Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Strategy 2017-2020













Nottingham City Council

Contents

1	Introduction	Page 3
2	Strategy aims	Pages 3
3	Policy context	Page 4
4	Air quality in Nottingham	Page 4
5	Role of local authority in regulating the taxi system	Page 5
6	Overview of the current situation	Pages 5
7	How the trade are currently enforced	Page 8
8	Taxi ranks	Pages 8
9	Challenges and opportunities	Page 10
10	The Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Strategy	Pages 10
11	Action Plan	Pages 13
12	Funding improvements	Page 15
13	Working with partners to deliver this vision	Page 15



Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicle Strategy

1 Introduction

Hackney Carriages (taxis) and Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) are an important part of Nottingham's integrated transport system. They are a useful, often vital, component to completing journeys and may form part of a more sustainable longer distance multi modal trip or be used where no convenient alternative is available. The demand responsive, often 24 hour a day, 7 days a week, year round service can respond to a wide range of needs. It is one of the most flexible elements of the transport system, yet still operates on a completely commercial basis.

In Nottingham, taxis and private hire vehicles are integral to supporting businesses to thrive by transporting people and goods/packages. The services can be a primary mode of passenger transport for many people for whom mainstream public transport is not an option or suitable, due to lack of public transport availability. Whilst fully compliant taxis help support many disabled and vulnerable people to live more independent lives. They also play an important part in the city's night time economic well being, providing a safe and secure mode of transport for many people. A thriving, efficient and affordable taxi service contributes to the local economy and benefits both local residents and visitors to Nottingham.

2 Strategy aims

The taxi and private hire industry in Nottingham is facing challenges: not only in the type of service it needs to deliver to continue to adapt to changing demographics of a growing, ageing and high student population but also in how it delivers its services due to technological advancements e.g. App bookings, new business operating models i.e. Uber and low emission vehicles.

The City Council is committed to ensuring the taxi and private hire sector remains integrated in our sustainable transport network and for them to continue to move passengers to destinations safely, whilst contributing to the economy with minimal environmental impact.

The aim of this document is to provide an achievable action plan for the taxi and private hire trade in Nottingham for the next 5 years and beyond. The strategy will help us understand where we want the taxi system to be in the future and how we are going to get there.

We want this strategy to help achieve a high quality operation that is:

- **Customer focused**: High levels of customer service are achieved, there are accountable operators and drivers and an accessible and value for money service is provided
- **Safe:** Both taxi and private hire services to be as safe as possible
- **Resilient:** Fleet vehicle transition to become low emission and energy efficient
- **Independent:** The industry to continue to operate on a fully commercial basis.

Plus provide:

- **Quality:** The taxi system in Nottingham should provide the highest quality of service to the residents and visitors and be focused on customer service and the customer experience. The service should be affordable, accessible, and safe for anyone choosing to use a taxi.
- **Clean:** The taxi stock in Nottingham should be at the cutting edge in technological advancements with greener, cleaner vehicles and associated infrastructure helping to provide a high quality environmentally friendly service now and into the future.
- **Enforced:** During customer engagement concerns about the strength of regulation and enforcement by the City Council around driver behaviour in particular over ranking, violation of traffic orders and illegal parking have been raised.

Nottingham City Council will work with taxi and private hire operators and other key stakeholders to ensure:

- A higher quality service provision for customers
- A fair and properly enforceable system
- Nottingham's taxi stock is at the cutting edge with the advances in green vehicles and changes in technology
- Consistency with the overall Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (transport strategy) for the city and the wider conurbation.

3 Policy context

It is important that the proposals and actions contained within this strategy align with the wider vision for Nottingham, including present and upcoming Council Plan and Nottingham Local Transport Plan (LTP) policies. The LTP recognises that taxis are an important part of the city's transport network. The City Council is committed to maintaining and enhancing the quality and reliability of Nottingham's integrated transport network through buses, tram, taxis, coaches, park and ride and easy interchange will be crucial to delivering economic benefits whilst also contributing to a low carbon transport system and improving people's accessibility to services and employment.

Taxis and private hire vehicles contribute to two core objectives of the LTP including:

- Delivering a world-class sustainable transport system which supports a thriving economy and enables growth
- Improving access to key services, employment and training including the creation of local employment and training opportunities

Measures around taxis and private hire will be investigated including to:

- Better integrate taxis and private hire services with public transport services such as with the NET tram network, rail services, SkyLink bus service to East Midlands Airport and with national coach services. Discounted fare promotions and combined ticketing will be further investigated to offer greater value for money to customers.
- Improve integration of the public transport network with taxis, private hire and community and voluntary transport e.g. through continued development of the Linkbus services.

