

## PART A

**Report to:** Licensing Committee  
**Date of meeting:** 14 January 2021  
**Report of:** Business Compliance Officer  
**Title:** Report on the Taxi and Private Hire Strategy

### 1.0 **Summary**

1.1 This is the second report providing an update on the development of the Council's Taxi and Private Hire Strategy, the current status of the strategy and the proposed next steps. This strategy considers issues wider than those within the remit of the Licensing Committee and so is brought before Members for information and feedback. The final strategy will also be brought before the Committee in the same way prior to approval at Cabinet where Licensing Committee member comments will be noted.

### 2.0 **Risks**

2.1 The risks are being identified as strategy is developed and will be presented with the final report.

### 3.0 **Recommendations**

3.1 That the Committee note the contents of the report.

### 3.2 **Contact Officer:**

3.3 For further information on this report please contact:  
Jamie Mackenzie, Business Compliance Officer

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**Report approved by:** Justine Hoy, Head of Community Protection

#### 4.0 **Taxi and Private Hire Strategy Overview**

4.1 It has become clear decisions the council and others make in relation to a wide range of functions impact on the Taxi and Private Hire trade (the trade) in Watford. At the present time licensing policies and protocols exist that specifically consider the controls to ensure the trade is safe and suitable to operate. Determining these policies is the role of the Licensing Committee.

4.2 The trade is also impacted upon to a greater or lesser extent by decisions made under other strategies and policies, for example decisions made by the council's transport or planning sections. In recognition of the need to have a consistent and clear vision for the trade, and to use this vision to design policies and make decisions that seek to achieve strategic aims, it was decided that a strategy for the trade would be useful. The strategy aims to provide an overarching policy to guide the council when making decisions that are likely to have an impact on the provision of, and access to, taxi and private hire transport services in the borough over the next 10 - 15 years.

4.3 At Licensing Committee on 19 October 2020 the proposed next steps were discussed. The first step was a trade only consultation running between 01 November 2020 and 31 December 2020. This report provides general feedback on the trade consultation.

#### 5.0 **Trade Consultation**

5.1 Because of limitations posed by the pandemic it was not possible to conduct face to face consultations such as meetings and drop-in sessions.

A webinar was arranged and the link to connect was sent to all drivers by text message. Unfortunately there were no attendees on this webinar.

A survey was created on Survey Monkey and the link sent to all drivers on two occasions.

5.2 At the date of writing the report there have been 32 responses. Responses to the proposals are split with a majority overall in support of most of the proposals. There are a few comments giving reasons for disagreeing with the proposals or more generally

stating complaints about the current work situation. These comments have not provided much in the way of alternative suggestions to assist in amending the proposals beyond re-stating the need for hackney carriage rank space which is dealt with in the strategy document.

- 5.3 A specific webpage was created to explain the proposals and give trade members the details of how to submit any feedback. To date only one email has been received from a long standing trade member who said they would not be reading the proposals.
- 5.4 An Example of the questions asked as part of the trade consultation can be found at appendix 1.

## 6.0 **Next Steps**

- 6.1 The strategy is still in draft format. Responses to the trade consultation have been lower than expected and the responses received have not resulted in the need to consider any changes to the proposed strategy at this stage.
- 6.2 The next steps are to arrange full public consultation. The public consultation is scheduled to begin on 15 January 2021 through a series of online webinars and digitally provided information. It is not likely that face-to face meetings or drop-in sessions will be possible. This will be a further period during which the trade can make comment and send feedback and we will continue to provide details to the trade on the various methods of engagement.
- 6.3 The public consultation is scheduled for 10 weeks ending on 31 March 2021. Members are also welcome to use the consultation period to make comments or suggestions concerning the proposed Strategy.

## 7.0 **Implications**

### 7.1 **Financial**

- 7.1.1 The Director of Finance comments that that there are no financial implications identified in this report.

## 7.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

7.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments there are no legal implications in this report.

## 7.3 **Equality Impact Assessment**

7.3.1 A full impact assessment on the outcomes of any review will be undertaken prior to any policy or procedural changes.

## **Appendices**

Trade consultation survey questions for the Taxi and Private Hire Strategy

## **Background Papers**

Taxi and Private Hire Strategy 2021-2035 (Draft)