

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

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COMMITTEE: Licensing

DATE: 23 November 2011

DIRECTOR: Stewart Carruth

TITLE OF REPORT: Multi Purpose Taxi Vehicles Surcharge- Taxi Consultation Group Recommendation

REPORT NUMBER: CG-11-141

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise the Committee of a recommendation from the Taxi Consultation Group.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:

- a) note the TCG recommendation; and
- b) instruct officers to carry out further work and report back to a future meeting on the various factors to be considered.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The costs of producing laminated signs would require to be supported through the licensing budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Taxi Inspection Centre will require to check that the requirement had been complied, at each vehicle examination.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

General Background

At its meeting on 24 October 2011 the Taxi Consultation Group ("TCG") had before it a submission from Unite the Union relating to multi seater taxi tariff rates, as follows:

*"Multi Seater Tariff Rates - there appears to be still a problem of some taxis overcharging passengers when the tariff should not apply in the multi seater taxis as there are 4 or less passengers (sic- see appendix 1- Taxi Tariff Surcharge 10)*

*that the TCG recommend:-*

*a suitable permanent display inside the taxi with the appropriate ACC logo and that this be inserted in all multi seater taxis by ACC.”*

In summary, Unite was of the view that some taxi drivers who operate multi seater vehicles are overcharging by applying a surcharge when carrying 4 or less passengers. Drivers of multi seater vehicles are permitted to charge 50% extra only when carrying 5 or more passengers.

The TCG was of the view that the current licence condition, which requires the taxi tariff card to be displayed in all licensed taxi vehicles, was not sufficient. In order that passengers are given the best opportunity to understand the correct fare for multi seater vehicles an A4 sized poster requires to be displayed in all multi seater taxis, detailing what the surcharge is and when it is applicable.

The TCG was not provided with any evidence that overcharging had taken place.

The full minute of the discussion item at the TCG meeting is produced earlier in the agenda.

#### Analysis/conclusions

The current Condition 13 (appendix 2) states that the licensing authority can provide “a notice or notices” for display in the passenger compartment of a taxi. Consequently, it appears that the licensing authority can in theory require the display of an additional notice regarding fares, without the requirement of a statutory procedure.

However, before deciding whether or not to introduce such a notice, a number of factors would require to be considered by Committee, such as evidence of an existing problem and its extent, equality of treatment in relation to other taxi fare surcharges, practicalities of implementation and the relationship of any additional notice to the existing complex tariff card. Officers should report back on these issues before any decision to proceed being taken.

#### 6. IMPACT

Corporate – None.

Public - Members of the public who use taxi services in the city may have an interest because this matter relates to alleged mischarging by taxi drivers in multi purpose vehicles.

Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment- It is not considered that an EHRIA is required, as it appears that there is nothing in the report that discriminates or disadvantages in terms of the equality strands.

7. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Conditions Applicable to Taxi Licences (City Zone)
- Conditions Applicable to Taxi Licences (Airport Zone)
- Taxi Tariff Card

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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## **Appendix 1**

### City of Aberdeen- Taxi Tariff Card- Surcharge 10

Where more than four passengers carried. Add 50% to basic tariff plus surcharges (excluding surcharges 4, 7 and 8)\*

\* 4 is £1 for pre booking; 7 is £1 for each hire from the airport; and 8 is 50p for each hire from the railway station.

## **Appendix 2**

### Condition 13 of Conditions Applicable to Taxi Licences (City and Airport Zones)

13. The holder of this licence shall obtain from the licensing authority a notice or notices detailing the approved maximum taxi fares and charges appropriate to exclusive or to shared hire of the taxi and shall display the notice or notices as appropriate in the passenger compartment of the taxi in such a position that it or they will be readily visible to the passengers being carried which notice or notices shall incorporate a provision to the effect that the taxi may be operated on shared hire only with the consent of the first hirer or passenger; and (subject to condition 24 below\*) no other notice or notices of fares and charges shall be displayed.

\* Condition 24 relates to taxi-buses and is no longer relevant as there are no taxi-buses in the city.