The Department for Transport's best practice guidance on Taxi and Private Hire Licensing (2010) , states that all modes of transport including taxi and private hire services have a valuable part to play in overall transport provision, and so local licensing authorities have input into delivering the LTPs. The key policy themes for such services include availability and accessibility. LTPs can cover:

- Quantity controls (via number of licences issued) and plans for the review of licensing conditions, with a view to safety but also to good supply of taxi and private hire services
- Fares (Hackneys only)
- On-street availability, especially through provision of taxi ranks
- Vehicle accessibility for people with disabilities
- Encouragement of flexible services.

4 Air Quality in Nottingham

Air pollution is recognised as a significant health issue with work flowing from the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment estimating that up to 250 deaths can be linked to air pollution in the City area in 2010.

Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were declared in 2002 on the grounds that annual mean nitrogen dioxide levels exceeded permissible limits in heavily trafficked parts of the City. One of these areas covers the main traffic routes in the City Centre and the second the Dunkirk area close to the Ring Road.

In December 2015, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) published a new Air Quality Plan. The aim of this was to reduce air pollution levels in problem areas to within EU threshold limits.

As a result the Government is going to mandate certain areas, including Nottingham, to implement Clean Air Zones. This means that by 2020 polluting taxi and private hire vehicles along with buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles will be required to pay a charge to enter designated areas unless they meet stringent emission standards i.e. are classified as Ultra Low Emission.

A scoping study is currently underway to determine the location and specification of the Clean Air Zone for Nottingham.

5 Role of the local authority in regulating the taxi system

As a Unitary Authority the City Council is the Taxi Licensing Authority, within its boundary. It is the duty of the Council to regulate the quality of service and safety standards of both Hackney Cabs and Private Hire vehicles. Drivers of both must be licensed. The distinction between taxis and private hire vehicles is that taxis ply for work from a rank, can hailed in the street and undertake pre booked work. Private hire services can only be pre booked. The Council seeks to promote and maintain an adequate supply and coverage of operators and vehicles across the city. It is also the City Council's responsibility to implement taxi ranks on the public highway, reasonably close to where people want to travel from, including key interchange points with bus and rail networks. The number of Hackney Cab licences is limited by the City Council where applicants for a licence are required to undertake a knowledge test and a driving assessment. The City Council is currently investigating shared service arrangements with Gedling Borough Council regarding the licensing enforcement activities as a means of achieving budget savings.

6 Overview of current situation

There are currently 411 Hackney Carriages licensed within Nottingham, all of which are diesel vehicles. They comprise of two main manufacturers: The London Taxi Company (formerly London Taxi International) and Metrocab. Both of their parent companies are investing heavily in electric vehicle technology.

There are currently over 1,000 licenses issued to private hire vehicles within the city of Nottingham.

All drivers are issued with a dual licence allowing them to drive both Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

Number of private hire companies based in the City

There are 24 private hire companies (operators) licensed within Nottingham.

Age of vehicles

The age limit of vehicles can be broken down into two main components: initial age limit and vehicle age limit. The licensing authority currently has an initial age limit of five years for PHVs and no age restriction on Hackney Carriages. This means that new PHVs with no vehicle being licenced over the age of ten years.

There and no licences available for Hackney Carriages at present. However anyone replacing their existing Hackney carriage must do so with a vehicle which is younger than the one being removed but in any event no older than 7 years. Once the vehicle reaches 12 years of age a new licence will only be issued if the vehicle is in exceptional roadworthy condition.

The average age, from date of first vehicle registration, of a Private Hire Vehicle in Nottingham is 6 years compared to 11.5 years for Hackneys (demonstrating an age differential of +5.5 years). On average, Hackney Carriage vehicles are more than twice as old as Private Hire Vehicles. The oldest Hackney Carriage is a 19 year old London Taxi International Fairway.

