

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Licensing

DATE: 28 October 2009

DIRECTOR: Stewart Carruth, Corporate Governance

TITLE OF REPORT: Provision of Taxi Service at Aberdeen Airport and potential removal of the Zoning Condition

REPORT NUMBER: CG-10-063

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to enable Members to make a decision on whether to retain the zoning condition currently imposed on taxi licenses whereby taxis can either operate exclusively out of Aberdeen Airport ("the airport") or exclusively in the City.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

- a) That Members consider the arguments in this report and resolve to remove the zoning condition.
- b) If the zoning condition is removed the green taxi plates and small roof signs issued to airport operators are replaced with yellow plates at the Council's expense
- c) Officers to report back to Committee 6 months after de-zoning and again at 1 year on how the new arrangement is working.
- d) that officers be instructed to follow the statutory procedure to remove the zoning condition on all taxi licenses.
- e) That no action is taken at this time in respect of changing the fare tariff which includes a £1 surcharge for each hire commencing at the airport, to account for the "dead" mileage traveling back to the airport after dropping off a hire in the city. This will be addressed at the next taxi fare review which will be around February 2010.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

If the zoning condition is removed then all airport zoned taxis will need to have their green taxi plates replaced with yellow ones at a cost of £15 per plate. With 135 plates to replace this will cost £2,025. There are also approximately 100 roof signs (some vehicles have inbuilt signs) at £66 each, (£6600) making a total cost of £8625. The Council should bear this cost as the change will be a Council led initiative.

There are no other financial implications.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

If approved, the point of removing the condition is to improve the taxi service to the public at the airport. The change will be monitored.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The legal implications are minimal. Zoning of the airport for taxi operations is achieved by imposing a condition on all taxi licenses restricting their operation to either the city or the airport. If the zoning is removed then we will remove that condition from all the licenses, following the statutory procedure. Thereafter all taxis will be able to operate from anywhere in the city.

Other potential implications are that the taxi service at the airport might deteriorate rather than improve. We will monitor the situation as will Aberdeen Airport Ltd and their taxi managing agents to ensure consistency and quality of service.

6. REPORT

6.1 History

Since 1992 the city has been split into 2 zones for taxi operational purposes. Licence holders choose to operate exclusively from the airport zone (green plates) or the city zone (yellow plates). Initially the system was not managed in any way. Latterly, Aberdeen Airport Ltd (AAL) has contracted with a taxi company to act as the managing agents of the airport taxi fleet. Airport operators remain self employed but contract with the managing agents to work exclusively under their corporate badge, out of the airport. In return the managing agents ensure that these operators get work in preference to any other operators.

6.2 The “Green Light”

For some considerable time there was a large volume of complaints from the public regarding long waiting times for taxis at the airport, poor service and taxis dropping of passengers then driving away empty, despite there being a long queue at the airport taxi rank. This latter category were city zoned taxis which were not licensed to pick up at the airport. Understandably the public did not like this method of working.

In order to address this a “green light” system was introduced. Since then the level of complaints has dropped off and there are now virtually none. The “green light” works when there is a queue of passengers waiting for taxis and no airport taxis available to pick them up. The managing agent will operate the green light which signals to city taxis that they can pick up from the airport taxi rank.

The issue with the “green light” enabling city zoned taxis to pick up is that these operators are in breach of the condition restricting them to working exclusively in the city. Breach of a licence condition is a criminal offence. Airport operators do not like the green light as they view this as taking away work that is rightfully theirs with no commensurate provision to enable them to pick up in the city, thereby disadvantaging them.

6.3 Aberdeen Airport Ltd

The airport is a subsidiary of BAA plc. It is built on private ground, and as such, it, rather than the Licensing Authority controls the taxi ranks and the approach roads at the airport. The airport authority also controls access. The airport is managed under the Airport Byelaws 2005. Security is a prime concern following the bomb attack at Glasgow Airport several years ago and AAL has recently invested heavily in improvements to security, access, and facilities on the site. AAL charges airport zoned taxi operators an annual fee to operate from the airport,

ostensibly giving them exclusive rights to passengers who require a taxi from the airport and who have not pre booked. The operation of the “green light” system had eroded this exclusivity by allowing city zoned taxis, which do not pay a permit fee to AAL, to pick up at the airport rank.

6.3 The Airport Zoning Working Group

A report was submitted to the Licensing Committee on 25th February 2009 which initiated a discussion on how the situation at the airport could be resolved. The report recommended that a working group be set up comprising all interested parties to look comprehensively at the various issues surrounding the provision of a taxi service at the airport with the aim of recommending an efficient and effective option to a) the Taxi Consultation Group and b) the Licensing Committee in late summer 2009.

The Group was set up and has been meeting regularly since April 2009. There are representatives on it from Elected Members (including Ward Councillors), Aberdeen Taxi Group (ATG), Central Taxis, ComCab, airport taxi drivers and AAL.

Before the group met for the first time all taxi operators were written to and asked for their views on the operation at the airport and whether it should be de-zoned. As was to be expected there were a wide variety of views expressed and no consensus emerged. Options consulted on were:- a) removal of the zoning condition entirely, b) an overlapping zone whereby city zoned taxis could pick up at the airport when a green light was lit indicating that there was a queue of passengers waiting and c) no change to the status quo.

6.4 It was agreed at the outset that the status quo was not an option.

AAL submitted a report to the Working Group (Appendix 1) putting forward proposals for change. It supported the removal of the zone and proposed to control taxi access by use of an Automated Number Plate Recognition system (ANPR). This system will be implemented regardless of the outcome of the zoning issue and is not one that the Council can or will become involved in.

