

**REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER  
LICENSING, FOOD & SAFETY  
TO THE GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE  
8<sup>th</sup> September 2017**

**RESPONSE TO WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION DOCUMENT –  
TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING IN WALES**

**1.0 Purpose of the report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Welsh Government Consultation Document issued on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 seeking views on the framework for licensing taxis and private hire vehicles proposed by the Law Commission for England and Wales; and
- 1.2 For Members to agree the response to the proposals on behalf of the City and County of Swansea.

**2.0 Executive Summary**

- 2.1 In May 2014, the Law Commission for England and Wales published its proposals for the reform of the legislative framework governing the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles in England and Wales. Following commencement of relevant provisions of the Wales Act 2017, licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles will be a matter within the legislative competence of the National Assembly for Wales.
- 2.2 It is under this new devolved settlement that the Welsh Government has again considered the proposals for the framework for licensing taxis and private hire vehicles put forward by the Law Commission, for the purpose of bringing new arrangements into effect in relation to Wales.
- 2.3 The proposed arrangements would:
  - a. See the introduction of national standards for all taxis and private hire vehicles, set by the Welsh Ministers, with the power for local licensing authorities to set additional standards where it is appropriate to do so;
  - b. Local licensing authorities would, however, remain responsible for issuing licences and enforcement for both taxis and private hire vehicles;
  - c. Make it easier for providers of taxis and private hire services to work across local authority boundaries and will give licensing officers new enforcement powers to deal with vehicles and drivers licensed in different areas. Tougher penalties on touting are also proposed (actively soliciting customers), including impounding vehicles;

- d. Bring pedi-cabs and novelty vehicles, including stretch limousines within the scope of taxi and private hire regulation but the exemption applied to wedding and funeral cars as part of primary legislation being retained, and
  - e. Retain the ability of local licensing authorities to limit the number of taxis working in their licensing area.
- 2.4 The Welsh Government considers that the majority of the recommendations put forward by the Law Commission would, if introduced, clarify and simplify the legislation governing the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles.
- 2.5 On this basis Welsh Government are supportive in principle of the majority of the proposals in relation to taxi and private hire vehicle regulation in Wales.
- 2.6 There are however, some recommendations that in the Welsh Government's opinion require further detailed consideration. The purpose of the policy consultation is to seek views on these specific recommendations.

### **3.0 The Consultation**

- 3.1 This public consultation was launched by the Welsh Government on 12<sup>th</sup> June 2017 and closes on 8<sup>th</sup> September 2017. Stakeholders were also advised directly of the detail of the consultation. The full document is attached at Appendix A to this report.
- 3.2 Welsh Government has asked 11 questions in relation to specific recommendations. These questions can be found throughout the document and again on pages 26 to 31 of the consultation document.

### **4.0 Response for Consideration**

- 4.1 Officers have drafted a response to the questions in the consultation document and this is attached at Appendix B to this report for Members' consideration and approval.

**5.0 Recommendation**

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members approve the response attached in Appendix B for submission to Welsh Government for consideration.

**The Licensing Committee's instructions are requested.**

<b>Background Papers:</b>	<b>None</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Yvonne Lewis</b>
<b>Extension:</b>	<b>5600</b>
<b>Legal Contact:</b>	<b>Aled Gruffydd</b>