

# Subject: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Transport Committee</b>
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Executive Director of Assembly Secretariat</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>23 January 2024</b>
<b>Public Access:</b>	<b>This report will be considered in public.</b>

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This report provides background information for the Transport Committee meeting on the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) on 23 January 2024. This meeting will review the role of Taxis and PHV in London's transport network and the strategy governing the industry.

## 2. Recommendations

- 2.1. **That the Committee notes the report as background to putting questions to invited guests and notes the subsequent discussion; and**
- 2.2. **That the Committee delegates authority to the Chairman, in consultation with the Deputy Chair and party Group Lead Members, to agree any output arising from the meeting.**

## 3. Background

- 3.1. In 2023, there were 89,600 PHVs licensed in London, up from 49,900 in 2013. In comparison, the number of black taxis in London has fallen from 22,200 in 2013 to 15,100 in 2023.<sup>1</sup>
- 3.2. Transport for London (TfL) is the licensing authority for London's taxi and private hire industries. TfL published a Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan in September 2016.<sup>2</sup> TfL last updated its Taxi and Private Hire vehicle policy in December 2021. In order to be a licensed black taxi vehicle the following conditions must be met: since 1 January 2018, all new black taxis presented for licensing for the first time must be zero emissions capable (ZEC), and vehicles already licensed by TfL must be less than 12 years old at time of re-licensing. In order to be a licensed PHV, the following licensing

<sup>1</sup> Department for Transport Data on Taxis, private hire vehicles and their drivers [TAXI0101](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2016 \(tfl.gov.uk\)](#)

requirements apply, from 1 January 2023: all PHVs (of any age) need to be zero emission capable when licensed for the first time, and vehicles already licensed by TfL must be no older than 10 years at time of re-licensing.<sup>3</sup>

- 3.3. All black taxis currently licensed by TfL are wheelchair accessible,<sup>4</sup> a condition since 2000.<sup>5</sup> PHVs that meet certain criteria can be designated as a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). Currently only around 0.7 per cent of PHVs in London are wheelchair accessible.<sup>6</sup>
- 3.4. By 2030, all taxis and PHVs must be zero emission capable (ZEC).<sup>7</sup> As of December 2023, over half of London's black taxis are now zero-emission capable, (7,970 vehicles).<sup>8</sup> There has been an increase of 10 per cent of ZEC taxis in the last six months.<sup>9</sup> As of December 2022, there were 11,000 charging points for electric vehicles across London, with 820 of those being fast or ultra rapid charging points. TfL's Electric Vehicle Delivery Plan has specified that 40,000-60,000 charging points will need to be built by 2030, with 10 per cent being rapid charging points.<sup>10</sup>
- 3.5. Since 1 April 2023, drivers have to pass an English Language Requirement test, and TfL has stated that it is 'essential for public safety' that all private hire drivers are able to speak in English at an 'appropriate' level.<sup>11</sup>
- 3.6. There are 13 Taxi Shelters remaining in London, although Assembly Members have questioned the lack of parking spaces and whether they contain proper toilet and handwashing facilities.<sup>12</sup> There are also private charging hubs, such as a taxi charging hub near the Old Kent Road which has ten bays, toilets and a café.<sup>13</sup>
- 3.7. There are a range of applications available including some which offer Black Taxis as well as those for PHV. In 2024, Uber is opening its service up to black cabs in London.<sup>14</sup>
- 3.8. There are fewer people applying to become taxi drivers as well as an aging workforce. To become a taxi driver, drivers must undertake the Knowledge [of London test], which is a series of tests required to be completed before a taxi licence can be obtained.<sup>15</sup> In 2018 and in years prior, there were an average of 2,000 candidates a year on the Knowledge, there are currently around 700 candidates in 2023.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> [Taxi and Private Hire vehicle policy - December 2021 \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-policy) p 10

<sup>4</sup> [Passengers and accessibility - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/passengers-and-accessibility)

<sup>5</sup> [Rolling Along in London - The New York Times \(nytimes.com\)](https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/15/nyregion/rolling-along-in-london.html)

<sup>6</sup> [Taxis and wheelchair accessibility | London City Hall](https://www.london.gov.uk/transport/taxis-and-wheelchair-accessibility)

<sup>7</sup> [Mayor's Transport Strategy \(london.gov.uk\)](https://www.london.gov.uk/transport/mayors-transport-strategy) p 55

<sup>8</sup> [board-20231213-item06c App2 TfL 2024 Business Plan Document.pdf; More than half of London's black taxis are zero emission capable - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/boards-and-committees/board-20231213-item06c)

<sup>9</sup> [More than half of London's black taxis are zero emission capable - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/more-than-half-of-london-s-black-taxis-are-zero-emission-capable)

<sup>10</sup> [All private hire vehicles licensed for the first time in 2023 to be zero emission capable - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\); London 2030 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy | London City Hall](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/all-private-hire-vehicles-licensed-for-the-first-time-in-2023-to-be-zero-emission-capable)

<sup>11</sup> [English language requirement - Transport for London \(tfl.gov.uk\)](https://www.tfl.gov.uk/road-users/english-language-requirement)

<sup>12</sup> [Taxi Shelters | London City Hall](https://www.london.gov.uk/transport/taxi-shelters)

<sup>13</sup> [5,000TH CHARGE: ZEVHub celebrates milestone after launching new taxi charging hub in London \(taxi-point.co.uk\)](https://www.taxi-point.co.uk/news/5000th-charge-zevhub-celebrates-milestone-after-launching-new-taxi-charging-hub-in-london)

<sup>14</sup> [Uber opens up to London's black cab drivers \(fleetworld.co.uk\)](https://www.fleetworld.co.uk/news/uber-opens-up-to-london-s-black-cab-drivers)

<sup>15</sup> [What is The Knowledge taxi test and why is the exam taken by London's black cab drivers so tough? | The Sun](https://www.the-sun.com/news/what-is-the-knowledge-taxi-test-and-why-is-the-exam-taken-by-london-s-black-cab-drivers-so-tough/)

<sup>16</sup> [Knowledge of London suggested changes to help raise taxi driver student numbers come under scrutiny \(taxi-point.co.uk\)](https://www.taxi-point.co.uk/news/knowledge-of-london-suggested-changes-to-help-raise-taxi-driver-student-numbers-come-under-scrutiny)

## 4. Issues for Consideration

- 4.1 The Committee will examine the role of taxis and PHV in London's transport network, and TfL's strategy for the sector in future.
- 4.2 The Committee will examine the impact of environmental standards for Taxi and PHV, both in terms of emissions and financial costs for drivers, and whether there are sufficient charging points to meet demand.
- 4.3 The Committee will also investigate the workforce challenges affecting taxi and PHV drivers and to review the impacts of licensing requirements.
- 4.4 Invited guests include:
- Helen Chapman, Director of Licensing, Regulation and Charging, TfL;
  - Christina Calderato, Director of Transport Strategy and Policy, TfL;
  - Steve McNamara, General Secretary, Licensed Taxi Drivers Association;
  - Mariusz Zabrocki, General Manager, Free Now;
  - Steve Wright, Chair, Licensed Private Hire Car Association; and
  - Asher Moses, Founder and Chief Executive Officer, Sherbet The Electric Taxi Company.

## 5. Legal Implications

- 5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

## 6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

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### List of appendices to this report:

None

### Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: None.

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