A taxi managing agent is in place to ensure the needs of passengers are being met. A dedicated airport fleet would be retained to serve the airport, working a shift system to ensure 24 hour cover. The Managing Agent organises a “top up” fleet of taxis to cope with peak demand periods. The Managing Agents must meet stringent performance standards, queue length being one of the key indicators. Taxis not authorised to go through the ANPR barrier will be permitted to pick up passengers in the short stay car park.

6.5 Rainbow City Taxis disagreed. (Appendix 2) It had grave concerns regarding how AAL’s proposals would improve the taxi service at the airport, taking the view that these proposals would have a negative effect by reducing dramatically the number of potential available taxis by not allowing them through the ANPR barrier. Rainbow favoured the overlapping zone and the retention of the “green light”.

6.6 AAL responded with another paper dated 25th June 2009 (Appendix 3). This debate continued throughout the lifetime of the Working Group with no progress being made. There was no consensus of opinion arising from the debate.

6.7 AAL , in order to move the business along then suggested that the 2 following proposals a) a taxi sharing scheme is introduced at the airport at predetermined times and during periods of peak demand and b) a Taxi Partners Programme is set up whereby other taxi firms become “partners” and register their interest with the managing agents who will then call on the partners assistance with clearing passengers during periods of high demand.

Both these options generated a lot of discussion and again, no consensus emerged.

6.8 Eventually, in order to move the discussion along, Rainbow City retracted their insistence that the only workable solution was to have an overlapping zone. The Working Group then agreed that the favoured option was to de-zone the airport by removing the appropriate condition on airport zoned taxi licenses. This is therefore the option that is recommended to the Committee in this report.

6.8 In order to ensure that the service does not deteriorate a monitoring system will be set up. A paper was presented to the Working Group (Appendix 4). Monitoring will include, among other things a question in the City Voice Focus Group regular questionnaire. There will be a six month period during which the provision of taxi services at the airport will be monitored by regular reports to officers from the managing agents and AAL. At the conclusion of that period a further report will be submitted to Committee for a final decision to be taken. No change will be made to the fare meters in airport taxis in the meantime allowing them to retain the surcharge they currently enjoy for “dead” mileage but, if the de-zoning becomes permanent then no surcharge will be payable.

7. FINAL CONSULTATION

7.1 While still in draft format this report was circulated for a consultation on its recommendations. The following people were consulted,:-

Internal, City Solicitor, City Chamberlain, Head of Corporate Communications, Convener and Shadow Convener, Local Ward Members.

External:- all taxi and private hire car operator licence holders, (around 1000) and the Members of the Airport Zoning Working Group.

7.2 Responses were received from 6 individuals and from Rainbow City Taxis. (Appendix 5)

8. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Brenda Flaherty, Legal Manager, tel (52)2624, bflaherty@aberdeencity.gov.uk

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

30.04.09

Prior to the second meeting of the taxi working group on the 5 May, AAL wishes to put forward its proposals for changes to the current taxi licensing arrangements, in order to focus future discussions.

To recap, it is assumed there is agreement that an efficient and effective taxi service at the airport should

- 1) Ensure a sufficient number of taxis continue to serve the airport, particularly at peak times and for late flights (and facilitate the future growth of the airport)
- 2) Consist of a dedicated airport fleet
- 3) Be a fair, safe and legal operation.
- 4) Aim to reduce the number of empty taxi journeys.

Furthermore complaints about the current system are that;

- 1) City zoned taxis have been permitted to pick up passengers at the airport taxi rank when there are queues of passengers, operating outside of their zone and therefore committing a criminal offence. Airport taxi drivers argue that they pay substantial amounts every month to operate exclusively from the airport.
- 2) Grampian Police expend unnecessary time and resources in enforcing the zoning arrangements
- 3) Current Licensing restrictions prevent airport contracted taxis returning from an outward trip with a new fare unless pre-booked, and the city zoned cabs are only allowed to set down or pick up at the airport if they are pre-booked. Inefficiency of taxi vehicle passenger carrying.
- 4) The zoned number of drivers does not meet peak or out of hours demand in itself.

With this in mind, AAL supports the removal of the airport zone.

- As is widely known Aberdeen Airport Ltd, a subsidiary of BAA plc, control the land on which the airport and surrounding approach roads rest and has powers to control access of taxis and private hire cars under the Airport Byelaws 2005.
- AAL will have the ability to control access by taxis to the airport with the use of an Automatic Number Plate Recognition system and without reliance on criminal prosecution.
- A single taxi management agent will be retained to ensure the needs of the airport passenger are being met.
- A dedicated and permitted airport fleet will be retained who will continue to serve the airport on a 24/7 basis and will follow a shift pattern to take account of the airport business.

- A 'top up' fleet of vehicles will be organised by the taxi management agent to meet the extra demand that can not be met by the airport fleet. This second tier of taxis will consist of the remaining management agents city taxis.
- It is the responsibility of the taxi management agent to meet the needs of Aberdeen Airport's passengers. They will call upon their second tier of taxis at the time they consider to be appropriate to meet stringent performance standards. AAL holds queue length as one of the most important measures and will be employing various methods to assess how well these are being managed.
- Taxis permitted to pick up at the airport will as a consequence be able to pick up from city ranks and thus increase the chances of two way loading.
- The control over these taxis in ensuring they return to the airport will be the responsibility of the taxi management agent.
- All taxis will continue to drop off passengers for the airport in the drop off area. Taxis that are permitted to access the taxi rank for pick up will do so by going through the ANPR barrier. All other taxis will be directed to the short stay car park for pick ups.

