EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Taxi Licensing Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2014

SR 2014 No. 302

1. Introduction

1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department of the Environment ("the Department") to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.

1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under sections 13(2), (3) and (5), 15(2), 19(1), 20, 30(1) and (2), 56(1) and 57(1) of the Taxis Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 ("the Taxis Act") and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

2.1. The purpose of the Regulations is to provide for the testing and licensing of taxis in Northern Ireland.

3. Background

3.1. The Taxis Act provides powers enabling the Department to develop a taxi reform programme, with the aim of modernising and simplifying the Northern Ireland taxi industry.

3.2. These Regulations establish a modernised legislative framework for the licensing of taxis and the technical standards they are required to meet. In particular, the Regulations introduce a new classification system based on the manner in which a taxi is operated, and a range of conditions for each class of taxi licence with which the owner will be expected to comply.

4. Consultation

4.1. The Department consulted on the proposals included in these Regulations between 4 July and 30 September 2011. The consultation included meetings with stakeholders as well as written responses representing the views of over 3000 consultees.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. The provisions included in the Regulations were screened for any equality impacts on section 75 categories. Only one minor impact was identified, on males, since over 93% of taxi drivers in Northern Ireland are male. It was therefore decided that there was no requirement to carry out a full equality impact assessment.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment was produced which indicated that the benefits of introducing the new Regulations outweighed the costs for the Northern Ireland taxi industry.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. Operation of the inspection of taxi vehicles under these Regulations will be carried out by the Driver and Vehicle Agency on a full cost recovery

basis, and so there will be no ongoing costs to the Department. The taxi industry will incur minor costs in respect of new roof signs.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. The provisions in the proposed Regulations have been screened for any conflict with the provisions of section 24, but no such conflict has been identified

9. EU Implications

9.1. Regulation of taxis is not covered by any European regulatory measures, and there are therefore no EU implications.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. The regulation of taxis throughout the rest of the United Kingdom is a matter for District Councils, which has led to the development of a variety of different approaches. The provisions in these Regulations do not directly replicate any particular regulatory regime; rather, they seek to incorporate the best elements of a number of systems.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable