

# LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

## CONSULTATION ARRANGEMENTS WITH HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE PROPRIETORS

16 February 2012

### Report of Licensing Manager

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform Members of the existing arrangements for holding consultation forums with hackney carriage and private hire proprietors and to seek their instructions regarding arrangements for future meetings. To seek instructions on the membership of the Taxi Liaison Group.

This report is public

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended:

1. to note the report and;
2. to determine the arrangements for future forum and Taxi Liaison Group meetings.

#### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Since 2000, it had been the practice for Members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee (formerly the Licensing Committee) and appropriate officers to hold separate 6 monthly forum meetings with hackney carriage and private hire proprietors. The purpose of such meetings was to provide a forum for consultation with the taxi trade on various issues affecting vehicles and drivers. Meetings were normally held each year in April and October.

1.2 At its meeting on 14 June 2007, the Committee reviewed the arrangements for holding consultations with hackney carriage and private hire proprietors and resolved as follows:

- (1) that the forums continue to be held on a six-monthly basis. That the forums be scheduled to commence at 11.00 am and finish at 1.00 pm.
- (2) that the forums be in two parts, the first part to be allocated to the Hackney Carriage proprietors and the second part to the Private Hire proprietors.
- (3) that the Chairman's and Vice-Chairman's attendance at the forums be mandatory.

- (4) that the attendance of other Members of the Licensing Regulatory Committee be on a voluntary basis.
  - (5) that Hackney Carriage and Private Hire proprietors be notified of forum meetings in writing and advised to submit items for the Agenda by a set date.
  - (6) that the number of items submitted for the Agenda be limited to three per proprietor/association.
  - (7) that the Agenda be prepared and posted to the City Council's website with copies available at Lancaster and Morecambe Town Halls.
  - (8) that proprietors/associations be given a set timescale of three minutes in which to speak on each Agenda item.
  - (9) that questions on Agenda items be submitted in writing to the City Council's Licensing section.
  - (10) that proprietors/associations be limited to three questions only on each Agenda item.
  - (11) that whether questions are from an individual or association is at the Chairman's discretion.
  - (12) that "Council Issues" be the first Agenda item.
  - (13) that the order in which other Agenda items is taken be at the Chairman's discretion.
- 1.3 Following the above, the delayed April proprietors' forum meetings were held on 28 June 2007 at the revised times of 11.00 am and 12.00 noon, although very few proprietors attended those meetings. Prior to the introduction of the revised arrangements outlined in 1.2 above, the meetings had been previously held at 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm.
- 1.4 The then Licensing Manager subsequently considered the introduction of a multi-agency partnership approach to liaison with representatives of hackney carriage and private hire proprietors. At the meeting of the Committee on 6 September 2007 the Members considered a report proposing the formation of a Taxi Liaison Group (TLG) which would consist of representatives of the Licensing office, the Police, the Highways Authority and a small number of hackney carriage and private hire proprietors. It was envisaged that the trade representatives would normally be the directors of the main taxi companies along with representatives of drivers' groups. In the above report, the Licensing Manager also proposed that meetings of the TLG should be held every six months but midway between the six monthly forum meetings held with all proprietors on the following basis:
- January ~ TLG meeting
- April ~ Hackney Carriage and private hire proprietors' forum meetings
- July ~ TLG meeting
- October ~ Hackney carriage and private hire proprietors' forum meetings

- 1.5 At the above meeting, the then Licensing Manager proposed to Members that the TLG arrangement would enable more meaningful discussions to be held in a partnership approach to addressing various issues. Such issues may include the Council's delivery of its taxi licensing service, policing and highways matters affecting drivers and vehicles and service standards generally within the taxi trade. It was further proposed that notes recording actions arising from TLG meetings would be reported to the next forum meetings with all hackney carriage and private hire proprietors. This should enable a basis for more effective and structured discussions at such forum meetings, and in turn should benefit proprietors and the other regulatory agencies involved in the taxi licensing function.

Following consideration of the above, the Committee resolved:

- (1) that Members approve that the existing arrangements for meeting with hackney carriage and private hire proprietors on a six monthly basis as decided at the Committee meeting on 28 June 2007 be maintained;
  - (2) that Members note the Licensing Manager's proposals to introduce an office based Taxi Liaison Group involving representatives of hackney carriage and private hire proprietors, the Police and the Highway Authority;
  - (3) that notes of the Taxi Liaison Group meetings be circulated to Members of the Committee.
- 1.6 Accordingly, the first meeting of the TLG was held in January 2008, followed by the proprietors' forum meetings in April 2008. The next TLG meeting was held in July 2008, followed by a special TLG meeting held in October 2008 to discuss certain policing and traffic enforcement issues and to commence a review of the hackney carriage ranking and private hire parking arrangements in Lancaster city centre. The next proprietors' forum meeting followed in November 2008.
- 1.7 Unfortunately, however, the four proprietors' forum meetings (2 for hackney carriage and 2 for private hire) held in 2008 were poorly attended with a total of 7 proprietors attending the two meetings held in April and also 7 attending the two meetings held in November. The TLG, on the other hand, proved to be a more effective forum through the engagement of various partner agencies and stake holders including the Council's Access Officer. As a result, at a meeting of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held on the 8 January 2009, it was agreed that the hackney carriage and private hire proprietors' forum meetings should be held annually rather than every 6 months as had been the case previously
- 1.8 A request has now been made by members of the Taxi Liaison Group for the Forum to be held twice a year in April and October as was previously the case, as they feel that 12 months between the meetings is too long a period. Members may also wish to consider the format of the Forum meetings, and whether the arrangements as set out in 1.2 above are still appropriate. Members should note that it is intended that the chief executive will be attending future meetings of the TLG and Forum meetings.
- 1.9 Whilst the TLG is an effective mechanism for discussions, there have been problems with membership of the TLG, and questions raised as to who should be attending and who represents who. Officers would like to formalise these arrangements to ensure that a proper balance can be maintained between ensuring that all sectors of the trade are represented and ensuring that the group is small enough to have meaningful discussions. It has been proposed by a member of the TLG that all attendees at the meeting should be able to evidence that they represent at least 15 members of the trade. Whatever decision is taken about entitlement to attend as a

trade representative it is recommended that a form should be submitted to the licensing department 2 months prior to the meetings signed by members of the trade that are being represented by the individual. A Newsletter is sent to all members of the trade following each TLG meeting outlining what has been discussed, and the minutes are published on line.

## 2.0 CONCLUSION

- 2.1 Members are therefore requested to determine the future arrangements for holding consultation with hackney carriage and private hire proprietors, and for membership of the Taxi Liaison Group.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b> (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p>
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<p>None applicable to this report.</p>
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<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>
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<p>Financial Services have not been consulted.</p>
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<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b></p>
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<p>Legal Services have been consulted and have no further comments.</p>
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<p><b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b></p>	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Wendy Peck <b>Telephone:</b> (01524) 582317 <b>E-mail:</b> wpeck@lancaster.gov.uk <b>Ref:</b> WP</p>
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<p>None</p>
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