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/212554/taxi-private-hire-licensing-guide.pdf

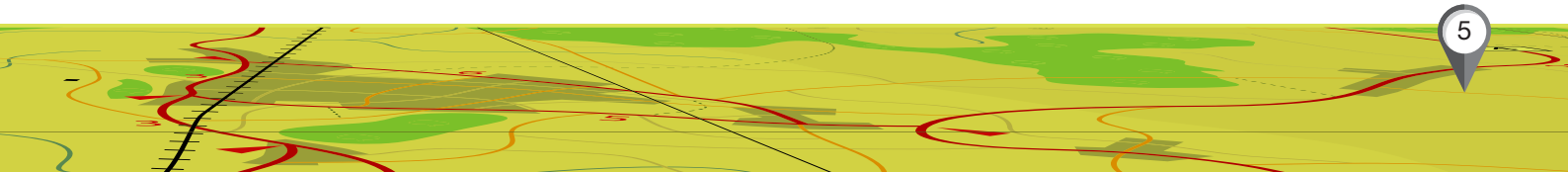
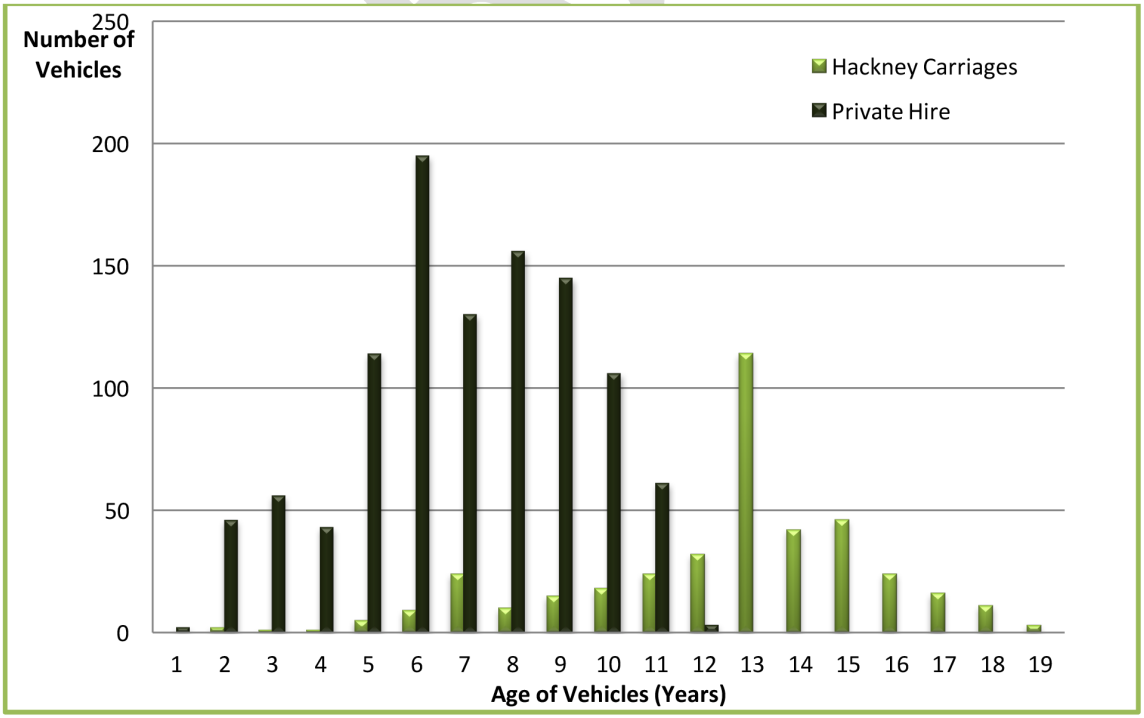
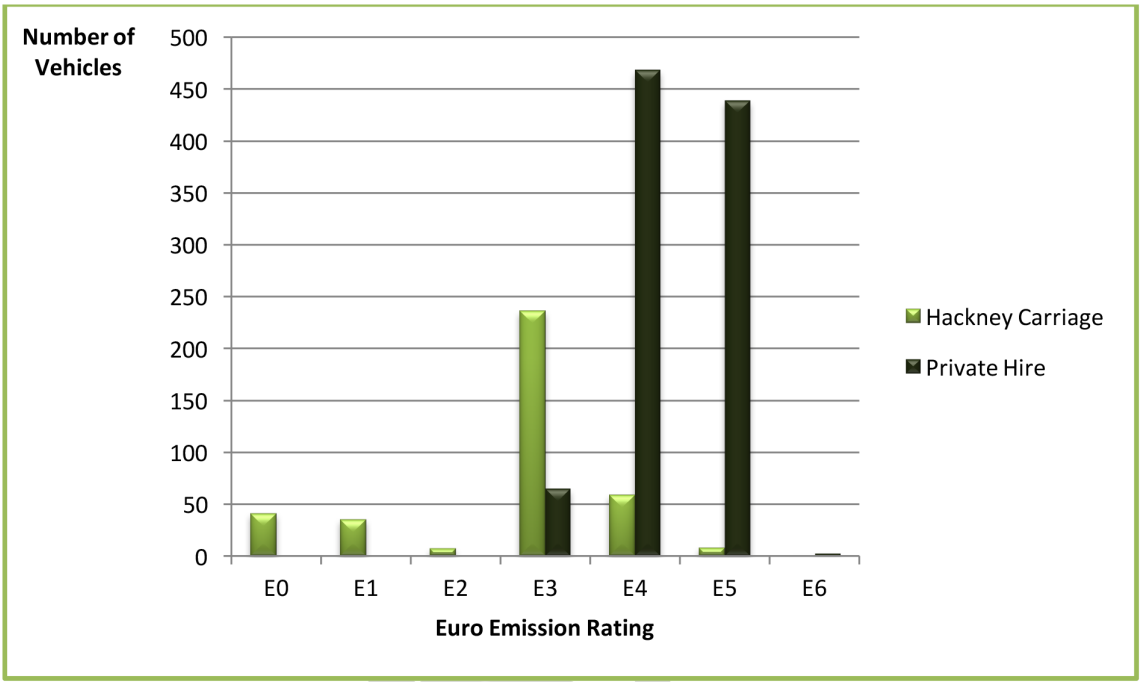


