

FOI investigation into mayoral cars

Briefing note

June 19th 2023

Approach

The approach adopted for this analysis consisted of two main angles.

The first was to estimate total greenhouse gas emissions from the fuel spend by converting spend to litres of fuel for petrol and diesel fuel vehicles using average pump prices over the period.¹ As the data provided by the councils was limited in detail, in many cases it was necessary to make an assumption about the engine type depending on the vehicle type (indicated by the entries with parentheses).

For plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs) an attempt was made to allocate the fuel costs between fuel (assumed to be petrol) and electricity using the ratio for Executive category vehicles used in the BEIS/DESNZ conversion factors)², using an electricity price of 30p/kWh. This calculation resulted in a cost per km which was used to estimate the distance driven and then this was converted into greenhouse gas emissions.

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/oil-and-petroleum-products-monthly-statistics>

2

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting>

1

It should be noted that for councils which recharge their vehicles less than this assumption,, the emissions will be higher (by as much as 50% for PHEVs operated solely on petrol).

These emission estimates were then compared against population densities for each council in order to highlight any outliers (based on the hypothesis that councils with lower population densities could expect to see higher emissions).

The second was to attempt to estimate the CO2 emissions of each vehicle type in order to highlight councils which have higher emission fleets. In most cases the only data about the vehicle supplied was the make and model, with no information about engine type, engine capacity, vehicle trim, transmission or age provided. Due to these limitations these CO2 emission factors are indicative only.

Results

- Two councils (Wigan and Sutton), have contracts for a vehicle and chauffeur, with one (Sutton) paying £39,000 plus VAT annually for this service. One council (Southampton) axed the chauffeur service and purchased an electric car with the savings.
- Two councils (Kensington & Chelsea and Gateshead) responded that the fuel costs were zero as the cars were electric, although of course electricity is not free so it is unclear how they are accounting for recharging costs.
- Buckinghamshire, Fermanagh & Omagh, and Surrey Heath have no mayoral car, with the officeholder claiming for any mileage driven using their own car.
- Slough, Exeter and Salford City got rid of their mayoral cars in the last few years.

- Somerset West and Taunton and East Lothian councils no longer use official cars and instead use pool cars (electric in the case of East Lothian).
- City of London noted “Vehicles used by the Lord Mayor of the City of London are funded using City’s Cash, and are therefore out of scope of the FOIA.” This warrants further investigation as CoL officer reports indicate a ~£100k annual budget for the ‘Shrieval’ fleet, which would place their spending on official cars well above that of any other council – notwithstanding that the source of this budget is non-public funds.³

Councils Operating High Emission Vehicles

Make and Model (gCO ₂ /km)	Councils	Comments
Volkswagen Phaeton 3.0 Diesel (224gCO ₂ /km and up) ⁴	City of Glasgow	Until recently Glasgow also had a Rolls Royce Ghost (347gCO ₂ /km and up) ⁵

³

<https://democracy.cityoflondon.gov.uk/documents/s179132/Business%20Planning%20Template%20MH%20-%20OLM%20Sheriffs%2022.11.22%20Final.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.volkswagen.co.uk/assets/common/pdf/pricelists/phaeton-pricelist.pdf>

⁵

<https://www.press.rolls-roycemotorcars.com/rolls-royce-motor-cars-pressclub/photo/detail/P90398179/the-new-rolls-royce-ghost-interior>

Jaguar XJ (184gCO ₂ /km and up) ⁶	Hillingdon, Dacorum Borough, Staffordshire County, Windsor and Maidenhead, Sheffield City, Merthyr Tydfil, Walsall Metropolitan Borough, Brentwood	Solihull also has a Range Rover Sport (196gCO ₂ /km and up) ⁷ and Walsall operates two Jaguar XJs, Sheffield also operates a Lexus GH450 H. Hillingdon is one of the councils bringing the legal challenge against the London Mayor's Ultra-Low Emissions Zone.
Audi A8 (184gCO ₂ /km and up) ⁸	Southend-on-Sea, South Tyneside, Lisburn & Castlereagh, Stirling, Perth & Kinross, East Riding of Yorkshire	Perth & Kinross has an Audi A8 L (206g/km and up), ⁹ South Tyneside also operates a Volvo S80

- Glasgow sold the Rolls Royce Ghost they owned (which was donated to the city)¹⁰ leaving the city's ceremonial post holders with a Volkswagen Phaeton luxury saloon to get around in – but this vehicle is now banned by the city's low emission zone¹¹.
- Edinburgh operates two BMW 730D SEs (148gCO₂/km and up)¹²

⁶ <https://www.jaguar.co.uk/jaguar-range/xj/index.html>

⁷ <https://www.parkers.co.uk/land-rover/range-rover-sport/suv-2022/car-tax/>

⁸ <https://www.autoexpress.co.uk/audi/a8/mpg>

⁹ <https://www.audi-mediacycenter.com/en/audi-a8-l-53>

¹⁰

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/lord-provost-glasgows-limousine-banned-30128218>

¹¹

<https://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/lord-provost-glasgows-limousine-banned-30128218>

¹² <https://www.parkers.co.uk/bmw/7-series/saloon-2008/730d-se-exclusive-4d-auto/specs/>

Councils operating EVs only

Make and Model	Councils	Comments
Audi E-tron	Stockport Metropolitan Borough	Still a very large and heavy vehicle for urban use.
Ford Mach E	London Borough of Havering	
Hyundai IONIQ 5	Bristol City, London Borough of Brent	
Hyundai IONIQ EV	Calderdale Metropolitan Borough, Cheltenham Borough, Ipswich Borough, Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames, Warrington Borough	
Hyundai Kona EV	Maidstone Borough	
Jaguar I-PACE	Canterbury City, Peterborough City, Wolverhampton City	
Kia Niro EV	Redcar and Cleveland, Charnwood Borough, Rochdale Metropolitan ,Borough, Swale Borough	
Nissan Leaf	Gateshead Metropolitan Borough, Oxford City	
Tesla Model 3	Falkirk District	
Tesla Model X	London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham	H&F has the most on-street public EV charge points of any local authority in England.
Volkswagen ID4	North East Lincolnshire	

Appendix 1: FOI request template

Hello

I'd be grateful if you can provide me with the following information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in regards to vehicles used to transport the Mayor of your Local authority.

1. A list of all vehicles owned or leased to the council for the use of transporting the Mayor of your Local authority and:
 - a. The make and model of each vehicle?
 - b. The cost of purchasing each vehicle (if not leased) since 2018?
 - c. The cost of leasing each vehicle (if not purchased) since 2018?
 - d. The cost of fuel for each vehicle since 2018?
 - e. The costs associated with maintaining each vehicle since 2018?
 - f. The cost of insuring each vehicle since 2018?
 - g. The costs of any parking fees and / or fines / PCNs issued to each vehicle since 2018?

Please provide cost per annum if possible for questions 1b-1g.

2. How many days a week on average is each vehicle used?
3. Is transporting the mayor the primary use of the vehicle? If not, please list other uses?

I look forward to receiving a response from you and I am happy to provide any additional information you require.

Yours faithfully,

Akwesi Osei