

PART A

Report to: Licensing Committee
Date of meeting: 11 January 2016
Report of: Head of Community and Customer Services
Title: Update on Working Party convened to determine Hackney carriage/private hire services for disabled and vulnerable passengers

1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 Watford Borough Council is responsible for licensing hackney carriages (taxis) and private hire vehicles and has a general duty to promote equalities. In turn, providers of taxi and private hire vehicle services licensed by the council are under a specific duty to assist passengers with particular disabilities.
- 1.2 At licensing committee on 14 September 2015 it was determined that a working party should be formed to provide recommendations for improvements to services. These recommendations to be brought before the committee in January 2016.

Contact Officer:

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Report approved by: Alan Gough, Head of Community and Customer Services

2.0 INTERIM UPDATE ON WORKING PARTY

- 2.1 A working party was convened on Monday 19th October 2015. Kris Beuret, who led the original project to test taxi services and is Director at Social Research Associates Limited and expert on taxi and private hire accessibility issues, was nominated and appointed as Chair. Also present at this meeting were representatives of Disability Watford, private hire operators, individual hackney carriage drivers, councillors and council officers.
- 2.2 Kris Beuret had prepared a presentation listing a number of common issues faced by drivers, operators and passengers. These included rank provision, enforcement issues, training and general understanding of legal requirements. These issues were discussed openly and many useful suggestions were made as to how and why such issues persist.
- 2.3 The first meeting concluded with an agreement that these comments and suggestions would be composed in to a formal document for consideration at the second working party meeting.
- 2.4 The second meeting of the working party took place on 24th November 2015. Discussion was focussed on a shortlist of ten specific topics identified as key concerns at the first meeting. Suggestions as to how these issues may be resolved were made by attendees and from this a final list of recommendations are being produced.
- 2.5 A third meeting of the working party is scheduled for January 2016. Final recommendations will be confirmed at this meeting and following this, the recommendations of the working party shall be presented to licensing committee on 29th February 2016.
- 2.6 Delay in presentation to the committee by one month has occurred due to a desire to ensure that the working party, and all members of this, have sufficient time to make sound and reasonable recommendations that are informed and would work in Watford.
- 2.7 Overall engagement with the working party has been good and the recommendations with detailed reasoning will be presented by Kris Breuret at the next committee.

Appendices

None

Background Papers

None used

File Reference

Disabilities working party