

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

ABERDEEN, 2 October 2019. Minute of Meeting of the TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP. Present:- Councillor Reynolds, Chairperson; and Councillor Lumsden (as substitute for Councillor Donnelly); Bill Price (Railway Taxi Drivers), Stewart Duncan (Airport Drivers), Graeme McColl (Aberdeen Taxi Group) and Russell McLeod (Rainbow City Taxis).

In attendance:- Sergeant Gillian Flett (Police Scotland), Lynn May, David McKane and Sandy Munro (Licensing), John Weir and William Whyte (Fleet Services), Mark Masson and Emma Robertson (Committee Services).

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 26 JUNE 2019 - FOR APPROVAL

1. The Consultation Group had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 26 June 2019.

The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:-
to approve the minute as a correct record.

ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT

2. The Consultation Group had before it a report which provided an overview of the activity of the Enforcement Officers regarding taxi enforcement operations since the previous meeting.

The Enforcement Officer spoke to the report during which he highlighted that enforcement officers had continued to conduct enforcement operations, some in conjunction with Police Scotland and City Wardens. Mr McKane emphasised that City Wardens would be enforcing non-parking restrictions in the Broad Street/Queen Street area.

Speaking in furtherance of the report, Mr McKane, Enforcement Officer, reminded drivers to check their vehicles in advance of testing, as the number of vehicles failing for issues that could be rectified in advance was an area of concern.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-
to note the update.

LEZ INFORMATION NOTE

3. The Consultation Group had before it an Information Note in regard to Low Emission Zones (LEZ) in Aberdeen City. The Group received a presentation from Mr Will Hekelaar, Senior Engineer in this regard. He provided background information on:-

- Air quality in Aberdeen;
- Policy and Legislation;
- What is a LEZ;
- Data Gathering;

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
2 October 2019

- Aberdeen City Centre;
- City Centre with 40% less Traffic; and
- Next Steps

Mr Hekelaar advised that further reading was available at:

www.lowemissionzones.scot

or by emailing: transportstrategy@aberdeencity.gov.uk

Lynn May, Solicitor, Aberdeen City Council, made reference to a Hydrogen Fuel Event being held today and sought the views of the taxi trade which she would feed back to the organiser, Louise Napier, Senior Project Officer, Aberdeen City Council.

There followed a discussion regarding infrastructure in the city centre for taxis to charge electric or hydrogen vehicles.

The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:-

to note the Information Note and presentation.

PROPOSED PROHIBITION OF DRIVING - LANGSTANE PLACE

4. The Consultation Group had before it a report by the Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services which provided information in relation to proposed prohibition of driving at an area around Langstane Place. The proposals included:

- (1) prohibition of motor vehicles between 10pm and 5am, 7 days a week, on Justice Mill Lane, Bon Accord Terrace (part of), Langstane Place (part of), Gordon Street (part of), Windmill Brae, Windmill Lane, Bath Street and Bridge Street (part of), with exemptions for cyclists, blue badge holders and for access to off-street car parks;
- (2) 24-hour prohibition of motor vehicles on Langstane Place between Dee Street and Crown Street, with a timed exemption for delivery by goods vehicles between 6am and 11am Monday to Saturday; and
- (3) a proposed reintroduction of pay and display parking bays on the east side of Dee Street, with the conversion of 3 existing pay and display bays to blue badge holders only.

The report recommended:-

that the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group –

- (a) consider the proposals for the Justice Mill Lane / Langstane Place / Windmill Brae area and provide the Chief Operating Officer with their views on the proposals; and
- (b) confirm what, if anything, they believe could be done to mitigate any impact on the Dee Street taxi rank.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
2 October 2019

- (i) to note the report; and
- (ii) that the members would respond to the Chief Operating Officer with their views on the proposals.

OFFSHORE EUROPE ROAD CLOSURES

5. The Consultation Group had before it correspondence from Bill Price, Railway Taxi Drivers, regarding Offshore Europe Road closures.

Mr Price began by congratulating the Roads Department and TECA for the smooth operation of the taxi rank at the first large event to be hosted at TECA. However, Mr Price reported that there had been an issue returning to TECA at peak time due to the closure of Dyce Drive.