Figure 1: Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Age comparison (Nottingham)



In 1992 the European Union introduced new emission standards for vehicles. These have progressively tightened limits for the main atmospheric pollutants.[2] None of Nottingham's Hackneys meet the Euro 6 emission standard, with only 2% of the fleet meeting the Euro 5 standard, which was introduced in 2010/11. 11% of the fleet actually pre date the Euro standards. In contrast 44%of the private hire fleet meets the Euro 5 standard and 41% Euro 4.[3]

Figure 2: The Euro Emission Profile of the Hackney and Private Hire Fleet in Nottingham



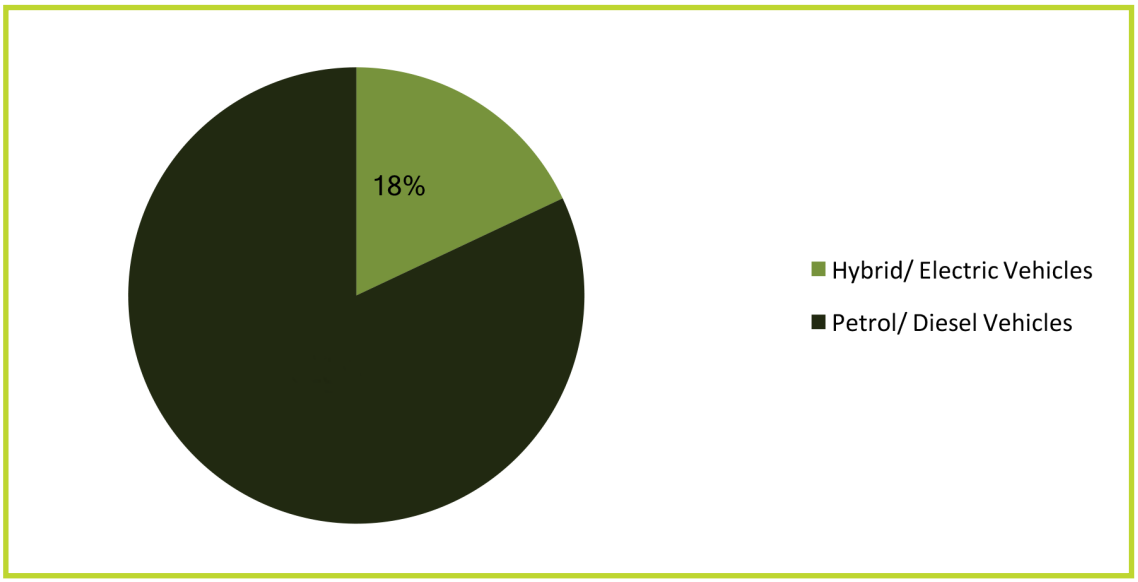
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/239317/ultra-low-emission-vehicle-strategy.pdf

[3] Energy Saving Trust ULEV Taxi Scheme Feasibility Study

Clean Fleet

The private hire market is showing signs of investment in low emission vehicles. Currently 193 of the 1,073 (18%) private hire fleet are electric or hybrid vehicles. The remaining 82% are either petrol or diesel powered.

Figure 3: Registered type of Private Hire Vehicles (Nottingham)



Number of DDA compliant/ wheel chair accessible vehicles

All Hackney Carriage vehicles are wheelchair accessible. Data is not held on wheelchair compliant private hire vehicles as there is no legislation/requirement on businesses to have wheelchair accessible vehicles. The Licensing Authority has the power to impose this requirement on businesses, but where proposals have been put forward by other councils it has been met with trade opposition due to costs and is not currently being pursued.

