



Name of meeting and date: **Licensing & Safety Committee**
19th September 2011

Title of report: **Penalty Point System for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles**

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan ?	Not applicable
Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny ?	Yes
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Peter McBride

Electoral [wards](#) affected and ward councillors consulted: **All wards**

Public or private: **Public**

1. Purpose of report

Members will recall that this matter was last before the committee in March this year when it was determined that the scheme be formally adopted and implemented in January 2012. For ease of reference all previous reports and papers to Committee are attached to this report.

2. Relevant Background Details

The proposed scheme has caused much consternation and upset amongst the taxi trade and see it as an unnecessary layer of enforcement and argue that the current enforcement methods work well.

Elected Members from many Wards and Licensing Officers have received a large number of representations and complaints about the proposed new scheme. Elected Members and the Licensing Manager have also been contacted by representatives of the GMB union as they have seen a huge increase in new members from the taxi trade who are particularly concerned about the scheme.

The Licensing Manager was invited to address Cabinet on the scheme and explain how the proposed scheme was to be applied and implemented. A deputation was also taken to Cabinet by the GMB on behalf of the taxi trade and Cabinet expressed the following concerns which they requested be brought to the attention of the Licensing & Safety Committee:-

- That the scheme is an unnecessary layer of enforcement when existing laws, regulations and conditions were sufficient for officers to deal with any breaches.
- That the scheme was cumbersome, time consuming and likely to lead to inconsistency and unfairness in application.
- That the cost of senior officers time in adjudicating on disputes was likely to be untenable and an unnecessary and inappropriate use of a senior officers time.
- That the existing IT system would not support the implementation of points imposed against a drivers record in a manner that was obvious
- That a request to spend any monies on a new IT system to support the scheme would not be approved (particularly at a time of spending cuts)
- That an alternative “reward scheme” such as the previously discussed “Stars on the Cars” be adopted and implemented instead as such a scheme was a more positive and user friendly way in which to improve standards amongst the taxi trade.
- A reward scheme would not involve spending money on new IT systems

3. Officer Recommendations & Reasons

That the Penalty point scheme be abandoned in favour of a reward scheme. Without extra funding for an IT system that supports the scheme it will not be possible to implement it. Current staffing levels also do not support the scheme as the likely amount of senior officer time taken up dealing with an appeal procedure is likely to be overwhelming and disproportionate.

4. Contact officer and relevant papers

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