Business bulletin

Item 6.1

Regulatory Committee

9.30am, Monday, 17 May 2021

Regulatory Committee

Convenor:	Members:	Contact:
Councillor Catherine Fullerton Vice-Convenor Councillor Denis Dixon 	Councillor Scott Arthur Councillor Susan Rae Councillor Cameron Rose Councillor Donald Wilson Councillor Max Mitchell Councillor Neil Ross Councillor Joanna Mowat	Lesley Birrell Committee Services 0131 529 4240 Andrew Mitchell Regulatory Services Manager 0131 529 4208

Recent News	Background
Hire Car Fleet research The last full taxi demand survey was carried out and reported to the committee in 2017. The Directorate has since procured consultants to carry out a full taxi demand survey, in addition to completing an assessment of demand for Private Hire Cars and the impact of the Age and Emissions Policy on the licensed fleet. A timetable for this work has been agreed with the appointed consultants (Jacobs UK Ltd). The initial report is expected to be brought before the Committee in late 2021.	The Council has a policy of limiting the number of taxi licences issued within the City, using the powers available in the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. This power can only be used if the Council is satisfied that there is no 'significant demand' for taxis which is unmet. The Council is required to keep this position under regular review, and as such consultants are procured to carry out full demand surveys every three years. Interim surveys are additionally procured and carried out every six months.
Taxi fares Research for the second of these surveys will take place during the first half of 2021, with a view to the Regulatory Committee agreeing a new fare tariff in September 2021. This research will be carried out in tandem with the fleet research described above, which will ensure that the processes are joined up where appropriate.	The Council, as Licensing Authority for taxis, is required to review and fix the scale of fares or any other charges which may be used by taxis licensed within the city. This review must take place at intervals not greater than 18 months. In June 2019 Jacobs was commissioned to undertake the next three comprehensive surveys of taxi fares
Fireworks (Scotland) Miscellaneous Amendments Regulations 2021 https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ssi/2021/79/contents/made From 30 June 2021, the following will be prohibited: 1. supplying "adult fireworks" outwith the hours of 7am to 6pm. (subject to exceptions); and 2. supplying more than 5 Kg (net explosive content) of "adult fireworks" to a person at any one time (subject to exceptions). The Trading Standards and Licensing Enforcement teams will be responsible for the enforcement of these changes, which will be communicated to businesses in the normal manner.	
Taxi and PHC grant fund	The First Minister announced in November that the Scottish Government would introduce

Grants of £1,500 were available to all Edinburgh licensed taxi and PHC drivers who:

- Had been working or available to work as a taxi/PHC driver from 9 October to at least 31 January 2021; and
- Had experienced loss of income up to 31 December 2020 (50% of turnover, compared with 2019)

The fund closed on 25 March 2021. 4,406 drivers received a £1,500 grant, meaning that a total of £6,609,000 was paid out.

Additional taxi and PHC grant fund from the Edinburgh Discretionary Business Support Fund

On 20 April 2021, 4,406 drivers who had benefitted from the initial grant of £1,500 received a further £1,000 top-up grant. This additional award from the discretionary grant fund totalled £4,406,000.

measures to help taxi and private hire car drivers financially affected by the impact of coronavirus. A discretionary fund would enable local authorities to provide additional support for taxi/PHC drivers who are suffering a severe but indirect effect of the pandemic.

Short Term Lets

The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 (Licensing of Short Term Lets) Order 2021 was withdrawn by the Scottish Government in February 2021.

The Scottish Government has set up a stakeholder working group to assist in production of guidance for hosts and local authorities, and to resolve any stakeholder concerns. The Council is represented on the working group and will engage with proactively with a view to having the licensing system implemented at the earliest opportunity.

The working group consists of other local authority groups such as COSLA and SOLAR, as well as trade and resident groups. The group has so far met twice and the next meeting is scheduled for 13 May.

The Scottish Government has indicated that the overall timetable for implementation of a licensing scheme for short term lets remains on course, subject to the outcome of the upcoming elections.

The Council has previously expressed strong concern about the impact of certain aspects of the short term letting industry on the city. The Council previously called for additional regulation of the sector, including the introduction of a licensing system

Civica Cx Computerised database administration system

The project to upgrade APP to Cx is now underway. The introduction of Cx Licensing will improve working processes through the automation of routine tasks, easing the burden of high volumes of applications during peak periods and increasing efficiency. Intuitive and mobile enabled, Cx Licensing also allows the Council to access applications in real time to minimise administration and improve the employee user experience.

The Civica APP database system is used to record licensing applications. The system has a number of limitations and the supplier has advised that no further upgrades are planned. The system is manual based, with little or no interface with applicants.

The Council will reach outcomes via the quickest and most appropriate route, making working practices more consistent. The project is expected to take around seven months to complete and is due to be implemented in the autumn	Upgrading to the Civica CX system requires significant investment but in the longer term will provide efficiencies in the service.

Forthcoming activities: