

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Licensing Committee
DATE	14 September 2011
DIRECTOR	Stewart Carruth
TITLE OF REPORT	Taxi Consultation Group
REPORT NUMBER:	CG/11/032

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to approve the revised remit, governance and membership of the Taxi Consultation Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Licensing Committee –

- (a) agree the remit of the Taxi Consultation Group as outlined in the report at Section 5.1
- (b) approve the membership of the Group as outlined in the appendix to the report; and
- (c) agree that the Taxi Consultation Group meet twice a year (one meeting prior to and the other following the Summer recess) and that the dates for these meetings be agreed by the Convener of the Group.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 If the Committee decides not to agree to recommendation (c) above, regarding the reduction in the number of meetings of the Group, there would be revenue implications as a result of the costs associated with officer's workload as outlined in 5.3 of this report.

There are no capital implications for current and future years, or any financial risk arising from this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The meetings of the Taxi Consultation Group (TCG) would require the attendance of a Solicitor to provide advice and to answer questions regarding taxi matters. An officer from Committee Services would be required to prepare agendas, attend meetings and produce minutes in keeping with the principles of the Council's Standing Orders and to provide advice thereon.

5. MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Remit

On 26th June 2007, the Licensing Committee agreed to establish the Taxi/Private Hire Car Consultation Group to progress any longstanding and new taxi and private hire car issues as they arise and to subsume the work of the Taxi/Private Hire Car Review Group. No formal remit or membership of the Group was agreed.

It is therefore proposed that the new remit of the TCG would be as follows:-

“A working group of the Licensing Committee to be known as the Taxi Consultation Group will be formed. It will consist of a maximum number of 5 Elected Members and 7 representatives of the taxi trade of whom 1 will represent the airport operators. Additional attendees will include the Taxi Inspector, the Fleet Services Manager, an observer from the Disability Advisory Group and a solicitor representing the licensing function. Other relevant representatives will be invited to attend meetings on an ad hoc basis.

Taxi trade members must represent a specific and recognised interest group. It will be understood that the representatives will report to their members after meetings.

The Group will meet twice yearly. The Group will act without any powers but will discuss matters of relevance to the taxi trade at the discretion of the convener and make recommendations to the Licensing Committee as appropriate.

“Matters of relevance” includes all matters relevant to the taxi trade in Aberdeen that are within the remit of the Licensing Committee.”

5.2 Membership

Under paragraph 30(2) of the Council's Standing Orders, the Licensing Committee shall have the power to appoint Consultative Groups without delegated powers consisting of its own members and such other persons as it thinks fit.

Correspondence was issued to all taxi trade groups including the current members and representatives of the TCG requesting that they provide details in terms of their representation on the TCG, how many members of the trade they represent, how they report back to their members, how they take their members views into account and whether they would wish to remain on the TCG.

A total of seven groups responded to the correspondence, however one of these groups, namely the Disability Advisory Group could not be considered as an affiliated member of the TCG as they do not represent any specific trade members, although a representative from this group would be welcome to attend the meetings as an observer. It

is therefore proposed that the membership of the TCG be as outlined in the appendix to this report. Taxi trade membership of the TCG would be for a fixed period of three years, after which time, correspondence seeking a further fixed term representation will be issued to all current taxi trade groups

It is also proposed that a member of the TCG would be entitled to nominate in advance of the meeting a substitute member to attend meetings only in the event that he/she was unable to attend.

5.3 Frequency of Meetings

Currently the TCG meets four times a year, however the current frequency of the meetings of the Group and the work associated with and following the meetings has had a significant impact on the workload of officers. It is therefore recommended that the number of meetings be reduced. If the Committee agrees to reduce the number of meetings of the Group to two meetings a year, this would result in a saving in officers' time to undertake other duties.

As a result of the proposed reduction of meetings, it would be the intention to write to the approved membership of the Group ten days in advance of the meeting seeking items for the agenda.

It is also proposed that the next meeting of the Group would be held on 24th October 2011 at 9.30am in the Town House. A programme of meeting dates for 2012 would be arranged in due course.

5.4 Feedback from Taxi Consultation Group Members

The Taxi Consultation Group discussed the draft report at their meetings on 23rd May and 15th August 2011, during which the following suggestions were submitted from some members of the Group:-

- that representation of the TCG include all Licensed Taxi Offices;
- that the TCG include a representative from the Disability Advisory Group as a member rather than an observer;
- that the TCG meet preferably four times per year to coincide with the meetings of the Licensing Committee;
- that two members of each taxi trade group be represented on the TCG as opposed to the recommendation within the report that only one be appointed;

6. IMPACT

Establishing a TCG ensures regular dialogue and consultation with the taxi trade. This enables the Council to fulfil its obligations to consult with the public and brings issues of relevance to the fore, often before they become problematical.

There is no particular interest for the public in the work of this Group as it has no delegated powers from the parent Committee, although as

potential passengers, the public may be interested in some issues which may be referred from this Group to the Committee.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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