



REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE ON 10 OCTOBER 2018

SUBJECT: TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

BY: CORPORATE DIRECTOR (CORPORATE SERVICES)

1. REASON FOR REPORT

- 1.1 To present the draft Taxi and Private Hire Communications Strategy for the Committee's approval.
- 1.2. This report is submitted to the Committee in terms of Section III H (1) of the Council's Scheme of Administration relating to the exercise of the function of the Council as Licensing Authority for The Moray Council area.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 **It is recommended that the Committee approve the Taxi and Private Hire Communications Strategy attached at APPENDIX 1.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 At its meeting on 21 September 2016, the Committee instructed a review of taxi communications and requested a report be submitted to their next meeting (para. 8 of the minute refers).
- 3.2 At its meeting on 16 November 2016, the Committee reviewed current communications and instructed consultation with stakeholders, development of a draft Taxi Communications Strategy and a report back to Committee on this. During discussions the Committee also agreed that it might be possible to hold meetings with taxi drivers with a view to encouraging better communications. The feeling of the Committee was that one meeting should be held in Elgin with another being held on a circuit basis. (Para. 8 of the minute refers).
- 3.3 At its meeting on 15 August 2018, the Committee agreed the draft Taxi Communications Strategy and instructed the Head of Legal and Democratic services to undertake further consultation as set out in section 3.13 of the report submitted to that meeting and that a further report be presented to the next meeting of the Committee (para. 5 of the draft minute refers).

- 3.4 Following the above Committee, the draft Strategy was issued by email/letter to Community Councils and Local Area Forums; by contact by the Equalities Officer with Equality groups; by email/letter to the trade with the opportunity being taken by the Licensing Standards Officer to raise this and seek feedback when out and about; postings on the Council's website and social media pages and TellmeScotland portal.
- 3.5 One response was received to the consultation from an operator/driver who read the document and thought that it seemed fine, advised that they would check things through the government website and email but liked the idea of face to face meetings in a hall so they could meet other drivers and operators and get a chance to hear their views.
- 3.6 A second response was received from Elgin Community Council who considered the draft and had no suggested amendments to make. They welcome the fact that a formal strategy will be in place and will keep an eye on how it works in the years ahead.
- 3.7 The Committee is now asked to approve the Strategy attached at **APPENDIX 1**.

4. SUMMARY OF IMPLICATIONS

(a) Corporate Plan and 10 Year Plan (Local Outcomes Improvement Plan (LOIP))

Regulating taxi vehicles and taxi drivers through the licensing system contributes to a safer community by ensuring they provide safe services for the public. Taxis are a valuable part of a growing and diverse economy. They provide employment opportunities and support the tourism and night economies. Taxis also promote health and independence by providing mobility for the whole community and access to resources.

(b) Policy and Legal

As detailed within the report to Committee on 15 August 2018, the Strategy has been informed by: the Council's Community Engagement Scheme 2012 -16 and Strategy; Scottish Government Guidance "Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing Best Practice for Licensing Authorities", Second Edition April 2012; and the Scottish Regulators' Strategic Code of Practice (Feb. 2015).

(c) Financial implications

There may be costs involved in implementing the Communications Strategy. These are not likely to be great and it is anticipated that they would be able to be met from current budgets.

(d) Risk Implications

Without a clear and consistent approach to communications there is a risk that the Council does not engage appropriately with stakeholders.

(e) Staffing Implications

It will take staff time to communicate and engage with stakeholders on an ongoing basis. It is anticipated that at current resource levels, implementation of the strategy can be met from existing resources. Licensing officers will also liaise with the Council's Corporate Communications section to draw upon available expertise and resources as required.

(f) Property

There are no anticipated property implications arising from this report.

(g) Equalities/Socio Economic Impact

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached at **APPENDIX 2**.

The strategy recognises the need to identify and overcome the barriers to communication and engagement for all stakeholders.

(h) Consultations

Consultation on this report has taken place with the Equal Opportunities Officer and Tracey Sutherland, Committee Services Officer and comments received have been incorporated.

7. CONCLUSION

7.1 There is a need to improve communications with all stakeholders and the strategy sets out an approach to this going forward.

Author of Report:	Margaret Forrest, Legal Services Manager (Litigation & Licensing)
Background Papers:	Council's Community Engagement Scheme 2012 -16 (http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file85646.pdf) and Strategy (http://www.moray.gov.uk/downloads/file85645.pdf) Report by Napier University for Scottish Government in relation to Taxi and Private Hire Car Market and Local Licensing Regimes across Scotland, April 2013: http://www.gov.scot/resource/0041/00419531.pdf Scottish Government Guidance "Taxi and Private Hire Car Licensing Best Practice for Licensing Authorities", Second Edition April 2012: http://www.gov.scot/resource/0039/00391287.pdf Scottish Development Department Circular 25/1986 Information for Local Licensing Authorities on the Licensing of Taxi and Private Hire Cars and their Drivers (http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2012/04/2261/1) Scottish Regulators' Strategic Code of Practice (Feb. 2015)

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