

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE CABINET MEETING ON 15 MARCH 2022 TO COUNCIL ON 25 APRIL 2022

CAB117: REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING PROCEDURES AND CONDITIONS

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Cabinet considered a report which explained that the Department for Transport published Statutory Standards in July 2020 setting out a range of robust measures to protect taxi and private hire vehicle passengers, particularly those most vulnerable. Licensing Authorities were requested to consider the Standards by the end of January 2021, and were expected to make appropriate changes to their policies and procedures in early 2022.

The report incorporated the changes within the statutory standards into the Council's existing taxi and private hire procedures and conditions, and made further amendments to the same regarding the age/mileage and testing requirements of licensed vehicles.

Cabinet discussed the report and commended the amendments.

The support of the Environment and Community Panel was noted.

RECOMMENDED: That the Council be invited to adopt the revised Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions document.

Reason for Decision

Changes to the existing Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Procedures and Conditions document are required to incorporate Statutory Standards for the protection of the travelling public. Additional changes to the age and mileage of licensed vehicles are proposed to assist with financial hardship of the licensed trade, alongside additional vehicle testing requirements to ensure vehicle safety

CAB121: LEGALSERVICES REVIEW

Cabinet considered a report which set out proposals for the provision of the council's legal services.

The options explored in the report were:

- Renew the arrangement with Eastlaw following a full review of the Service Level Agreement (SLA), excluding the Monitoring Officer role
- In-house provision with external commissioning when needed
- Section 113 delegation arrangement with another local authority
- Fully commissioned – public or private

Under standing order 34 Councillor Moriarty presented the comments from the Corporate Performance Panel who supported the recommendations with the suggested addition of the involvement of the Monitoring officer in recommendation 2. This was agreed.

RECOMMENDED: 1) That the Assistant to the Chief Executive invokes the notice period for termination of contract with Eastlaw (12 months)
2) That an in-house legal team be established and the resources recruited to manage the council's legal work and the Monitoring Officer be fully involved in that process.
3) That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council to progress the project to create an in-house legal function, together with the procurement of software for the administration of the service. An in-house service is within budget, as set out in the Financial Implications within the report.

Reason for Decision

The cost of legal services is increasing due to the volume of legal work including governance issues and large, complex projects being undertaken by the council. The council requires strategic, specialist skills and resiliency to ensure the council's legal obligations are carried out in an accurate and timely manner. Due to capacity problems the council has experienced significant delays with some legal work resulting in it requiring outsourcing at extra cost. The council has appointed a dedicated Monitoring Officer in recognition of the issues experienced in sharing this post with another authority and it is now proposed to bring the legal service back in-house.

The minor amendment to recommendation 2 also takes into account the comments from the Corporate Performance Panel.