



**ST HELENS**  
BOROUGH COUNCIL

## Licensing and Environmental Protection Committee

**Public Agenda  
10 February 2020**

<b>Report Title:</b>	<b>Adoption of Statutory Standards in Taxi Licensing</b>
<b>Cabinet Portfolio</b>	Safer, Stronger Communities
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cllr Jeanie Bell
<b>Exempt Report</b>	No
<b>Reason for Exemption</b>	N/A
<b>Key Decision</b>	No
<b>Public Notice issued</b>	N/A
<b>Wards Affected</b>	All Wards
<b>Report of</b>	Lisa Harris Executive Director, Place Services Email - LisaHarris@sthelens.gov.uk
<b>Contact Officer</b>	Lorraine Simpson Licensing Manager Email - LorraineSimpson@sthelens.gov.uk Tel - 01744 675349

<p><b>Borough priorities</b></p> <p>Please mark <b>X</b> for any priority supported by this report</p> <p><b>NB</b> Use Section 4 - Background Information to explain how each selected priority is supported</p>	Ensure children and young people have a positive start in life	
	Promote good health, independence and care across our communities	
	Create safe and strong communities for our residents	X
	Support a strong, diverse and well-connected local economy	X
	Create a green, thriving and vibrant place to be proud of	
	Be a modern, efficient and effective Council	

## 1. Summary

- 1.1 To approve the adoption of the new Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards following consultation.

## 2. Recommendations for Decision

- 2.1 Licensing & Environmental Protection Committee **is recommended to:**
- i) authorise adoption of the Statutory Standards for Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing.

## 3. Purpose of this Report

- 3.1 Members will recall that this Committee authorised a consultation into the adoption of the Statutory Standards on 9 December 2020. The consultation ran until 31 January 2021.
- 3.2 The consultation was widely distributed to:
- Taxi Licensed Trade
  - Trade representatives
  - Local Business
  - Local Councillors
  - Emergency Services
  - Voluntary Sector
  - St Helens Chamber
  - Local Disability Groups
  - Council website
- 3.3 One response was received to the consultation from Unite the Union, a copy of which is attached at Appendix A. Members will note that the majority of comments from Unite are in agreement with the proposed standards.

## 4. Background/Further Information

## 4.1 Implementation of the Standards following Adoption

The main changes the Standards will introduce are noted below:

- 4.1.1 Twice yearly Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks for licensed drivers (this used to be once every three years).
  - 4.1.2 New English Language proficiency tests for drivers (both oral and written).
  - 4.1.3 Review of all current licences previously issued, in accordance with the new standards adopted (on a case by case basis).
  - 4.1.4 Improved safety measures in relation to Private Hire Operators, including an annual basic DBS check.
  - 4.1.5 Revisions to the current Convictions Policy contained in the Council's Taxi Licensing Policy to include the recommendations on previous convictions as set out in the Annex to the guidance.
  - 4.1.6 A move to more driver training being provided by, or under the supervision of, the Licensing Authority.
  - 4.1.7 The responsibility of the Licensing Authority to refer individuals to the DBS for consideration to be added to the barred lists in certain circumstances, i.e. where it is believed the individual presents a risk of harm to a child and/or vulnerable adult.
  - 4.1.8 Multi-agency working between the Licensing Authority, the Police and the MASH team.
  - 4.1.9 Introduction of CCTV (and audio recording) in licensed vehicles.
- 4.2 Some of these areas are complex and will require a substantial degree of planning, resources and funding. As such an implementation plan will be developed to facilitate this.
- 4.3 The Liverpool City Region Licensing Managers have also agreed to consider if any of the areas could be delivered collectively to reduce the associated costs, as no funding has been made available from central government to implement the new Standards.
- 4.4 The first part of the Standards to be implemented will be the bi-annual DBS check.
- 4.5 As Members will be aware from the previous report presented to this Committee on 9 December 2020, the Department for Transport expects the standards contained in the guidance to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to. It is the recommendation of officers that the standards be adopted in their entirety.
- 4.6 Should Members approve this recommendation, a report will be presented to full Council to recommend adoption of the Standards and that the relevant government office be advised of the Council's adoption of the Standards in their entirety..

## 5 **Conclusions**

5.1 Members are recommended to approve the adoption of the Statutory Standards and recommend their adoption to Full Council.

## **6. Implications**

6.1 Legal Implications – The Statutory Guidance has been issued under the Policing and Crime Act 2017, with effect from 20 July 2020. The Department for Transport expects these recommendations to be implemented unless there is a compelling local reason not to.

6.2 Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Implications - NA

6.3 Social Value - NA

6.4 Sustainability and Environment - NA

6.5 Health and Wellbeing - NA

6.6 Equality and Human Rights – NA

6.7 Customers and Resident – The Standards will change how Licensing Authorities deliver elements of the service, however these changes are intended to ensure that the general public, children and those most vulnerable are appropriately protected.

6.8 Asset and Property - Nil

6.9 Staffing and Human Resource - Nil

6.10 Risks - Nil

6.11 Finance - Nil

6.12 Policy Framework Implications – The Council's Taxi Licensing Policy will need to be updated in due course to reflect the changes implemented in accordance with the new Statutory Guidance.

## **7. Appendices**

7.1 Appendix A – Unite Consultation Response