

Title of meeting: LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date of meeting: 22 MARCH 2019

Subject: REPORT OF THE TASK AND FINISH GROUP ON TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING - UPDATE ON GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

Report by: DIRECTOR OF CULTURE, LEISURE AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Wards affected: ALL

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee about work undertaken by the Task and Finish Group (TFG) on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing and the published response by the Government to its recommendations.

2. Recommendations

That the Licensing Committee note the contents of the report.

3. Background

- 3.1 The TFG on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing was established in September 2017. Its remit was to consider evidence relating to the adequacy of current taxi and private hire licensing authority powers, as set out in legislation and guidance, and to make recommendations for actions to address any priority issues identified. The findings and recommendations (34 in total) were submitted to the Secretary of State for Transport on 9 July 2018.
- 3.2 The Chair of the TFG, Professor Mohammed Abdel-Haq, states in the foreword to this report that

"In scoping the work together we were determined, above all, to chart a future which ensured public safety for all, a working environment for those in the trade which guaranteed fair working conditions and whilst maintaining a competitive, dynamic market, preserve the character, integrity and aesthetics of this time-honoured trade".

3.3 He also highlighted that:

"It is clear that the status quo whereby taxi and private hire licensing is inconsistent, ineffective and incompatible with the protection of vulnerable people must not be allowed to continue. Alongside other incidents of criminality, the events in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and elsewhere have brought the fundamental flaws in the licensing regime into the sharpest possible focus; these oblige uncompromising determination to make taxis and private hire vehicles safe for all".

3.4 A copy of this report is attached as **Appendix A**.

3.5 The Government published its response to the TFG on 12 February 2019. The response first sets out a broad summary of the government's position, and the actions it proposes to take. It is then followed by a point-by-point consideration of the report's 34 specific recommendations.

3.6 The response recognises that the TFG report sets out a road-map for the reform of the regulation of the taxi and private hire sector. The response also acknowledges that the TFG, in reaching its conclusions and recommendations, have put the passenger at the heart of its thinking and the Government have committed to take action where needed to ensure a safe and well-functioning sector which meets the needs and expectations of its passengers.

3.7 The response accepts three key measures recommended to achieve a safe service for passengers which are:

- National Minimum Standards;
- National Enforcement Powers; and
- A National Licensing Database.

3.8 A copy of the response document is attached as **Appendix B**.

3.9 The response identifies what legislation the Government proposes to take forward. However, in the short term this will not include a full replacement of the law for private hire and hackney carriages.

4. Reasons for recommendations

To provide up-to-date information to the Licensing Committee on the potential for changes to the licensing regime for the taxi and private hire trade.

5. Equality impact assessment (EIA)

No EIA required as this report is for noting purposes only.

6. Legal Implications

The legal implications are embodied within the report.

7. Finance Comments

No financial implications arising from the publication of the document.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

- Appendix A - TFG -Taxi and Private Hire Report**
- Appendix B - Government Response to TFG Report**

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: