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## GATESHEAD METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REGULATORY COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, 27 April 2021

**PRESENT:** Councillor K Dodds (Chair)

Councillor(s): W Dick, M Charlton, B Goldsworthy, M Ord,  
D Bradford, J Gibson, H Kelly, L Kirton and I Patterson

**APOLOGIES:** Councillor(s): D Duggan, J Raine, R Mullen and S Gallagher

#### **RC284 MINUTES**

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record.

#### **RC285 THE IMPACT OF COVID ON THE PRIVATE HIRE AND HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE IN GATESHEAD**

The Committee received an update on the impact of Covid on the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Trade in Gateshead.

The Committee heard that the service had been kept running over the last 13 months in particular due to staff having to be redeployed. The Committee were advised that there is a statutory duty to keep going and gave credit to the staff. Huge changes have had to be made in processes and everyone has been working from home. At first the testing station was closed between the 27 March and 9 June vehicles were then given priority when the station re-opened.

Instead of applicants having face to face sexualisation training and a computer based course was developed.

Officers have really tried to keep the taxi trade well informed and linked them into the Covid team to help with the guidance. The Council's standard vehicle conditions were amended.

It was recognised that Covid 19 had an impact there has been a reduction in demand and there was some anxiety and stress from some drivers working in close proximity with the public as well as facing competition from app based private business models.

There has been a reduction of 73 licensed vehicles and 33 drivers. The Council has offered grants and it has recognised the importance of the trade in getting key workers to places of work and vulnerable people to vaccine and other appointments. 600 awards of £500 were made from a Covid restrictions grant. Some taxi drivers have left the trade all together others have suspended their license and have indicated they will come back. Those who are nearing retirement

have indicated they probably won't come back, others in there 30s and 40s have been finding alternative work.

Officers have been able to signpost people to support or to GPs. It was noted that there is a lot of information on the website around mental health and dealing with anxiety however it is not directly linked to driver pages. Officers will look into this as a possibility.

RESOLVED - that the information contained within the update be noted.

**RC286 APPEALS AND PROSECUTIONS**

The Committee received a report outlining appeals and prosecutions during the period 4 November and 7 April 2021.

RESOLVED - That the information be noted.

**Chair.....**