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Gweinidog yr Economi a Thrafnidiaeth
Minister for Economy and Transport



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Ein cyf/Our ref KS/08778/19

Janet Finch-Saunders AM
Chair of the Petitions Committee

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14 January 2020

Dear Janet,

Thank you for your letter of 16 December requesting an update on our future plans to reform taxi licensing.

Through our White Paper consultation we sought views on proposals for reforming the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles. In response, we received a wide range of views about how the legislative framework underpinning the taxi and private hire vehicle industry should be improved.

The consultation responses indicated that there was strong support for national standards, improved enforcement powers and information sharing, but there was some opposition to the Joint Transport Authority (JTA) proposals. There was also consistent feedback that the proposals did not go far enough to address the current challenges faced by the taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) industry and regulators.

As a result we are working in conjunction with the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA) to develop these proposals further. This will include production of a plan recommending a number of 'quick fixes' in the short term before any possible legislative change.

We aim to update Wales's taxi and PHV licensing system to make it fit for modern Wales as a whole. It is envisaged that this will involve creation of a consistent standard to be applied across Wales that promotes safety, contributes to a cleaner environment, improves the customer experience and promotes equality. Areas of work being considered during this policy development include:

- The provision of driver training including areas such a child and vulnerable adult safeguarding, disability awareness and customer service
- National standards for drivers, vehicles and operators that are focused on safety

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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

- Improved enforcement powers and consistent procedures
- Improved information sharing between local authorities and the development of a national register
- The impact of licensed vehicles on the environment
- Problems of cross border hire
- Promoting equality by ensuring that all customers have access to suitable vehicles and all customers feel safe.
- Improving the customer experience

It is envisaged that the development of consistent standards across the country will assist in reducing some of the problems of cross border hire by creating a level playing field for drivers and applicants.

In October 2019, a Policy Officer was appointed by the WLGA to assist in the delivery of these proposals. Work has already started on the development of short term measures to try to tackle some of the issues that were raised by local authorities and the taxi and PHV trade in the consultation.

There will be engagement with relevant stakeholders including representatives of the taxi and PHV industry throughout this process. In addition, discussions have started with the Department for Transport (DfT) to ensure that Wales is taken into consideration in the event that national standards are created for England. This is to ensure that consideration is given to consistency and to make certain that there is no adverse impact as a result of their developments and vice versa.

I trust that the Petitions Committee will find this update helpful.

*Yours ever,
Ken*

Ken Skates AC/AM

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