

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

ABERDEEN, 2 May 2024. Minute of Meeting of the TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP. Present:- Councillor Delaney, Chairperson; and Councillors Clark, Henrickson and Lawrence; and Adam Catto (Independent), Chris Douglas (Aberdeen Taxis), Russell McLeod (Rainbow City Taxis), (Thomas Mason (Airport Taxis), Luke Hulse (Independent) and Patwa (Disability Equity Partnership), Peter Cambell (Railway Station/Unite).

In attendance:- PC Gary Forbes (Police Scotland), John Weir, Derek Jamieson and Kevin Flannigan (Fleet Services, Operations), Sandy Munro and Daniel Wright (Licensing Team) and Mark Masson and Gogo Okafor (Committee Services.

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, particularly Thomas Mason, who was attending his first meeting as the representative from Airport Taxis.

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of the Chairperson, Councillor Al-Samarai, noting that Councillor Delaney would be chairing the meeting today.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements intimated.

MINUTE OF PREVIOUS MEETING OF 6 FEBRUARY 2024 - FOR APPROVAL

3. The Consultation Group had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 6 February 2024.

The Consultation Group resolved:-
to approve the minute.

MATTERS ARISING

4. By way of matters arising from previous minutes, the following was raised:-

- (1) With reference to article 3 (Easement of Taxi Restrictions at Aberdeen Railway Station) of the minute of 6 December 2024, Hussein Patwa sought confirmation as to whether a response had been received from ScotRail Management in respect of the locations of the drop off points, and whether all licensed drivers had been contacted by the Licensing Team and provided with the aforementioned information; and
- (2) With reference to article 6 (Promoting Taxi Driver Equality and Disability Awareness), Hussein Patwa sought confirmation of the indicative timescales for proposals in terms of Taxi Driver Training.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

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- (i) that in relation to (1) above, Sandy Munro confirmed that correspondence had been circulated to licensed drivers in November 2023, and that if possible, the information would also be circulated to members of the Group; and
- (ii) that in relation to (2) above, Sandy Munro confirmed that an initial report on Taxi Driver Training would likely be submitted to the Licensing Committee on 5 June 2024.

**THE IMPACT OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR SHORTAGES IN THE CITY CENTRE
- ABERDEEN INSPIRED**

5. This item was withdrawn, noting that the papers from Aberdeen Inspired and the Taxi Trade would be submitted to the first meeting of the Street Knowledge Test Working Group.

ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT

6. The Consultation Group had before it for consideration, the Enforcement Officer's report which provided details relating to Taxi/Private Hire Car issues and information.

The report provided details of (a) the current numbers of licensed vehicles and drivers compared to May 2023; (b) street knowledge test statistics during the period 23 January to 23 April 2024; and (c) the number of tests booked, sat and passed.

Daniel Wright provided a summary of the key findings of the report.

The Consultation Group resolved:-
to note the information provided.

MIXED TAXI FLEET - SANDY MUNRO

7. With reference to article 7 of the minute of the previous meeting of 6 February 2024, the Consultation Group had before it, issues relating to a mixed Taxi Fleet, including:-

- Arriving at a reasonable split percentage;
- Method of maintaining the split;
- Reasonable length of notice of availability of a saloon plate; and
- Means of ensuring saloon plates were properly surrendered.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

that this item be added to the next meeting of the Group, noting that the taxi trade would submit suggestions/proposals relating to a mixed Taxi Fleet.

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PROPOSAL FOR STREET KNOWLEDGE TEST - RUSSELL MCLEOD

8. The Consultation Group had before it the Taxi Trade Members submission for Aberdeen's Street Knowledge Test.

Russell McLeod provided a summary of the submission and responded to questions from members.

During discussion, it was acknowledged that there was a need to modernise the test.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to establish a Street Knowledge Test Working Group consisting of the following membership:-
 - the Vice Convener of the Licensing Committee;
 - Taxi Trade – 3 members;
 - DEP – 1 member;
 - Aberdeen Inspired – 1 member;
 - Our Union Street – 1 member;
 - Police Scotland – 1 member; and
 - Councillors Boulton, Clark, Henrickson and Lawrence;
- (ii) to note that the working group would consider and submit proposals for a modernised Street Knowledge Test to the next meeting of the Group; and
- (iii) to invite a representative from VisitAberdeenshire onto the working group.

WAV TEST MANUAL (HANDRAILS/HANDHOLDS) - TAXI TRADE SUBMISSION

9. The Consultation Group had before it a paper by the Taxi Trade members which sought discussion and a practical resolution in relation to the local authority's position on the Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle testing manual and the features within it, specifically regarding handrails/handholds.

Chris Douglas provided a summary of the paper.

John Weir, Fleet Service Manager made reference to the WAV testing manual and process for vehicle testing, he also explained that handrails were required to be installed for wheelchair passengers and should be retro fitted by qualified people.

During discussion the following was raised:-

- that testing for handrails had not been undertaken as part of the WAV vehicle test for six years;
- that there were concerns for those drivers who may fail the WAV vehicle test in the coming days, noting that their vehicle had passed previous tests without the need of handrails;

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- it was acknowledged that although handrails had not been tested as part of the vehicle test previously, this was not a new requirement and drivers should also take responsibility for ensuring that their vehicle is compliant with the WAV test manual; and
- that there was a need to clarify whether the smaller WAV vehicles required to have handrails fitted, similar to the situation regarding steps, whereby only larger WAV vehicles required those.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that a review of the WAV test manual would be undertaken in due course; and
 - (ii) to note that officers would consider options for those drivers who had already booked their vehicle for a test, although no guarantees could be provided at this time.
- **COUNCILLOR STEVE DELANEY, Chairperson**