Low Emission Zone – Motion dealt with, after division.

16 Councillor Daly, seconded by Bailie Thomas Kerr, moved that:-

"Council notes that the City Administration Committee of 13th October 2022 agreed to a time-limited exemption for non-funded taxi operators with Low Emission Zone enforcement for this group not coming into effect until 1st June 2023. However, Council recognises the significant concern is continuing to be expressed by taxi operators and users of other vehicles regarding the ability to source compliant vehicles both due to supply chain delays and the macro-economic environment.

Council notes the concerns expressed by Unite Union Glasgow Cab Section that over 1,000 drivers could be lost as a result of retaining the 1st June 2023 enforcement date. Council considers that this would have a detrimental impact on the city's economy (particularly its night time economy) and on the ability for those with access needs and those who require night-time transport to be able to access the city for work and leisure.

Council notes that Scotland's other LEZ's are not due to start enforcement until 1st June 2024 (30th May 2024 in Dundee) and that reflecting the significant challenges facing many small and medium businesses at the moment, it would be prudent to align the full enforcement of Glasgow's LEZ with these other schemes.

Accordingly, this Council agrees that the full enforcement of Phase 2 should be delayed until 1st June 2024 and instructs the Chief Executive to make arrangements for this to occur."

Councillor Millar, seconded by Councillor Aitken, moved as an amendment to delete all and replace with the following:

“Council notes that air pollution in the city centre remains stubbornly high and in breach of statutory levels, and notes that these concentrations of air pollution contribute to poor health outcomes for Glaswegians, generational health inequalities, and an estimated 300 deaths in Glasgow each year. Council reaffirms that the introduction of a Low Emission Zone is an urgent public health intervention required to address Glasgow’s longstanding air pollution crisis. Council welcomes early findings of progress made as a result of phase 1 of the LEZ, and anticipates further progress as a result of phase 2.

Council further reaffirms that public hire taxis are an important part of Glasgow’s public transport mix, and recognises the particular support required to help the taxi sector achieve compliance. Council notes that around £3million of public funding has been made available by the Scottish Government to date to support taxi operators in the Glasgow area to transition to compliance, including up to 80% grant funding for retrofit solutions.

Council recalls the mitigations and flexibilities it has provided in relation to LEZ enforcement for the taxi trade. Council recalls the decision of the City Administration Committee on 13th October 2022 to provide a time-limited exemption until June 2024 for taxi operators who can demonstrate they do not have access to

a funded retrofit solution. Council further recalls the decision of the City Administration Committee on 10 March 2022 which provided for a time-limited exemption beyond June 2023 for operators who seek to access retrofit funding but who are not able to complete upgrades for reasons of capacity (either due to a lack of capacity within retrofit providers or due to lack of funding capacity within the Scottish Government's LEZ Support Fund).

Council notes that guidance giving effect to these exemptions and advising operators on how to apply has now been made publicly available. Council notes that this will merely require operators who are not yet LEZ compliant but who have access to a funded retrofit solution to evidence their expression of interest to the LEZ Support Fund, with an ultimate backstop to this time-limited exemption of June 2024. Council notes that the cumulative effect of these mitigations is that no taxi should be off the road in June 2023 as a result of LEZ enforcement, and that the sector has been given significant flexibility beyond this date to achieve compliance.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to ensure continued preparations for general enforcement of the LEZ in June 2023, with provision made for all agreed exemptions, and to ensure that a report on progress on implementation of the LEZ is brought to the relevant committee by the end of this year."

Councillor Pidgeon, seconded by Councillor Jassemi, moved as an amendment that:

"Council notes the decision to begin general enforcement of the Low Emission Zone on 1st June 2023, despite an amendment by the Labour Group at City Administration Committee on 7th March 2022, and at Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 23rd March 2022, to delay enforcement until 1st June 2024, recognising the significant challenges being faced across the city and the need for certainty.

Council: reiterates its belief that the LEZ is an important and necessary measure; notes the recent evidence from the Mayor of London indicating that the expansion of the ULEZ there has had a transformational impact on air quality and, therefore, on the quality of living of those living there; and agrees that it is unacceptable for anyone in the City of Glasgow to live a shorter or poorer life due to avoidable air pollution.

Council recognises that the taxi trade continues to be an important part of the city's economy and vital to helping people move around safely, however believes that the Scottish Government has not offered adequate funding to this industry through the funds administered by the Energy Savings Trust, and that this funding is disproportionately smaller than the funding made available to the bus companies operating within the city.

Council further recognises that, despite requests by this Council for additional public subsidy, there has not been funding of sufficient scale; that the failure to address the needs of key stakeholders rests solely with the Administration; and resolves to instruct Officers to make the necessary preparations to amend the Low Emissions Zone scheme to delay general enforcement until 1st June 2024."

