

TAXI LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee held within the Council Chambers, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Tuesday, 19 September, 2000 at 10.00 a.m.

Present: Provost Alistair Macdonald (LAB), Councillors Mary Campbell (LAB) and Ronald McColl (SNP).

Attending: Mr. N. Ettles, Principal Solicitor, Mr. D. Rooney, Senior Administrative Officer and Mr. K. MacLeod, Licensing Officer (Enforcement).

Also Attending: Messrs. J. Cassidy and B. McLaughlin representing the Dumbarton and Alexandria Taxi Owners Association Limited and Messrs. D. Millar, D. McDermott and M. McDermott representing the Clydebank Taxi Trade Association.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillors John Syme (LAB) and John McCutcheon (SNP).

Councillor Mary Campbell in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000 were submitted and accepted as a correct record, it having been noted that the Minutes had been approved by the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee on 16 August, 2000.

VEHICLES APPROVED TO OPERATE AS TAXIS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000 there was submitted a further report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on the consultation exercise which had been undertaken with respect to the maximum number of passengers which the new Peugeot Euro 7 Taxi should be licensed to carry.

Following discussion it was agreed to recommend that the status quo should apply relative to the maximum number of passengers which the new vehicle would be licensed to carry, that is, a maximum of 5 passengers in respect of taxis operating within the Clydebank zone and 4 passengers in respect of taxis operating within the Dumbarton zone.

REVISED CONDITIONS RELATING TO TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR LICENCES AND TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE CAR DRIVERS LICENCES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000 there was submitted a further report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on revised conditions relating to Taxi and Private Hire Car Licences and Taxi and Private Hire Car Drivers Licences.

With regard to the one outstanding matter concerning the condition relating to Fire Extinguishers, it was noted that Station Officer Gavin of Strathclyde Fire Brigade, who had attended the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 6 June in connection with this matter, had been contacted further and had now submitted a letter dated 8 September, 2000 in which a revised version of the proposed condition was detailed.

After hearing Mr. Millar it was noted that the representatives of the taxi trade had expected the revised condition to contain a reference to a minimum weight of one kilogram for fire extinguishers which would be approved by the licensing authority for use in taxis.

It was agreed that the condition be suitably amended to reflect the point raised by Mr. Millar and that it be recommended to the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee that the amended condition be approved.

PROVISION OF TAXI RANKS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000, there was submitted a further report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services providing an update with respect to the appointment of taxi ranks at (a) Balloch Railway Station and (b) within the Coldstream North Car Park at the Clyde Regional Centre in Clydebank/adjacent to the Asda Store at the Clyde Regional Centre.

It was noted:-

- (a) that at a meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee which was held on 16 August, 2000 it was agreed that the proposed appointment of a taxi stance within the lay-by at Balloch Railway Station be approved as undernoted:-

From the centre point of the lay-by on the East side of Tullichewan Road, Balloch, adjacent to the Railway Station, running South South East from said point for a distance of 15 metres - to accommodate 3 taxis;

- (b) that at a special meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee which was held on 4 September, 2000 it was agreed that the proposed appointment of taxi stances within the Coldstream North Car Park at the Clydebank Shopping Centre be approved as undernoted:-

1. From a point 12 metres South South East of the entrance to Argos Distributors Ltd., 17 Britannia Way, Clydebank, running East South East from said point for a

distance of 20 metres - to accommodate 4 taxis, with a feeder rank being located as follows:-

From a point 8 metres to the South South East of the entrance to McDonalds Restaurant, 12 - 14 Britannia Way, Clydebank, running South South West from said point for a distance of 20 metres - to accommodate 4 taxis.

2. From a point 12 metres to the East South East point of the pick up/drop off area at the fore of the UCI Cinema, 23 Britannia Way, Clydebank, running East South East from said point for a distance of 5 metres - to accommodate 1 taxi; and

- (c) that the Director of Commercial and Technical Services had been requested to take the necessary action to have the new taxi stances marked out and poles and signs erected and had also been advised of the decision to refer the matter of the adoption of the layby at Balloch Railway Station to the Roads and Technical Services Committee.

Following discussion it was noted that the marking out of the ranks should be completed imminently but it would take longer to have the poles and signs erected. In this connection it was agreed that the Director of Commercial and Technical Services be requested to provide an indication of the timescale for completion of the erection of the poles and signs at the ranks.

In relation to a point which was raised by Councillor McColl, it was noted that referral of the matter of the adoption of the lay-by at Balloch Railway Station would be included on the agenda for the meeting of the Roads and Technical Services Committee which was due to be held on 11 October, 2000.

VEHICLE INSPECTIONS - STATISTICAL REPORT

With reference to previous Minutes of Meetings of this Sub-Committee there was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on taxis presented for tests, failure rates and reasons for vehicles failing tests during the period from 20 July to 8 September, 2000. It was agreed that the contents of the report be noted.

