

RIBBLE VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL REPORT TO LICENSING COMMITTEE

INFORMATION

meeting date: TUESDAY, 12 APRIL 2022
title: TAXI LICENSING UPDATE
submitted by: MARSHAL SCOTT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE
principal author: STEPHEN BARKER - SOLICITOR

1 PURPOSE

1.1 To inform Committee of recent developments in relation to the licensing of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles.

1.2 Relevance to the Council's ambitions and priorities:

- Community Objectives - }
- Corporate Priorities - } Consideration of these issues will promote the Council's aim to be a well-managed Council.
- Other Considerations - }

2 BACKGROUND

2.1 Members will recall that the Department for Transport published Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards in July 2020, and that Committee approved the amendment of the Council's conditions and policy where appropriate at the meeting on 20 October 2020. The Department has now indicated that best practice guidance is to be updated.

2.2 At its meeting on 1 February 2022, Committee was advised of progress of the Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Bill. This has now received Royal Assent.

2.3 HM Revenue and Customs have introduced a requirement for licensing authorities to confirm a tax check has been completed by applicants renewing taxi, private hire and scrap metal licences.

2.4 A Private Members Bill is proceeding through Parliament amending the Equalities Act 2010 in respect of provision of transport for disabled persons.

3 ISSUES

3.1 The National Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards issued in 2020 provide statutory guidance, which local authorities are required to have regard to in administration of their licensing responsibilities. The last occasion on which best practice guidance on administration of the taxi licensing regime was issued was on 2 March 2010. The Department for Transport is carrying out a consultation on introduction of updated guidance, which is open from 28 March 2022 to 20 June 2022. Consultation will take place on a number of issues including:

- driver licensing – proficiency;
- driver licensing – vocational training and assessment;

- vehicle licensing – tinted windows;
- vehicle licensing – identification and signage;
- vehicle licensing – age limits; and
- enforcement – points based enforcement.

The consultation document is attached at Appendix 1.

A further report will be brought to the next Committee on the proposed response by the Council.

- 3.2 The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act received Royal Assent on 1 April 2022. Members will recall that this introduces a requirement for local authorities to input information to a central database where they have suspended, revoked, refused to grant or refused to renew a driver's licence, and for other authorities to have regard to that information in determining application for grant or renewal. Further, if a local authority has concerns about an issue involving a driver in their area, who's licence has been issued by another authority, there is a requirement to report those concerns to the issuing authority, who then must have regard to those concerns.
- 3.3 HMRC have introduced a requirement for applicants for renewal of taxi and private hire licences and scrap metal licences to carry out an online tax check, and to provide evidence of having done so as part of their application. The Council's document and website have been updated to explain this requirement, effective from 4 April 2022, and holders of relevant licences have been notified of the requirement. Nationally it is predicted that it will cost local authorities at least £1.5 million to update their systems and processes to accommodate the new rules. Copies of their information for applicants on the Council's website can be found at Appendix 2.
- 3.4 The Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Bill is proceeding through Parliament. This Bill seeks to amend the Equality Act 2010 to provide greater protection to all disabled persons using taxis and private hire vehicles. The Bill has passed through the Commons without amendment and is now at the Committee stage in the House of Lords.

4 RISK ASSESSMENT

- 4.1 The approval of this report may have the following implications:
- Resources – No implication identified.
 - Technical, Environmental and Legal – No implication identified.
 - Political – No implication identified.
 - Reputation – No implication identified.
 - Equality & Diversity – No implication identified.

5 CONCLUSION

- 5.1 Committee is asked to note the contents of this report.

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For further information please ask for Stephen Barker, extension 3216.

REF: SB/CMS/LICENSING/12 APRIL 2022