AAL are keen to discuss these proposals further at the next scheduled taxi working group meeting on 5 May. We will also be happy for the ANPR system to be explained in more detail.

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29 May 2009

Convenor
 Taxis at Aberdeen Airport Working Group

Town House
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 ABERDEEN
 AB10 1AQ

Dears Convenor

I would like to propose an alternative proposal for the working group to consider.

I was of the opinion that this Working Group was set up in an attempt to improve the Taxi Service at Aberdeen Airport, and also to ensure that those Taxis that do pick up are not in breach of their Licensing condition.

This proposal is based on my assumption that AAL will introduce a barrier system (ANPR) with or without the backing of this working group or Aberdeen City Council (Licensing Committee)

I would suggest the following be for a 12 month trial period and for the working group to meet at least three times during this period:

- 1) Retain the Airport Zone

It is my opinion that this is what the majority of Airport drivers would favour, this gives Airport drivers the security that they have exclusive rights at Aberdeen Airport during normal periods and would negate the need for these drivers to work the City ranks, which in return will provide a better service cover by the Airport fleet for Airport customers.

- 2) Vary all City zoned vehicles Licensing conditions which will allow City drivers to legally pick up at Aberdeen Airport when invited by AAL's Managing Agent "Green Light"
- 3) Instead of AAL's 2 tier system. AAL introduce a 3 tier system
 - i) Airport permit vehicles who remain the only vehicles which can wait at Airport ranks (including all Heliports)

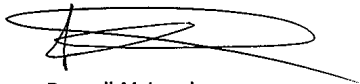
- ii) Managing Agent City fleet which can be called upon when there are no Airport vehicles available. Managing Agent can inform their City fleet via radio/data system.
- iii) Green light is retained which would inform all remaining Aberdeen taxis that passengers are waiting.

AAL and the Managing Agent seem to have already agreed/accepted what ever barrier charge AAL are levying. As Managing Agent this is their prerogative to do so on behalf of their own fleet, also to allow their own City fleet to pick up first is again an advantage of being the Managing Agent. The Taxi Managing Agent at Aberdeen Airport can not however accept a levy on behalf of the majority (800) of Aberdeen's remaining Taxi Drivers. I would urge AAL to allow these taxis to pick up without charge. At the point these taxis are required all other avenues will have been exhausted. Given that at the point these vehicles are required all the Managing Agents vehicles will have been utilised there could very well be a customer service issue.

I feel this proposals offer a more flexible service to passengers at Aberdeen Airport, and does not restrict the current 1250 taxis available fleet to a fleet of 450.

If its customer service that is paramount to AAL, surely they can see that to cut the available fleet by over 60% is not a realistic option.

Yours sincerely



Russell McLeod
Managing Director
Rainbow Cars Ltd

Note To Taxi Working Group
25th June 2009

Aberdeen Airport Limited response to Russell McLeod, Rainbow Taxis Proposal

I refer to the notes from the recent meeting of the Taxi Working Group and make response to your specific request for the airport to review the possible solution proposed by Russell McLeod, Rainbow Taxis.

In the first instance, let me emphasise, the passenger is at the heart of how we manage the airport. The Airport is an integral part of the City and Shire and we accept and consider ourselves fully responsible for that our performance, and our ability to meet the needs of passengers has a large bearing on the short and long term prosperity of the North East.

Previously we tabled to the Group our key measures when considering the proposed changes to the airport zoning. Our solution took full account of these issues and we remain confident that the proposal would encompass these.

- Ensure sufficient number of taxis continue to serve the airport, particularly at peak times and for late flights
- Retain a dedicated airport fleet to support the achievement of the above
- Be a fair, safe and legal operation
- Aim to reduce number of empty / and possible speculative journeys

We will continue to use these when we consider alternative proposals.

With this in mind, when reviewing that which was put forward by Russell McLeod to the Working Group, we would make the following observations.

1. The proposal to retain an Airport Zone relies heavily on the green light system to address peak demand. The impact of this system is overstated. One of the main reasons the working group was set up, was to address the failure of the existing system to generate sufficient additional taxis at peak demand whilst it also recognised that the existing system was illegal in terms of taxi licensing.

Unfortunately, experience has demonstrated it has never been a simple case of switching the light on to generate the required number of taxis. A green light is only as effective as far as it can be seen and therefore its success is measured by the number of taxi drivers that happen to be on site. It is mis-leading to suggest and foolish to believe, that the airport has approximately 1200 taxis currently at its disposal. This does not take into account shift patterns worked by city operators, pre-ordained contract arrangements and demand generated elsewhere in the City.

2. In response to the comment regarding the airport fleet and city pick up, ultimately our joint aim was that we would endeavour to reduce the number of one-way hires. Removing the Airport Zone opens the ability for all drivers to have access to return journeys. In our proposal the Airport Managing Agent would be responsible for making the decision of whether an airport driver accepting a hire within the city would compromise the service at the airport. If necessary they would then have to supplement the airport fleet to ensure service delivery. This, I would suggest, makes this a more manageable situation for all with effective controls being exercised.

3. I note also the comment regarding securing the airport drivers' livelihood. Our proposal would also deliver this to the driver by way of a de-zoned airport but controlled and managed by a single operator.

Aberdeen Airport does not anticipate and does not support a huge increase in the dedicated airport fleet. The very nature of the airport taxi business can not sustain a fleet of more than 150 drivers without diluting their ability to earn a salary. There exists an optimum number of drivers that will service approximately 90% of the demand for airport taxis and balances the need for the airport to continue to be an enticing and viable place of work.

