

COMMITTEE	Licensing Committee
DATE	12 September 2017
REPORT TITLE	Review of the Taxi Consultation Group
REPORT NUMBER	CG/17/090
CG LEAD OFFICER	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Arlene Dunbar

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT:-

To review the remit, governance and membership of the Taxi Consultation Group (TCG).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Licensing Committee:

- (a) agree to change the name of the group to the Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group;
- (b) agree the remit and meeting frequency of the Group as outlined in the report at Section 3.10;
- (c) instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to write to the private hire firms and seek nominations to represent the Private Hire trade;
- (d) Upon receipt of nominations instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to then write to all Private Hire Car Licence Holders asking them to indicate their preferred representative for the Group

3. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

- 3.1 At a meeting of the TGC held on 28 February 2017, the Group considered a request from Aberdeen Taxis Limited to join the TGC to enable them to represent their taxi and private hire car drivers.
- 3.2 At the meeting, Mr Peter Campbell (Unite the Union), Mr Bill Price (Railway Taxi Drivers) and Mr Stewart Duncan (Airport Drivers) advised that they had consulted with their drivers regarding the request and had received a unanimous response that the request should be declined.

3.3 Mr Graeme McColl, Aberdeen Taxi Group advised that he had not been able to consult with Members of the Aberdeen Taxi Group on the proposal prior to the TCG meeting; however he was of the opinion that his members would not be supportive of Aberdeen Taxis Ltd joining the Group. He also reminded the TCG that its membership had been reviewed and reduced by the Licensing Committee on 4 September 2012, following previous consultation with the Taxi Trade. Mr McColl suggested that if Aberdeen Taxis Ltd were invited to join the group the invitation to join should be opened out to all four of the private hire firms operating in the city.

3.4 At its meeting on 18 April 2017 the Committee resolved to consider the request to join along with a full review of the remit, governance and membership of the TCG following the Scottish Local Government Elections in May 2017.

3.5 The TCG remit as agreed by the Licensing Committee on 4 September 2012, is as follows:

“A working group of the Licensing Committee to be known as the Taxi Consultation Group will be formed. It will consist of a maximum number of five elected members and eight representatives of the taxi trade of whom one will represent the airport operators and one will represent licensed taxi booking offices. The Disability Advisory Group and Unite Union will also have one representative as a member of the Group. Additional attendees will include the Taxi Inspector, the Fleet Services Manager and a solicitor representing the licensing function. Other relevant representatives will be invited to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis.

Taxi trade members must represent a specific and recognised interest group. It will be understood that the representatives will report to their members after meetings.

The Group will meet three times yearly. The Group will act without any powers but will discuss matters of relevance to the taxi trade at the discretion of the Convener and make recommendations to the Licensing Committee as appropriate.

“Matters of relevance” include all matters relevant to the taxi trade in Aberdeen that are within the remit of the Licensing Committee.”

3.6 Review of the Remit

3.7 The current remit of the Group could be considered to extend to the taxi trade only and it is recommended that the remit is amended to explicitly include references to the private hire sector. It is further recommended that the Committee instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to write to the private hire firms and seek nominations to represent the Private Hire trade rather than agree to the request by Aberdeen Taxis to join the Group.

- 3.8 Upon receipt of the nominations it is recommended that the Head of Legal and Democratic Services then write to all Private Hire Car Licence Holders asking them to indicate their preferred representative for the Group.
- 3.9 In order to reflect the wider remit of the TCG it is recommend that the Group is renamed to the Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group.
- 3.10 The amended remit of the Group would therefore be as follows:

“A working group of the Licensing Committee to be known as the Taxi **and Private Hire** Consultation Group will be formed. It will consist of a maximum number of five elected members and **nine** representatives of the taxi and **private hire car** trade, namely:

- Aberdeen Airport Drivers
- Taxi Badge Holders Association
- Independent Drivers
- Unite Union Aberdeen Rail Taxi Drivers Association
- Aberdeen Taxi Group
- Disability Equality Partnership
- Licensed Taxi Offices
- Private Hire Trade

Additional attendees, not members, will include the **Enforcement Officer**, the Fleet Services Manager and a solicitor representing the licensing function. Other relevant representatives will be invited to attend meetings on an ad-hoc basis depending on the matters to be considered”.

