

TAXI ADVISORY FORUM

12 APRIL 2017

REVIEW OF DRAFT GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Report by Head of Vehicle Policy Branch

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide the Forum with an opportunity to consider the draft guiding principles the Department intends to adopt to inform the current review of taxi policy and legislation.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. The taxi industry in Northern Ireland has changed considerably in recent years. This fundamental review of taxi policy and legislation provides the opportunity to consider and review why and to what extent government intervention in the taxi industry is required and consider how it may enhance the industry, enabling it to provide a safe and fit for purpose service to consumers.
- 2.2. With much greater uptake and use of mobile devices impacting on the way in which consumers want to engage and travel in taxis, the review must be mindful of their changing requirements.
- 2.3. Until significant engagement with the industry and travelling public has been undertaken, it is not possible to finalise our policy objectives as we do not want to predetermine any outcomes. Nevertheless, starting to think about potential guiding principles and objectives is helpful at this stage and these can, of course, be amended as the review proceeds.
- 2.4. The Department also wants to ensure that the Taxi Review takes account of the forthcoming draft Programme for Government objectives, subject to its adoption by the NI Executive.

3. DETAIL

- 3.1. The Department for Infrastructure has lead responsibility for three PfG Performance Indicators, two of which relate to travel:
 - Average journey time on key economic corridors; and
 - % all journeys which are made by walking/cycling/public transport.

3.2. The Department clearly has responsibilities beyond these targets. Having more people working in better jobs and having a strong, competitive and regionally balanced economy are two of the draft PfG's main outcomes. This Department's transport policies and taxi policy can help achieve these outcomes.

3.3. In respect of taxi policy, six draft policy outcomes are outlined below:

- **CONSUMER FOCUSED** – We place the needs of consumers at the centre of our policy making;
- **SAFE** - We have a safe taxi industry for both passengers and drivers;
- **INCLUSIVE** – Taxi services are available to all, regardless of disabilities;
- **TRANSPARENCY** – Consumers are clear about the taxi journeys they are paying for;
- **SUSTAINABLE** – We have an industry that can be sustained into the future so that consumers' demands are met and drivers make a decent wage; and
- **MODERN** –Northern Ireland takes advantage of improvements in modern technology that make using taxis more attractive for consumers.

3.4. ACTION: Views are sought on the draft guiding principles outlined above.

ALEX BOYLE

Head of Vehicle Policy Branch

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