4. In terms of the 3 tier proposal we would make the following response. A single agent managing the overall service gives us and the agent greater control in terms of service delivery, management of capacity and demand thus ensuring that we have a taxi service available as and when the passenger requires. It is not clear what benefit a three tier proposal would give to the traveller, given the limitations of the green light system.

It is important to bear in mind that the point of the working group being convened was as a result of the green light being illegal and ineffective in managing supply and demand. The proposal merely legalises the current process that historically has been deemed ineffective.

5. We appreciate that Mr McLeod has suggested running a trial based on a 3 tier system. By de-zoning the airport as per our previous proposal we can effectively alter how the taxi service is operated and managed going forward, should the need arise. We do recognise the need for change and have more to gain and learn by running with our proposal given the current relationships and knowledge. We are confident that the scope afforded to a single taxi management agent at the airport with relative control, will be more effective and provide a favourable number of taxis than currently respond in a green light environment. This will also remove a large degree of the uncertainty that we presently experience and instil clarity in the taxi operation for the passenger.

The question of whether a charge should be imposed on non airport taxi operators picking up is not within the remit of the taxi working group. Aberdeen Airport Limited have always been consistent in their position in that as a private company, BAA receives no public funding and that it can only afford investments in the region of £30 million over the next five years if airlines, retailers, transport providers and others who profit from the airport, contribute towards the cost of providing the essential facilities on which the airport relies. Just as airlines pay to use our runways and airfield facilities, it is absolutely right that taxi operators should contribute towards the cost of providing and maintaining essential forecourt facilities. It is also worth noting that research which was issued with the Working Group Note of Meeting 06 May 2009 indicated that Taxi charging from airports is commonplace.

Following the terror attack in Glasgow in June 2007 a project was instigated and has recently been completed which has identified zoned areas for specific services and introduced further security controls to the external areas. During this project it was accepted that all passenger pick up should be accommodated within the public car parks. This was determined on the basis that the transaction time for passenger pick-up cannot easily be controlled and the arriving passengers journey can be affected by many interacting influences, ie Border Control, the wait for luggage, flight arrival times etc. All of the above makes flights arrivals an entirely different experience to a passenger drop-off which can help explain the reason why these processes have been addressed independently.

Finally, we also wanted to ensure that the forecourt facilitated the free flow of traffic and easy access to the terminal building. If we were to allow pick up from the forecourt, we would inevitably create a 'non-approved' car park and re-introduce what was originally being managed out by the project in the first instance.

In summary and considering all of the above points, it remains our opinion that our initial proposal of de-zoning is the best way forward and we will continue to work with the Council and the Taxi Working Group to facilitate its introduction.

Yvonne Birch
Commercial Manager
Aberdeen Airport Limited

Fraser Bain
Terminal Manager
Aberdeen Airport Limited

KK Lam
General Manager
Com Cab

Proposed Monitoring re Airport Zoning**Existing monitoring information/sources**

NESTRANS Regional Transport Strategy 2021 Monitoring Report April 2009

Taxis

Indicator 29	The number of taxis and private hire vehicles available in the northeast	On target
Indicator 30	The number of licensed taxi and private hire drivers in the north east	No target ↑
Indicator 31	The proportion of taxis which are capable of carrying wheelchairs	On target

Indicator 29: The number of taxis and private hire vehicles available in the north east.	Baseline 2006:			
		Taxis	Private Hire	Total
	Aberdeen	927	174	1,101
	Aberdeenshire	360	242	602
	North east	1,287	416	1,703
	<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2006</i>			
	Monitor 2007:			
		Taxis	Private Hire	Total
	Aberdeen	939	175	1,114 (+7)
	Aberdeenshire	438	274	712 (+18.3%)
North east	1,377	449	1,826 (+7.2%)	
<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2007</i>				
Monitor 2008:				
	Taxis	Private Hire	Total	
Aberdeen	980	207	1,187 (6.5%)	
Aberdeenshire	501	322	823 (+15.6%)	
North east	1,377	449	2,010 (+10.1%)	
<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2008</i>				
Target: To increase the number of vehicles available for hire by at least 1% per year from 2006 base to at least 2,000 by 2021.				

Indicator 30: The number of	Baseline 2006:
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licensed taxi and private hire drivers in the north east.	Taxi Drivers Private Hire Total			
	Aberdeen	1,249	2	1,251
	<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>1,493</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>1,550</u>
	North east	2,742	59	2,801
	<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2006</i>			
	Monitor 2007:			
	Taxi Drivers Private Hire Total			
	Aberdeen	1,286	2	1,288 (+3.0%)
	<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>1,561</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>1,624 (+4.8%)</u>
	North east	2,847	65	2,912 (+4.0%)
	<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2007</i>			
	Monitor 2008:			
Taxi Drivers Private Hire Total				
Aberdeen	1,346	2	1,348 (+4.7%)	
<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>1,745</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>1,801 (+10.9%)</u>	
North east	3,091	58	3,149 (+8.1%)	
<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2008</i>				

Indicator 31: The proportion of taxis which are capable of carrying wheelchairs	Baseline 2006:	
	Aberdeen	299 (27.2%)
	<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>21 (3.5%)</u>
	North east	320 (18.8%)
	<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2006</i>	
	Monitor 2007:	
	Aberdeen	350 (31.4%)
	<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>26 (3.7%)</u>
	North east	376 (20.6%)
	<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2007</i>	
	Monitor 2008:	
	Aberdeen	393 (33.1%)
<u>Aberdeenshire</u>	<u>39 (4.7%)</u>	
North east	432 (21.5%)	
<i>Source: Scottish Transport Statistics 2008</i>		
Target: To increase the proportion of taxis which are capable of carrying wheelchairs to 25% by 2021 (20% by 2011).		

