

22. Environmental Considerations

- 22.1 Taxi and private hire vehicles are an essential form of transport in the York area. Many people depend on such vehicles for trips when other forms of transport are unsuitable or unavailable; these persons include the vulnerable and some schoolchildren who are likely to be more susceptible to poor air quality and respiratory illnesses. Unlike many other local authorities, York currently has no taxi emission policy. For the health and environmental reasons above and because York has a legal duty to improve air quality, it is vital that emissions from licensed vehicles are reduced as far as practicable. It is therefore important that increased efforts are made to reduce emissions of toxic particulates and nitrogen dioxide and also greenhouse gases that lead to climate change and contribute to flooding in York.
- 22.2 York has recently been designated as an ultra low emission city. The Council's Low Emission Strategy (adopted October 2012) and Third Air Quality Action Plan (adopted December 2015) aim to reduce emissions from all sources, especially transport, and assist York to meet its' health-based air quality objectives. These documents contain a series of measures to reduce emissions and to incentivise the transition from conventional fuels and especially diesel¹ to ultra low emission fuels.
1. In June 2012 the World Health Organization (WHO) classified diesel engine exhaust as carcinogenic to humans¹ and said everyone should reduce exposure to diesel exhaust emissions.
Press release 213 (IARC, June 2012)
<http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/2012/mono105-info.php>
- 22.3 The Department for Transport (DfT) guidance asks licensing authorities to consider how their vehicle licensing policies can support any local environmental policies they may have adopted, bearing in mind the need to ensure that benefits outweigh costs (in whatever form). DfT suggest that local authorities may wish to consider setting vehicle emissions standards, perhaps by promoting cleaner fuels.
- 22.4 For the past two years the Council has incentivised the uptake of low emission taxis by offering a discount; this has resulted in over 60 low emission taxis in York. In addition these vehicles have much cheaper fuel, tax and insurance costs.

¹ *Press release 213 (IARC, June 2012)*
<http://www.iarc.fr/en/media-centre/iarcnews/2012/mono105-info.php>

- 22.5 Only the following European Standards will be accept for new private hire applicants from 1 November 2016, and all replacement vehicles for both taxi and private hire, as from 1 June 2017 for taxis and 1 November 2017 for private hire vehicles:
- Petrol vehicles – Euro V petrol vehicles class
 - Diesel vehicles – Euro VI diesel vehicles class
 - Ultra low emission vehicles - defined as 75g CO₂/km and under e.g. petrol/hybrid, fully electric vehicles
- 22.6 The types of vehicles that new hackney carriage vehicle licences will be issued to will be determined by the Gambling, Licensing and Regulatory Committee, if/when the Council determines to issues new licences.
- 22.7 Emissions from licensed vehicles could be reduced further by encouraging better maintenance of vehicles and by switching off engines when stationary or idling, particularly at ranks.
- 22.8 The emission standards for taxis and private hire vehicles will be subject to review, considering the latest air quality monitoring results, to determine whether they are making sufficient progress towards achieving the health based air quality objectives.
- 22.9 This policy is part of the Council's ambition to have an ultra low emission taxi fleet in York that benefits people's health and creates a more pleasant environment. The Council will be bidding for Ultra Low Emission Taxi incentive funding to support the wider adoption in the York fleet.