

Report from the Assistant Director – Planning and Public Protection

Taxi complaints – 1 January to 31 August 2019

Summary

1. This report is to update Members, as requested, on complaints about taxis. The reporting period is 1st January to 31st August 2019.

Recommendations

2. The Committee is asked to note the information in the report.

Reason: In order to be updated on the complaints about taxis during the period 1 January to 31 August 2019.

Background

3. Although usually referred to as ‘complaints’, the database consists of incidents reported from a wide range of sources including passengers, members of the public and road users. Many of the reports are from other taxi drivers – the local taxi trade has appointed a ‘complaints co-ordinator’ with the aim of streamlining the reporting process. Some of the reports on the database are from officers of the council and other agencies sharing their concerns. We actively encourage anybody with concerns about taxis in York to report the matter to public.protection@york.gov.uk in order to ensure we have the most comprehensive picture of the issues as possible, and we take appropriate action in response to the issues raised.
4. There are some 292 ‘complaints’ in total on the database in the time period (excluding a handful of duplicates). Over half of all the complaints (178 out of 292) (61%) are not about York licensed drivers, vehicles or operators. This includes those licensed elsewhere, often referred to as ‘out of town’ drivers etc. Some 152 of the 178 complaints (85.4%) are from York licensed drivers. However, this may be expected as we have been actively encouraging the trade to report matters of concern to public protection rather than take matters into their own hands. There were 114

complaints about York licensed drivers etc. Some 31 of those 114 complainants (27.2%) are known to be from the local trade.

5. When officers receive a complaint, they must first determine whether it is an issue for our service or another agency such as the police or different local authority. Matters are typically 'referred to another department or authority' where the complaint is about the conduct or driving of an 'out of town driver' since this can help them to determine whether the driver remains 'fit and proper' to hold a licence. Road traffic accidents are also reported to Operation Spartan – the North Yorkshire Police hotline for road traffic accidents - for information and to assist in any investigation they are undertaking.
6. A proportionate response is taken in respect of all complaints dealt with by City of York Council's officers, as required by our enforcement policy. The vast majority of issues are dealt with by way of written warning/advice. When complaints are dealt with by City of York Council Officers they are categorised as follows:-
 - 'accepted' - where on balance of probability it is felt that the complainant's account is correct
 - 'not accepted' - where on balance the complainant's view is not felt to be correct.
 - 'false' - where a complaint is known to be incorrect
 - 'malicious' - where it appears that officers have been deliberately misled (no complaints have been recorded as malicious).
 - 'other' – where no category applies e.g. it is a general enquiry

Please note: The categorisation is based on officer 'judgement' and are not 'proven' matters.

7. Annex 1 shows a breakdown of the 262 complaints which have been classified as 'accepted', 'other' or 'referred to another' i.e. the 'not accepted' and 'false' complaints have been excluded. Of note:-
8. One particular operator (referred to as Operator A in the Annex) has 136 complaints recorded against them.
 - The majority of these complaints relate to the way vehicles are parked i.e. 34 out of 136 (25%) – particularly on ranks.
 - Other common complaints concern general 'driving standards' (27 out of 136)(19.9%), 'illegal turns' (14 out of 136)(10.3%) and 'wrong way on street' (13 out of 136)(9.6%).

- Problems with plates/signage account for 17 out of 136 (12.5%) complaints.
9. Some 98 'accepted' etc. complaints are in relation to the local York trade. An analysis of which shows:
- The majority of complaints about York drivers related to general 'driving standards' (29 out of 98) (29.6%). A further 11 out of those 98 (11.2%) relate to illegal turns.
 - 'Driver behaviour' was the cause of 21 out of the 98 complaints (21.4%)
10. Annex 1 shows how the complaints are spread across different 'operators'. Please note that for ease of reference, complaints against hackney drivers are recorded as one of the operators.
11. In addition, anyone with a York licensed vehicle is required under their conditions to report road traffic accidents within 72 hours. There have been 19 road traffic accidents 'self reported' in the period.

Consultation

12. There is no consultation associated with this report as it is for information only

Options and Analysis

13. There are no options and analysis associated with this report as it is for information only

Council Plan

14. This action supports the council's priority to meet its statutory duties.

Implications

15. There are no other implications

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Report **Date** 01/10/2019
Approved

Specialist Implications Officer(s) List information for all

N/A

Wards Affected:

All

For further information please contact the author of the report

Annexes

Annex 1 – List of complaints

List of Abbreviations Used in this Report

None