

**LICENSING  
COMMITTEE**

17<sup>th</sup> July 2017

**FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THE RESULTS OF THE EARLIER  
CONSULTATION ON “IMPROVING DISABLED PEOPLE’S ACCESS TO  
REDDITCH TAXI FLEETS”**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Joe Baker
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**

Members are asked to consider again the results of the previous consultation exercise undertaken in relation to two proposed amendments to the Council’s Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Policies that were recommended to the Licensing Committee following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee’s “Improving Access for People with Disabilities to Redditch Taxi Fleets” Short, Sharp Review.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Members are asked to consider again the responses received during the original consultation exercise and RESOLVE whether to approve implementation of the following proposed changes to the Council’s Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Policies:**

- **The Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licensing Policy be amended 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.**
- **The Driver Licence Policy be amended to require that refresher training should be provided on driving standards and disability awareness to taxi drivers every three years.**

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**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

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

**Legal Implications**

- 3.2 Proper consultation on the proposals to amend the Council's policies was undertaken to minimise the risk of legal challenge if the proposals are subsequently implemented.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.3 On 6<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Licensing Committee considered the responses received during a consultation on proposed changes to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Policies that were recommended to the Licensing Committee following the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's "Improving Access for People with Disabilities to Redditch Taxi Fleets" Short, Sharp Review.
- 3.4 Following consideration of the consultation responses, the following proposed changes were approved for implementation.
- Information to be displayed in licensed vehicles for passengers detailing how to make compliments or report complaints.
  - Following the implementation of the legislation locally, on Section 165-167 of the Equality Act 2010 Taxi and Private Hire Passengers in Wheelchairs, a media campaign be conducted to guide disabled people and taxi drivers when travelling by taxi about their rights and responsibilities.
  - Worcestershire Regulatory Services (WRS) to produce a list of drivers, who consent to having their details published and currently operate licensed Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles, with the intention to publishing the list on the WRS and Redditch Borough Council websites.

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- 3.5 There were two other proposals for change that Members did not want to approve before checking that appropriate consultation had taken place. These proposals were:
- 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.
  - The Driver Licence Policy – Application for a Hackney Carriage and / or Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Licence be amended to require that refresher training should be provided on driving standards and disability awareness to taxi drivers every three years.
- 3.6 Members were concerned as Redditch Taxi Association had suggested that not all licensed drivers had received the consultation document that had been sent to all licence holders by Licensing Officers.
- 3.7 Members also wanted to check that the following organisations were consulted with:
- Older People's Forum
  - Community Forum
  - Health and Well Being Group
  - BARN (Bromsgrove and Redditch Network)
  - DAR (Disability Action Redditch)
  - Town Centre Partnership
- 3.8 Despite requests being made by Licensing Officers, the Redditch Taxi Association have not provided details of any of the licence holders who said they did not receive a consultation document when they were originally distributed. Officers have also been able to confirm that all of the groups listed above were given the opportunity to respond to the consultation when it was originally advertised.
- 3.9 As a result, further consultation with the groups and licence holders has been deemed an unnecessary step to take and Members are asked to consider again the responses that were received during the original consultation exercise.
- 3.10 A table setting out a summary of the survey responses received during the original consultation exercise is attached at **Appendix 1**.

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- 3.11 A total of 22 survey responses were received although not every respondent provided an answer to each of the survey questions.
- 3.12 The majority of respondents to the survey (68%) agreed with the Council's proposal to relax its policy on the licensing of vehicles as hackney carriages so that instead of additional hackney carriages having to be "brand new" wheelchair accessible vehicles, they can be wheelchair accessible vehicles that are up to six years of age.
- 3.13 A smaller majority of respondents to the survey (59%) agreed with the Council's proposal to amending its policy on the licensing of drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to require all drivers to undertake refresher training in driving standards and disability awareness every three years.
- 3.14 A number of other comments were received via the survey responses received. These comments can be seen in **Appendix 1**.
- 3.15 In addition to those who completed the consultation survey, a submission in response to the consultation exercise was made by the Redditch Taxi Association (RTA). The RTA submission was accompanied by a list of those drivers that the submission is submitted on behalf of. The RTA submission can be seen at **Appendix 2**.
- 3.16 The RTA disagree with the proposal to relax its policy on the licensing of vehicles as hackney carriages so that instead of additional hackney carriages having to be "brand new" wheelchair accessible vehicles, they can be wheelchair accessible vehicles that are up to six years of age.
- 3.17 The RTA disagree with the Council's proposal to amending its policy on the licensing of drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to require all drivers to undertake refresher training in driving standards and disability awareness every three years.
- 3.18 The RTA make a number of other comments and suggestions in their submission, including that an independent inquiry must be carried out before any decision is made to change policies.
- 3.19 Members are asked to consider again the responses received during the consultation and decide whether to approve implementation of the following proposed changes to the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle and Driver Policies:
- 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.

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- The Driver Licence Policy be amended to require that refresher training should be provided on driving standards and disability awareness to taxi drivers every three years.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

4.1 None

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Summary of Consultation Survey Responses  
Appendix 2 – Submission from Redditch Taxi Association

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