

## TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

ABERDEEN, 27 March 2019. Minute of Meeting of the TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP. Present:- Councillor Reynolds, Chairperson; ; and Councillor Sandy Stuart (as a substitute for Councillor McRae); and John Clark (Unite the Union), Chris Douglas (Aberdeen Taxis), Stewart Duncan (Airport Taxis), Graeme McColl (Aberdeen Taxi Group), Roy McHardy (GMB) and Russell McLeod (Rainbow City Taxis).

In attendance:- Sheila Barclay and William Whyte (Fleet Services), John Clark (Unite the Union), David McKane, Lynn May and Sandy Munro (Licensing), Sean Cremer (Finance), Derek Jamieson and Allison Swanson (Committee Services) and PC Steve Sharp (Police Scotland).

### MINUTE OF MEETING OF 3 OCTOBER 2018 - FOR APPROVAL

1. The Consultation Group had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 3 October 2018.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**  
to approve the minute.

### ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT

2. The Consultation Group had before it a report which provided an overview of the activity of the Enforcement Officers regarding taxi enforcement operations since the previous meeting.

Speaking in furtherance of the report, the Enforcement Officer requested that all drivers review the wording of the notice in their vehicles regarding credit/debit card charges to ensure that the wording was compliant with legislation. The Consultation Group then had an extensive discussion regarding the number of taxis accepting card payments, and the advantages and disadvantages of making acceptance of card payments mandatory. During the discussion there was a view that it should be policy that all drivers had to accept all forms of payment. In response, Mrs Lynn May, solicitor, advised that the Licensing Team was currently reviewing conditions, however at present accepting card payment could not be enforced on drivers. They would encourage all drivers to accept all payment methods but, at this time, this was an individual business decision for each driver.

Thereafter, Mr William Whyte, Fleet Manager, confirmed that wheelchair equipment in vehicles accessible vehicles was being checked at the start of the vehicle test.

The Consultation Group also discussed the decline in the number of licenced drivers, in particular the % of licences held by drivers over the age of 50 and the impact on the trade in the future if this was not addressed. It was agreed that this was a matter for the trade to discuss and Graeme McColl agreed to arrange a meeting for the trade for this purpose.

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**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**

to note the update.

**APPLICATION FOR TAXI RANK AT TECA - SUBMITTED BY LICENSING**

3. The Consultation Group had before it an information note by the Licensing Team which advised that Aberdeen City Council as Licensing Authority had received an application from SMG Europe Holdings Ltd to establish a permanent taxi rank at The Events Complex Aberdeen (TECA).

The note explained that before the Authority could appoint any new taxi rank it had to carry out a formal consultation which had to include representatives of taxi operators in the area. A report seeking approval to commence the formal consultation process would be considered by the Licensing Committee at its meeting on 23 April 2019. If approved, the consultation would commence and the responses received would be reported back and considered by the Licensing Committee at a later date. The Consultation Group's initial comments regarding the proposal was sought at this time.

The Group was supportive of the proposal and hoped that the taxi rank would be approved by the Licensing Committee and in operation for TECA opening.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**

to support the proposal to establish a permanent taxi rank at The Events Complex Aberdeen (TECA) and should the Licensing Committee on 23 April 2019 agree to commence the formal consultation on the proposal to encourage the trade to respond to this.

**OFFSHORE EUROPE TAXI CONCESSION - SUBMITTED BY RUSSELL MCLEOD, TAXI BOOKING OFFICES**

4. The Consultation Group had before it a request from Mr Russell McLeod that the Consultation Group discuss concessions for taxi licensing during Offshore Europe week 2019.

The Group was in favour in principle of the Licensing Committee relaxing the condition zoning the city for the purposes of taxi operation at city centre taxi ranks for the duration of Offshore Europe week 2019, and permit airport zone taxis to pick up at city ranks, as well as any taxi rank that might be established at TECA for the purpose of Offshore Europe should the formal taxi rank at TECA not have been established by that time.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**

to note that the trade would submit a request to relax the condition zoning the city for the purposes of taxi operation at city centre taxi ranks for the duration of Offshore Europe week 2019 (the dates and time to be specified in the request), and to permit

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airport zone taxis to pick up at city ranks, as well as any taxi rank established at TECA for the purpose of Offshore Europe should there not be a formal taxi rank at TECA established by that time, for consideration by the Licensing Committee.

**TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES USE OF THE BUS GATE (RIGHT TURN) ENTRY TO TECA SITUATED ON A96 INVERURIE ROAD - SUBMITTED BY RUSSELL MCLEOD, TAXI BOOKING OFFICES**

5. The Consultation Group had before it a request from Mr Russell McLeod to discuss taxi and private hire vehicles potential use of the bus gate (right turn) entry to TECA situated on the A96 Inverurie Road.

The Consultation Group heard from Ms Lynn May, Legal Services, who advised that the establishment of bus gates was a matter for the Council's Operational Development Committee, rather than the Licensing Committee. However, she could advise that the Council's roads section was working on proposals for the introduction of bus gates in the vicinity of TECA and, at this time, the intention was to implement the same access as with all bus gates in the city, i.e. to allow taxis only to use the bus gates and therefore private hire vehicles would not have access. Private hire cars would access with general traffic via the main entrance on Dyce Drive.

The Consultation Group discussed the proposal that public private hire vehicles would not have access to the bus gates at TECA, during which they highlighted that this would mean the exclusion of 228 private hire cars. Members were concerned of the impact of this on the service available to the public and noted that any representation on this matter would need to be made directly to the Chief Officer – Operations and Protective Services.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**  
to note the information.

**VULNERABILITY THROUGH INTOXICATION - SUBMITTED BY THE LICENSING TEAM WITHIN POLICE SCOTLAND NORTH EAST DIVISION**

6. The Consultation Group had before it an information note from the Licensing Team within Police Scotland North East Division which (1) advised of the work carried out within the city by Police Scotland in the past few months in relation to vulnerability through intoxication and (2) explained that Police Scotland were seeking the support of the Consultation Group to continue to promote this message and what they could do to help keep people safe.

PC Steve Sharp advised that the campaign highlighted the need for enhanced awareness of intoxication and associated vulnerability and that provisions to deal with such situations are in place to support a person perceived to be vulnerable or unable to

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take reasonable care of themselves. Videos to support the campaign were available for Members to view on Youtube.

Members welcomed the information and requested that the information be circulated separately to Members to enable this to be cascaded to drivers.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group resolved:**

to note the information and to request PC Steve Sharp to circulate information about the vulnerability through intoxication campaign to the Consultation Group to enable the information to be cascaded to drivers.

**ABERDEEN GRAMPIAN CHAMBER OF COMMERCE VANGUARD PROJECT -  
SUBMITTED BY FINANCE**

7. The Consultation Group heard from Sean Cremer, who advised of Aberdeen Grampian Chamber of Commerce's Vanguard project which was working with volunteers towards creating a bright future for the Aberdeen City Region.

He provided an overview of the Vanguard project and explained that there were three main project themes, namely:

1. Tourism – exploring how to get local people to become tourists in their own area and creating a package to attract the millennial weekend audience.
2. City Centre – considering how to inject pace into existing activities and further develop the Union Street brand.
3. Regional narrative – looking at work being undertaken to talk up the North-east, encompassing talent attraction and retention; cultural ambitions and making our city region a 'cool' place.

Mr Cremer explained that the Group had developed promotional material and were keen to work with all sectors who welcomed tourists/visitors to the city to improve customer experience and ensure a consistent welcome to the city regardless how they arrived. In this regard, he advised that the Group would like to liaise with the taxi and private hire car trade in providing a welcoming experience for all.

The Consultation Group were supportive of the project and agreed to cascade information to drivers from the Project. In addition to the brochure currently produced, Members suggested that a pocket sized map would be welcomed by visitors as this had previously proved successful during Offshore Europe week. The Group also highlighted that a digital platform containing all visitor information would be useful for the trade to sign post visitors to.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**

to note the information.

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**MEETING DATES 2019**

8. The Consultation Group noted that the meeting dates for the rest of 2019 were:
- 26 June 2019 at 10am
  - 9 October 2019 at 10am

Both meetings would be held in the Town House, Broad Street, Aberdeen.

**The Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group resolved:**  
to note the meeting dates for 2019 as recorded above.

- Councillor John Reynolds, **CHAIRPERSON.**

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Wednesday, 27 March 2019

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