
MEETING	TAXI LICENSING POLICY TASK GROUP
DATE	15 NOVEMBER 2010
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS MERRETT, VASSIE AND WATT

1. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

RESOLVED: That Councillor Watt be appointed as Chair of the Task Group.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members were invited to declare, at this point in the meeting, any personal or prejudicial interests they might have in the business on the agenda. No declarations were made.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak at the meeting under the Council's Public Participation Scheme.

4. TAXI LICENSING POLICY REVIEW - SCOPING REPORT

Consideration was given to a report, which introduced the Council's current Taxi Licensing Policy and the issues to be addressed as part of the scrutiny review.

The topic had been registered by Councillor Gillies as Chair of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee, following a number of meetings where the committee had made decisions based on the council's current Taxi Licensing Policy, which had highlighted aspects of the policy open to interpretation. It had therefore been agreed that the policy was in need of review to ensure that it was robust and fit for purpose.

The Community Safety Overview and Scrutiny Committee had set up the Task Group and provided a remit and objectives for the review as set out on page 4 of the report. The Scrutiny Committee had also requested production of a draft final report for their consideration in March 2011, prior to the Licensing Unit carrying out their survey of unmet demand.

The Licensing Manager with the assistance of the Taxi Licensing Officer gave a presentation (full details of which are attached to these minutes as an Annex), which provided an overview of the City of York Council's Licensing Policy, which included:

- The aims of Licensing
- Differences between Hackney and Private Hire vehicles
- Number of vehicle licences and conditions attached
- Driver requirements
- Details of fares and how they are set
- Fees and governance
- Suggested scrutiny topics:
 - Quantity controls
 - Licence conditions
 - Taxi ranks
 - Opportunities to enhance the provision
- Quantity restrictions, waiting lists and derestriction
- Vehicle licence conditions
- Taxi ranks - siting, use and numbers
- Opportunities to enhance provision
- Confirmation that the taxi trade wished to promote a professional image

Members questioned a number of points and raised the following issues in relation to the presentation and current policy:

- The fact that York residents did not seem to have a culture of hailing taxi's from the roadside
- Was taxi visibility an issue
- Comparisons required of the number hackney carriages/private hire vehicles, ranks and spaces with those of cities of a similar size and levels of tourism eg Cambridge, Bath, Canterbury, Oxford etc
- Need to raise public awareness of ranks particularly those that were underused
- Social inclusion and access issues previously raised and whether recent changes made were sufficient
- Whether charges were made for wheelchairs/guide dogs
- Type of meters used eg calendar/time controlled, issue of receipts and payment by credit card
- Benefits and disadvantages of de-regulation and the reasons why some Local Authorities were returning to restricting the number of licensed hackney carriage vehicles in their areas
- Could vehicle licences be structured to encourage the licensing of more electric vehicles to reduce pollution in the city? Confirmation that electric vehicles were exempt from obtaining a vehicle licence
- What impact would the setting up of a low emission zone have for the city
- Confirmation that, following a recent court case, the authority had no specific policy on emissions standards
- Authority did not specify the maximum age of taxi/private hire vehicles
- Government guidance was awaited on the level of wheelchair accessible vehicles required in the city
- Investigation of the availability of side loading electric vehicles and the provision of recharging points
- Personal safety issues eg justification for the provision of CCTV in newly licensed vehicles

- Details of the unmet demand and waiting time at ranks surveys undertaken by Halcrow

Following further discussion it was

- RESOLVED:
- i) That the next meeting of the Task Group be arranged for w/c 13 December 2010, members to be emailed to arrange a suitable date. ^{1.}
 - ii) That the information requested by Members be sought prior to the next meeting to further inform the Task Group. ^{2.}

REASON: To ensure compliance with scrutiny procedures, protocols and work plans.

Action Required

1. Arrange next Task Group meeting. JC
2. Obtain requested information for next meeting. DH

CLLR J WATT, Chair

[The meeting started at 5.30 pm and finished at 7.00 pm].

This page is intentionally left blank

Taxi licensing

- Aims– to protect the public
- To ensure adequacy of provision
- To make accessible to all
- LA's to determine own policies
- Dft Best Practice Guide

Taxi Industry

- Hackney
- Trade from ranks
- On street
- Pre booked
- 2 licences required- vehicle + driver
- Private hire
- Pre booked only
- 3 licences- vehicle + driver + operator

Vehicle licences

- Hackney
- Restricted 178 vehicles
- +2 Jan 11
- April 2011 review policy
- Private hire
- 562 vehicles
- 78 operators
- No numeric restrictions
- Annual renewal – HC 1st June PH 1st Nov
- Conditions attached to licences (public safety)
- Tested at Eco depot

Drivers

- Driving licence for 12 months
- Fit and proper:
 - Right to work
 - Medical group 2
 - CRB enhanced-notifiable occupation/ISA
 - Local knowledge test
 - DSA driving test/ Wheelchair assessment if applicable
 - Disability Awareness assessment – online
- Issue for 12months could be 3 years

Fares

- Hackney
- Must have meter
- Measure time/distance
- Maximum set by LA
- Grisdale formula
- Extras – pets, luggage, fouling
- Private Hire
- No regulation
- May have meter/ chart
- Usually in line with hackneys.

Fees and governance

- Fees can cover cost of administration and enforcement
- Council not Exec function
- Delegated to committee / officers
- Appeal to Environment Appeals committee
- Subsequent appeal to Mags court

Scutiney Topics

- Quantity Controls
- Licence Conditions
- Taxi ranks
- Opportunities to enhance provision

Quantity Restrictions (1)

- LA's can either restrict numbers of HC's or de-limit
- 2/3rds derestricted / some re restricting
- Dft rec's delimitation unless evidence would result in deterioration of amount or quality of service
- Cannot refuse to grant new licences unless can prove no unmet demand-Survey, not visa versa
- Can de limit at any time – if reasonable
- Awaiting quotas on WAV's

Quantity Restriction (2)

- 178 licensed vehicles
- 90 rented out
- 22 multiple licence holders
- Waiting List 182
- Financial hardship to those renting and low down on waiting list
- Policy review required next spring, options:
 - Retain existing numbers
 - Continue with progressive growth
 - Delimit

Quantity restrictions (3)

- Should the council interfere in the commercial aspects of the taxi industry?
- Yes
 - Controls numbers prevents overcrowding
 - Quality controls easier??????????
- No
 - Restricts opportunities for those who wish to join the trade
 - Reduces competition on price
 - Limits availability of hackneys

Vehicle Licence Conditions

- Enforceable only at licensing
- Current problem areas:
 - livery
 - tinted windows
 - emission standards
 - luggage in rear loading Wav's

Taxi ranks

- Are there enough
- Are they in the right place
- Specific issues – Duncombe Place

Opportunities to enhance provision

- Adequate provision for disabled travellers
- Rural transport
- Novel vehicles
- ???????

This page is intentionally left blank