

## MEETING

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Wednesday 7 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Changes to Taxi and Private Hire Licensing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Planning, Environment & Economy)

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently published the document "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards" and Welsh Government has recently published the document "Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales". Both documents affect Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	For information.
2	That Members have regard to these two documents when considering any Taxi and Private Hire Licensing matters

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE CHANGES
1.01	<p>In July 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) published Statutory Taxi &amp; Private Hire Vehicle Standards with the focus on protecting children and vulnerable adults. The DfT state that following a detailed consultation it's clear there is a consensus that common core minimum standards are required to better regulate the taxi and private hire vehicle sector.</p>
1.02	<p>The DfT standards have effect in Wales even though responsibility for taxi and private hire vehicle policy has been devolved to Welsh Government. However, should Welsh Government introduce legislation to regulate on these matters, the DfT standards would cease to apply.</p>
1.03	<p>In March 2021, Welsh Government published the Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales. This document follows Welsh Government's white paper 'Improving Public Transport' published in 2018. The aim of the recommendations contained in the document is to provide 'quick fixes' to improve the consistency of licensing standards and increase public safety across Wales. The recommendations form the basis for further development by Welsh Government into national standards.</p>
1.04	<p>There are 5 reasons outlined by Welsh Government to adopt the recommendations, public safety being the first. The public should be able to expect a licensed driver to be competent, honest, safe and trustworthy. There have been numerous reports in recent years involving child exploitation which have made it clear that weak and ineffective arrangements for taxi licensing in England and Wales left the public at risk; these new recommendations hope to rectify this by improving public safety across Wales. This also includes the safety of vehicles, along with improving the standards set for private hire operators.</p>
1.05	<p>Other reasons for adopting the recommendations include better consistency of standards across Wales, harmonised enforcement, increased accessibility of vehicles in Wales and better standards of customer service.</p>
1.06	<p>The DfT statutory standards and the Welsh Government's Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing recommendations introduce a number of changes that Local Authorities will need to adopt. In summary the main changes are list below, although some of these have already been implemented by this authority:</p> <p>Drivers</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requirement for drivers to join the Disclosure &amp; Barring Service (DBS) Update Service and have a DBS check every 6 months.</li><li>• Use of the National Database for Refusal and Revocations of Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers</li><li>• Overseas criminal record check for drivers</li><li>• Adopting the Welsh Government's Driver Code of Conduct</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Updating the Private Hire Driver Conditions in line with the Welsh Government's Recommendations</li> </ul> <p>Vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Requirement for vehicle proprietors to have an annual DBS check.</li> <li>Overseas criminal record check.</li> <li>Adopting the Welsh Government's policy on CCTV and Video Point of Impact Systems (VIPS)/Dash Cams in taxis and private hire vehicles.</li> <li>Impose the Welsh Government's recommendations for accessibility conditions on vehicle proprietors of taxis and private hire vehicles.</li> </ul> <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standardised application forms across Wales</li> <li>To commit to reviewing any Taxi Licensing Policy every 5 years in accordance with the DfT's Statutory Standards.</li> </ul>
1.07	It is proposed that an overarching Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Policy will be drafted, for consideration by the Committee, to incorporate all of the smaller policies and procedures currently in place into one document, and to incorporate the standards set out in the Welsh Government document.
1.08	In the interim, it is requested that members have regard to both of these documents when considering any Taxi or private Hire Licensing matters.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	An overarching Taxi Licensing Policy will need to be drafted, which will have resource implications on the Licensing Team.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	As required.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	No risk implications.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Department for Transport, Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Guide: Best Practice Guide:</p> <p><a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904369/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english-28-07-2020.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904369/statutory-taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-standards-english-28-07-2020.pdf</a></p> <p>Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales:</p> <p><a href="https://gov.wales/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles-licensing-guidance-html">https://gov.wales/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicles-licensing-guidance-html</a></p> <p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Gemma Potter – Team Leader  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703371  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gemma.potter@flintshire.gov.uk">gemma.potter@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Private Hire</b> – a type of licensed vehicle which can only be booked through a licensed Private Hire Operator’s office.</p> <p><b>Taxi / Hackney Carriage</b> – Black Cab style taxi or purpose built vehicles which have distinguishable features and can be hailed from the street.</p>