



**Report of the Service Manager
General Licensing Committee - 9 June 2023**

For Information Only

Taxi and Private Hire (Wales) Bill: White Paper Consultation Response

1.0 Background

- 1.1 On 9th March 2023, Welsh Government published a White Paper, outlining proposals for new Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle legislation in Wales. Welsh Government set out their vision “*..for a taxi and private hire licensing system that is fit for a modern Wales, promotes safety for passengers and drivers, contributes to a cleaner environment, improves the customer experience and is accessible for by all.*”
- 1.2 They stated that the Consultation sets out proposals for legislation to modernise the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle sector and to address the problems of cross bordering. All consultation responses were required to be submitted by 1st June 2023.

2.0 Summary of proposals

- 2.1 The white paper focuses on the legislative requirements that Welsh Government feel are needed to address immediate concerns, with the core proposals for reform outlined as:
 - The introduction of mandatory national minimum standards for drivers, vehicles and operators applied across Wales;
 - Improved enforcement powers for local authorities. This will include provision for local authorities to take enforcement action against any driver or vehicle wherever they are licensed;
 - Better information sharing between local authorities and better information for passengers; and

- Retention of the current two-tier licensing system of Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles but to ensure the clear and visible distinction between the vehicles so that they are instantly recognisable to the public.

3.0 Consultation

3.1 The Consultation document consisted of 22 questions and a Regulatory Impact Assessment. Links to both documents can be found via the following link:

<https://www.gov.wales/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-wales-bill-white-paper>

3.2 Swansea Licensing Officers, as part of the All-Wales Licensing Expert Panel, worked together to produce a consultation response on behalf of the Directors of Public Protection Wales. A specific response was also prepared for Swansea Council.

3.3 The consultation response on behalf of Swansea Council was agreed by the Director of Place and the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services & Performance and submitted by the deadline of 1st June 2023. The Swansea Council response submitted is attached at **Appendix A** of the report.

3.4 Members will note from the submission that there were some proposals which were of particular concern to Swansea Council. Firstly, in relation to proposed changes to licensing administration arrangements, which can be found on page 3 of the document. and secondly the need to raise awareness of the 'restricted licensing' regime specific to Swansea, which can be found on page 19. Both issues would have a detrimental effect, not only on the Licensing Authority and the local trade but also on public safety if some of the changes proposed were introduced. Several other proposed changes are supported as they will help to modernise the industry, to the benefit of the public.

3.5 Members will also note on page 18 that any changes that would result in standardising fees across Wales is not supported as this would have a detrimental effect on the way the service could be administered and enforced locally.

4.0 Next Steps

4.1 Following the end of the consultation period, Welsh Government Officers will consider all responses received but currently there has been no indication of when the new, draft legislation will be published.

The report is submitted to the General Licensing Committee for information only.

Background Papers: Consultation document & RIA
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