

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 November 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Corporate

SUBJECT: Department for Transport Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards recommendations

WARDS: Borough wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive a report from the Regulatory Committee recommending that the Executive Board approve amendments to the current taxi licensing policies.

2. RECOMMENDED: That the following be adopted:-

- (1) A requirement that all new applicants be checked against a central database prior to being licensed and that a National Register be updated with details of licence refusals and revocations.
- (2) A requirement for all licensed drivers to be registered with the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) update service so that more frequent checks can be conducted.
- (3) An amendment to the vehicle licensing policy requiring the display of a customer feedback notice in vehicles.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 In July 2020, the Department for Transport ('DfT') published statutory guidance referred to as the 'Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards' ("the Standards"). The focus within the standards is on protecting children and vulnerable adults and a number of recommendations are made. The DfT expects these recommendations to be implemented by local authorities unless there is a compelling reason not to.
- 3.2 On 2 September 2020 the Regulatory Committee received a copy of the Standards and were notified that its contents and implications would be

thoroughly examined by officers of the Council and referred back to the Regulatory Committee for consideration.

- 3.3 One of the recommendations was to implement a new professional standards policy relating to convictions and this has been adopted by the Council.
- 3.4 Three further recommendations have now been considered by Officers and amendments to the Council's current taxi licensing policies were submitted to the Regulatory Committee for consideration.
- 3.5 On 6 October 2021, the Regulatory Committee considered the amendments. See attached Regulatory Committee agenda at Appendix 1. These amendments are also set out in section 2 of this report.

4 CONSULTATION

- 4.1 As part of a consultation exercise the local taxi trade were contacted on 16 August 2021 by email for any comments on the 3 amendments. Details of the consultation were also posted on the Council's website with a closing date for comments or opinions of 30 August 2021
- 4.2 Written responses were received from the taxi trade and these are set out in the attached report to the Regulatory Committee.

5 OPTIONS

- 5.1 The options available to the Regulatory Committee at the meeting on 6 October 2021 were either to recommend –
 - Agreement to some or all of the potential changes;
 - Amendment to some or all of the potential changes; or
 - Rejection of the potential changes.
- 5.2 The Regulatory Committee resolved to agree all of the potential changes set out in the agenda subject to there being an amendment to the proposed wording of the Vehicle Licence Policy Amendment set out in Appendix D. The amended wording agreed by the Committee is set out in bold below.

*“Every licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicle is required to permanently display in a prominent location for the customer a **feedback notice (compliments and complaints)** as provided by the licensing section”.*
- 5.3 The reason for the amended wording was that the Committee wanted to make it clear that the feedback notice was also for positive feedback and not just complaints.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The subject matter of this report is to adopt policy changes.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

N/A

7.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A

7.3 A healthy Halton

N/A

8.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

9. RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

10. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

11. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Regulatory Committee Agenda Item dated 6 October 2021 and accompanying appendices.