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# Update Following Discussions at the Taxi and Private Hire West Berkshire Council Liaison Group

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<b>Committee considering report:</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>Date of Committee:</b>	07 November 2022
<b>Portfolio Member:</b>	Councillor Tom Marino
<b>Report Author:</b>	Moira Fraser
<b>Forward Plan Ref:</b>	N/A

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## 1 Purpose of the Report

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with an update and raise any issues emanating from the most recent Liaison Group meetings.

## 2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the report.

## 3 Implications and Impact Assessment

Implication	Commentary
<b>Financial:</b>	There are no specific financial implications arising from this report. Any follow up actions will be met from within existing resources.
<b>Human Resource:</b>	Attendance at these taxi trade meetings and any follow up actions will be met from within existing resources.
<b>Legal:</b>	There are no legal implications associated with these meetings. The trade meetings are not a legal requirement but are seen as good practice and allow a meaningful dialogue with the trade in an attempt to reach agreement on a wide number manner of topics affecting them.

<b>Risk Management:</b>	There are no risk management issues associated with this report. A good working relationship with the trade can assist with minimising reputational harm to the Council.			
<b>Property:</b>	None			
<b>Policy:</b>	The trade meetings are an opportunity to discuss policy issues but it is not a decision making forum. Any policy changes would be taken to the Licensing Committee, Joint Public Protection Partnership Committee or Council in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation.			
	<b>Positive</b>	<b>Neutral</b>	<b>Negative</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Equalities Impact:</b>				
<b>A</b> Are there any aspects of the proposed decision, including how it is delivered or accessed, that could impact on inequality?		✓		The forum is a platform to discuss any policy changes. Equalities Impact Assessments would be undertaken where changes to policies and or procedures were proposed.
<b>B</b> Will the proposed decision have an impact upon the lives of people with protected characteristics, including employees and service users?		✓		The trade meetings are not a decision making forum.
<b>Environmental Impact:</b>		✓		The trade meetings are not a decision making forum.

<b>Health Impact:</b>		✓		The trade meetings are an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest and an opportunity for the trade to raise matters directly with the decision makers. It is therefore hoped that they would have a positive outcome for the wellbeing of members of the trade and ultimately of the residents that use their services.
<b>ICT Impact:</b>		✓		There is no ICT impact albeit that some of the meetings will be conducted via Zoom.
<b>Digital Services Impact:</b>		✓		None
<b>Council Strategy Priorities:</b>	✓			The provision of a viable taxi trade in the district will support a number of the priorities in the Council Strategy. These meetings in particular are associated with supporting businesses to start, develop and thrive in West Berkshire.
<b>Core Business:</b>		✓		Providing support to the taxi trade forms part of the business as usual for the Public Protection Partnership.
<b>Data Impact:</b>		✓		The report does not have a significant impact on the rights of data subjects.
<b>Consultation and Engagement:</b>	All Members of the West Berkshire Taxi Trade are invited to attend these meetings. While only a few have opted to attend the notes from the meetings are circulated to all members of the trade. The meeting is also attended by Members of the Licensing Committee.			

## 4 Supporting Information

### Background

- 4.1 The Taxi and Private Hire West Berkshire Council Liaison Group (TTLG) has been set up to provide a forum to meet with and consider comments from representatives of the taxi trade and seek advice from licensing officers on a range of issues that affect existing and proposed licences, policies, tariffs and fees and other matters of common interest.

- 4.2 The meeting is attended by Members of the Licensing Committee, representatives of the hackney carriage and private hire trade and relevant Officers and is chaired by the Licensing Committee Chairman.
- 4.3 It has been agreed that we will hold two scheduled meetings a year. One in January to discuss, amongst other things, the outcome of the annual fees and charges consultation and to hold initial discussions about any changes to the tariff scheme. Tariff scheme proposed variations would then need to be consulted on and if appropriate implemented during that year.
- 4.4 The second meeting, which will usually be held in October would include a discussion on the fees and charges pertaining to the trade for the forthcoming financial year before the formal consultation process is started. This meeting will also receive any feedback on tariff consultations should one be undertaken. Ad hoc meetings can be arranged to discuss any matters of concern or interest during the year.
- 4.5 Since the July 2022 Licensing Committee meeting a number of meetings have been held with the taxi trade to work through the concerns and comments raised in respect of the draft Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. Those discussions are reflected in a separate report to this Committee.
- 4.6 As described in paragraphs 4.5 above a meeting also took place on the 24 October 2022 to discuss the 2023/24 fees and an update on the 2022 tariff consultation was provided.

### **2023/24 Fees**

- 4.7 Officers presented the fees and charges for 2023/24 that were discussed at the Joint Public Protection Committee on the 05 October 2022 to the trade. The fees and charges are also the subject of a separate paper included on the agenda for this meeting.
- 4.8 The trade made no comments on the fees.
- 4.9 The trade requested that the Licensing Team recirculate information explaining to the trade how they could sign up to the online DBS service which would reduce costs to the trade and the workload of the Licensing Team.

### **Hackney Carriage Tariffs**

- 4.10 The update included as a separate item on this agenda was provided to the trade at the meeting.
- 4.11 The trade noted the outcome of the consultation and the ensuing delegated officer decision to amend the layout of the tariff cards.

### **Licensing Liaison Officers**

- 4.12 The trade were informed that the Licensing Liaison Officer (LLOs) roles had been funded by Covid grant money. This funding had now ceased and as a result it had become necessary to end their contracts. The model had however been successful and officers were looking at ways to restructure the team so that this type of role could be included on the establishment going forward.

4.13 The PPP had also successfully recruited two new apprentices who would be joining the team by mid-November. The apprentices would be working towards the Regulatory Compliance Officer qualifications and as part of their training would be able to undertake some of the lower level inspection work done by the LLOs.

## 5 Conclusion

5.1 The TTLG meetings appear to be a valued opportunity for dialogue between elected Members and the trade. It is therefore proposed that at least two meetings will continue to be arranged every year. The next meeting would take place on the 09 January 2023.

5.2 The January meeting would afford an opportunity to feedback on any comments received in respect of the proposed fees for 2023/24 following the statutory consultation and would afford the opportunity to discuss the current tariffs and if any modifications should be consulted on later in the year.

## 6 Appendices

None

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### Background Papers:

None

### Subject to Call-In:

Yes:  No:

Report is to note only

**Wards affected:** All

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