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MEETING	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE	9 JANUARY 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS FIRTH, GILLIES (CHAIR), HORTON, LOOKER AND MOORE (VICE-CHAIR)

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## 1. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

At this point Members were asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they had in the business on the agenda. There were none.

## 2. **MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2008 be approved and signed as a correct record.

## 3. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

It was reported that there had been two registrations to speak under the Council's Public Participation Scheme. Both speakers had registered to speak on the same item. The Chair agreed to hear comments from them, provided there was no repetition.

Mr. Stuart Robertson, the Deputy Chairman of York Taxi Association spoke in relation to agenda item 6. He urged Members to choose Option 1 as outlined in the Officers report. He expressed concern about further plates being issued as he felt the market is satisfied at present.

Mr. Alan Rowley, the Secretary of York Taxi Association spoke in relation to agenda item 6. He advised members that the taxi trade has been hit by the current economic climate and by the introduction of late night buses. He asked members to consider choosing Option 1 as outlined in the Officers report.

## 4. **REQUEST TO REVIEW TINTED WINDOWS CONDITION AS ATTACHED TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENCES.**

Members considered a report which asked them to review the licence condition which limits the degree of tint permitted for licensed hackney carriage and private hire vehicle windows in respect of low emission, environmentally friendly vehicles.

Officers reminded members that a representation had been made by a private hire operator who wished to licence several hybrid vehicles which he will import from Japan. The factory fitted glass in the vehicles does not meet the standard criteria for tinted windows as set by the Council.

Members advised that they had no difficulty with the Officer recommendation, as all licensed vehicles are public service vehicles and should adhere to the standards set by the council.

RESOLVED: That Option 1 be approved and no changes are made to the existing licence condition for hackney carriage and private hire vehicles in respect of tinted windows.<sup>1</sup>

REASON: The safety considerations for the introduction of the condition is valid for all vehicles licensed by the council irrespective of engine emissions.

Action Required

1. Inform the individual concerned of Members decision. KS

## 5. HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCE CONDITIONS

This report asks members to consider a relaxation of the vehicle licence condition that requires all hackney carriages to be of the colour black. The relaxation is to apply in respect of vehicles that are temporarily licensed to cover the period when the original vehicle is off the road due to accident or mechanical damage.

Members queried how often a request to use a vehicle of another colour in these circumstances is received. Officers advised that it is a rare occurrence. Members also queried if six weeks was a reasonable amount of time for any such exemption to apply. Officers confirmed that the Taxi Association are happy with this figure.

RESOLVED: That Option 2 be approved and with respect to the standard hackney carriage vehicle licence conditions allow for an exemption to the standard livery condition for a temporary licensed vehicle for a period of 6 weeks when the original licensed vehicle is off the road for accident or mechanical repair.<sup>1</sup>

REASON: To reduce the potential financial impact on licensed drivers when their vehicle is off the road.

Action Required

1. Amend vehicle licence conditions in accordance with Option2 KS

## **6. REVIEW OF ISSUE OF NEW HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCES.**

Members considered a report which asked them to decide whether to commission an interim demand survey for hackney carriages to inform a review of the policy of issuing new vehicle licences in light of the current economic climate.

In response to the comments made on this item under Public Participation, Officers reminded Members that there are still people who are on the waiting list for a taxi licence and any decision would need to be fair to all concerned.

Members queried the legal position on Option 1. Legal Officers in attendance advised that suspending the current policy for any period of time would require a separate report from Officers as there are many legal implications. Members were advised that Option 1 is something which could be considered but an actual decision to that effect would need to be deferred for a future meeting until an Officer report could be produced.

Members queried the cost involved in conducting a survey and if fees to taxi licence holders would increase. Officers confirmed that the cost of the survey would be met out of the taxi licensing account which is funded by licence fees.

Members commented that while they have sympathy with the predicament of existing taxi licence holders, they need to consider those on the waiting list. They felt that a survey would be useful to gain some accurate evidence as to what effect the economic crisis is having on the taxi trade. It was felt that if the current policy does need changing due to the economic situation, then a survey would support and inform those concerned in making any changes.

Members commented it would be useful for the survey to be conducted during the University term time to assess the impact of the late night buses on the taxi trade.

**RESOLVED:** That Option 3 be approved and an interim survey of unmet demand be carried out and a full consultation be undertaken with those currently on the waiting list prior to making a decision.<sup>1</sup>

**REASON:** This will enable members to have an objective assessment of demand in the taxi market and enable the views of those who wish to enter the trade to be heard.

Action Required

1. Add survey and consultation to work plan.

KS

Councillor Gillies, Chair

[The meeting started at 2.00 pm and finished at 2.30 pm].