
COMMITTEE Licensing

DATE 17 November 2010

DIRECTOR Stewart Carruth

TITLE OF REPORT Variation of Condition on Airport Zoned Taxi Licences:
outcome of trial period

REPORT NUMBER: CG/10/182

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Committee of the outcome of a trial period in which airport zoned taxis have been permitted to operate in the city centre between the hours of midnight and 5am on a Saturday night/Sunday morning.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee decides whether to:

- (i) make the situation permanent by varying the condition to enable airport zoned taxis to continue to operate in the city zone between midnight and 5am on Saturday nights/Sunday mornings
- (ii) if the Committee decides to adopt option (i), continue the trial period until the statutory variation procedure is completed;
- (iii) revert to the position before the trial period whereby all airport zoned taxis operate only from the airport.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

If the Committee adopts options (i), this may expedite dispersal of persons from the city centre between midnight and 5am on a Saturday night/Sunday morning as there may be more taxis available for pick ups.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6. REPORT

At its meeting on 24 February 2010, the Committee decided to initiate a six month trial period suspending the zoning condition attached to airport zoned taxi licences. This suspension applied between the hours of midnight and 5am on a Saturday night into a Sunday morning.

The effect of this suspension is that airport zoned taxis have been permitted to operate within Aberdeen City during these time periods.

This trial period is still in effect until the Committee make a determination in relation to this matter.

A two week consultation exercise took place between 21 September and 5 October 2010 in which approximately 1000 questionnaires were sent to both airport and city zoned taxi operators.

125 responses were received in total, 108 from city zoned taxi operators and 17 from airport zoned taxi operators.

City zoned taxi operators

90 out of the 108 responses stated that the trial has impacted on their trade between the hours of midnight and 5am on a Saturday night. The primary reasons given are that there is already more than enough city zoned taxis operating at this time without the need for more taxis; there is not enough work for this increase in taxi numbers; there is already a drop in earnings due to the tough economic climate and this loss is being exacerbated by allowing more taxis to work on a Saturday night/Sunday morning; city zoned taxi drivers are having to work more hours than usual to make up for fall in income and there is insufficient space on taxi ranks for all the taxis.

Out of the 90 respondees who stated that the trial has impacted on trade, 89 indicated that they would not like this situation to become permanent. The reasons given were similar to the above. Only one respondee stated that he was 'undecided' on this point.

The remaining 18 city zoned taxi operators indicated that the trial had not impacted on trade.

Airport zoned taxi operators

13 of the 17 respondees indicated that they had taken advantage of the suspension of the zoning condition. 4 indicated that they had not.

Of those 13 who had taken advantage of the suspension, 12 reported it to be a success and indicated that they would like the situation to become permanent. The primary reason given is that it gives drivers an opportunity to make extra income and compensates for loss of revenue generated by the 'green light system' whereby city drivers may pick up at the airport when the green light is

illuminated. A few also commented that they believe that they have been able to assist in dispersal of persons from the city centre during a very busy time. 1 respondee gave no reason.

The letter which accompanied the questionnaires stated that the purpose of the questionnaire was to gather factual, evidence based comments. However, no evidence was submitted to support any of the comments made by operators. The Committee may wish to consider this when considering options.

Hard copy responses of all those questionnaires received are available for distribution should members so wish to peruse them.

This report was noted at the meeting of the Taxi Consultation Group on 25 October 2010.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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