for our residents.

Nationally taxis account for 4% for the UK's domestic greenhouse gas emissions despite only accounting for 0.93% of all registered cars. Due to their high mileage, mostly urban journeys and vehicle age, taxis also contribute significantly to poor local air quality, impacting the health of local residents and other drivers. This coupled with the huge numbers of children who now suffer asthma and other breathing issues means that we have to do everything we can to reduce these emissions immediately.

Currently there are 317 private hire vehicles and 55 Hackneys registered in Hyndburn. Of these 174 are diesel, 10 petrol, 186 are hybrid and 0 (zero) fully electric. A large number of

taxis are registered in other towns particularly Wolverhampton. There is significant room for improvement in these figures and with a helpful 'nudge' I believe we can get more taxi drivers to switch to hybrid and fully electric. This will be good for them as these cars are more fuel efficient and reliable and will be good for the Borough as it will reduce pollution and reduce our carbon footprint.

Question:

Will the Council consider developing an overall strategy to engage with local taxi drivers and operators with the aim of:

1. Fully understanding why drivers and operators are choosing to get registered in Wolverhampton at considerable effort and expense rather than Hyndburn;
2. Further changing the taxi testing regime in favour of Hybrid and fully electric vehicles. For example, as hybrid and electric cars are far less polluting and far more reliable than even new diesel and petrol cars, extending the period that hybrid cars only needing to be testing every 12 months to the first 7 years of their life and the period for fully electric cars to the first 10 years of life;
3. Identify incentives for drivers to switch to hybrid and fully electric taxis e.g. by offering reduced fees for taxi and operator licences for hybrid and fully electric cars or offer grants and loans to encourage purchase of new and second hand zero emissions cars including wheelchair accessible cars. Additionally, the Council (Hyndburn and LCC) could include criteria in contract tenders to make these more favourable to operators with Zero emission vehicles;
4. Improve the car-charging infrastructure within Hyndburn and offer cheaper charging for taxi drivers.

Many of these are currently being done by forward thinking councils who take their net zero responsibilities seriously. I hope Hyndburn will implement the obvious ones straight away and develop a longer strategy for others.

From: Cllr Shabir Fazal OBE (address supplied)

Date: 30th October 2024 (01:50)