

PART A

Report to: Licensing Committee
Date of meeting: 15th September 2016
Report of: Head of Community and Customer Services
Title: Update Report on Disability Access Improvements for Taxi and Private Hire Passengers

1.0 Summary

1.1 Watford Borough Council is responsible for licensing hackney carriages (taxis) and private hire vehicles and, as a public sector organisation, has, under the Equality Act 2010, a general duty to promote equalities. Similarly, providers of taxi and private hire vehicle services are under a specific duty to assist passengers with disabilities.

1.2 At Licensing Committee on 19th February 2016 it was determined that a total of 29 recommendations should be implemented to improve passenger access and to assist drivers in making a good provision for disabled travellers.

It was further determined that an update report should be presented to the committee in September 2016.

This is the update report.

1.3 Recommendations of the working party fell in to six distinct categories:
Income and fares
Vehicles
Ranks
Parking
Enforcement
Training

Improvements in each category were further divided in to those which could be implemented quickly and those which required further technical development.
(See Appendix 1 – extract from committee report of 19 February 2016)

- 1.4 This update report seeks Members continued approval to progress the recommendations and asks Members to make any further recommendations or improvements as they see fit.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Licensing Committee note the current progress of the disability access improvement project

Contact Officer:

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

3.0 Detailed proposal

- 3.1 This report is a follow up to the report to committee on 19th February 2016 and gives detailed information on each of the 29 proposed actions.
- 3.2 The action plan formulated following the meeting of February (Appendix 2) gives time scales for the implementation of each recommendation. Members will see that all are on schedule and some have started ahead of schedule. A detailed breakdown of progress is given alongside each recommendation.
- 3.3 Where an action falls in to the category of immediate action, this does not mean immediate completion. Some actions are ongoing and the date for completion is given in the action plan.
- 3.4 All recommendations scheduled for completion by September 2016 have been implemented
- 3.5 Some actions requiring further technical development have been started. This is because the technical hurdles did not present as much of an issue as first thought. An example is the driver awards scheme which has not only been considered but was found to be viable and is now at an advanced stage of planning.
- 3.6 Some actions have resulted in new information concerning accessibility. For

example, the Equalities Impact Assessment Survey undertaken as part of the Tariff Review demonstrated that most respondents found the access at Watford Junction satisfactory or good (Appendix 3)

3.7 A copy of the information booklet available for passengers is attached as Appendix 4. Members will see that the whistle-blowing scheme is also mentioned in this booklet.

3.8 In general progress has been very good. Where delays have been encountered this has usually been when seeking the assistance of outside organisations, some of them large, undoubtedly with their own plans and projects to complete. So far these delays have not significantly hindered any aspect of the project and although they may lead to some re-assessment of timescales, officers remain confident that aims can be achieved.

4.0 Implications

4.1 Financial

4.1.1 There are no direct financial implications from this report. Any changes in policy/process/projects will be subject to a business case/financial implications assessment.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 Some of the recommendations require a change to the current Licensing Conditions.

4.3 Equalities

4.3.1 The purpose of this project is to improve the services for customers with disabilities in the context of our duties under the Equalities Act 2010. The report and appendix outline the consultation and analysis undertaken.

4.4 Potential Risks

4.4.1	Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
	No improvement in standards of service.	2	4	8
	Lack of engagement and co-operation from other services/organisations	4	3	12

Reputational impact from limited improvements in levels of service	2	3	6
Failure to deliver against recommendations in agreed timescales	2	5	10

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Recommendations of Licensing Committee for improvement of services for taxi and private hire passengers

Appendix 2 - Improving Hackney Carriage and Private Hire services in Watford for disabled people.

Appendix 3 – Example of brochure text

Background Papers

None used