- Annual reporting

City Voice – Aberdeen’s Citizen’s Panel

- Possible question for the public relating to the ease of getting a taxi at the airport, possibly time specific i.e. did you have to wait longer than 10mins?

- Transportation questions usually required for August to be included in September Questionnaire, with results in December
- If September is not achieved can try to get agreed question in another quarterly questionnaire
- Base line question prior to any changes would be advisable
- Annual reporting

A Surface Access Strategy for Aberdeen Airport 2008-2012

Target 4: BAA Aberdeen/ATF work with the taxi operators and the Aberdeen City Council to bring about changes during 2008 and 2009 in the efficiency of taxi vehicle passenger-carrying, both in terms of two-way loading and in increasing average taxi occupancy with a managed sharing scheme

- Base line?
- How will this be monitored? How frequent?
- SMART?

Airport Managing Agent

- Current targets for taxi waiting times
- Monitoring and reporting on agreed frequency on achievement of targets

Possible additional new sources of information:

Taxi Drivers

- Develop questionnaire for all yellow/green plates which could include:

View of how the new system is working
How this is affecting their business – better/worse/the same
Suggestions for improvement
- Could be done annually/six monthly and report analysis
- Should do this early to establish base line

Public

- Develop feedback forms for issue at the airport or combine with current customer feedback
- Develop on-line questionnaire
- Utilize Council/BAA website
- Possibly use business portal websites to capture business market
- Possibly use tourist portal websites to capture tourist market
- Could be done annually and report analysis
- Should do this early to establish base line

Sandy Stuart
(Name and address supplied)

Dear Brenda

Re Aberdeen Airport de zoning

I would urge the City Council to hold back; surely it is more important that the Council take back control of the Taxi Plates i.e. to stop companies and other people making money out of hiring out cars with plates that are not in the driver's name. At present the Council it would appear condones this practice, even though it is illegal. I wonder what will happen should there ever be an accident, with a taxi that has an illegal plate.

In view of the lack of information viz a viz B.A.A. and Com- Cabs, as to what is to happen (post de zoning) would it not be best if the Council insisted that the zoning laws as is should be implemented? Thus forcing the Airport Authorities and Com-Cab to make known their proposals.

In my opinion the only way that the Airport passengers will receive the best service, is by a dedicated taxi fleet, where a degree of control remains , however a free for all there can be no control at all and the passengers will suffer.

I would like all the Licensing Committee members to receive a copy of my letter. I thank you in advance.

YFS

Sandy Stuart (Badge No.919)

From: Kev L (email address supplied)
To: <licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
CC: <jastewart@aberdeencity.gov.uk>, Jaqui Wallace <jwallace@aberdeencity.gov...>
Date: 29/09/2009 16:57

Dear Brenda

After attending the last airport working group meeting and reading the report on de-zoning I feel that the group have over looked a few things.

I believe the aim of the de-zoning is to develop a more efficient service to the travelling public along with reducing traffic in the area (public demand, carbon foot print and congestion).

With this in mind I would like to point out my own observations.

At the moment Comcabs, as managing agent, are using the existing airport fleet and are calling on their city fleet once the zoned fleet has been depleted. Once both fleets have been depleted only then the "green light is used" to allow other sole traders or office cars to help at busy times.

This means all other city street and office cars dropping off are returning to the city empty until the green light is turned on; Empty cars leaving while Comcabs city fleet rush to the airport adding to the waiting time of passengers and the congestion in the area. (The agent are using the city fleet as they can be billed)

If the proposal of de-zoning goes ahead I can only see more problems, not only for the airport but also the cities other taxi operators be it from an office car or independent street trader.

There will be a marked up surge in yellow plate that will use city ranks reducing the work for many city cars, hitting the independent trader most as they will not have the access to the airport under the new Comcabs partnership scheme and will loose rank space in town. It must be remembered that the non office cars are the 'largest fleet' in the city with over 400 cars. With over 140 new yellow plates being able to use city ranks and the present 400 city fleet not being invited to trade under the new partnership system at the airport hardly seems a fare trade. Again this will add to passenger waiting time at the airport and bring even more area congestion than we have at present, this goes against NESTRANS and BAA ground transport strategy; When Comcabs airport fleet has been depleted they will call upon their city fleet then eventually use their partner offices , with those not participating in the scheme returning empty.

Rainbow city, the cities largest office fleet with over 300 cars, has already announced that they will not join the partnership scheme as they will have extra admin cost and added cost to their drivers. Couple this with over 400 street traders it will only leave a higher percentage of cars leaving (Rainbow, other offices who will not join, street cars not able to join, approximately 75% of total city taxis) leaving the airport empty, and those entering, (Comcabs airport, Comcabs city fleet, partner offices, approximately 25% city taxis)the airport empty. This is a non starter for the public, the city and the environment.

I must stress the cost incurred by the City Council of £8625 (which no doubt will be recouped through licence fees) will be nothing in comparison to the cost incurred by the individual city street traders who are struggling at this moment, the suggestion to de-zone would only reinforce Comcabs position on having a monopoly at the airport.

All together this exercise and the monitoring for a year will make a very unpleasant time for passengers and be very costly to ACC and the taxi trade, also jamming up the road system even further.

To this end I shall oppose any de-zoning that maybe suggested.