Councillor Wardrop, seconded by Councillor Reid-McConnell, moved as an amendment to delete all and replace with the following:

"Council notes that as part of proposals to improve air quality and create a Greener Legacy, an initial plan was developed for "low emission zones" around the 10 venues at the Commonwealth Games in 2014. However, it emerged that it would not be possible to introduce these zones.

Council notes that in 2016 the Scottish Government promised to deliver Scotland's first Low Emission Zone (LEZ) by 2018, working closely with a local authority. In October 2017, it was confirmed that Glasgow would be home to Scotland's first LEZ.

Council acknowledges that progress was made when the City Administration Committee on 28th September 2017 agreed in principle to a LEZ being implemented by the end of 2018. It intended to accelerate action to tackle air pollution in the City Centre Air Quality Management Area and a delivery group was established towards the implementation of the LEZ. On 31st December 2018, Glasgow's LEZ, which only impacted on buses for the first 4 years, came into force. Council welcomes the restricting of the most polluting buses over the last few years, and this has already brought some big improvements to air quality in the city.

Council notes that during the public consultation period into the LEZ final scheme design in January 2021, 92% of objections received were from respondents identifying themselves as operators or drivers within the hackney taxi trade, including from Unite the Union Glasgow Cab Section. Following these representations from the taxi trade raising particular concerns around availability and cost of compliant vehicles, extensive funding was put in place to support taxi drivers to ensure their vehicles were compliant, or that they were in the process of making their vehicles compliant or purchasing a compliant vehicle, with 90% of the fleet in March 2022 either already compliant or eligible for retrofit funding. Increased funding was sought from the Scottish Government to ensure the viability of the taxi sector within Glasgow.

Council notes that under the original timescale for introduction of the LEZ, set out by the LEZ Leadership Group in August 2020, LEZs were to be operational in four Scottish cities by May 2022. A revised date for implementation of the LEZ in Glasgow for all vehicles from 31st December 2022 was presented to committee in March 2022. Due to the ongoing impact of the Covid19 pandemic, particularly on the taxi trade, this implementation date was further revised to 1st June 2023, with the full support of Council. Plans for a Low Emission Zone in Glasgow have been underway for a decade, and the introduction has been delayed significantly, with concerns from residents, business owners and especially the taxi trade sector listened to and reflected in the scheme design. We support the retaining of the 1 June 2023 as the enforcement date, which includes exemptions till 1st June 2024, with restrictions on cars and other vehicle types which will bring the pollution levels down further.

Council recalls its unanimous motion of May 2021 into air pollution, which noted that “"delay in reducing the levels of atmospheric air pollution is the cause of avoidable deaths”, and that the health impacts of polluted air are not felt evenly within our city. Nitrogen dioxide levels in Glasgow continue to exceed the health based objectives for nitrogen dioxide which were meant to have been achieved by 2005. The World Health Organisation has now said that nitrogen dioxide target should be a quarter of the current target to adequately reduce health risks. Without significantly decreasing emissions from road transport, the major cause of local air pollution, these health based objectives will continue to be breached for a considerable time to come. This also means that those who live, work and use our city centre for retail and leisure will continue to be subject to harmful levels of pollution with the associated impacts on their health. It should be noted that taxi drivers suffer particularly high personal exposure to air pollution and air quality improvements benefit them more than most other sectors of the population.

Council also recognises that it will be necessary in future years to strengthen the current LEZ emissions standards, noting the planned 2030 phase-out date for new petrol and diesel cars and the need to meet our local and national climate targets, and that this may lead to Low Emissions Zones becoming No Emissions Zones, therefore instructs officers to bring forward a paper to the appropriate committee, following the LEZ introduction, considering how that can be taken forward, learning lessons from the LEZ implementation, and how this could also complement Community Wealth Building and other relevant Council strategies.”

Councillors Millar and Wardrop, with the approval of their seconders, agreed to combine their amendments as follows:

“Council notes that air pollution in the city centre remains stubbornly high and in breach of statutory levels, and notes that these concentrations of air pollution contribute to poor health outcomes for Glaswegians, generational health inequalities, and an estimated 300 deaths in Glasgow each year.

Council notes that as part of proposals to improve air quality and create a Greener Legacy, an initial plan was developed for "low emission zones" around the 10 venues at the Commonwealth Games in 2014. However, it emerged that it would not be possible to introduce these zones.

Council notes that in 2016 the Scottish Government promised to deliver Scotland’s first Low Emission Zone (LEZ) by 2018, working closely with a local authority. In October 2017, it was confirmed that Glasgow would be home to Scotland’s first LEZ. Council reaffirms that the introduction of a Low Emission Zone is an urgent public health intervention required to address Glasgow’s longstanding air pollution crisis.

