

Licensing Committee

8 February 2017

Report title	Request to Establish a Private Hire Drivers Focus Group	
Wards affected	All	
Accountable director	Kevin O'Keefe, Governance	
Originating service	Licensing Services	
Accountable employee(s)	Elaine Moreton	Section Leader - Governance
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Report to be/has been considered by	Private Hire Working Group 24 November 2016	

Recommendations:

The Committee is asked to:

1. Approve the establishment of a Private Hire Drivers Association Focus Group.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The Licensing Committee is asked to consider the establishment of a Private Hire Drivers Association Focus Group.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Wolverhampton Private Hire Drivers Association (WPHDA) is a recognised group representing private hire drivers. WPHDA are a member of the Private Hire Working Group and have attended most of the working group meetings since their inception. They have raised several issues with the Licensing Authority and have contributed to trade consultations at working group meetings.
- 2.2 In November of last year WPHDA held a protest drive on the ring road. Prior to the protest Licensing Services had offered to discuss the association's most recent concerns through the Private Hire Working Group. WPHDA stated they were unwilling to meet through the established working group as they did not wish to discuss their issues in the working group format, which includes operators as active members of the group.
- 2.3 Following consultation with the Chair, the Cabinet Member with responsibility for oversight of taxi licensing and officers from Licensing Services, it was not felt appropriate to bypass the well-established existing agreed arrangements and jeopardise the excellent relationships that have been fostered with the trade over several years simply because WPHDA had threatened to carry out a protest.
- 2.4 WPHDA held the protest and their request for a standalone focus group was considered at the Private Hire Working Group on 24 November 2016. There was no consensus at the working group. The majority of operators present were reluctant to agree to establishing a group solely for WPHDA, even if this were only for a short series of meetings. A minority of operators were comfortable with the establishment of such a group, provided the meetings were open for operators to attend and observe.

3.0 Proposal

- 3.1 In the absence of any consensus from the Private Hire Working Group officers from Licensing Services propose that the Licensing Committee approve the establishment of a Private Hire Drivers Association Focus Group, subject to the following conditions:
 - Any agreed issues between WHPDA and the representative of the Licensing Authority from the group will be reported back to the Private Hire Working Group for consultation before any formal consultation and/or being presented to the Licensing Committee.
 - The group will be established on a task and finish basis with a series of meetings and a timetable agreed in advance.
 - The meetings will not include private hire operators as active participants; however, they will be permitted to attend meetings to observe.

- The scope of the issues the group will consider will be those previously detailed in correspondence to the Licensing Authority.

3.2 Proposed membership of the group and a delivery schedule is attached at Appendix A to this report.

4.0 Financial implications

4.1 There are no financial implications associated with the recommendation in this report. [GE/27012017/L]

5.0 Legal implications

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. [SH/13012017/X]

6.0 Equalities implications

6.1 There are no equalities implications to this function

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications to this function.

8.0 Human resources implications

8.1 There are no Human resources implications to this function.

9.0 Corporate landlord implications

9.1 There are no landlord implications to this function.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 Not applicable

PRIVATE HIRE DRIVERS ASSOCIATION FOCUS GROUP

Group Membership

Core Members:

Cabinet Member for City Environment
Head of Governance
Licensing Manager
Section Leader, Licensing
WPHDA Chair
WPHDA Vice Chair
Training Lead (Worcestershire Count Council)

Observers:

Chair of the Licensing Committee
Vice Chair of the Licensing Committee
Private Hire Operators

Clerk:

M. Hooper (Democratic Services)

Delivery Schedule

Private Hire Working Group – 7th March 2017

To report Licensing Committee decision to the group and agree meeting dates.

Private Hire Drivers Focus Group meetings (x3) – TBC

- Agree issues in scope (suggested first meeting)
- WPHDA representations (suggested second meeting)
- Licensing Services response (suggested third meeting)

Private Hire Working Group – TBC

To report Focus Group outcomes to the group.

Licensing Committee – TBC

Present agreed recommendations to Licensing Committee*.

*subject to requirements for consultation