

LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Taxi Marshal Scheme 13 February 2014

Report of Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

Following discussions at the Taxi Forum, and consultation with the hackney carriage proprietors to enable the Committee to consider further the introduction of a temporary Taxi Marshal scheme between the North Road, Diggles rank and Wood Street car park

This report is public

Recommendation

Not to introduce a Taxi Marshalling scheme between the North Road, Diggles rank and Wood Street car park on a Friday and Saturday night.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will be aware that at the last meeting of this Committee it was resolved that further consultation should be carried out with hackney carriage proprietors in relation to the introduction of taxi marshals on a Friday and Saturday night between the hours of 1930 and 0330 to ensure that proprietors would support such a scheme.
- 1.2 It was proposed that, in order to deal with the current North Road issue during the United Utilities works, the Council could, through an agency, arrange for taxi marshals to be engaged on Friday and Saturday nights from 19.30 to, say, 03.30, one in the Wood Street car park and another at the North Road rank. Hackney carriages could then wait in the Wood Street car park until the marshals advised that a place was available on the North Road rank. The presence of the marshals would ensure that only vehicles which had been waiting in Wood Street were able to access the North Road rank, and would also deter unauthorised private parking on the rank.
- 1.3 It was reported that the scheme, if introduced, could be funded from the current budget, as there was currently a vacant enforcement officer post. However, officers would only be able to recommend the introduction of a taxi marshal scheme if there was clear evidence that its implementation would have the full support and co-operation of the trade, and would offer value for money.
- 1.4 It was reported that the Taxi Task Group had considered the report and asked that the views of the trade be sought in relation to the proposal. Hackney carriage proprietors had been consulted and only three responses had been

received - two were in favour of a taxi marshal scheme being introduced between the North Road, Diggles rank and Wood Street car park, and one did not know. Members may recall that the report in January stated there had originally been four responses however this was an administration error as one of the responses had been recorded twice.

- 1.5 Members were advised that the County Council had no objection to the management of ranking within the taxi bays on North Road by appointed and appropriately trained marshals in addition to the existing restrictions.
- 1.6 The Police had been consulted on the report, and Inspector Thackeray-Scott was in attendance at the meeting to put forward the views of the Police. He reported that over ranking in the city centre was a problem and the Police received complaints about it. The Police worked with the City Council to resolve issues and had the power to issue fixed penalty notices for obstruction. Taxi marshals were used elsewhere and received the support of the Police. The City Council needed to be sure that any proposal to introduce taxi marshals had the support of the hackney carriage proprietors and represented value for money before being implemented.
- 1.7 It was resolved that hackney carriage proprietors be consulted further regarding the engagement of taxi marshals. That, subject to the outcome of this consultation, if marshals would have the support of the trade, the Committee would be minded to engage taxi marshals, through an agency, on Friday and Saturday nights from 19.30 to 03.30, one in the Wood Street car park and another at the North Road rank.
- 1.8 A further consultation has now been carried out with the hackney proprietors in relation to the introduction of the scheme. Once again, the response was very low with a total of three being received. Two of the responses were in favour of the scheme and one was against. That means in total from both consultations the council have received six responses of which four were in favour, one was against and one didn't know. All responses are attached to this report at Appendix A.
- 1.9 Members may wish to consider whether the low response means there is a lack of interest in the scheme, which could then follow that it will not be supported by the trade. A taxi marshalling scheme such as the one proposed can only work with the full co-operation of the trade, who will be expected to participate in it.
- 1.10 The Licensing Manager has requested quotes from security companies who supply SIA registered staff, such as the ones required, and at the time of writing this report has only been given one quotation which works out at £28 per hour plus VAT for 2 marshals.
- 1.11 Members will note from the cost quoted above, providing the scheme, even on a temporary basis, is quite costly, in particular if it is not going to be supported by the hackney proprietors. Although such schemes do work very well in other towns and cities, the lack of interest from the trade suggests that the proposal may not represent best value for money.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 The officer recommendation is that in view of the lack of positive response

form the trade, the introduction of a taxi marshalling scheme should not proceed.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Health & Safety, Equality & Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

None directly arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

The legal implications are set out in the report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The cost of the taxi marshal scheme could be covered within the current licensing budget as there is currently a vacant post.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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