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MEETING	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE	8 JUNE 2007
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS BENNETT (CHAIR), HYMAN AND B WATSON
APOLOGIES	COUNCILLORS HORTON AND MOORE

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### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point Members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. No Members declared any interests.

### 2. MINUTES

Councillor Watson raised a query regarding the licensing of limousines and Members thought that this was taken in general discussion rather than as urgent business and was therefore not in the minutes. The Democracy Officer agreed to report back to Councillor Watson on this.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2007 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### 3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been five registrations to speak on Agenda Item 4 (Taxi Vehicle Standards – Emissions, Livery and Luggage Capacity) under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

Mr Usher, a York taxi driver, objected to the proposals for the minimum age of a vehicle. He had recently purchased a top of the range 6 year old BMW which was frequently commented upon by customers as being a very comfortable car. He felt that it was unfair that a top of the range car, that met Euro 3 Emissions Standards, should be outmoded once it reached 8 years old. A four year old car would be more expensive and therefore mean that a lower model or standard of vehicle would have to be purchased.

Mr Rowley, the secretary of the York Taxi Association agreed the image of the Hackney Carriage Trade in York would benefit from some fine tuning but he thought that the changes proposed in the report were unreasonable. He felt that a fairer system regarding the age of Hackney

Carriages would be on at 5 years and off at 9 years. He told the Committee that there was evidence that dark coloured cars were involved in more accidents and suggested that white or silver would be a better colour for a standard livery if one were to be adopted. The loss of advertising would affect the livelihood of many drivers and he pointed out that the business of the Hackney Carriage Trade was already in decline but Private Hire trade was on the increase.

Mr Robertson, Vice-Chair of the York Taxi Association, said that whilst wanting to improve the standards of Hackney Carriages generally he felt that younger vehicles had a higher depreciation and dark coloured cars needed more cleaning. He felt that it was unfair to ask one sector of the trade to take all the proposals on board. He also felt that the trade was acting responsibly and trying to improve standards by funding a marshalled taxi rank at the racecourse on race days.

Mr Bulmer, a local taxi driver said that they all had strong views on emissions. He thought that the least safe colours for cars were brown, black and green and he felt that Hackney Carriages were already clearly marked. He suggested that there should be a Government grant to help finance any changes that were implemented.

Mr Taylor, a York taxi driver, said that he had purchased a purpose built vehicle for wheelchairs that was very costly. He felt that there would be no need to get rid of this after 8 years and he would lose out financially if he had to replace the vehicle this early.

Councillor Taylor made representations on behalf of the Green Party and said that the report missed the mark. He said that taking cars off the road due to their age was environmentally inefficient and not a sustainable way of achieving the best results. The report suggested an arbitrary age for vehicles to cease being taxis and the Council should be looking towards rejecting petrol and diesel and looking towards alternative fuels. New technologies were coming out all of the time and these needed to be explored. The Council must work with the taxi companies and drivers and set a reasonable time limit to work to. He believed the colour of the taxi was irrelevant.

#### **4. TAXI VEHICLE STANDARDS – EMISSIONS, LIVERY, AND LUGGAGE CAPACITY**

The Head of Licensing & Bereavement Services circulated additional information to Members regarding timescales for implementation of the proposals, Taxi licensing conditions for in other Local Authorities, the results of a questionnaire that was handed out during Hackney Vehicle Licensing and research on the availability of different colours of car.

The Officer explained that the timetable for delivery of the proposals was as follows:

<b>Emission and Age Standards</b>	<b>Livery</b>
As of 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2008 all vehicles when presented for re-licensing must meet at least Euro II standards	From 1 <sup>st</sup> September 2008 all vehicles when presented for licensing for the first time shall be in livery colours and will be supplied with the official coat of arms decal
As of 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2009 all vehicles when presented for re-licensing must meet at least Euro III Standards	As of 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2009 all vehicles when presented for re-licensing shall be in livery colours and will be supplied with the official coat of arms decal
No car will be first licensed unless it meets Euro III standards or better after 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2008	
After 1 <sup>st</sup> June 1009 no car will be first licensed if it is over 4 years old	
After 1 <sup>st</sup> June 2009 no car will be re-licensed after it has reached 8 years old	

Members discussed a variety of issues including:

- the cost of a full re-spray for a vehicle
- advertising on the exterior of taxis; it was noted that this was with the approval of the Licensing Authority as to the content
- various colours for the proposed livery including black, white and silver; it was noted that black was a block colour
- having a standard livery would make it easier for the public, particularly overseas visitors, to readily identify licensed vehicles and would clearly differentiate between Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriages
- the policies regarding Taxi licensing conditions at other Local Authorities contained in the additional information
- the statistics regarding the availability of different colours of vehicle contained in the additional information
- The aspiration of the City of York Council to make all Taxis Euro III compliant by 1<sup>st</sup> June 2009

RESOLVED:

- That the introduction of a vehicle emissions policy as set out in paragraphs 14, 15 and 16 of the report be adopted.

- That a single livery for all licensed taxis as set out in paragraphs 21 and 22 be adopted and the colour of the vehicles be black
- That the agreement, in principal, to the introduction of a minimum luggage space be deferred to a later meeting

REASON:

These proposals are in line with other strategies of the Council and the timetable for the introduction is reasonable given the usual turn over of licensed vehicles within the taxi trade.

Cllr Bennett

Chair of Licensing & Regulatory Committee

The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 3.10 pm.