

TAXI ADVISORY FORUM

12 APRIL 2017

REVIEW OF TAXI POLICY & LEGISLATION

Report by Head of Vehicle Policy Branch

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to advise the Forum of a range of issues relating to the ongoing review of Taxi Policy & Legislation, including the formation of a Taxi Drivers' Subgroup and prompt discussion around the various elements of the review.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The previous Minister commenced a fundamental review of taxi policy and legislation. The Terms of Reference was considered at the previous meeting of the Forum on 19 October 2016. The work presently being undertaken continues the previous Minister's policy intentions but will, of course, be subject to the views and priorities of an incoming Minister.
- 2.2. A report on guiding principles, which will help steer this review, is also to be considered at this (12 April 2017) meeting of the Forum.

3. REVIEW DISCUSSION DOCUMENT – KEY THEMES

- 3.1. Consideration has been given to the scope of the review to ensure that all elements are well defined and that decisions are made on whether any elements should be deemed out of scope.
- 3.2. Subject to the views of a future Minister, the following areas are being considered as part of the review. The list includes key headings in each area and stakeholders specific to each theme¹.

Theme	Key Headings	Stakeholders
Scope of Act (i.e. what operations should be included and what should not be included)	Courtesy Vehicles Wedding and Funeral Cars Tuk Tuk and Trikes	Wedding and funeral operators Courtesy Transport Sector Tour Operators

¹ The stakeholder column will be in addition to general key stakeholders, ie consumers, taxi drivers / operators, departmental officials etc whose views will be pertinent for all themes.

Taxi Operator Licensing	Scope Record Keeping Fees Licensing Conditions Complaints	PSNI, Department of Health & Education.
Taxi Vehicle Licensing	Vehicle classifications including the use of Class C type taxis Roof signs/plating Age limits Air Quality Fees	Tourism sector
Taxi Driver Licensing	Taxi Practical & Theory Tests Periodic Training Fit and Proper Person test Fees	Approved training providers Joint Approval Unit for Periodic Training (JAUPT)
Accessibility	Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Taxis User experiences	Vehicle Convertors Disability Groups Users with Disabilities
Cross Border Taxiing	Operations in either jurisdiction – extent of permitted operations. Tour services.	Border Taxi Operators, Irish Authorities. Tour Operators.
Fares and Taximeters	Taximeter requirement Printer & receipt requirements Maximum Fare structure Credit card and contactless availability	Taximeter manufacturers and fitters
Compliance & Enforcement	Applicable across the policy streams.	DVA
Impact of Modern Technology	Future & impact of app-based services Ridesharing	DVA

3.3. Subject to the views of a future Minister, the following areas are not being considered as part of the review:

- The physical vehicle requirements of a Wheelchair Accessible Taxi – as these have been considered in detail as part of the 2015 regulations²;

² This does not rule out the Department, as part of its normal business, reviewing issues of concern for either the industry or travelling public.

- Devolving responsibility to local Councils; and
- Driverless Vehicles - given this is unlikely to be a major issue in Northern Ireland for the foreseeable future.

3.4. The key themes outlined above are being reviewed and developed to feature in a Discussion Document which will be issued for public consultation to help provide a basis for future policy proposals. Officials are currently undertaking research in other jurisdictions to include as case studies to help the reader compare regulatory regimes.

3.5. ACTION: Views are sought regarding, the areas that are listed in scope, whether there should be more, and on those areas that are listed as out of scope.

4. TAXI FORUM SUBGROUPS

4.1. To help inform the Discussion Document it is intended that the following subgroups will be formed:

- Operator Licensing;
- Driver Licensing;
- Vehicle Licensing, Taximetry & Impact of Modern Technology;
- Accessibility; and
- Tourism & Hospitality.

4.2. It is also intended to hold more interest group specific meetings around the following issues, and others that may arise:

- Scope of Taxi Regulation; and
- Cross Border Taxiing.

4.3. It is intended that these discussion groups will start to meet towards the end of April / beginning of May 2017.

4.4. ACTION: Views are sought regarding the above subgroups and seeking volunteers to participate.

5. TAXI DRIVERS SUBGROUP

5.1. The Department and members of the Forum agreed that there needed to be better and specific input from taxi drivers. Indeed the issue was also raised by the DFI Committee who wanted to see the views of taxi drivers better represented in the policy development process.

5.2. Since the last meeting 15 taxi drivers have been nominated and included on a new Taxi Drivers' Subgroup. The list of names is outlined in [Annex A](#).

5.3. The majority of drivers have been contacted to discuss logistical arrangements with the intention of meeting after the Easter break.

5.4. The drivers were also asked what issues were causing them concern and the following issues were raised:

- Access to bus lanes – both that they felt the current trial announced by the Departments former Minister should be extended and that Class C should be allowed access;
- Taxi Driver periodic training – concerns about the value of the content and that the training was ill suited for the wedding car industry;
- Low Fares - The taxi fare in Derry is too low and drivers can't make a living;
- High entry costs - high cost burden to become a taxi driver keeps unemployed people from accessing the job; and
- Communications - Local councils seeking contracts being unaware of the new maximum fare arrangements.

5.5. Membership of the subgroup will remain under review.

5.6. ACTION: Views are sought regarding the proposed drivers' subgroup.

6. OUTLINE TIMETABLE

6.1. An outlined timetable of the key elements of the review is outlined below. These are subject to the views and decisions of a future Minister.

- By 1 November 2016, establish a Taxi Advisory Forum, and related terms of reference, that will help inform the work of the Department during the review and in relation to the decision making thereafter;
- By 1 July 2017, to issue a Review of Taxi Policy & Legislation - Discussion Paper to stakeholders and the general public (for 2 months) which will help inform future policy development in all in scope areas;
- By 1 October 2017, to collate and present a summary of responses to a Minister for initial consideration;
- By 1 December 2017, to issue Proposals for Public Consultation (for 2 months); and
- By 1 March 2018, to collate and present a summary of responses and options to the Minister for consideration.

ALEX BOYLE

Head of Vehicle Policy Branch

5 April 2017

MEMBERS OF THE TAXI DRIVERS' SUBGROUP

Name	Class	Area
Richard Kehoe	A	Derry / Londonderry
Martin Newton	A	Derry / Londonderry
Warren Starrett	A	Greater Belfast
Colin Weir	A	Greater Belfast
James Largey	C	Greater Belfast
Richard Forbes	C	Greater Belfast
Terry Page	B	Derry / Londonderry
Noel Maguire	A	Magherafelt
Damien Dunleavy	A	Derry / Londonderry
David Palmer	C	Greater Belfast
Peter McCracken	C	Greater Belfast
Eddie Fay	D	Greater Belfast
Sean Carmichael	D	Greater Belfast
Gerry Diver	B	Greater Belfast
Graham Fisher	B	Greater Belfast