

**REPORT TO:** LICENSING COMMITTEE - 1ST SEPTEMBER 2005

**REPORT ON:** LICENSING OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR BOOKING OFFICES

**REPORT BY:** DEPUTE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (SUPPORT SERVICES)

**REPORT NO:** 483-2005

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To advise Members of the Scottish Executive's proposals for the introduction of regulations to give powers to local authorities to licence taxi and private hire car booking offices and to obtain the Committee's instructions for replying to the Consultation Paper containing these proposals.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 It is recommended that the Committee:-
- (a) note the proposals for the licensing of taxi and private hire car booking offices contained in the Scottish Executive's Consultation Paper; and
  - (b) remit to the Depute Chief Executive (Support Services) to reply to the Consultation Paper on behalf of the Council in the terms suggested in paragraph 6.3 below.

## **3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 None.

## **4.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

## **5.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6.0 MAIN TEXT**

- 6.1 In terms of Sections 10 to 13 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, local authorities are empowered to licence taxis and private hire cars and their drivers. There is, however, no power to require booking offices to have a licence. Since the introduction of the 1982 Act, a number of local authorities (including this authority), COSLA and the Police have been requesting that new powers be introduced to allow local authorities to license taxi and private hire car booking offices.
- 6.2 The Scottish Executive has now recognised the concerns which have been expressed over this lack of regulation. It accepts that there is some evidence that vehicles and drivers operating from some such establishments may be operating illegally and that there may be other illegal activities going on. As well as being to the detriment of the travelling public, it is acknowledged that, if it is in the public interest to licence the vehicles and the drivers operating from such offices, then the businesses running the offices should also be licensed. Accordingly, the Scottish Executive has now issued a Consultation Paper proposing the introduction of a licensing scheme.
- 6.3 This would allow both powers of inspection and enforcement to ensure that such establishments were operating within the law and that the licence holder is a fit and proper person to operate such a business. It is recommended that the Council supports the introduction of a licence scheme. It is also recommended that the Council includes the following in its response:-

- (a) all booking offices should require a licence irrespective of the number of vehicles which they operate;
- (b) a licence should be required by anyone who acts as a booking agent, ie someone providing a facility to enable the public to make arrangements for the hire of a taxi or private hire car;
- (c) all local authorities who have decided to licence taxis and private hire cars and their drivers should also licence booking offices; and
- (d) there should be a set of mandatory national conditions, supplemented by such other conditions as each local authority deems to be appropriate.

## **7.0 CONSULTATIONS**

7.1 None.

## **8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

8.1 "Consultation Paper on Licensing of Taxi/Private Hire Car Booking Offices" - Scottish Executive, June 2005.

**9.0 Name Patricia McIlquham**

**Depute Chief Executive (Support Services)**

**Date: August 2005**