

13 May 2024

Response to Request for Information - 6411334

Challenging Wolverhampton and their Environmental Commitment

This request is being handled under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Thank you for contacting City of Wolverhampton Council. Councillor Collingswood has asked me to investigate your enquiry and respond directly to you.

[Section 48 of the Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act](#) states that the Council, "shall not refuse such a licence for the purpose of limiting the number of vehicles in respect of which such licences are granted by the council". Therefore, it is illegal for the Council to refuse applications for private hire vehicles to limit their numbers. There is also no provision to refuse applications from private hire drivers or private hire vehicle operators based on where they live.

Every application for a licence must be determined and if the applicant meets the criteria, the licence must be granted. Unfortunately, there is actually a shortage of licensed drivers both in Wolverhampton and across the country, with the latest DfT stats showing that the [trade is down 25%](#) on pre-pandemic figures. This has major public safety issues, from women's safety in the night time economy, to special educational needs children unable to travel to school.

There is no lawful basis to refuse an application from someone who lives somewhere else in the country. No policy was devised to encourage this, and the council does not gain financially, as the fees for taxi licensing are legally ringfenced for spend only on related activities. City of Wolverhampton Council has never advertised for applicants.

To clarify, whilst private hire drivers may not ply or stand for hire (i.e. accept a booking for immediate hire not through their operator), [Section 75 of the Local Government \(Miscellaneous Provisions\) Act 1976](#) makes provisions to permit journeys pre-booked through a private hire vehicle operator to start, drive through and end in any area of the country, regardless of which licensing authority issued their licences. This is known as the 'right to roam'. Due to this, the council has previously lobbied for a national emissions policy, as taxis are inherently mobile and cross authorities' borders. The council also recently consulted on an [ultra-low emission vehicle policy](#), however a legislative solution is the only comprehensive way to ensure consistency.

Please see the response information marked in blue on below:

City of Wolverhampton Council
Civic Centre, St. Peter's Square,
Wolverhampton,
WV1 1SH

 wolverhampton.gov.uk

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Request

I would like to request a Freedom of Information request to find out how many miles Wolverhampton Licensed Hackney and Private Hire Vehicles cover each year.

Could you also let me know as part of this request the following:

1. How many are electric vehicles are registered with Wolverhampton City Council?

With reference to question 1, we can confirm that the Council holds information falling within the description specified in your request. However, Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 allows a public authority to refuse a request if the cost of providing the information to the applicant would exceed the 'appropriate limit' as defined by the Freedom of Information Act.

The Regulations provide that the appropriate limit to be applied to requests received by local authorities is £450 (equivalent to 18 hours of work). In estimating the cost of complying with a request for information, an authority can only take into account any reasonable costs incurred in:

- (a) Determining whether it holds the information
- (b) Locating the information, or a document which may contain the information
- (c) Retrieving the information, or a document which may contain the information
- (d) Extracting the information from a document containing it.

For the purposes of the estimate the costs of performing these activities should be estimated at a rate of £25 per hour.

The information appertaining to your request is not easily accessible as we do not record the fuel type of any of the vehicles and as such this information is not held as a distinct set able to be retrieved or reported on. To provide you with the information requested would require a manual trawl of 29,000 records individually to check the V5 certificate and as such we believe that the aggregated time it would take to collate the information would be in excess of 18 hours (equivalent to a notional cost of £450).

2. How many have diesel engines and of those how many have a euro 5 or 6 engine?

Please see the response to question 1 above.

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3. What is the average age of a the Councils Taxi fleet?
7.32 years
4. How many of the vehicles registered with Wolverhampton Council, have owners who actually live in the District of Wolverhampton?
1,331
5. Can you tell me where the non Wolverhampton Drivers live in respect of Borough Boundaries and their numbers? i.e 50 in the Borough of Fylde District.

District	Licensed Private Hire Drivers
Burnley	177
Chorley	24
Fylde	21
Hyndburn	159
Lancaster	5
Pendle	350
Preston	152
Ribble Valley	3
Rossendale	23
South Ribble	12
West Lancashire	8
Wyre	39

6. Can you tell me what the level of CO2 emissions your Authority's Taxi Fleet is producing annually - and how these figures are offset in the Wolverhampton CO2 reduction/offset policy?
In response to your above question, Section 1 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 places two duties on public authorities. Unless exemptions apply, the first duty at:

- Section 1(1) (a) is to confirm or deny whether the information specified in a request is held.
- The second duty at Section 1(1)(b) is to disclose information that has been confirmed as being held.

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In respect of this question, it has been established, following a search of our paper and electronic records, that the information you requested is not held by the City of Wolverhampton Council.

"Any person making a request for information to a public authority is entitled to be informed in writing by the public authority whether it holds information of the description specified in the request".

7. How many staff does Wolverhampton City Council employ, solely to manage the Hackney and Private Hire Taxis fleet administration and enforcement teams?

113

8. Did the Council carry out an impact assessment to see what the damage would be to other authority areas that now have an unlimited number of out of town Wolverhampton taxis operating within their district or City Boundaries? Most Council have a maximum cap on the number of Taxis allowed to operate to meet their local demand.

Whilst there is provision to limit the number of hackney carriages (taxis), if there is no unmet demand within the city, there are only 21 taxis (hackney carriages) licensed outside of Wolverhampton. There is no lawful provision to restrict the numbers of private hire vehicles. The council did not complete an 'impact assessment' as it may not legally refuse an application for a private hire licence on the grounds that the applicant does not live within Wolverhampton.

Please quote the reference number 6411334 in any future communications.

If you are dissatisfied with the handling of your request, you have the right to ask for an internal review. Internal review requests should be submitted within two months of the date of receipt of the response to your original letter and should be addressed to:

Information Governance Team
Governance
City of Wolverhampton Council
Civic Centre
St. Peter's Square
Wolverhampton WV1 1SH

Email: foi@wolverhampton.gov.uk

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If you are still dissatisfied with the Council's response after the internal review you have a right of appeal to the Information Commissioner, contact details can be found on their website: www.ico.org.uk

I will now close your request as of this date.

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