

Deregulation Bill 2013-14

SUMMARY

- 1.1 Several changes to taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) legislation are being proposed by the Government in the Deregulation Bill 2013-14.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To note the contents of the Deregulation Bill 2013-14 in relation to taxi and private hire vehicle legislation.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 The report is for information only.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 Several changes to taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) legislation are being proposed by the Government. The changes affect the legislation which applies in England outside London and Wales.
- 4.2 The Government has introduced the Deregulation Bill as part of its drive to reduce the overall burden of regulation on business and individuals and cut 'red tape' during this Parliament. Ministers have identified three measures which will apply specifically to the taxi and private hire trades.

4.3 The three measures which have been added to the Deregulation Bill are:

- Allowing private hire operators to sub-contract bookings to operators licensed in a different district. This change will improve operators' ability to meet passengers' needs. And it will help to make the passenger's experience so much more convenient.
- Allowing anyone with an ordinary driver's licence to drive a private hire vehicle when it is "off-duty". The principal benefit of this measure is that a PHV could be used as a family car, freeing up many families from the need to run a second car and saving them money.
- Making the standard duration for all taxi and PHV driver licences three years; and five years for all PHV operator licences. Shorter durations will only be granted on a case by case basis, where it is justifiable for a particular reason. This will reduce the financial and administrative burden of having to make more frequent licence renewals.

4.4 The Government have also sought views on licence conditions set by local authorities. They have requested the taxi and private hire trades outside London to give them examples of conditions attached to their licences which they consider to be overly restrictive or unreasonable. Once received, they will consider those examples and weigh up the case for changing the law.

4.5 The three measures described above, along with the possible fourth measure, represent the first part of a deregulation process which will be taken forward in the more comprehensive reforms being proposed by the Law Commission. They are due to publish their report and draft Bill at the end of April. The Government will then have a year in which to consider the report and prepare a response. This timescale for considering the Law Commission's report means that there will not be time to take forward a dedicated Taxi Bill before the next General Election. That is why these changes are being introduced using the Deregulation Bill. The Deregulation Bill itself is being considered by Parliament and progress on the passage of the Bill can be found on the Parliament web-site at:
<http://services.parliament.uk/bills/2013-14/deregulation.html>

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 Not applicable.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer Financial officer Human Resources officer Estates/Property officer Service Director(s) Other(s)	Olu Idowu - - - John Tomlinson -
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IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 The Council may charge such fees for the granting of licences to cover the whole or part of the recoverable costs of administering the licensing function.
- 1.2 The proposals set out in the report could have a significant impact on the costs associated with administering the licensing function.

Legal

- 2.1 As set out in the report.

Personnel

- 3.1 The proposals set out in the report could have a significant impact on staffing levels associated with administering the licensing function.

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 The outcome of the proposals set out in the consultation will apply equally to all those groups affected by them therefore no particular group(s) will be disadvantaged.

Health and Safety

- 5.1 None directly arising from the report.

Environmental Sustainability

- 6.1 None directly arising from the report.

Property and Asset Management

- 7.1 None directly arising from the report.

Risk Management

- 8.1 None directly arising from the report.

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 9.1 The information set out in this report supports the corporate priorities that the Council provides **good quality services that meet local needs**.