

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE: Licensing

DATE: 24 February 2010

DIRECTOR: Stewart Carruth

TITLE OF REPORT: Airport Zoning- Variation of Condition on Yellow Plate Taxis

REPORT NUMBER: CG/10/027

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To ratify (or otherwise) the variation of a condition on city zoned taxi licences to allow them to pick up fares at Aberdeen Airport (“the airport”) when the ‘green light’ system is in operation.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That Members:

- a) consider the responses from taxi drivers in relation to the proposed variation (see appendix 1);
- b) ratify the proposed new condition; and
- c) instruct officers to finalise procedural aspects of the variation and issue the amended conditions.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The purpose of varying the condition is to improve the taxi service at the airport. The effect of the change will be monitored.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6. REPORT

In terms of paragraph 10(2)(a) Schedule 1 Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Licensing Committee has the power to vary licence conditions.

The Licensing Committee at its meeting of 2 December 2009 approved in principle a recommendation that it should amend the condition on city zoned taxi licences which makes it unlawful for such taxis to pick up at the airport. Under

the proposed variation city zoned taxis will be able to pick up passengers at the airport when the managing agent illuminates the green light. The green light indicates that there is a queue of passengers waiting for taxis which cannot be cleared by airport zoned taxis alone.

The proposed variation is as follows:

Original Condition (to be amended)

2. "This licence is valid within the whole of the licensed area, except Aberdeen Airport".

Proposed New Condition

2. "This licence is valid within the whole of the licensed area, except Aberdeen Airport. When the taxi managing agent, in consultation with Aberdeen Airport Limited and Grampian Police illuminates the green light, and only when the green light is illuminated, this condition will not apply".

The 'green light' system works as follows: a green light is illuminated at the airport by the taxi managing agent in consultation with Aberdeen Airport Limited ("AAL") and Grampian Police (the "police"), when circumstances agreed between AAL and the managing agent dictate it is necessary. The managing agent's taxi marshal, who is stationed at the airport rank, continually monitors the number of airport zoned taxis returning to the airport. If there are not sufficient airport zoned taxis returning to the airport to pick up the waiting passengers then the marshal will illuminate the green light. The managing agent's service standard (as agreed with AAL) is that the average passenger waiting time should be no longer than 15 minutes. The frequency of use of the green light varies day to day due to peaks and troughs in passenger numbers.

The proposed new condition shall, subject to final approval by the Committee, replace the original condition on city zoned taxis (yellow plates), and will come into effect after 28 days if no appeal is lodged with the Sheriff Court during that time.

If the Committee ratify the new condition then city zoned taxis will only be able to pick up at the airport when they are requested to do so by the managing agent, Aberdeen Airport Limited or Grampian Police and when the green light is illuminated. The new condition would allow city zoned taxis to pick up at the airport without being in breach of a condition.

Licensing officers wrote to all taxi licence holders (875 in total) to consult them in relation to the proposed variation. The letter explained the decision of the Licensing Committee on 2 December 2009. We received three responses to the letter. Two of the responses were by email (copies of which can be found at appendix 1) and the other was by telephone.

The first respondent said in their email that airport drivers pay a premium to operate at the airport. Therefore, allowing city drivers to pick up at the airport under the 'green light' system creates inequality between the city and airport zoned drivers. The second respondent's email said that the green light is not easily visible to city drivers from the holding bay outside the airport and suggested the light be moved to the holding bay. The managing agent's city zoned drivers are told in advance when the green light is to be operated which puts other city drivers at a disadvantage.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

Paul M Connolly
Solicitor (Licensing Team)

Email: pconnolly@aberdeencity.gov.uk
Direct Dial: 01224 522357

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Licensing Committee report: CG/10/063 'Provision of Taxi Service at Aberdeen Airport and potential removal of the Zoning Condition', dated 28 October 2009

2

From: Licensing
To: Brenda Flaherty
Date: 07/01/2010 09:39
Subject: Fwd: Proposed New Condition

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

>>> Olive Kemp < > 06/01/2010 19:47 >>>

In response to your letter advising of the above.

I operate as a sole trader, have a yellow plate and would welcome this proposal however I do have reservations regarding the "GREEN LIGHT" system.

1. The "GREEN LIGHT" is not easily visible even though you are at the dropping off area which is close to the terminal building.

2. To maintain airport security and limit amount of Taxis entering the pick up area, the "Green Light" could be moved to the holding area. This would also eliminate confusion and make it fairer to all taxi operators.

3. At the moment Com-Cabs drivers are advised when the "green light" is on. If this light is not clearly visible then Com-Cabs drivers would have the advantage over others.

I would be obliged if my comments would be considered.

Many Thanks

Olive Kemp