National Highways and Transport (NHT) Public Satisfaction Survey Results 2016

Nottingham City Council participates in the annual NHT Public Satisfaction Survey every two years. The postal survey collects public perspectives and satisfaction with a range of Highway and Transport Services in the Local Authority area. Table 1 below shows the three indicators included in the NHT Public Satisfaction Survey for taxis. As can be seen Nottingham City scored positively in the last (2014) survey.

Table 1: NHT Public Satisfaction Survey (taxi indicator results for Nottingham – detailed breakdown by question)

	Very or fairly satisfied	Fairly or very dissatisfied
Cost of taxis	36%	24%
Reliability of taxis	58%	4%
Availability of taxis	65%	2%

7 Enforcement

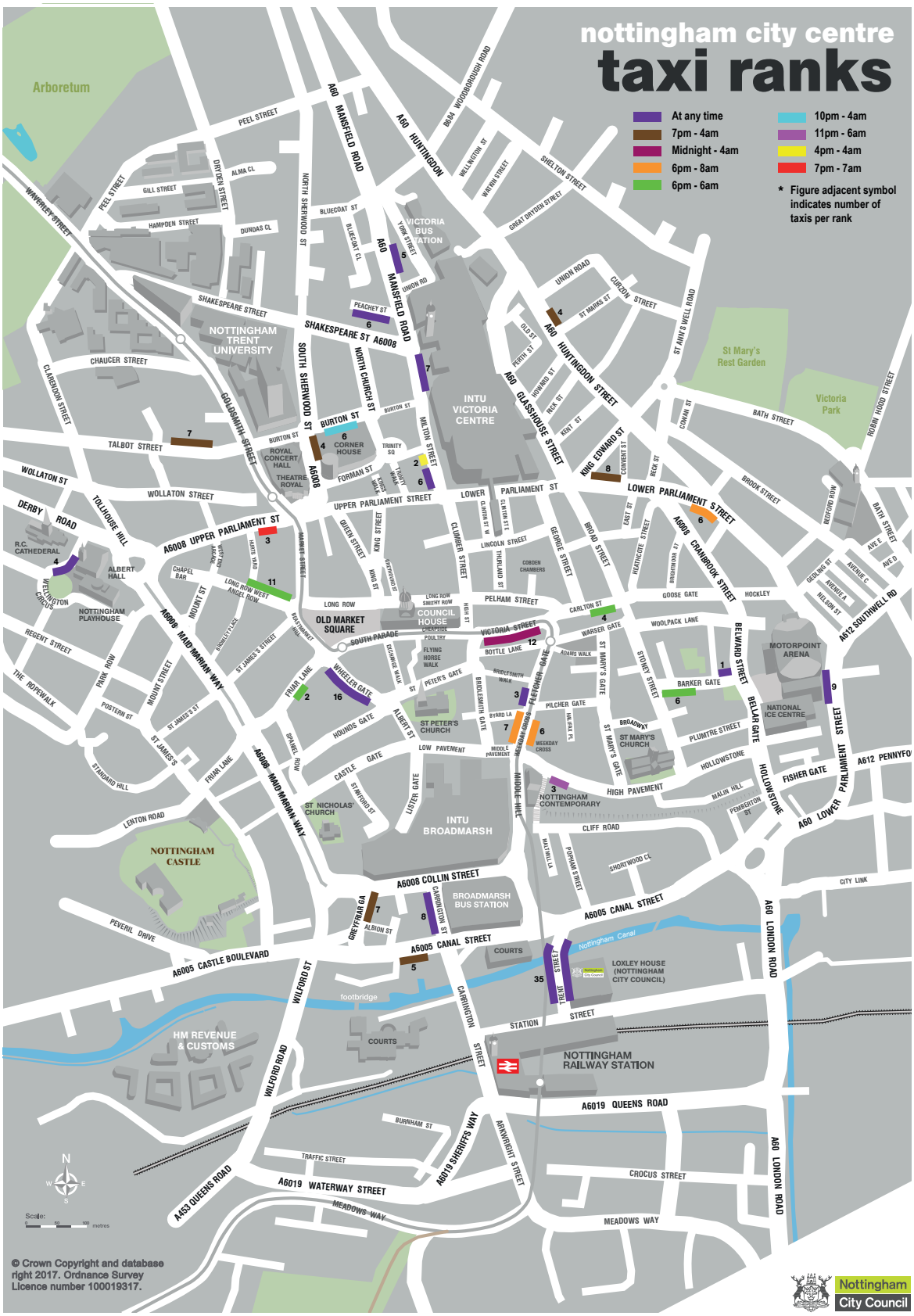
The Licensing Team carry out annual inspections of operators at their respective bases. Enforcement officers conduct regular rank checks within the city in respect of driver's licences, vehicle licences and conditions of vehicle. Bi-annual multi-agency taxi checks are carried out to identify taxis for more serious offences e.g. driving without a licence or plying for hire.