I would like to put my own small suggestion forward to you and the elected members that would make a huge difference to passenger transport at the airport, one that will give choice to all and be of a fare and equal system for those in the taxi trade and be one which will serve the most important issue of the arriving public to our city with far greater efficiency.

My proposal is that the airport fleet remain zoned to work there, that will retain the all important dedicated fleet. Any other taxi driver that would like to help out at busy time would pay BAA for a card that would allow them to pass the newly installed barrier on a swipe card basis (Birmingham airport operate this system and it works very well) to be topped up as and when required. Thus any city yellow plate cab dropping off would have to pay a premium for a card that has 10 pickups with no invalid date. This would allow all office and street cars to have the opportunity if required to help clear queues if the driver so wishes (drivers choice to have a card).

At the moment airport drivers pay a permit fee to BAA to operate in the zone and Comcabs city fleet are

charged £1.50 a pick up when they are called upon (50p going to CC, £1 going to BAA), when the (at the moment illegal) green light goes on there is no fee to pay for other drivers (the free pick up is seen as bad business for BAA and Comcabs so no green light until people have queued for half an hour or so).

With my suggestion it would be BAA selling the cards and they would have total control of the queuing time and the switching on of the green light. Buying a card would then become a temporary permit allowing those holders to pick up when the green light is switched on without breaking the law. Cards can be held in cars and used anytime help is needed.

The cost of this would be none to the Council, none to taxi offices, minimal to 'ANY' driver, less demand for licence and hackney changes and most importantly it would be of huge benefit to the travelling public with readily available cars on instant demand with the added bonus of reducing traffic in the vicinity and that of any green issue.

Only one factor will have to be considered and addressed, that is the one of the implementation of the barrier system. The cost would have to be borne by BAA, all monies eventually being recouped through the card payment system. My opinion is that BAA should bear any cost in any instance.

I believe that this would be a far better proposal and suit the needs of passengers in turn be a fair system to all in the taxi trade.

I look forward to your response and comments
Yours sincerely

Kevin Leiper
(Independent street taxi)

Ps, Can I ask you to circulate this email to all concerned in the airport issue 'within the council and NESTRANS' as I am sure you have a better facility to do so, rather than me sitting trying to find and typing loads of email addresses, cheers.

With Windows Live, you can organise, edit, and share your photos.
<http://clk.atdmt.com/UKM/go/134665338/direct/01/>

From: alastair howitt (email address supplied)
To: <licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 23/09/2009 21:55
Subject: airport de-zoning

From alastair howitt taxi driver

I am not in favour of de-zoning.

I believe it would give a lower standard of service. My reasons are :

Drivers would only work at peak times and take "the cream" of the jobs, it is not financially viable to sit there for the late flights or weekends, the rank would be empty. At the moment there is some form of rota system. Where are the airport going to get cars at two o'clock on a sunday morning for a flight late from spain. I can see the headlines on mondays paper "Aberdeen airport nightmare again".

At the moment they have a high standard of dress code, good clean cars, good knowledge of business parks, a variety of vehicles for the job and a management system that i believe to be about 95% efficient.

The green light would work if it was managed properly. They leave it far to late to turn it on and that upsets the public, every airport taxi has a GPS

fitted so they know exactly where the cars are ,there are no excuses!

On the subject of barriers and out of zone charges i hope the council will stand up to "bully boy" tactics of implementation. Everyone wants something for nothing the airport, the council, the taxi driver, the operators. It is in everyone's benefit to come to a common agreement.

This problem was caused in the first place by lack of investment from the airport, council and government. If we had a proper integrated transport system policy, this would not have happened. To take fifty minutes to travel seven miles is a disgrace in a city the size of Aberdeen.

At present we have to make the best of a bad situation, which should never have occurred in the first place.

From: Michael North (email address supplied)
To: <licensing@aberdeencity.gov.uk>
Date: 29/09/2009 22:50
Subject: dezoning of airpport .

hi , i am a "streetcar" taxi . ie no company radio . like many hundreds of taxis in aberdeen are . this does nothing for me and other street cars . this will mean a two/tier licensing . this is my eyes and am sure against european law , restricting my trading . although having been issued by the license from the same source and paid the same , i/we will be denied the same "working rules/conditions".?i hear repeatedly that the customer comes first from airport people etc . why then is it only ONE WEEK every two years (oil week) that anyone can pick up at airport .? this is just a money making stunt ?.if they airport/ council had been/are so worried about pleasing the public arriving at the airport this practice allowing of picking up should of been more widespread than every two years . . the road infrastructure would/should of been sorted out long/long ago . but the again hear we have a LACK OF PLANNING AUTHORITY .? when new airport was built

70"s, they had a blank canvas to work with . they got it wrong then and have continued to clog-up the roads around the airport .some bright spark thought it better to put on a cyle lane on approach road rather whan widen road . how many cylists use this in a day ? less than 100 , how many thousands of cars vans are stuck in the same road . yet the FREE LOADERS (the cylists)sail by the standstill road tax paying users . another cuckoo decision that makes it harder to provide adequate service to airport . have any of you on this committee ever taken so long to go the 400 yds from the front door to the shell garage at any other airport . i certainly have not . instead of welcome to aberdeen it should read WHAT A WELCOME TO ABERDEEN. no amount of taxis at this time will improve service to customers . the green light is as good or as bad as those who operate it . i hear from airport taxis sister com-cabs drivers that at many/many times

the light is late reluctantly or never put on even if there is large amount waiting at shelter.? the roads around the airport is number one thing that has the greatest hindrence of providing a fit/proper service . ! if this area is dezoned and airport taxis and certain radio controlled companies get more than me/other street cars . i/we would need a greatly reduced cost of our "same"?? trading license issued by the council . thats why this two tier system would be wrong .yours michael north (address supplied) . a hackney carriage driver since 1978 .

