

MEETING	LICENSING & REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE	6 NOVEMBER 2009
PRESENT	COUNCILLORS FIRTH, GILLIES (CHAIR), HORTON, LOOKER AND MOORE (VICE-CHAIR)

22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

At this point in the meeting, members are asked to declare any personal or prejudicial interests they may have in the business on the agenda. None were declared.

23. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 September 2009 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

24. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was reported that there had been no registrations to speak under the Council's public participation scheme on general issues within the remit of the committee.

25. YORK TAXI ACCREDITATION SCHEME

Members considered a report which advised them of proposals to develop a voluntary accreditation scheme for taxi and private hire drivers. The scheme will lay down common standards of customer service and a mechanism for the arbitration of disputes.

Officers advised Members that further to a meeting of the Social Inclusion Working Group, officers identified that different groups of customers had experienced a varied standard of service from licensed taxis. Issues such as drivers assisting with luggage are out of legislative control so a working group was established to look at the development of an accreditation scheme. The group has developed a draft of the scheme which at present is being called YTAS (York Taxi Accreditation Scheme) although this may be changed as York College Students are working on a logo and branding for the scheme.

Members then made the following comments and suggestions, by reference to the headings contained in the policy:

- Who can apply - Members queried whether the scheme would extend to Limousine companies which operate in the City. Officers advised this would be looked into.
It should be made clear that the policy extends to office staff employed by taxi companies.
- Vehicle arrival/pickup – The sentence ‘they may like help with the belt’ be changed to ‘they may require assistance with the belt’.
- Visual Impairment - the sentence regarding assistance dogs be placed under a general heading to reflect there are assistance dogs for other disabilities also.
- During the journey - remove the words ‘Not smoke in the vehicle’ as this matter is dealt with by the law.
- Customer Standards (booking) – Members commented that stating an arrival time and giving customers compensation if they are disadvantaged due to the taxis late arrival should be considered carefully. Customers also need to be reasonable e.g. booking taxis in enough time if they are catching a train.

Members had a discussion concerning the appropriate wording to be used regarding the dress code for taxi drivers. Certain members felt that it would be better to not be over prescriptive. It was decided that it would be delegated to officers to consult with the trade on the matter.

Members suggested that it be made clear that the scheme will have its own complaints process and the option of Environment Appeals would not be applicable.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Licensing & Regulatory Committee support the development of the scheme with the amendments suggested above.

REASON: To increase consistency in service standards offered by licensed hire drivers in the City.

Councillor Gillies, Chair

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