REVIEW OF VARIOUS TAXI LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000, there was submitted a further report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services regarding the review of various Taxi Licensing fees and charges.

It was noted: -

- (a) that at the meeting of the Sub-Committee on 1 August it had been agreed to recommend to the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee that the Head of Finance be requested to conduct an appropriate accounting exercise with a view to ascertaining whether the income from Taxi Licensing fees and charges was more than sufficient to meet the expenses incurred in carrying out the functions of the licensing

authority in relation to the licensing of taxis and private hire cars, and, if so, to provide an indication of the extent to which fees and charges may be reduced. It had also been agreed that a representative of the Finance Section be requested to attend the next meeting of the Sub-Committee in connection with this matter;

- (b) that when the matter was considered by the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee on 16 August, 2000 the Convener, Councillor Campbell, had advised that she had discussed the situation with officers of the Finance Section and it had been considered that to undertake the type of study referred to would be a duplication of effort as a similar exercise had been carried out approximately three years ago;
- (c) that the recommendation of the Sub-Committee had not been accepted for the reason referred to in (b) above and instead the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee had agreed that the report by the then Director of Finance, which had been submitted to the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee in June, 1997 following a study having been carried out relative to the costs of administering Taxi Licensing, be resubmitted to the next meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee; and
- (d) that the report from 1997 indicated that there was an estimated deficit of over £6000 per annum with respect to the costs of administering Taxi Licensing.

Following discussion it was noted that as a decision on the matter had been taken by the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee, the representatives of the taxi trade would require to raise their concerns with the appropriate body under the Council's new administrative system which was due to come into effect from 1 November, 2000.

COUNCIL PAYMENTS TO TRANSPORT BODIES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, regarding the enquiry from the representatives of the taxi trade as to whether any grants would be available to taxi operators to assist in the upgrade and purchase of newer vehicles, given that train and bus services are subsidised by the Council and the taxi trade is now regarded as part of an integrated transport network, the Sub-Committee was reminded that Councillor Syme, as one of the Council's representatives on the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Board, had undertaken to raise this matter with the Board.

As Councillor Syme had not been present at a meeting of the Sub-Committee since 15 March it was agreed that he be requested to provide a report on the outcome of the matter having been raised with the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Board, for consideration at the meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee which was due to be held on 11 October, 2000.

REVIEW OF TAXI FARES AND CHARGES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000, there was submitted a further report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on the review of taxi fares and charges.

It was agreed:-

- (a) to note that at a meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee on 16 August, 2000 the proposals in respect of the Dumbarton zone had been approved and the revised fare chart for that zone would come into effect on 1 October, 2000; and
- (b) to accept the proposals which had been put forward by the representatives of the Clydebank taxi trade for the Clydebank zone, a copy of which is appended hereto, and to remit further consideration to the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee for approval.

It was noted that, if approved by the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee, the proposed fares in respect of the Clydebank zone would require to be advertised in the normal manner and the matter would thereafter be reported back to Members for a final decision once the period of notice had expired.

LOMOND SHORES - PROVISION OF PEOPLE MOVER SERVICE

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000, there was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on the above matter which had been raised by the representatives of the taxi trade.

It was noted that prior to the meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee on 16 August, 2000, a letter had been received from Lomond Shores Management Company Limited advising that the local taxi association had been mistaken in assuming that a "People Mover" service which had been under consideration would have been provided by the use of MPVs, commonly referred to as "people carriers"; that the people mover option was no longer being considered; and that the current transport option which was being explored was that of a local sprinter bus, operated if possible by the SPTE.

ALCOHOL IN TAXIS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 1 August, 2000, there was submitted a report by the Head of Legal and Administrative Services on the above matter which had been raised by the representatives of the taxi trade.

It was noted that in accordance with the decision of the Sub-Committee on 1 August, a letter has been sent by the Clerk to the Licensing Board to all holders of Public House, Off Sale,

Hotel, Restaurant, Refreshment and Entertainment Licences and Secretaries of Registered Clubs.

At the suggestion of Councillor McColl, it was agreed that a letter be sent to the Police authority asking that they be more pro-active in relation to enforcing the relevant Bye-law which prohibits the consumption of alcohol in public places.

MELFORT AVENUE, CLYDEBANK - PROHIBITION OF SPECIFIED TURNS

Mr. Millar referred to the Traffic Management Order which had recently been put in place by the Council prohibiting vehicles other than school buses or cycles turning from Drumry Road into Melfort Avenue, Clydebank and advised that he would be writing to the Head of Roads, Transport and Environment Services to ask if it would be possible to introduce a one-way system for Melfort Avenue rather than the existing arrangement.

It was agreed that the position be noted.

VALEDICTORY

As this would be the last meeting of the Sub-Committee prior to the introduction of the Council's new administrative system in November, Councillor Campbell thanked the representatives of the taxi trade for their participation and contribution since the inception of the Sub-Committee.

The meeting closed at 10.58 a.m.