8 Taxi ranks

Taxi ranks are an important element in helping to manage the supply of taxis at busy locations. They help to reduce congestion and vehicle emissions by limiting the time drivers spend on the road while waiting to be hired. Ranks are important especially for disabled passengers as they allow enough time and space for wheelchairs to be loaded safely. The key issue the City Council faces with ranks is competition for kerb side space e.g. bus stops, loading and general parking and the management of them, particularly over ranking problems. The Council is committed to reviewing ranks based on demand and availability of kerb space. There are currently 11 formal all day time ranks designated in the city centre with an additional 18 ranks that come into force in the evening. These are shown in Figure 3 below



Figure 3: City centre taxi ranks



9 Challenges and Opportunities

This strategy seeks to put measures in place to respond to the following challenges and opportunities which have been derived from trade representation and customer feedback:

- Better quality service for the public
- Personal safety issues for passengers, with particular reference to women, young and disabled people
- Personal safety issues for drivers
- How to balance supply with demand impacting levels of provision and locations
- Compliance with license conditions, particularly ensuring that private hire observe the requirements for pre-booking
- Driver Behaviour (over ranking, violation of traffic orders, illegal parking)
- Impact of major transport infrastructure changes including changes to Nottingham Train Station, the completion of NET Phase Two and in the future implications of Broadmarsh/ Southside Transport Strategy, Connecting Eastside Phase 2
- The need to improve air quality, especially in the city centre and other problem areas that exceed EU Limit Values
- The need to reduce carbon emissions
- Support drivers to become ambassadors for the city and thus enhance Nottingham's reputation

10 Office for Low Emission Vehicles

In June 2015 the Council submitted a bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Taxi Scheme Fund, for which £20 million funding has been allocated to encourage cities to grow the market for ULEVs in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire market. In July 2015, it was announced that the City's bid had been successfully shortlisted to the final bidding round. The Energy Saving Trust (EST) in partnership with the Council has undertaken a feasibility study worth £30,000. The study gathered information as to how the City Council could use the potential funding to reduce the upfront cost of purpose built taxis and where charging infrastructure will be best located to serve the trade. Representatives of the trade were invited to input into the study. This information was used to inform a Delivery Phase bid which was submitted by the City Council to OLEV in December 2016. If successful, funding will be awarded from 2016 to 2020.

11 Key Strategy Deliverables

These will be achieved through a series of measures, more significantly including:

1. Improving customer experience care of drivers and services offered by the trade:

- Refresh the code of conduct setting out expected standards of driver and customer behaviour.
- The Council will consider implementing a Driver Dress Code, to improve upon Nottingham's existing taxi industry reputation by ensuring all relevant licensed drivers adhere to a minimum standard of dress to help promote a smart and professional Hackney carriage and private hire service for citizens and visitors to Nottingham.
- There will be a requirement of a large photographic name badge to be present in the vehicle; this will make driver identification easier.
- Improved signage in the vehicle to include at a minimum; a no smoking, no withholding payment and a no meter running no fee applicable signs.
- A complaints number and customer feedback email address will be displayed clearly in all vehicles.
- A Driver Excellence Award will be implemented in recognition of outstanding customer service – this will focus on drivers who provide quality services for disabled and elderly passengers.
- Commencement of a series of taxi related campaigns around disability awareness.

2. Work with neighbouring districts to develop a coherent taxi licensing and enforcement policy:

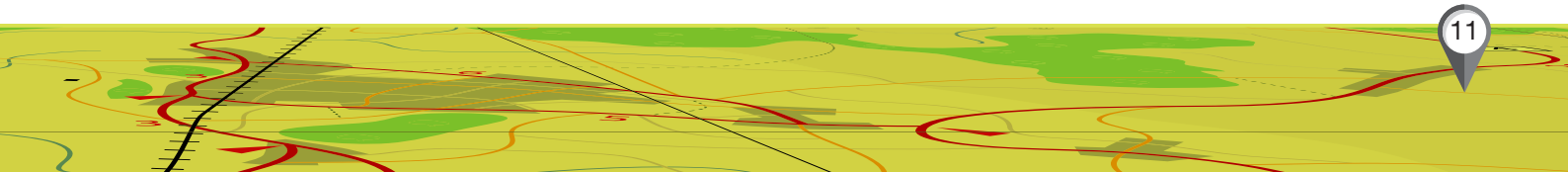
- The Council will work with other neighbouring local authorities to develop a licensing framework to which all licensed vehicles will adhere too.
- The framework could give the Council and other partner local authorities the right to enforce against licensed vehicles within their boundary, which are not adhering to regulations.

