

UPDATE ON TAXI LICENSING SCRUTINY TASK GROUP REPORT

The Gloucestershire Economic Growth Scrutiny Committee approved the Taxi Licensing Scrutiny Task Group report at its meeting on Wednesday 20th January 2021.

The Task group was made up of County and District Councillors with an aim of exploring economic benefits of adopting a common set of standards and sanctions for taxi and private hire vehicle licensing in Gloucestershire. The Task Group had meetings in 2019, prior to the pandemic outbreak, which were attended by Councillor Mattie Ross on behalf of Stroud District Council. The Task group also invited Licensing Officers for input.

Below are updates and actions from Stroud District Council's Licensing Section on the Task Group's four recommendations for district authorities.

1. Implementation of the National Register of Refusals and Revocations
Stroud District Council implemented use of the Register on 1 April 2020.
2. Exploring how, across all authorities, standards and enforcement can be aligned and organised jointly
Stroud District Council Licensing Officers are members of the Gloucestershire Licensing Officer Group (GLOG). We are working together to align our taxi policies so they reflect the Task Group recommendations and also the new [Government Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards](#) which were released in July 2020. The Statutory Standards focus mainly on safeguarding issues and local authorities have a duty to have regard to them. We are finalising a joint county policy which reflects these Standards. The aim is that each authority can then incorporate this into their own local policies. Some of the key points in the joint policy are:
 - DBS conviction check procedures
 - Criminal conviction policies
 - Safeguarding and disability awareness training
 - Language proficiency
 - Information sharing
 - Enforcement policies and joint enforcement

Stroud District Council Licensing Officers have already started to review our local taxi policy and are updating it to reflect the GLOG joint policy and Statutory Standards. The intention is that a draft Stroud District Council taxi policy will be

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considered by Community Services and Licensing Committee in Spring 2021 prior to formal consultation.

3. Joint county training for drivers and members on safeguarding and disability awareness

GLOG is looking at a joint training provider for Gloucestershire and proposing refresher training every 3 years.

4. Common approach to use of CCTV in taxis.

The Statutory Standards give guidance on CCTV in taxis and suggest in some cases that mandatory CCTV is beneficial. The GLOG group felt that imposing mandatory CCTV would have significant financial impact on taxi drivers at this time when, due to the pandemic, many have had little or no work over the past 12 months. There are also significant data protection considerations. We have therefore decided to look at CCTV and any other vehicle criteria separately once taxi businesses are back up and running properly again.