

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Licensing
DATE	14 May 2025
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Low Emission Zone – Wheelchair Accessible Taxi Exemption
REPORT NUMBER	CR&E/25/107
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR	Gale Beattie
CHIEF OFFICER	David Dunne
REPORT AUTHOR	Will Hekelaar
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To update Members on proposals for a further one-year exemption from the Low Emission Zone for wheelchair accessible taxis.

2. RECOMMENDATION

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 Note that wheelchair accessible taxis are to be granted an additional one-year exemption from the Low Emission Zone; and
- 2.2 Instruct the Interim Chief Officer – Governance to communicate this decision to wheelchair accessible taxi operators.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

- 3.1 In [September 2023](#), Members of the Licensing Committee were advised that a one-year exemption from the Aberdeen Low Emission Zone (LEZ) had been agreed for taxi and private hire car (PHC) operators. This came into force on 1st June 2024 and is due to expire on 30th May 2025. At the time of the September 2023 report, approximately 189 taxis (32% of the local fleet) and 19 PHCs (8%) were not compliant with the LEZ.
- 3.2 When the exemption was granted, it was made clear to the taxi and PHC industry that such exemptions could only be granted for one year and that there was no guarantee of renewal, so vehicle and fleet owners should look to achieve compliance with the LEZ in the quickest time possible. During this time, funding has been available from the Energy Savings Trust to support vehicle and fleet operators achieve LEZ compliance.

- 3.3 Since then, there has been significant improvement in the local taxi and PHC fleet, with (as of March 2025) 69 licensed taxis (14% of the fleet) and 3 PHCs (less than 1%) not compliant with the LEZ. 58 of these non-compliant taxis are wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs); no PHCs are WAVs.
- 3.4 There is still a need for a good supply of taxis in the city centre to ensure the area remains accessible to all, and safe, particularly for those travelling home after enjoying a night out in the city centre for whom public transport may not be available. Offering an additional one-year exemption to these 58 wheelchair accessible taxis will therefore ensure the current city centre taxi provision can be largely maintained, with 97.8% of taxis either compliant or exempt, and 99% of PHCs compliant, and allow an additional year to work towards a fully compliant taxi and PHC fleet in the city centre. As per the legislation and the previous exemption, this additional exemption can only be issued for twelve months, with no guarantee of renewal, therefore operators are still advised to achieve compliance with the LEZ in the quickest time possible.
- 3.5 Operators of wheelchair accessible taxis will require to be advised of this additional one-year exemption from the Low Emission Zone.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Transport (Scotland) Act 2019 introduced powers for local authorities to implement LEZs and to specify local time-limited exemptions. The protocol agreed with Transport Scotland for the consideration of exemptions was that these would be considered by the local LEZ Delivery Group (made up of representatives of Aberdeen City Council, Aberdeenshire Council, Nestrans and NHS Grampian) and a recommendation made to the Council's Chief Officer of Strategic Place Planning who would have final determination on whether the exemption should be granted or not.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Exempting vehicles from the LEZ reduces the air quality benefits but the impacts should be relatively minor given the volume of vehicles involved.

7. RISK

- 7.1 The assessment of risk contained within the table below is considered to be consistent with the Council's Risk Appetite Statement

Category	Risks	Primary Controls/Control Actions to achieve Target Risk Level	*Target Risk Level (L, M or H) *taking into account controls/control actions	*Does Target Risk Level Match Appetite Set?
Strategic Risk	Exempting vehicles from the LEZ could prevent ACC achieving compliance with air quality objectives in the quickest time possible, as per obligations under the Cleaner Air for Scotland Strategy. Restricting the number of taxis and PHCs in the city centre could negatively impact on the provision of safe and accessible transport options for all users.	Support an additional one year exemption for wheelchair accessible taxis, but ensure that wheelchair accessible taxi drivers are aware that the exemption only lasts for a maximum of one year.	L	Yes
Compliance	No significant risks identified.			
Operational	No significant risks identified.			
Financial	No significant risks identified.			
Reputational	The Council may be viewed as not taking air quality obligations seriously and offering favourable conditions to the taxi trade. Conversely, a lack of taxis serving the city centre as a result of LEZ restrictions could reflect badly on the Council and its obligations to support a safe and accessible transport system.	Support an additional one year exemption for wheelchair accessible taxis, but ensure that wheelchair accessible taxi drivers are aware that the exemption only lasts for a maximum of one year.	L	Yes
Environment / Climate	Exempting vehicles from the need to	Support an additional one	L	Yes

	comply with the LEZ will have negative air quality implications.	year exemption for wheelchair accessible taxis, but ensure that wheelchair accessible taxi drivers are aware that the exemption only lasts for a maximum of one year.		
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8. OUTCOMES

Council Delivery Plan 2024	
Impact of Report	
Regional and City Strategies	The proposals within this report support the Regional Transport Strategy priority of 'Accessibility for all' and the Local Transport Strategy objective of 'An integrated, accessible and socially inclusive transport system'.

9. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Integrated Impact Assessment	New Integrated Impact Assessment has been completed
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required.
Other	N/A

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 None.

11. APPENDICES

11.1 None.

12. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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