3. Creation of a city centre taxi zone:

- Changes to existing City Centre Clear Zone access arrangements.
- Introduction of a Clean Air Zone that will charge for access for certain categories of vehicle that do not meet stringent low emission standards.
- The designation of taxi ranks within the zone as ULEV.

4. Fleet clean:

- A policy will be introduced to require that all Hackney Carriages are ULEV by 2025.
- A minimum of 40% of Hackney Carriages will be ULEV by 2020.
- Target for 25% of private hire fleet to be ULEV by 2020 and 50% of fleet by 2025.
- Licenses will not be issued for diesel vehicles older than 5 years.
- Provision of a mandatory eco driving course as part of obtaining a license will be included.
- The City Council will actively seek funding to incentivise the trade to renew and upgrade its fleet.
- Licenses will be offered at a reduced rate for those drivers who take up ULEV.
- The Council will also consider issuing a small number of additional licenses to expedite the take up of ultra-low emission vehicles.
- The Council will investigate opportunities to develop a ULEV leasing scheme.



5. Driver Improvement Penalty Points Scheme (DIPPS):

- The Council has a responsibility to ensure that all drivers of City Council licensed vehicles adhere to minimum standards. The standards concerned are defined by legislation, licence conditions, byelaws adopted by the Council and in this scheme.
- DIPPS is a new non-statutory enforcement tool designed to enable Authorised Officers of the City Council to issue penalty points to those drivers licensed by the Council who persistently fail to meet the required standards contained within the licensed conditions and licensing legislation.
- The aim of the scheme is to improve overall driver compliance with legislation and licence conditions in order to secure overall improvements in driver behaviour, customer service and passenger safety. Implementation of a system that will see points issued to license holders who contravene an infringement.
- Each license will receive a points allocation specific to the level of their responsibility. Issues have been raised by the trade around over ranking, violation of traffic orders and illegal parking.

6. Introduction of an improved fit and proper person test

- The Council will ensure all drivers pass an English test before being granted a license.
- To improve customer service drivers must also pass a Nottingham Knowledge, History and Culture test.

7. Safeguarding:

- As part of the application of obtaining a new license or renewing a license, the applicants will be required to attend a Safeguarding Awareness Training session provided by Nottingham City Council. A license will not be granted until this has been completed.
- Introduction of a continuous disclosure and barring service registration for drivers.
- Driver and vehicle identification will be improved through new driver display cards.
- Work with licensed businesses to improve operational safeguarding practices.
- Launch a Taxi Safety Awareness Campaign in partnership with Nottinghamshire Police, University of Nottingham, Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham's Business Improvement District and Nottingham Street Pastors to increase public understanding of the potential dangers of using unlicensed vehicles.

8. Technology:

- Provide an online application and renewal service for taxi license holders. This will help reduce costs for license holders and improve the efficiency of the application process.
- The Council will develop and launch an online/ app based operator quality rating system to drive up standards.
- Incentives will be placed around drivers regularly receiving high quality ratings from customer for example increased priority if grants become available for vehicle purchase.
- Introduction of a Taxi E-Newsletter to improve communication between the City Council and the trade and its patrons.

12 Action Plan

Table 2 sets out the measures, actions and timescales for implementation. These are grouped in accordance with the strategy areas.

Table 2: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Action Plan

Strategy Area	Measure	Benefit	Action	Timescale
Quality	Designation of new taxi hub at the railway station	Additional pick up point for station hub	NCC to coordinate with East Midlands Trains to help facilitate	Short (1-2 years)
Quality	Develop a taxi operating application for the internet and smart phones	Will ensure Hackney carriages can remain competitive with app based operator	NCC to develop a business model for the app development to assess viability	Short
Quality	Provide taxi waiting facilities at other public transport interchange points	Increased availability of pick up points and improved integration with other modes	NCC will identify and implement	Short
Quality	Travel offers for target groups e.g. disabled people and unemployed to access work or training	Reduction in cost will make service more accessible	NCC and trade to develop travel offers	Short
Quality	Through ticketing with public transport operators via Robin Hood smartcard	Opportunity for multi-modal travel	NCC to explore via Citycard	Medium 3-5 years)

