

# LICENSING COMMITTEE

13/07/21

## SUBJECT AND PURPOSE

**Review the Policies relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers and Operators**

## RECOMMENDATIONS / KEY DECISIONS REQUIRED:

To provide an update to members on two documents that have recently been published that affect Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing.

A further report, with an updated Taxi Policy will be brought before members in due course, prior to consultation with interested parties.

## REASONS:

In order to have a consistency of standards across Wales.

Relevant Scrutiny Committee Consulted	NA
Exec Board Decision Required	NA
Council Decision Required	NA

Executive Board Member Portfolio Holder: Councillor P.M. Hughes

Directorate: Communities  
Name of Head of Service  
Mr Jonathan Morgan

Report Author  
Mr Justin Power

Designation:  
Head of Homes and Safer  
Communities

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Licensing Committee

13/07/21

### **Review the Policies relating to Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators**

**Carmarthenshire's** Licensing Policies and Conditions relating to Hackney Carriage (taxi) and Private Hire Vehicles, Drivers and Operators have been in place for a number of years. With new statutory standards published by the Department for Transport (DfT) along with new recommendations published by the Welsh Government it is proposed that Carmarthenshire Council review its policies and conditions to incorporate these new standards and recommendations.

In July 2020 the Department for Transport (DfT) published Statutory Taxi & 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.

The DfT standards have effect in Wales even though responsibility for taxi and private hire vehicle policy has been devolved to the Welsh Assembly. However, should the Welsh Government introduce legislation to regulate on these matters, the DfT standards would cease to apply.

In March 2021, the Welsh Government published the Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing in Wales. This document follows the 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.

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 in other parts of the Country 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.

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.

#### **Changes to Statement of Taxi Policy**

It is proposed that the Taxi Policies become one large document encompassing all the other supplementary polices and conditions that relate to taxi and private hire licensing. This will hopefully simplify matters for applicants and licensees as all the necessary documents will be available in one place.

The DfT statutory standards and the Welsh Government's Harmonisation of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing recommendations will bring about many changes to our current Policies. In summary, the main changes are as follows:

### **Drivers**

- Requirement for drivers to join the Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) Update Service and have a DBS check every 6 months.
- Adopting the Welsh Government's Driver Code of Conduct.
- Updating the Private Hire Driver Conditions in line with the Welsh Government's Recommendations
- Group 2 Medical Standard
- Adopting the IOL Convictions Policy

### **Vehicles**

- Requirement for vehicle proprietors to have an annual DBS check.
- Overseas criminal record check.
- Adopting the Welsh Government's policy on CCTV and Video Point of Impact Systems (VIPS)/Dash Cams in taxis and private hire vehicles.
- Impose the Welsh Government's recommendations for accessibility conditions on vehicle proprietors of taxis and private hire vehicles.

### **General**

- To commit to reviewing Statement of Taxi Policy every 5 years in accordance with the DfT's Statutory Standards.
- Standardised application forms across Wales

<b>DETAILED REPORT ATTACHED ?</b>	<b>No</b>
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## **IMPLICATIONS**

**I confirm that other than those implications which have been agreed with the appropriate Directors / Heads of Service and are referred to in detail below, there are no other implications associated with this report :**

**Signed: Mr Jonathan Morgan**

**Head of Homes and Safer Communities**

Policy and Crime & Disorder	Legal	Finance	ICT	Risk Management Issues	Organisational Development	Physical Assets
<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>	<b>NONE</b>

## CONSULTATIONS

I confirm that the appropriate consultations have taken in place and the outcomes are as detailed below

Signed: Mr Jonathan Morgan

Head of Homes and Safer Communities

**1. Local Member(s):**

No local member involvement and therefore no consultation necessary.

**2. Community / Town Council:**

No Community / Town Council involvement and therefore no consultation necessary.

**3. Relevant Partners:**

No Police and Fire Authority involvement and therefore no consultation necessary.

**4. Staff Side Representatives and other Organisations:**

There are no other organisations involved and therefore no consultation necessary.

**Section 100D Local Government Act, 1972 – Access to Information  
List of Background Papers used in the preparation of this report:**

**THESE ARE DETAILED BELOW**

Title of Document	File Ref No.	Locations that the papers are available for public inspection
Welsh Government Consultation – Licensing of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles in Wales.		Licensing Section, 3 Spilman Street, Carmarthen