

TAXI LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE

At a Meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee held within the Council Suite, Council Offices, Rosebery Place, Clydebank on Tuesday, 25 April, 2000 at 10.00 a.m.

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

Attending: Mr. N. Ettles, Principal Solicitor and Mr. D. Lamb, Licensing Officer (Enforcement).

Also Attending: Mr. J. Cassidy representing the West Dumbarton Area Taxi Trade Association and Messrs. D. McDermott and M. McDermott representing the Clydebank Taxi Trade Association.

Apologies: Apologies for absence were intimated on behalf of Councillor John Syme (LAB) and Mr. D. Miller.

Councillor Mary Campbell in the Chair

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of Meeting of the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 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 19 April, 2000

PROVISION OF TAXI RANKS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, there was submitted a further report by the Director of Corporate Services on proposals to introduce 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

Following discussion, it was noted:-

- (a) that the proposals with respect to the appointment of these taxi ranks had been approved by the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee at its meeting on 19 April, 2000;

- (b) that it was anticipated that the issue of the adoption of the lay-by at Balloch Railway Station by the Council would shortly be resolved; and
- (c) that new management rules for the Clyde Regional Centre were being drafted and it was anticipated that the draft rules would be submitted to the next meeting of the Environmental Protection and Leisure Services Committee for Members' consideration.

VEHICLE INSPECTIONS - STATISTICAL REPORT

With reference to previous Minutes of Meetings of this Sub-Committee, there was submitted a report on taxis presented for tests, failure rates and reasons for vehicles failing tests during the period from 1 March to 6 April 2000.

It was noted:-

- (a) that from the figures presented in the report there had been a substantial increase in the percentage of vehicles which were failing tests; and
- (b) that notwithstanding that a certain number of the failures may be related to minor faults, the percentage of vehicles over 8 years old operating within the Clydebank zone which had failed tests gave serious cause for concern.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed:-

- (a) to note that the Licensing Enforcement Officer would obtain the necessary information with regard to the certification of the emissions test equipment at the Vehicle Testing Unit and would, thereafter, arrange to have an informal meeting with representatives of the taxi trade thereon,
- (b) that a report on (a) above would be submitted to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee, and
- (c) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

REVIEW OF VARIOUS TAXI LICENSING FEES AND CHARGES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, there was submitted a report by the Director of Corporate Services reviewing various Taxi Licensing fees and charges.

It was noted that since the last meeting of the Sub-Committee a limited research exercise had been carried out with respect to the level of fees charged by neighbouring authorities for the types of applications, etc. which were the subject of review.

Following discussion, it was agreed that the matter be continued to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee in order that details of the charges made, and the service provided, by West Dunbartonshire Council and other authorities could be submitted for consideration.

COUNCIL PAYMENTS TO TRANSPORT BODIES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, the Sub-Committee resumed consideration of 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.

Following discussion, it was noted:-

- (a) that the appropriate taxi trade association was the appropriate body to progress this issue taking into account the national context of the matter, and
- (b) that this item be continued on the agenda of the Sub-Committee meantime in order that Councillor Syme, as one of the Council's representatives on the Strathclyde Passenger Transport Board, could provide an update on the matter.

REVISED CONDITIONS RELATING TO TAXI LICENCES AND TAXI DRIVERS LICENCES

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, there was submitted a further report by the Director of Corporate Services on revised conditions relating to Taxi Licences, Private Hire Car Licences and Taxi/Private Hire Car Drivers Licences.

Following discussion, the Sub-Committee agreed:-

- (a) that the contents of the report be noted,
- (b) to invite a representative of the Fire Authority to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee with respect to proposed condition 29 relating to Holders of a Taxi Licence,
- (c) to obtain further advice from the Scottish Executive in respect of the condition in the standard conditions pertaining to Holders of a Licence to Drive a Private Hire Car, which concerns applicants or drivers being required to pass a test of his/her knowledge of the local area, road layouts, etc., and
- (d) to continue consideration of the possible introduction of a Dress Code for Taxi/Private Hire Car Drivers to the next meeting of the Sub-Committee in order to allow the representatives of the taxi trade to consult with their members and obtain the necessary feedback thereon

NOTE: Provost Macdonald left the meeting at this point in the proceedings.

PRIVATE HIRE CARS

With reference to the Minutes of Meeting of this Sub-Committee held on 15 March, 2000, the Sub-Committee resumed consideration of various concerns which had been raised by the representatives of the taxi trade with respect to the operation of private hire cars within the area.

After hearing the Convener, Councillor Campbell, it was noted that a meeting had recently taken place with representatives of the Police authority, the taxi trade and relevant officers to discuss the concerns which had been raised.

In this connection, it was also noted that resources would be deployed by the Police authority in an effort to address these concerns.

REVIEW OF TAXI FARES AND CHARGES

Following discussion, it was noted that the representatives of the trade were awaiting the outcome of Glasgow City Council's review of taxi fares and charges before submitting any proposals on this matter.

Having heard the Licensing Enforcement Officer, it was noted that a Taxi Operator in Clydebank had been in contact with him regarding a request for a fare increase.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Sub-Committee would be held on Tuesday, 6 June, 2000 at 10 00 a.m.

Having heard the Convener, Councillor Campbell, it was agreed that the representatives of the taxi trade would give officers as much notice as possible of any issues they wished to raise in order that the appropriate information could be obtained prior to the meeting date.

The meeting closed at 11.17 a.m.