In response, Ross Stevenson, Engineer, Operations and Protective Services advised that a review of the road traffic arrangements and the lessons learned from the event would be carried out in liaison with SMG Europe (operators of TECA).

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-

to note the concerns and the information provided.

SAFEGUARDING TRAINING

6. The Consultation Group heard from Sandy Munro, Interim Licensing Team Leader, in relation to correspondence received from the Blue Lamp Trust dated 4 September 2019, which offered a training course on safeguarding awareness specifically for taxi and private hire drivers.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-

to note the information provided and that the taxi trade would disseminate the information to their members.

TAXI KNOWLEDGE TEST

7. The Group had before it correspondence from Chris Douglas, Aberdeen Taxis Ltd, which proposed changes to the structure of the Taxi Knowledge test.

Mr Douglas was unable to attend the meeting today, however Graeme McColl and Russell MacLeod spoke on his behalf.

The correspondence advised that:-

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
2 October 2019

- (1) at present applicants were required to take all four topics of the current Taxi/Private hire knowledge test and pass with at least 75% of all parts in that test in order to achieve an overall pass of the whole test; and
- (2) if a candidate fails any one part of the four parts, they are then required to re-sit the whole test again at another time. Therefore, losing the passes they previously had on the other sections.

In his letter, Mr Douglas proposed the following:-

- (a) an amendment to the test structure in order to incentivize potential candidates to progress through the Street knowledge test.
- (b) that if a candidate passes any one part of the four-part test that they would retain that pass and therefore, not be required to re-sit that part should they fail any other Topic. Subsequently, if they pass three and fail one, at the next test they would only be required to sit the one part that they failed.

It was suggested that members could contact Mr Munro with any further proposals.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-

that a report in relation to the Taxi Knowledge Test be submitted to the next Group meeting on 12 February 2020.

LICENCE RENEWALS

8. The Group had before it correspondence from Bill Price, Railway Taxi Drivers, relating to Licence renewals.

Mr Price explained that:-

- (a) a request had come from taxi drivers regarding the time taken to receive their licence renewal; and
- (b) it was causing problems with the drivers' insurance companies as they required proof that the driver held a current taxi driver's licence.

Mr Munro acknowledged that there was a delay and that the Licencing Team was looking at processes/resources to address the issue. He advised that the Team were happy to confirm licence status by telephone with rail operators at Aberdeen Station and with insurance firms.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:-

to note the information provided.

AOCB

9. (A) Bus Gates

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
2 October 2019

The Chairperson sought the views of the taxi and private hire trade in respect of the current bus gate situation across the City.

Members acknowledged that customers were unhappy with current road traffic regulations which do not permit private hire drivers to pass through bus gates, although taxi drivers were able to do so, making journeys longer and more expensive for private hire driver customers.

The Chair suggested that the concerns of the Group be minuted, noting that the Licensing Committee could consider the request and suggest to the Operational Delivery Committee that they receive a report in this regard.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group agreed:-

- (i) to note the concerns of the group; and
- (ii) that the request to allow access for private hire drivers through bus gates be considered by the Licensing Committee at their next meeting.

(B) Taxi Fare Review

The Group heard Karen Gatherum, Trainee Solicitor make reference to the Taxi Fare Review report which would be considered by the Licensing Committee on 3 December 2019.

She advised (a) that the report recommended either a taxi fare increase of 6% or the status quo; (b) that the increased percentage figure had been arrived at using the HPI website; and (c) that statutory consultation would be undertaken.

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group agreed:-

- (i) to note the information provided; and
- (ii) that the taxi waiting time be adjusted accordingly and included within the report to the Licensing Committee.

DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS:

10. The Consultation Group had before it proposed dates of future meetings, all commencing at 10.00am in the Town House as follows:-

- 12 February 2020;
- 18 June 2020; and
- 7 October 2020

The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:

to agree the proposed future meeting dates for 2020.

- **COUNCILLOR JOHN REYNOLDS, Convener.**

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
2 October 2019

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP
Wednesday, 2 October 2019