

# LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

## Taxi Forum 13<sup>th</sup> November 2014

### Report of the Chief Officer (Governance)

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable the Committee to consider the future of the Taxi Forum and its possible replacement by a regular “surgery” to be held by the Chairman of the Committee, supported by officers as appropriate.

**This report is public**

#### RECOMMENDATION

- (1) **That the Taxi Forum be disestablished, and that regular “surgeries” be arranged where the Chairman, supported by officers, as appropriate, is available to meet with individual members of the trade to discuss any issues of concern.**

#### 1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Since 2000, it has been the practice to hold Taxi Forum meetings to enable members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee (formerly the Licensing Committee) to consult with hackney carriage and private hire vehicle proprietors on various issues affecting vehicles and drivers that are within the terms of reference of the Committee.
- 1.2 Prior to January 2009, the meetings were six monthly, and separate forum meetings were held with hackney carriage proprietors and private hire proprietors. In January 2009, the Committee reviewed the arrangements for the Forum meetings, and, in view of low attendances, resolved that the separate Forums be amalgamated into one Forum for hackney carriage and private hire proprietors, and that the Forum meet annually in April.
- 1.3 The arrangements were further reviewed in February 2012, when the meetings reverted to six monthly. In July 2013 the Committee resolved that the Forum should meet quarterly. However, the meetings in February and May 2014 were cancelled for lack of business.
- 1.4 Generally, attendance at the Forum meetings has not been representative of the trade as a whole, and the same issues tend to be raised again and again, and often relate to individual cases which are not appropriate for discussion in a Forum. Members of the Committee have tended to say very little, even though the reason for having the Forum is to enable an exchange of views between the trade and elected members of the Committee.

## **2.0 Proposal Details**

- 2.1 Following discussions with the Chairman, it has been suggested that a more effective mechanism for consultation with the trade would be to hold regular “surgery” type sessions throughout the district, where the Chairman would be available, supported by the appropriate officers, to meet with any individual member of the trade who wished to raise a particular issue within the terms of reference of the Committee.
- 2.2 It is felt that such an arrangement would facilitate more meaningful consultation and discussion, and would assist some members of the trade who may be more comfortable raising issues on a one to one basis than speaking in a larger forum meeting.
- 2.3 Where appropriate, any significant issue raised at a “surgery” could be the subject of a report to the Committee, and again, if appropriate, could be the subject of full written consultation with all proprietors.
- 2.4 If the Committee approves the proposal, the arrangements could be reviewed following the 2015 election.

## **3.0 Details of Consultation**

- 3.1 The proposal was first raised with the Chairman, and it is considered that it provides a suitable mechanism for meaningful discussion between the Chairman as the representative of the Committee, and members of the trade.

## **4.0 Options and Options Analysis (including risk assessment)**

- 4.1 The options open to the Committee are to introduce the proposed “surgery” type arrangement to replace the Taxi Forum, to develop some other form of mechanism for consultation between members of the Committee and the trade, or to retain the Taxi Forum. A further review could be carried out in June 2015.

## **5.0 Conclusion**

- 5.1 The views of the Committee are sought.

<b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> <b>(including Health &amp; Safety, Equality &amp; Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</b>
---

None directly arising from this report.

<b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
---------------------------

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

<b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>
-------------------------------

If a new “surgery” type arrangement were introduced to replace the Taxi Forum, there would be no significant change to the officer and member resources required.

**OTHER RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS****Human Resources:**

None

**Information Services:**

None

**Property:**

None

**Open Spaces:**

None

**SECTION 151 OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The Section 151 Officer has been consulted and has no further comments.

**MONITORING OFFICER'S COMMENTS**

The report has been prepared by the Monitoring Officer in her capacity as Chief Officer (Governance)

**BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None

**Contact Officer:** Mrs S Taylor**Telephone:** 01524 582025**E-mail:** STaylor@lancaster.gov.uk**Ref:**