

Subject:	Reforming the law of taxi and private hire services	Status:	For Publication
Report to:	Licensing Committee	Date:	Thursday 12 th July 2012
Report of:	Director of Business	Portfolio Holder:	Customers, Legal and Licensing
Key Decision:	<input type="checkbox"/> Forward Plan <input type="checkbox"/>	General Exception	<input type="checkbox"/> Special Urgency <input type="checkbox"/>
Community Impact Assessment:	Required:	No	Attached: No
Biodiversity Impact Assessment	Required:	No	Attached: No
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1.	RECOMMENDATION(S)
1.1	That Members note the content of the report.

2. PURPOSE OF REPORT

2.1 To inform members that the Law Commission launched its consultation on the draft proposals for reforming taxi and private hire licensing laws on 10th May 2012.

3. CORPORATE PRIORITIES

3.1 The matters discussed in this report impact directly on the following corporate priorities:

- **A clean and green Rossendale** – creating a better environment for all.
- **A healthy and successful Rossendale** – supporting vibrant communities and a strong economy.
- **Responsive and value for money local services** – responding to and meeting the different needs of customers and improving the cost effectiveness of services.

4. RISK ASSESSMENT IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no specific risk issues for members to consider arising from this report.

5. BACKGROUND AND OPTIONS

5.1 In July 2011, the Law Commission agreed to undertake a law reform project on the law of taxis and private hire vehicles at the request of the Department for Transport.

5.2 The Law Commission has now launched its consultation on their draft proposals for reforming taxi and private hire licensing laws. The public consultation seeks views on the proposed changes to the way in which taxis and private hire vehicles (often referred to as minicabs) are regulated. Some of the main points include:

- Clearer rules governing taxis and private hire vehicles
- Charity volunteers and childminders could stay out of it
- The distinction between taxis and private hire vehicles would remain
- All vehicles would be subject to national minimum safety standards
- Once licensed, a private hire firm could work freely across the country, without geographical or licensing restrictions contributing to widening consumer choice, making services cheaper and more competitive
- Proposals will have a minimal affect the iconic London “black cab”

- Taxi numbers may no longer be restricted by local authorities
- Private hire operators would be able to take bookings outside their own local area
- Licensing could be extended to limousines, motorcycle “taxis” and bicycle rickshaws (or “pedicabs”)
- It is proposed that all new taxi and private hire drivers should have disability awareness training
- There is a possibility of a specific licence for accessible vehicles
- And where drivers or operators do break the rules, the consultation suggests that improved enforcement powers should be available, including impounding vehicles.

5.3 The consultation is open until 10 September 2012. The Commission’s provisional proposals and consultation questions are outlined in the paper, “Reforming the law of taxi and private hire services”, which is available on the Commission’s website, <http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/1804.htm>

COMMENTS FROM STATUTORY OFFICERS:

6. SECTION 151 OFFICER

6.1 There are no specific financial implications

7. MONITORING OFFICER

7.1 The Council must make a decision based on all relevant information and following consideration of all relevant Council policies.

8. HEAD OF PEOPLE AND POLICY (ON BEHALF OF THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE)

8.1 There are no specific human resources implications.

9. CONSULTATION CARRIED OUT

9.1 None

10. CONCLUSION

10.1 Members are requested to note the content of the report

Background Papers	
Document	Place of Inspection
Reforming the law of taxi and private hire services	http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/1804.htm