DEAR SIR/MADAM

HAVING READ THE REPORT ON RECONING ABERDEEN
THE FIRST THING TO REMEMBER IS THE DOP

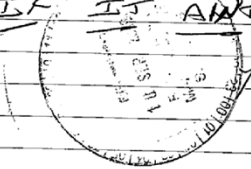
IN COMPANIES THIS TELLS YOU THAT THE SYSTEM
IS WORKING WHICH IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING
ALSO AS A RSO PLEASE ASK YOU DO NOT MENTION
ANYTHING REGARDING THE PRIVATE AIRS DRIVES

IF 160 AIRBOR TAXIS MOVE ONTO THE SYSTEMS
GIVING SOBS IN THE CITY THIS WILL EFFECTIVELY
PUT RSO PLATES OFF THE ROAD AS A RESPONSIBLE
EMPLOYER ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL NEED TO CONSIDER
THIS ON THE WAY THE SYSTEM ABERDEEN
WAS IN PLACE WORKS WELL AND WE ARE ALL
MAKING A LIVING EVEN THOUGH MOST WORK
LONG HOURS SO I THINK THE COUNCIL

SHOULD REMEMBER THE OLD SAYING

IF IT AINT BROKE DONT FIX IT

YOURS J.M
P/HIRE 69



Rainbow House
Craigshaw Road
West Tullos
Aberdeen
AB12 3AR



Admin
T. 01224 344800
F. 01224 344844

29 September 2009

Convenor of Licensing Committee
Town House
Broad Street
ABERDEEN
AB10 1AQ



Dear Convenor

Reference: De-Zoning at Aberdeen Airport

Having been a contributor at the Airport working group, and having seen how our local press have interpreted the report I feel it was my duty to at least inform members of your committee that in my opinion the media headlines "Free for All to Cut Taxi Queues" at Aberdeen Airport is a total misconception.

If you read the report it is very apparent that AAL will implement the ANPR barrier no matter what decision the Licensing Committee make, this will inevitably reduce the amount of available taxis at Aberdeen Airport during peak periods. Since day one of the Airport Working Group AAL's intentions have been crystal clear to everyone attending these meetings.

From a group that was set up to find a way to legally allow City drivers to "help" at Aberdeen Airport during peak periods, we now find ourselves in a position where 65% of Aberdeen Taxi Drivers who are not Airport Taxi Drivers or affiliated to AAL's Taxi Managing Agent will incur a charge if they are requested to pick up passengers at Aberdeen Airport. This whole Working Group process has been hijacked by AAL to create an additional revenue stream.

If this is not bad enough the Licensing Committee are now being asked to ratify and condone this action.

The Airport Working Group originally had 3 options to consider:

De-Zone, Over Lap Zone, Status Quo

If Aberdeen City Council de-zone AAL will introduce the ANPR system incurring a barrier charge.

If Aberdeen City Council adopt the over lap zone AAL will introduce the ANPR system incurring a barrier charge

If Aberdeen City Council do nothing (Status Quo) AAL will introduce the ANPR system, incurring a barrier charge

In other words AAL have a win, win, win situation !

I would ask members to pay particular attention to 6.4 in the report and especially "This system will be implemented regardless of the zoning issue and is not one that the Council can or will become involved in" I totally disagree with this statement.

Aberdeen City Council Licensing Committee governs and legislates for all aspects of Taxis in Aberdeen including fares. The author of the report may well be correct that you can not get involved in what private business (AAL) does but surely morally you should not change legislation at a third parties request knowing that it will ultimately have a negative financial implication for 65% of Aberdeen Taxi Drivers.

Unfortunately AAL has manipulated this whole issue for their own financial gain. Aberdeen City Council are left in an impossible position no matter what they decide there will without doubt be a negative impact on passengers at Aberdeen Airport. If only half of these 65% of Taxi Drivers decide not to take part then that is over 400 drivers who previously were perfectly willing to help when needed, will now be unable to.

The automatic number plate recognition (ANPR) system that AAL have installed at Aberdeen Airport is not a cash barrier, therefore Taxi Offices will be required to register its drivers with the Taxi Managing Agent then collect the fee from its drivers and pass to the Managing Agent. At present I am not aware of any company who is willing to participate in this scheme. There are also 300+ drivers who have no affiliation to any office, unless AAL have had a change of mind there will be no way for these drivers to participate.

I understand that you have no power to stop BAA doing what they want to do but surely you owe 65% of Taxis drivers in Aberdeen more than just to capitulate.

I would urge the Licensing Committee to try and open some sort of dialogue with AAL on drivers behalf, but in the meantime I would ask that you change nothing. Let AAL introduce the ANPR, let AAL make the change, if it works for passengers at Aberdeen Airport then Aberdeen City Council can then make what ever changes are necessary.

By sanctioning AAL's proposal Aberdeen City Council will undoubtedly share in any blame if AAL's proposed scheme is unsuccessful.

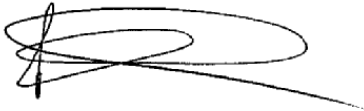
Aberdeen City Council could commission a survey to every Taxi Driver asking if they are willing to pay AAL's charges. Alternatively the Licensing Committee could agree that any levy that AAL

impose on Aberdeen Taxi Drivers and any subsequent increase can be passed on to the customer.
Where could this end?

By agreeing to what AAL are proposing you will have turned your back on approximately 800 Taxi Drivers who are dependant on this Committee for their working conditions.

