

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

ABERDEEN, 30 April 2025. Minute of Meeting of the TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP. Present:- Councillor Al- Samarai, Chairperson; and Councillors Clark, Delaney, Henrickson and Lawrence; and Alan Catto (Independent), Chris Douglas (Private Hire Trade), Russell McLeod (Licensed Taxi Booking Offices), Luke Hulse (Independent), Amanda Foster (substitute for Hussein Patwa, Disability Equity Partnership), Peter Campbell (Unite), Stephen Lawrence and Michell Burr (Railway Station Taxi Drivers) and Iain Hamilton (Airport Taxi Drivers).

In attendance:- Sandy Munro, Alexa Last, Dave McKane and Daniel Wright (Licensing Team); John Weir, Derek Jamieson and Kevin Flannigan (Fleet Services), Vycki Ritson (Operations – Roads), Marlene Mitchell (Port of Aberdeen) and Mark Masson and Gogo Okafor (Committee Services).

Please note that if any changes are made to this minute at the point of approval, these will be outlined in the subsequent minute and this document will not be retrospectively altered.

WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

An apology for absence was intimated on behalf of Hussein Patwa.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST OR TRANSPARENCY STATEMENTS

2. There were no declarations of interest or transparency statements intimated.

MINUTE OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING OF 6 NOVEMBER 2024 - FOR APPROVAL

3. The Consultation Group had before it the minute of its previous meeting of 6 November 2024.

The Consultation Group resolved:-
to approve the minute.

SOUTH HARBOUR - MARLENE MITCHELL - PORTS OF ABERDEEN

4. The Consultation Group had before it a note from Marlene Mitchell, Port of Aberdeen which provided details relating to a number of pre-booked taxis (booked directly by the guests based on numbers provided by the Welcome Volunteer team) which failed to turn up at a cruise call at Aberdeen South Harbour. Also attached was a layout plan for cruise operations at South Harbour, which showed the stabling point for pre-booked taxis collecting guests and crew from cruise ships.

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

30 April 2025

The Consultation Group heard from Marlene Mitchell regarding the issues at the South Harbour and also from Chris Douglas who responded on behalf of Aberdeen Taxis which provided taxis for that particular cruise ship.

Marlene explained that a list of cruises entering the South Harbour was located on their website.

It was acknowledged that First Aberdeen no longer provided a bus service to the South Harbour.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that Chris Douglas would liaise with Marlene Mitchell on establishing better communication links between the taxi firm and the Port of Aberdeen; and
- (ii) to note that Marlene Mitchell would seek to determine whether the safety regulations at the South Harbour would prevent taxis picking up at quayside.

TALL SHIPS 2025 - CHRIS DOUGLAS

5. The Consultation Group had before it correspondence from Chris Douglas relating to the Tall Ships 2025 event, which advised that the Taxi Industry was very keen to be proactively involved in ensuring the Local Authority's integrated transport strategy for the event was a success.

The Consultation Group heard from Chris, who explained that the taxi trade were reaching out to organisers and key stake holders on the run up to the event to ensure the taxi industry was considered as part of the planning process for transport related matters. He made reference to a timeline to highlight what they had done to date and sought discussion to see if there was anything more that could be done in the build-up.

During discussion, the following was noted:-

- that taxi trade members had been invited to a Project Team meeting on 12 June 2025 relating to the Tall Ships Event;
- that no new taxi ranks were proposed for the event, although access to Commerce Street would be provided for drop off/pick up at the harbour;
- that bus services would be running more frequently; and
- that ScotRail would be running extra carriages and would be relaxing permit provision for 4 days to access the station.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that Vycki Ritson would liaise with the Tall Ships Event Project Group to obtain the Transport Management Plan for circulation to the taxi trade, including any previous notes/minutes of meetings and the possibility of providing Marshalls at the Railway Station; and

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

30 April 2025

- (ii) to note that the Convener and Vice Convener would meet with relevant stake holders to progress any issues raised above relevant to the Tall Ships Event.

ENFORCEMENT OFFICER REPORT

6. The Consultation Group had before it a report by the Enforcement Officer and Civic Licensing Standards Officer in relation to general Taxi/Private Hire Car issues and information.

The report provided details of (a) the current numbers of licensed vehicles and drivers compared to August 2023; (b) street knowledge test statistics during the period 10 December 2024 to 8 April 2025; and (c) vehicles failing Hackney Tests.

Daniel Wright provided a summary of the report, making reference to the down take in drivers over 2 years, the rise of private hire vehicles and Airport Taxis and an improvement in the street knowledge test pass rate.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that the next report would include details relating to the taxi school and the possibility of including statistics of applicants who frequently cancel the street knowledge test;
- (ii) to note that officers would explore options to increase the number of street knowledge tests undertaken each week, to include the utilisation of any cancellations; and
- (iii) that the pass rates from January 2025 be circulated to the taxi trade members.

UPDATED INSPECTION MANUAL - SANDY MUNRO

7. The Consultation Group had before it the updated Aberdeen City Council – Taxi/PHC Testing Manual for information.

Sandy Munro advised that the manual did not contain many changes, however it had been simplified for users.

During discussion, it was noted (1) that the content of the manual produced by the Licensing Team was taken from Government Guidance and other Local Authority areas; and (2) that the specification for wheelchair accessible taxi vehicles had been amended and re-circulated by email.

The Consultation Group resolved:-

- (i) to note that Sandy Munro would liaise with colleagues in Fleet Services to ensure that the reasons for vehicle test failures based on the manual would be included within their test certificate;

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR CONSULTATION GROUP

30 April 2025

- (ii) to note that any technical concerns or issues regarding the manual should be discussed with Fleet Services; and
- (iii) to otherwise note the updated Testing Manual.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 24 SEPTEMBER 2025

8. The Consultation Group had before it a note of its next meeting date.

The Committee resolved:-

to note that the next meeting would be held at 10.00am on 24 September 2025, in the Town House.

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