Strategy Area	Measure	Benefit	Action	Timescale
Clean	Provide access to grants to support early take up of low emission/ electric vehicles	Helps reduce the initial cost of a low emission vehicle. Long term cost saving in fuel for operators and drivers. Environmental benefits.	NCC will submit bids to relevant funding streams that become available for example the recently shortlisted bid to the Office for Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV)	Short
Clean	Develop a network of fast charging infrastructure across the City	Give drivers confidence to transition to low emission vehicles		Short
Clean	Support development of a ULEV taxi leasing scheme	Will remove financial barrier of upfront costs of purchasing a ULEV for drivers, thus expediting take up	NCC to develop business model for the proposed operation	Short
Clean	Creation of Clean Air Zone	Improved air quality in the City Centre	NCC to work with DEFRA to ensure implementation by the end of 2019	Short
Clean	Undertake work on a 'no idling' campaign consisting of signs and promotions to encourage drivers to turn off the engines whilst stationary	Idling costs the trade money and has a negative impact on the environment. By encouraging drivers it will contribute to improved air quality in the city.	NCC will produce signs and undertake promotions to encourage drivers to turn off the engines whilst stationary	Short
Clean	Attendance at an Eco Driving course will become a mandatory part of obtaining a license.	An eco-driving course will provide attendees with the knowledge to driver vehicles in a more cost efficient, environmentally friendly manner	License criteria will be amended over a period of time	Short
Clean	Changes to policy to include a maximum age of 10 years for all vehicles in operation	More fuel efficient vehicles will be in operation transferring into cost and environmental benefits for the trade and the City		Medium
Clean	Policy changes to target all Hackneys and 50% of private hire vehicles to be ULEV by 2025.			Medium

Strategy Area	Measure	Benefit	Action	Timescale
Enforced	Develop coherent and enforceable taxi licensing policy with neighbouring districts	Will give NCC officers the right to enforce against offending vehicles from neighbouring authorities	NCC to work with other districts to develop policy	Short
Enforced	Implement Driver Improvement Penalty Points Scheme	Improve overall driver compliance with legislation and licence conditions in order to secure overall improvements in driver behaviour, customer service and passenger safety.	NCC to finalise policy and begin consultation with the trade	Short
Enforced	Complete review of rank capacity and increase rank capacity where warranted based on demand and available kerb space	Reduce problem of over ranking and ensure ranks are better matched to demand availability	NCC to implement additional ranks	Short
Enforced	Clamp down on over-ranking and illegal plying for hire at known hot spot areas around the station and in the City Centre	Improved driver behaviour, decreased congestion at ranks and reduce risk of vehicles blocking the highway	Introduction of the Driver Improvement Penalty Points scheme will discourage illegal plying and road manoeuvres.	Short
Enforced	Extend enforcement to include moving traffic offences e.g. banned turns (when appropriate powers secured)	Ensure compliance with road traffic regulations	Requiring change to national legislation	Long

13 Funding improvements

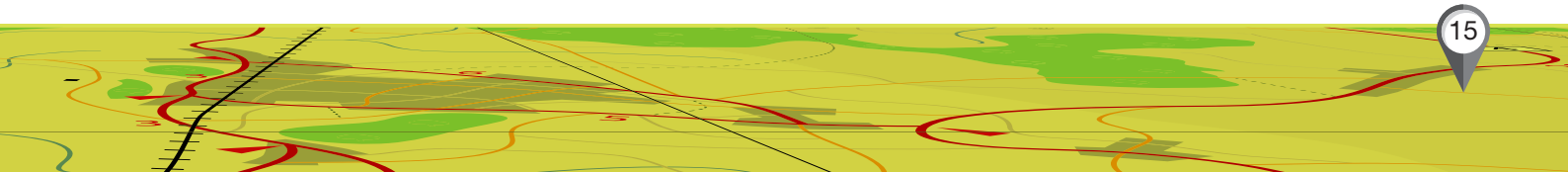
The measures contained within the strategy will be potentially implemented through a package of funding streams including;

- Nottingham City Council resources
- Government funding opportunities
- D2N2 Local Enterprise Partnership
- The development of a lease fund

The City Council will also explore the creation of a financial model to support drivers in their purchase of ULEV vehicles.

14 Working with partners to deliver this vision

We will work with local councillors, trade representatives, user groups including the local disability forum, public transport operators, business representatives, Business Improvement District, Invest in Nottingham and Marketing NG, amongst others on the contents of this strategy.





Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Strategy

www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/taxis

Nottingham City Council