

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

ABERDEEN, 12 October 2022. Minute of Meeting of the TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP. Present:- Councillor Al-Samarai, Chairperson; and Councillors Crockett, Farquhar and van Sweeden (as substitute for Councillor Clark); and Chris Douglas (Aberdeen Taxis) and Stewart Duncan (Airport Taxis).

In attendance:- PC Ina Duthie (Police Scotland), Sandy Munro and Dave McKane (Licensing Team), John Weir (Fleet Manager, Operations) Mark Masson and Gogo Okafor (Committee Services).

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chairperson welcomed those in attendance to the meeting.

The Clerk intimated that apologies for absence had been submitted by Councillors Boulton, Clark, Delaney and Henrickson; and Mr Russell McLeod.

He also indicated that Councillor van Sweeden was in attendance as the substitute for Councillor Clark.

MINUTE OF MEETING OF 26 AUGUST 2022, FOR APPROVAL

2. The Consultation Group had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 26 August 2022.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

to approve the minute as a correct record.

REFERRALS - MINUTE EXTRACT FROM MEETING OF LICENSING COMMITTEE OF 6 SEPTEMBER 2022

3. With reference to articles 5, 6 and 11 of the minute of the previous meeting of 26 August 2022, the Consultation Group had before them for information, a minute extract from the meeting of the Licensing Committee of 6 September 2022.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Committee took no action at this time in relation to bringing forward a review of the Taxi Fare Review;
- (ii) to note that the Committee deferred the commencement of a Taxi Demand Survey for 12 months; and
- (iii) to note that the Committee agreed to increase the number of annual meetings of the Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group to four, commencing in 2023.

ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT

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4. The Consultation Group had before it for consideration, the Enforcement Officer's report which provided details relating to Taxi/Private Hire Car issues and information.

Dave McKane highlighted the main issues from his report and responded to questions from members, clarifying in particular (1) that the driver numbers (4%) had stabilised in the past 12 months; and (2) that the number of tests passed was 23% and not 28% as reported.

Chris Douglas suggested that to help monitor trends/impact, could statistics on Passes/Fails following test results be added to future reports.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that the Enforcement Officer would add statistics of Passes/Fails following street knowledge test results to future reports to the Group; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided.

PUBLIC SAFETY - ITEM SUBMITTED BY STEWART DUNCAN

5. The Consultation Group had before it correspondence from Stewart Duncan in relation to Public Safety.

The Group heard Mr Duncan make reference to the recent death of Jill Barclay and he suggested that there was a requirement to discuss with all relevant stakeholders (Aberdeen City Council, taxi booking offices, press and Police Scotland) the issue regarding public safety, and explore any of the collective actions, which could be taken to reassure the public that the stakeholders could provide safe areas for single travellers to support people who find themselves in unexpected vulnerable situations.

The Group then heard PC Ian Duthie, provide a detailed response in terms of the ongoing initiatives which were already in place to ensure public safety, including the following:-

- Licensed Premises 'Ask for Angela' – adopted by approximately 90% of the trade, Bar and Door Staff receiving training, Places of Safety within licensed premises, contacting friends/family and/or Police;
- Bystander Training (intervention) – Rolled out to the licensing trade and University population which displayed various scenarios and video content and sought feedback and provided recommendations on what should be done if they have any concerns;
- Licensed Premises Duty of Care and Drugs Policy – spiking incidents reported but following investigation there had been no confirmed cases in the local area; requirement for staff to contact taxi/friends/family/police etc with instruction that vulnerable people should not just be asked to leave the premises and left on their own;

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- Street Pastors (Christian community volunteers) – trained to engage with people on the street, to listen care and help those in need; vehicle situated on Belmont Street at weekends;
- NHS Hub – can assist and respond to situations which alleviates pressure on paramedics and ambulance services; Police would also take people to hospital if there was a requirement to do so;
- Taxi Marshalls – providing assistance at the night time taxi ranks, hours of operation recently changed at the request of the Consultation Group;
- Weekend briefing sessions held within the policing teams, which would highlight any licensing issues/concerns.

During the discussion, the following was noted:-

- that taxis were an expensive option for many on low incomes, especially when the distance of travel to get home at night may be relatively short, although could be quite worrying for some, particularly when they were alone;
- that taxi drivers were reminded to be vigilant, particularly as they cover large areas of the city 24/7;
- that at present there was no appetite from the licensing trade to establish the 'Unite Group', or something similar; and
- that Aberdeen Taxis had developed a 'Safe Cab' App for smart phones, which other companies could consider using, which incorporated a 'Safe Walk' feature, to help people who were unable to find/flag down a taxi, and was designed to share the users location with friends/family for tracking purposes, but also had a 'panic button' to alert taxi offices.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) that the Clerk would look into the possibility of arranging a demonstration of the 'Safe Cab' App at the next meeting of the Licensing Committee; and
- (ii) to otherwise note the information provided.

MEETING DATES FOR 2023

6. The Consultation Group had before it the dates for the four meetings to be held in 2023 at 10am in the Town House as follows:-

- 8 February 2023;
- 5 April 2023;
- 4 October 2023; and
- 6 December 2023.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

to note the meeting dates.

- **COUNCILLOR GILL AL-SAMARAI, Chairperson**