Trade members must represent a specific and recognised interest group. It will be understood that the representatives will report to their members after meetings. A member of the Group would be entitled to nominate in advance of the meeting a substitute member to attend meetings only in the event that he/she was unable to attend. Named substitutes should be notified to the Clerk at the same time as the substantive member is confirmed.

A quorum shall be five members of the group, which must include two External Members.

The Group will meet three times yearly. The Group will act without any powers but will discuss matters of relevance to the taxi **and private hire** trade at the discretion of the Convener and make recommendations to the Licensing Committee as appropriate. Members will be asked to notify the clerk in writing of any matters they wish to be discussed eight working days in advance of the scheduled meeting. The notification must state the matter they wish to discuss, a brief background to this and the action (if any) they would like the Licensing Committee to take.

“Matters of relevance” include all matters relevant to the taxi **and private hire** trade in Aberdeen that are within the remit of the Licensing Committee.”

3.11 Membership

3.12 The Licensing Committee has the power to appoint Consultative Groups without delegated powers consisting of its own members and such other persons as it thinks fit.

3.13 Accordingly it is proposed that the membership of the Group be as outlined in the appendix1 to this report and that each representative group shall be written to requesting that they confirm or reconfirm in writing its nominee.

3.14 Trade membership of the Group would be for a fixed period of four years in line with the term of the Local Authority, after which time, a further review of the remit and membership could be conduct if it was considered necessary.

3.15 Changes to the nominated representative should be notified to the Clerk in writing.

3.16 It is also proposed that a member of the Group would be entitled to nominate in advance of the meeting a substitute member to attend meetings only in the event that he/she was unable to attend. Named substitutes should be notified to the Clerk at the same time as the substantive member is confirmed.

3.17 Frequency of Meetings

3.18 Whilst it is recommended that the number of meetings remain at 3, it should be noted that the same matters are often raised by the taxi representatives at the TCG meetings and then again by deputation at the main Licensing Committee meetings. It is anticipated that the taxi representatives shall continue to submit deputations to the Licensing Committee on important matters.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 If the Committee resolved not to agree recommendation 2 (b) above, and instead decided upon a greater number of meetings, there would be revenue implications resulting from increased staff costs associated with officer's workload.

4.2 There are no capital implications for current and future years.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

- Financial

- 6.1 There are no direct financial implications arising from the recommendations of this report
- Employee
- 6.2 There is no risk to employees arising from the recommendations of this report
- Customer / citizen
- 6.3 There is no risk to the Customer/Citizen from the recommendations of this report
- Environmental
- 6.4 There is no Environmental risk arising from the recommendations of this report.
- Technological
- 6.5 There is no risk to technology arising from the recommendations of this report.
- Legal
- 6.6 There are no legal risks arising from the recommendations of this report.
- Reputational
- 6.7 There is no risk to reputation arising from the recommendation of this report.

7. IMPACT SECTION

Economy

- 7.1 There will be no impact on Economy arising from the recommendations.

People

- 7.2 The Group ensures dialogue and consultation with the taxi trade. This enables the Council to bring issues of relevance to the fore and allow discussion in a more informal way.
- 7.3 The inclusion of a representative of the Disability Equity Partnership assists the TCG in considering disabled taxi passengers' requirements.
- 7.4 There is no particular interest for the public in the work of this Group as it has no delegated powers from the parent Committee, although as potential passengers, the public may be interested in some issues which may be referred from this Group to the Committee.

Place

7.5 There will be no impact on the place arising from the recommendations.

Technology

7.6 There will be no impact on technology arising from the recommendations.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

Any appendices attached to the covering report should be numbered and listed here.

10. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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HEAD OF SERVICE DETAILS

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Group/Organisation etc	Name of Representative
5 Elected Members (1 SNP, 1 Conservative, 1 Labour, 1 Liberal Democrat and 1 Independent)	Councillor John Reynolds (Chairperson) Councillor Christian Allard Councillor Steve Delaney Depute Provost Alan Donnelly Councillor Gordon Graham
Aberdeen Airport Drivers	Stewart Duncan
Taxi Badge Holders Association	Vacant
Independent Drivers	Gordon Anderson
Unite Union	Tommy Campbell (Peter Campbell as substitute)
Aberdeen Rail Taxi Drivers Association	Bill Price
Aberdeen Taxi Group	Graeme McColl
Disability Advisory Group	Bryan McKenzie as substantive member, Mary Rasmussen as substitute
Licensed Taxi Offices	Vacant
Private Hire Trade	TBC