

**LICENSING  
COMMITTEE**

10<sup>th</sup> November 2014

**REQUEST FROM BROMSGROVE TAXI ASSOCIATION FOR CHANGES  
TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICIES**

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Rita Dent
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Steve Jordan – Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services
Wards Affected	All Wards
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Non-Key Decision	

**1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS**

The Chairman of Bromsgrove Taxi Association has submitted a report to officers at Worcestershire Regulatory Services in which a number of changes to the Council's current policies and procedures relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing are proposed.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

**Members are asked to RESOLVE;**

- (i) To note the content of the report from Bromsgrove Taxi Association,**
- (ii) To instruct the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services to organise an open Forum for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Holders to attend discuss the proposals more widely.**

**3. KEY ISSUES**

**Financial Implications**

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report. The costs involved in holding further discussions with the members of the Taxi Association would be met from existing budgets held by Worcestershire Regulatory Services.

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**Legal Implications**

- 3.2 The Council's current policies in relation to the operation of Private Hire Licences and Hackney Carriage Licences are set out in the Taxi Handbook and associated guidance issued by the Council. There are currently no scheduled reviews due to be undertaken in relation to the Council's policies, although officers ensure that the policies are continually kept up to date to reflect any relevant changes in legislation.
- 3.3 At this stage officers are proposing to hold further discussions with the members of the Taxi Association to find out more about their views on what aspects of the policies they would wish to see amended. The process in order for the policies to be reviewed would be for officers to report back to Licensing Committee to seek authority to commence formal consultation. It would then be a decision for the Committee on whether to agree to make changes.
- 3.4 It is worth noting that there are some legislative changes to the rules around Private Hire and Hackney Carriage licensing which will come into effect as part of the Deregulation Bill. The Bill is currently progressing through Parliament and it is not known when it will receive the Royal Assent, although it would be expected before May 2015. As referred to in Appendix 2, there may be some benefit in delaying a review of driver licensing until the Deregulation Bill is approved.

**Service / Operational Implications**

- 3.5 The Chairman of Bromsgrove Taxi Association has submitted a report to officers at Worcestershire Regulatory Services in which a number of changes to the Council's current policies and procedures relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing are proposed. The report submitted can be seen at Appendix 1.
- 3.6 The changes that have been requested have been summarised at Appendix 2. This summary also contains observations and comments from officers in relation to the proposals being put forward.
- 3.7 Members are asked to consider the report submitted by the Chairman of the Bromsgrove Taxi Association and the observations and comments from officers on the proposals being put forward. Officers believe that the next step in the process would be the Head of Worcestershire Regulatory Services to organise an open Forum for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licence Holders to attend and discuss the proposals more widely. Accordingly Members are asked to give authority for officers to proceed with this.

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- 3.8 As referred to at 3.3, the next stage thereafter would be for formal consultation to be carried out. However, rather than proceed with this immediately, officers feel there would be benefit from allowing further discussion to take place with the trade, and would propose bringing back a report outlining the outcome of those discussions to the next meeting of the Licensing Committee. Members can then make a more informed decision about whether to go out to formal consultation.

**4. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 The risks identified by this report relate to the Council either acting too hastily to change policy or choosing to disregard the issues raised by the taxi drivers through Bromsgrove Taxi Association. These risks are being managed by the approach of seeking more information from the trade and considering all the relevant implications, including forthcoming legislative changes, before making a decision on whether formal consultation would be appropriate.

**5. APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 – Report from Bromsgrove Taxi Association  
Appendix 2 – Summary of Proposed Changes and Commentary

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