

**REPORT FROM:** ASSISTANT DIRECTOR, PLANNING, BUILDING CONTROL  
AND REGULATORY SERVICES

**TO:** TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE

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## **TAXI SAFETY**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To implement the resolution of Council to have meaningful discussion with the taxi trade on vehicle safety

### **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Committee agree the consultation proposals and agree that they would constitute meaningful discussion with the taxi trade.

### **REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

In order to ensure that adequate measures are implemented to improve vehicle safety standards in Pendle.

## **Background**

- 1.1 The mechanical standards in taxis has been an issue for Pendle over a number of years. The matter was first raised with the trade at the taxi licensing committee in 2017 followed by a number of working group meetings with representatives of the trade and Councillors. After a number of years discussing with the trade how improvements could be made a decision was taken by the Council to change the taxi licensing policy to require that all taxis be

inspected each day and that this be administered via an online app. This follows Government Guidelines (See list of background papers) that now require daily checks to be undertaken, albeit that the guidance indicates paper checks.

- 1.2 At the Full Council meeting on 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024 a decision was taken to suspend the implementation of the taxi app in order that meaningful discussion takes place with the trade. Dialogue has happened over many years with the Committee, taxi trade and officers participating. Without defining what meaningful dialogue means it is likely that there will be future criticisms of our approach and calls for more discussion. This report suggests what meaningful dialogue would look like. It also must take place in a defined framework where all parties are clear about what they need to do to have an effective dialogue.

## **Issues**

- 2.1 There have been over the last 8 years a series of consultations, meetings and discussions with interested parties about how to improve safety. Various factors have prevented progress being made. These include:
- Representatives not attending meetings
  - Lack of clarity on who is representing who at meetings which means there is no mandate for participants to represent the interests of other members of the trade and hence participants often represent themselves
  - Lack of responses to consultations
  - Lack of written responses
  - Non adherence to timeframes
- 2.2 Both Pendle and the taxi trade fully understand the issues that are involved and what the outcome of the process is intended to achieve which is an improvement to the unacceptably poor safety record of taxis.
- 2.3 If meaningful discussions are to take place this needs to be within a specified timeframe with all parties adhering to that agreed timeframe. That timeframe must be reasonable but avoid being protracted as has happened in the past.
- 2.4 The dialogue should include focussed discussion within the framework of a working group that meets regularly. That group would need to be disciplined in sending papers out, attending meetings and putting their ideas down in writing so as to avoid what has happened in the past where verbal comments have led to ambiguities.
- 2.5 It is important that the wider views of the trade are known. An easily accessible, anonymous online survey of all members of the trade should be carried out to get as wide a perspective of views as possible.
- 2.6 An action plan and terms of reference also need to be agreed to ensure that the process is undertaken in a timeframe that is reasonable and that does not end up being protracted.

## Terms of Reference

2.7 Terms of reference need to be agreed for the working group so that there is no ambiguity of what is expected of all participants. A draft of one is included at Appendix 1.

## Action Plan

3.1 In order to have meaningful and timely discussions an action plan with timescales needs to be agreed. All parties must adhere to the timeframes and produce any outputs set out in the action plan within the timescales set out.

3.2 Appendix 2 below set out the proposed consultation process.

## IMPLICATIONS

**Policy:** The policy of the Council is key to ensuring public safety for the operation of the taxi trade.

**Financial:** None arising directly from this report.

**Legal:** None arising directly from this report.

**Risk Management:** Not having an effective policy places the Council and the public at risk

**Health and Safety:** Not having an effective policy places the Council and the public at risk

**Sustainability:** None arising directly from this report.

**Community Safety:** The policy of the Council is key to ensuring public safety for the operation of the taxi trade.

**Equality and Diversity:** None arising directly from this report.

## LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

### Government advice and best practice on vehicle licensing for licensing authorities

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-best-practice-guidance-for-licensing-authorities-in-england>

# **Appendix 1**

## **Vehicle Safety Working Group –**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **Purpose**

The purpose of this working group is to have meaningful dialogue between representatives of the taxi trade and elected members in relation to introducing an App or alternative measures for vehicle safety checks.

#### **Terms of Reference**

- 1 An elected councillor from the taxi licensing committee to be appointed to chair meetings.
- 2 Taxi trade will have 5 seats on the working group. In order to avoid personal interests being represented the representatives shall inform the Council in writing who is to attend and shall state clearly what mandate they have and from whom to verify their legitimate mandate to represent the trade.
- 3 Written minutes of the group meetings will be taken and agreed at the following meeting.
- 4 Three members of the taxi licensing committee will attend.
- 5 Taxi Licensing staff will attend meetings.
- 6 The working group will not have decision making powers but will report to and make recommendations to the Taxi Licensing Committee.
- 7 The working group will meet every 2 weeks at 5pm on a Wednesday.
- 8 No substitutes will be allowed to ensure consistency. Changes to representatives can take place provided that the steps outlined at 2 are undertaken and the changes will be permanent.
- 9 The agenda and papers will be issued 2 clear working days before the meeting.
- 10 Any proposals made to the group shall be made in writing. If proposals are made verbally during the group meeting those making them will send a written version to the group within 2 working days after the group meets.
- 11 The working group will discuss only matters that relate to the purpose of the group which relates to the mechanical condition of vehicles and safety.
- 12 Agenda Items will be put forward in writing by those wishing to include an item for discussion.
- 13 The working group will cease when the final recommendations to Committee are made by 30/4/2025

## Appendix 2

	Action	Responsible Body	Timescale
Need to consult the wider trade	Develop a Jadu questionnaire to be issued to all licensed drivers, owners and operators. 21 day consultation	PBC	27/2/25
Set up a working group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working group set up to meet every 14 days</li> <li>Trade to set out who will attend and importantly what mandate they have and who they represent</li> <li>Terms of reference to be agreed by the Taxi Licensing Committee and any changes to be made shall be agreed in the first meeting of the working group and ratified by the Taxi Licensing Committee</li> </ul>	All	7/3/25
Meeting	Set up a meeting with the wider trade	PBC	31/3/24
Consideration of comments	A report setting out all comments and recommending actions to be produced and considered by the working group	All	30/4/2025
Reporting	Before going back to Council a report of the findings of the consultation and of the comments of the final working group to be considered by the taxi Licensing Committee	PBC	31/5/2025