I will be in attendance at the meeting on 28th October; I would be willing to take part in any discussion.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Russell McLeod', written in a cursive style with a large loop at the end.

Russell McLeod
Managing Director
Rainbow Cars Ltd

17/09/2009) Brenda Flaherty - Fwd: ABERDEEN AIRPORT TAXI PROVISION

From: Licensing
To: Brenda Flaherty
Date: 17/09/2009 08:55
Subject: Fwd: ABERDEEN AIRPORT TAXI PROVISION

Licensing Team
 Office of City Solicitor
 Resources Management
 Aberdeen City Council
 Ground Floor
 Town House
 Broad Street
 Aberdeen AB10 1AQ

Direct Dial 01224 522377
 Direct Fax 01224 522491
www.aberdeencity.gov.uk

>>> JAMES LEIPER < > 16/09/2009 13:40 >>>
 Dear Sirs,

I am surprised to see such backward thinking proposals for the provision of taxis at Aberdeen Airport if the Airport is to be DE-zoned then it should be available to every licensed taxi with a yellow plate in Aberdeen not to one select company if you go down this route we will still have passengers waiting in a queue watching Aberdeen taxis dropping off and driving away empty this is unacceptable.

What B.A.A. and there managing agent are trying to achieve is simply making money and they are not interested in providing a better service to the citizens and visitors to our City.

The council has a great opportunity to go public and tell the people of Aberdeen that they want to DE-zone the Airport as long as B.A.A allow every available Aberdeen taxi to be free to pick up there if they do not agree to this then the council will stipulate that the rank remains zoned and the full letter of the law will be applied and let B.A.A and Com Cabs take the flak for not providing a service and putting profit before people.

All this talk of the whole Com cab fleet and partner taxi companies to help out when the Airport rank is busy is just window dressing to achieve the ability to fleece taxi drivers and worse the passengers as well no company will risk there core business to service the Airport rank and as any honest taxi driver will tell you the Airport and the taxi office cars are busy at the same time IE 08am to 09.30 am and 4pm to 6pm please do not allow this greed to further tarnish our city's reputation.

Thank you for allowing my input to this debate and I sincerely hope that the measures taken will improve the service to the passengers and not just fill the pockets of foreign companies.

Kind regards

Jim Leiper

Taxi licence holder and driver

Former Airport driver but thrown of the rank for daring to have a conflicting opinion from Com Cabs and no help from B.A.A. when informed of the bullying and unjust treatment from there managing agent.

General Manager.
British Airport Authority
Aberdeen Airport
Brent Road.
Aberdeen.

Date 14th November 2009.

Subject :- "Note Of No confidence"

With reference to the attached document
we Aberdeen Taxi Drivers (Airport)
request an urgent meeting with all
relevant parties (with open working days)
in an attempt to rectify major problems
that exist @ Aberdeen Airport.

Our only concern is to provide an
efficient & effective taxi service.

From Aberdeen Taxi Drivers (Airport)
Aberdeen Airport

Contact No
07818646370

Copies to :- Homecabs Aberdeen
 Homecabs London
 Aberdeen City Council.

WE THE ABERDEEN AIRPORT TAXI DRIVERS WISH TO
 CAST A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN THE COMCAB
 AIRPORT MANAGEMENT TEAM AND URGENTLY REQUEST
 AN IMMEDIATE MEETING WITH ALL DRIVERS PRESENT.

NAME	CAB NO.
J McKay	65
E McKay	50
C	37
Ally Angus	78
L Davidson	19
J Davidson	128
Campbell	30
Eddie Morrison	120
B. Katz	49
Paul Wessel	63
James B. Wilson	59
George Robertson	31
D. McKay	23
W. Patrick	51
J. Jones	77
J. J. U.	123
Tom Jones	111
B. Berry	99
M. Harris	100

NAME	CAB NO.
S. BAXTER.	42
E. B. ROBERTSON	47
R	20
9 decker	A2
D J L	A14
D M G S	4
B. Summers	112
Impact	106
WR	149
WR	119.
Fred Paterson	143
J e	A130
D T F	A15
N. Stuart	A86
D. Rowe	101
H S	A69
N. Kering	A5
Jim Wyness	G91
R. W. J.	A61
T. K. Price	A12.
C TAYLOR	A61
George Ruder	G76

/

NAME	CAB NO.
Bill Munro	A71
PETER ROSS	A68
J. BULL	A87
alison Macdonald	A43
J. Dowler	A104
B. BILLET	A53
H. FROU	118
P. Buchan	9.17.
DAVID McWILLIAM	27
BILL NICOL	38
JACK MCKIMMIE	3
BOB WADE	7
RUSSELL NAPEL. R. R. R.	133
Gene May	21
to McKay	A55
Smukerian	54
MONCEF - MESKINI	A9
ALFIE WATSON	A155
GORDON BURKE	57
D. SS	33
W R Burke	136
Allen Ford	25

NAME	CAB NO.
S Ross	28
A Petrie	36
J MacGregor	39
J M Wilson	44
Amy Mulloy	34
Sim Thorburn	134
Bruce McEwen	113.
W M	124
D Brown	74
D. GREGG	35
A. Gordon	144
D McDonald	127
G. H. H. H.	95
W M. H.	205
S 73	75
A. H. H.	90
A. H. H.	96
M. H.	139
C. H.	85
R. H.	18
H. H.	117
D. Webster	110

A

NAME	CAB NO.
P Campbell & C Campbell	A 96
A Middleton	22
W HARKINS	108
S. Steyer	45
Kevin Weir	89
Derek Lunsdale	92