

Report to: **COUNCIL**

Date: 23 July 2019

Executive Member/Reporting Officer: Councillor Allison Gwynne – Executive Member (Neighbourhoods, Community Safety and Environment)
Ian Saxon – Director (Operations & Neighbourhoods)

Subject: **REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONSULT ON PROPOSED GREATER MANCHESTER COMMON MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR THE TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE TRADE**

Report Summary: Council is asked to approve a period of consultation in respect of proposed common minimum standards for the Taxi and Private Hire trade across Greater Manchester.

Recommendations: Council is asked to recommend a period of public consultation.

Corporate Plan: This report corresponds to the 'Living Well' strand of the Corporate Plan, by supporting the development of modern infrastructure and a sustainable environment that works for all generations and future generations. It will aid improvements in air quality.

Policy Implications: Any changes to Licensing policies will be subject to full consultation and Council approval.

Financial Implications: (Authorised by the statutory Section 151 Officer & Chief Finance Officer) There are no direct financial implications.

Legal Implications: (Authorised by the Borough Solicitor) Setting and changing the conditions of taxi licensing is a function of the Council and not the Executive. Speakers Panel enforce and uphold any policy framework set by Council. The Council has powers and duties under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to license Taxi and Private Hire drivers, vehicles and operators. There is an absolute duty to consult on any changes given the implications for individual's livelihoods. All the legal requirements as to consultation must be followed.

Risk Management: Failure to review policies and procedures exposes the Council to risk of challenge through the courts and Local Government Ombudsman with potential financial and reputational consequences.

Access to Information:	APPENDIX A	A draft copy of the proposals
	APPENDIX B	Benchmarking of GM authorities as to whether already meeting proposed minimum standards

Background papers relating to this report can be inspected by contacting:

Sharon Smith, Head of Public Protection
Telephone - 0161 342 2277

E-mail sharon.smith@tameside.gov.uk

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report outlines a set of draft proposed common minimum standards to be implemented across Greater Manchester (GM) and asks for permission to start a period of consultation. There are many challenges that both the trade and licensing authorities are facing with the current regulations and inconsistent standards across GM. We want to achieve a trade that is fit for purpose for the 21st Century and contributes to our vision for an improved integrated transport system for GM.
- 1.2 The key drivers for this review are around public safety, out-of-area operation, vehicle standards, congestion and poor air quality. The proposed approach looks to encourage consistently high standards for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire services in (GM), and to encourage Government to pursue regulatory reform to ensure high safety standards.
- 1.3 We all want to see taxi and private hire services in GM that consistently deliver safe and high quality services for the public. By establishing GM wide minimum standards in taxi and private hire licensing, we can ensure a consistent approach for all residents and visitors in Greater Manchester.
- 1.4 Over the past 18 months, GM's licensing authorities, supported by Transport for Greater Manchester (TFGM), have been working together to collectively; develop and agree a common set of minimum standards for licensing the Taxi and Private Hire trade.
- 1.5 The next step is for TfGM to host a consultation, on behalf of all GM Licensing Authorities, on the proposed minimum standards, as further detailed in this report below.

2. PROPOSED COMMON MINIMUM STANDARDS

- 2.1 Significant progress has been made by the GM Licensing Managers Group in developing common minimum standards which define the expectations for drivers, vehicles and operators across the whole of Greater Manchester. A draft copy of the proposals are attached at **Appendix A**.
- 2.2 These standards will ensure that all GM authorities apply rigorous tests & checks to those engaged in the taxi trade, ensuring that the travelling public across GM are suitably protected, and that GM puts itself in a strong position to lobby for legislative change.
- 2.3 The proposed minimum standards relate to the four key areas identified by the GM Licensing Managers Group; Drivers, Vehicles, Operators and Local Authority Standards, and aim to raise standards across GM with a view to a more consistent approach to taxi licensing across the region.
- 2.4 Tameside Council already meets or exceeds many of the agreed minimum standards. A spreadsheet which benchmarks each of the GM authorities is shown at **Appendix B**.

3. TIMETABLE

- 3.1 A briefing took place with Andy Burnham, Mayor of Greater Manchester, Executive members and Chairs of Licensing Committees across GM on Monday 3 June 2019.
- 3.2 The proposed further timetable is detailed below:

17 June 2019	Briefing to all elected members
24 June 2019	Advanced trade briefings of the proposals

Summer/Autumn 2019	Formal consultation commences
January 2020	Reports taken through governance for decision
April 2020	Implementation commences

3.3 TfGM will host the consultation on behalf of all GM Licensing Authorities.

4. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 As set out on the front of the report.