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| MEETING | GAMBLING, LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE |
| DATE | 25 JULY 2012 |
| PRESENT | COUNCILLORS BOYCE (CHAIR), DOUGHTY, GILLIES (VICE-CHAIR), GUNNELL, KING, MCILVEEN, REID, SEMLYEN, TAYLOR AND WATT |
| APOLOGIES | COUNCILLORS HORTON, LOOKER AND ORRELL |

1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point in the meeting, Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the last meeting held on 25 April 2012 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Councils Public Participation Scheme.

4. **LAW COMMISSION CONSULTATION - REFORMING THE LAW OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE SERVICES.**

Members considered a report which advised them on a recent consultation from the Law Commission regarding proposals to reform the law relating to taxi and private hire services.

Officers provided an update and advised the Committee that although the Private Hire and Hackney Associations had been informed about the consultation, there had been no feedback received on the report. The Private Hire Association had

indicated they would be responding to the consultation via their national associations.

Members had the following comments:

Question 5 – Members queried if the proposal to only include vehicles that seat 8 passengers or fewer in the definition of taxi and private hire vehicles would exclude mini-bus taxis. Members asked that their request that mini-bus taxis are not excluded be added to the consultation.

Question 11 – Some Members commented that it seemed overly onerous to put funeral and wedding car drivers through the same checks as taxi drivers, but it would be sensible to have ‘operators licences’ to ensure that the vehicles being used are fit for purpose. Other Members disagreed and felt that these drivers should be subject to appropriate checks as they are carrying members of the public the same as taxi drivers.

Question 23 – Members agreed with the Officers response that only Hackney Vehicles should be able to use the words ‘taxi’ if the two tier system is retained.

Question 25 – Members commented that the definition of ‘fit and proper person’ was vague in the consultation document and that some local authority areas may have lower standards than others. Members did not want to see authorities such as York, with higher standards being brought down.

Question 34 – Members agreed that local authorities should retain the ability to set their own standards.

Question 54 – On the issue of restriction of taxi numbers, some Members felt that some de-restriction would be useful, however on the whole members agreed that restriction was a good idea in light of high vehicle emissions and the unmet demand survey which indicates there is no unmet demand in York. Members also raised concerns about the practice of hackney plates changing hands for large sums of money and while they did not agree with de-restriction, they would welcome some intervention to prevent high plate rental prices.

Question 57 – Some Members felt that there should be no restrictions on the issuing of licences to wheelchair accessible vehicles. Officers pointed out that whilst de-regulation isn’t a

good idea for York, it is up to individual authorities to decide how restrictions are managed.

Question 69 – Members asked why officers had given a definitive no to cross-border enforcement powers. Members felt that there could be some benefits to working with other authorities.

RESOLVED: That Members approved the consultation response with the amendments/additions outlined above.

REASON: To enable Officers to respond to the Law Commission Consultation on Reforming the Law of Taxi and Private Hire Services.

Councillor Boyce, Chair
[The meeting started at 4.00 pm and finished at 5.30 pm].