

TAXI/PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

NOTE OF MEETING OF 17 AUGUST 2009

Present:

Councillors: Reynolds (Convener) and Boulton and Robertson.

John Fowler, (ATG), Neil Pirie, (TBHA), Alistair Rose, (ARTDA), Scott Douglas, (Comcab), Lynne Smith, (ATG/Central Taxis), Gordon McKay, (ATG/Rainbow), Kevin Leiper, (ATG) and Russell McLeod, (ATG/Rainbow)

Sgt Keith Middler (Grampian Police), Brenda Flaherty (Office of City Solicitor), Arlene Dunbar (Office of City Solicitor) and Caroline Treanor (Office of City Solicitor)

Apologies

Councillor Young

1. **Note of Meeting of 18 May 2009**

Approved.

2. **Airport Zoning Working Group**

- (a) Note of Meeting of 10 June 2009
- (b) Note of Meeting of 01 July 2009

Noted.

3. **The Licensing of Booking Offices**

The Group had before them for information a draft report by Director of Corporate Governance regarding the Licensing of Taxi Booking Offices.

Brenda Flaherty explained that the report outlined mandatory and local conditions which would be attached to the licence and advised that the proposed application fee was £190.00 for 3 year licence.

Russell McLeod considered that it would be useful for relevant operators and council officers to meet to discuss the proposed local conditions as he considered that some of the conditions were too onerous, in particular the requirement to keep data for a period of 3 years.

Lynne Smith considered that there was an issue with the terms of the proposed condition 4 with regard to school contracts.

The group noted the report and agreed to fix a meeting to discuss the conditions.

4. **Proposed Taxi Rank to Serve Union Square Development**

The Group had before them a draft report by the Director of Corporate Governance regarding the viability of a taxi rank in Union Square.

Brenda Flaherty advised that Palmerston Road had been investigated as a potential location for a rank; however, the location was too far away from the main entrance, poorly lit and quiet.

Alternative locations at Guild Street, Market Street and Wapping Street were also investigated however; it was considered that these were not viable for safety reasons and traffic congestion.

The draft report advised that the only feasible option would be the establishment of a rank within the development car park. The developer, Hammerson is still considering it's options.

Kevin Leiper advised that he had attended a number of meetings and understood that Hammerson had initially agreed to the establishment of a rank within the car park. However, their position changed to using a free phone system which would generate an income. When no operators came forward, Hammerson then decided to operate a permit system.

The Group agreed to invite representatives of Roads, Planning and Hammerson to the Taxi Consultation Group meeting on 16 November 2009.

5. **Family Saloon Car Partnerships**

The Group had before it a draft report from the Director of Corporate Governance regarding Family Saloon Car Partnerships

Brenda Flaherty advised that the report had come about as a result of 4 requests by taxi operators to form family partnership while retaining their saloon cars rather than providing a wheelchair accessible taxi. The report recommended refusing the requests.

Councillor Boulton considered it would be useful if the report contained statistics outlining the percentage of the fleet which were wheelchair accessible.

6. **"Get you home" Spare Wheels**

The group had before it a draft report by the Director of Corporate Governance regarding space savers wheels.

The report recommended the amendment of Condition 19 attached to Taxi Operator Licences which prohibits the use of space saver wheels and allows the use of said wheels in certain circumstances.

John Fowler said that he thought the report was long overdue and welcomed no recommendations.

Members of the Group expressed concern about operators completing a hire with a space saver wheel fitted and it was agreed to amend the report accordingly.

7. **Renfrewshire Council v Sneddon – Court of Session Decision**

The Group had before them a synopsis of a Court of Session Decision in the Case of Renfrewshire Council v Sneddon.

Brenda Flaherty advised that the decision was presented for information and confirmed that the committee's policy on wheelchairs all was robust.

8. **AOCB**

(i) **Vehicle Specification**

The Group had before it a letter dated 6 August 2009 from Bill Parris, National Operations Manager, Allied Vehicles and an undated letter from Alistair Williamson, Chairperson of Disability Advisory Group (DAG).

Mr Parris's letter expressed concern about the decision taken by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 3rd June, 2009 to adopt a vehicle specification based on the Department for Transport's Consultative document. The letter requested that the Committee reconsider its decision and revisit the specification. Thereafter the Committee heard from Alistair Williamson who advised that DAG had not been consulted on the proposed specification.

The Group agreed to invite Mr Parris and Mr Williamson to the Licensing Committee meeting on 2 September 2009.

(ii) **Taxi Rank Location Map**

Members of the trade advised that the taxi rank location map was going to be distributed during Off-Shore Europe and had been advised, that after this event, no further copies would be distributed.

Brenda Flaherty agreed to raise the issue with Corporate Communications.

8. **Date of Next Meeting**

16 November 2009 at 10 am.