Council acknowledges that progress was made when the City Administration Committee on 28th September 2017 agreed in principle to a LEZ being implemented by the end of 2018. It intended to accelerate action to tackle air pollution in the City Centre Air Quality Management Area and a delivery group was established towards the implementation of the LEZ. On 31st December 2018, Glasgow’s LEZ, which only impacted on buses for the first 4 years, came into force.

Council welcomes the restricting of the most polluting buses over the last few years, and this has already brought some big improvements to air quality in the city. Council welcomes early findings of progress made as a result of phase 1 of the LEZ, and anticipates further progress as a result of phase 2.

Council further reaffirms that public hire taxis are an important part of Glasgow's public transport mix, and recognises the particular support required to help the taxi sector achieve compliance. Council notes that during the public consultation period into the LEZ final scheme design in January 2021, 92% of objections received were from respondents identifying themselves as operators or drivers within the hackney taxi trade, including from Unite the Union Glasgow Cab Section. Following these representations from the taxi trade raising particular concerns around availability and cost of compliant vehicles, extensive funding was put in place to support taxi drivers to ensure their vehicles were compliant, or that they were in the process of making their vehicles compliant or purchasing a compliant vehicle, with 90% of the fleet in March 2022 either already compliant or eligible for retrofit funding. Increased funding was sought from the Scottish Government to ensure the viability of the taxi sector within Glasgow. Council notes that around £3million of public funding has been made available by the Scottish Government to date to support taxi operators in the Glasgow area to transition to compliance, including up to 80% grant funding for retrofit solutions.

Council recalls the mitigations and flexibilities it has provided for in relation to LEZ enforcement for the taxi trade. Council recalls the decision of the City Administration Committee on 13th October 2022 to provide a time-limited exemption until June 2024 for taxi operators who can demonstrate they do not have access to a funded retrofit solution. Council further recalls the decision of the City Administration Committee on 10th March 2022 which provided for a time-limited exemption beyond June 2023 for operators who seek to access retrofit funding but who are not able to complete upgrades for reasons of capacity (either due to a lack of capacity within retrofit providers, or due to lack of funding capacity within the Scottish Government's LEZ Support Fund).

Council notes that guidance giving effect to these exemptions and advising operators of how apply has now been made publicly available. Council notes that this will merely require operators who are not yet LEZ compliant but who have access to a funded retrofit solution to evidence their expression of interest to the LEZ Support Fund, with an ultimate backstop to this time-limited exemption of June 2024. Council notes that the cumulative effect of these mitigations is that no taxi should be off the road in June 2023 as a result of LEZ enforcement, and that the sector has been given significant flexibility beyond this date to achieve compliance.

Council notes that under the original timescale, LEZs were to be operational in four Scottish cities by May 2020 with grace periods for enforcement 31st December 2022. Council notes that the impact of the Covid19 pandemic, including on the taxi trade, saw this implementation date further revised to 1st June 2023 with the full support of Council. Plans for a Low Emission Zone in Glasgow have been underway for a decade, and the introduction has been delayed significantly, with concerns from residents, business owners and especially the taxi trade sector listened to and reflected in the scheme design.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to ensure continued preparations for general enforcement of the LEZ in June 2023, with provision made for all agreed exemptions, and to ensure that a report on progress on implementation of the LEZ is brought to the relevant committee by the end of this year."

Councillor Daly, with the approval of his seconder, accepted the amendment by Councillor Pidgeon resulting in the following adjusted motion:

"Council notes the decision to begin general enforcement of the Low Emission Zone on 1st June 2023, despite an amendment by the Labour Group at City Administration Committee on 7th March 2022, and at Finance and Audit Scrutiny Committee on 23rd March 2022, to delay enforcement until 1st June 2024, recognising the significant challenges being faced across the city and the need for certainty.

Council: reiterates its belief that the LEZ is an important and necessary measure; notes the recent evidence from the Mayor of London indicating that the expansion of the ULEZ there has had a transformational impact on air quality and, therefore, on the quality of living of those living there; and agrees that it is unacceptable for anyone in the City of Glasgow to live a shorter or poorer life due to avoidable air pollution.

Council recognises that the taxi trade continues to be an important part of the city's economy and vital to helping people move around safely, however believes that the Scottish Government has not offered adequate funding to this industry through the funds administered by the Energy Savings Trust, and that this funding is disproportionately smaller than the funding made available to the bus companies operating within the city.

Council further recognises that, despite requests by this Council for additional public subsidy, there has not been funding of sufficient scale; that the failure to address the needs of key stakeholders rests solely with the Administration; and resolves to instruct Officers to make the necessary preparations to amend the Low Emissions Zone scheme to delay general enforcement until 1st June 2024."

On a vote being taken electronically and by roll call, 46 members voted for the combined amendment by Councillors Millar and Wardrop and 37 for the motion as adjusted.

The combined amendment by Councillors Millar and Wardrop was accordingly declared to be carried.