

**LICENSING  
COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

**UPDATE ON THE CONSULTATION ON “IMPROVING DISABLED  
PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO REDDITCH TAXI FLEETS**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Yvonne Smith
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Simon Wilkes – Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

To receive an update report on the consultation exercise being undertaken following the findings of the Overview and Scrutiny Task Group “Improving Disabled People’s Access to Redditch Taxi Fleets”.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**That Members note the content of the report and the consultation document shown at Appendix 1.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 The costs involved in carrying out the consultation exercise are being met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

**Legal Implications**

- 3.2 Carrying out proper consultation on any proposals to amend the Council’s policies is required to minimise the risk of legal challenge if the proposals are subsequently implemented.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3 On 18<sup>th</sup> July 2016, the Licensing Committee received a presentation from the Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Board, Improving Disabled People’s Access to Redditch Taxi Fleet Task Group and considered the findings contained in the Task Group’s Report.

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- 3.4 The Task Group had been established to carry out a review of action that could be taken to improve taxi services delivered to customers with disabilities in the Borough.
- 3.5 The Task Group made a number of recommendations in their report and the Licensing Committee were asked to resolve to implement these recommendations, subject to further consultation where required.
- 3.6 The recommendations from the Task Group were:
- 1) The Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy and the Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy should be amended:**
    - (a) to allow applications for new hackney carriages to be made for vehicles that are less than six years old, meet European M1 safety standards and have facilities for carrying a disabled person in a wheelchair within the vehicle. (*This relates to the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy only*); and**
    - (b) to require drivers to display stickers in their vehicles that provide information about how to report complaints;**
  - 2) The Driver Licence Policy – Application for a Hackney Carriage and / or Private Hire Vehicle Driver’s Licence – should be amended to require that refresher training should be provided on driving standards and disability awareness to taxi drivers every three years;**
  - 3) There should be a media campaign to guide disabled people and taxi drivers when travelling by taxi about their rights and responsibilities;**
  - 4) WRS should publish a list of drivers who currently operate licensed wheelchair accessible vehicles on the WRS and Redditch Borough Council websites in a similar format to Brighton and Hove City Council and Eden District Council;**
  - 5) WRS should undertake a review of the conditions attached to taxi operators’ licences; and**
  - 6) The Licensing Committee should review the effectiveness of the disability awareness training provided to taxi drivers.**

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- 3.7 The Licensing Committee resolved that the recommendations of the Task Group be agreed subject to a small amendment so that the stickers displayed in vehicles provided information on how to report compliments as well as complaints and subject to further consultation where appropriate to be carried out by Worcestershire Regulatory Services with the relevant consultees.
- 3.8 Following discussions with Legal Services, it was concluded that the recommendations that require amendments to be made to the Council's policies or would involve licence holder's details being published on the Council's website, would need to be subject to consultation with relevant stakeholders.
- 3.9 A consultation document was therefore produced to facilitate consultation on these proposals. The consultation document can be seen at Appendix 1. The consultation document has been sent to all drivers and operators licensed by Redditch Borough Council at the beginning of October.
- 3.10 Details of the consultation have also been posted online on the Council's website at [www.redditchbc.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.redditchbc.gov.uk/consultations). The website offers an online version of the consultation form that people can complete as an alternative to the paper version.
- 3.11 Details of the consultation have been forwarded to relevant stakeholders that represent both the hackney carriage and private hire trade, relevant organisations such as the Police and also groups that represent people with disabilities in the Borough.
- 3.12 The consultation will be running until 31<sup>st</sup> December 2016 and it is anticipated that the results will be reported back to the Licensing Committee for consideration at the meeting on 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 None

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Consultation Document

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