



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Licensing Committee

Tuesday 21 November 2023

Review of Taxi CCTV policy

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Richard Overton - Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Homes & Enforcement
Lead Director:	Dean Sargeant - Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
Service Area:	Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable
Report considered by:	Licensing Committee - 21 November 2023

1.0 Recommendations for decision:

It is recommended that Licensing Committee:

- 1.1 Note progress to date regarding installation of CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles on a voluntary basis;
- 1.2 Note the feedback received from the CCTV consultation undertaken in June 2023; and
- 1.3 In noting the content of this report, maintain the current voluntary policy (Appendix A) relating to the installation of CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles and continue to explore external funding opportunities to progress the installation of CCTV in taxis on a voluntary basis.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 To provide Licensing Committee with an overview of the recent consultation on whether to make CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles mandatory and provide a summary of the feedback received. In doing so, this report recommends that CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles remains voluntary.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 There are an estimated 2 million taxi journeys taken every year within Telford and Wrekin and currently there are over 370 drivers and 270 vehicles licensed by the council, as well as 28 operators.
- 3.2 The Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy was reviewed and approved by Committee at their meeting on 16 March 2021. This review followed the introduction of the Department for Transport (DfT) Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (Statutory Standards). Part 6 of the council's policy (Appendix A) details the voluntary installation of CCTV in licensed vehicles.
- 3.3 The DfT Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards require all licensing authorities to consult on making CCTV in licensed vehicles mandatory and to identify if there are circumstances which indicate that the installation of CCTV in vehicles would have either a positive or negative effect on taxi safety.
- 3.4 Across the country, 17 (out of 266) licensing authorities have made it a condition of licence for all taxi and private hire vehicles to be fitted with CCTV systems.
- 3.5 To inform the decision on whether to mandate CCTV in licensed vehicles, the council launched a public consultation on 30 June for 8 weeks. The consultation received 185 responses with 160 being users of a taxi or private hire vehicle and 25 a driver, vehicle proprietor or operator.
- 3.6 The main themes emerging from respondents demonstrated that CCTV would improve the safety of passengers and drivers, promote better driver and passenger(s) behaviour, help resolve disputes (through having evidence) and improve driving standards.
- 3.7 75% of those who use taxis felt that CCTV would have made their experience of taxis or private hire vehicles better. 15% of taxi users felt that CCTV would have had no impact on their experience and 1% of respondents felt that CCTV would have made their experience worse.
- 3.8 Out of the 25 respondent drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators, 24 were licensed by Telford & Wrekin Council and 1 by Shropshire Council. 76% did not currently have a CCTV unit installed. This group of respondents raised the greatest concern around passenger behaviour and driver safety.
- 3.9 Drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators were asked what could prevent them from using CCTV in their vehicle(s) with the main responses including cost, privacy and choice.

- 3.10 To inform the approach to CCTV in licensed vehicles and consultation undertaken in June, the council has undertaken a two year trial and captured feedback from both driver and passengers where CCTV has been installed.
- 3.11 Funded by the Community Safety Partnership, 25 CCTV units have been installed in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles on a voluntary basis. A further 18 units have been ordered and these will be fitted over the coming months. Overall, drivers have welcomed this trial and the funding to install CCTV units in their vehicles. 69 passengers provided feedback on the trial which very much mirrors that captured from the consultation and summarised above. The council will continue to explore opportunity for additional funding and purchase more CCTV units for installation on a voluntary basis.
- 3.12 In parallel to feedback received from the consultation, the council has considered DfT guidance on making CCTV mandatory and the net adverse effects of this being a condition of licence.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 That Committee maintain the current voluntary policy relating to the installation of CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles.
- 4.2 That Committee approve the council's approach to encourage drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators to take part in the voluntary scheme to install CCTV in their vehicles.
- 4.3 Committee approve that the council should continue to explore opportunities for further funding to continue to install CCTV in taxis.

5.0 Alternative Options

- 5.1 In noting the risks outlined below, the alternative option is to introduce a mandatory scheme requiring CCTV in Telford and Wrekin licensed vehicles.

6.0 Key Risks

- 6.1 Licensing Committee will be familiar with the challenges of cross-border hire and the continued lobbying by Telford & Wrekin Council to government on ensuring consistency of licensing standards across licensing authorities.
- 6.2 Current legislation allows drivers to lawfully operate anywhere in the country, regardless of where they are licensed, so long as their vehicle and operator licences are licensed in the same area. To this end, vehicles and drivers licensed with neighbouring authorities operate in the Borough of Telford and Wrekin. Therefore, if CCTV was made a mandatory it is anticipated that taxis and drivers would choose to be licensed by neighbouring authorities, who currently have a voluntary CCTV policy in place, but continue to operate in the borough.

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6.3 Should this happen, the council would lose associated licensing powers as this would be under the control of the relevant neighbouring council.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 This report supports the following council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy
- A community-focussed innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services

8.0 Financial Implications

8.1 Under a mandatory scheme, the responsibility for the installation of CCTV in taxi's and private hire vehicles would fall to the vehicle owners who pay directly for all costs incurred. Under the voluntary scheme, the council would continue to explore external funding opportunities to grow the current CCTV offer.

8.2 The cost to the council in respect of equipment required to view the CCTV images (if required) is met from existing budgets.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (LGMPA) provides that:

(1) A district council may attach to the grant of a licence of a hackney carriage under the Act of 1847 such conditions as the district council may consider reasonably necessary.

9.2 Section 48 of the LGMPA 1976 provides that in respect of private hire vehicles:

(2) A district council may attach to the grant of a licence such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary.

9.3 Due regard should be paid to guidance on the installation and use of CCTV contained in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards and the Home Office Code of Practice. Guidance produced by the Surveillance Camera Commissioner (SCC) and the Information Commissioner's Office (ICO) should also be considered and followed. The installation of CCTV in a licensed vehicle will comply with the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

9.4 The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 This report has implications for all wards in the Borough.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 In mandating CCTV in taxis, the cost of purchasing and installing is an additional cost that may have an overall impact on driver/ vehicle proprietor viability. Through the use of external funding, the council is able to support the roll out of CCTV on a voluntary basis while promoting this as part ongoing promotion on taxi safety.
- 11.2 The recommendations contained within this report are not considered to have a direct impact on the Armed Forces Duty, specific socio-economic groups or town and parish councils.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations it is considered that there are no human rights or equalities implications associated with this report, as they will apply equally to everyone regardless of any protected characteristic.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 There are no climate or environmental implications arising from this report.

14.0 Background Papers

None

15.0 Appendices

- A Extract of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy:
Part 6 - The Installation of CCTV in Licensed Vehicles

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	13/11/2023	14/11/2023	SH
Finance	13/11/2023	14/11/2023	PT
Director	13/11/2023	15/11/2023	DRS