

LICENSING AND REGULATORY PANEL

TUESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2008

PRESENT: Councillor R D Feldman in the Chair

Councillors S Armitage, J Dunn, V Morgan,
D Wilson and C Townsley

IN ATTENDANCE

T McSharry – Access Committee for Leeds
P Roberts – West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority (METRO)
G Bartlett – LCC Chief Highways Officer
H Claxton – LCC Traffic Engineering Manager
A Rashid – Hackney Carriage Trade Representative
B Heptinstall - Hackney Carriage Trade Representative
K Gill - Hackney Carriage Trade Representative
A Ali - Hackney Carriage Trade Representative
G Nabi - Hackney Carriage Trade Representative
D Broster – Section Head, LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing
C Page – LCC Taxi & Private Hire Licensing

1 **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest

2 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dowson, Selby, Townsley and Wilkinson

Apologies were also received from Mr D Littlewood – Access Committee for Leeds

3 **Minutes**

RESOLVED – That the minutes of the meeting held 6th May 2008 be confirmed as a correct record

4 **Matters Arising**

Taxi Ranks/Shelters

Further to minute 40 of the meeting held 6 May 2008, Mr D Broster informed the Panel of the outcome of a site visit of Leeds City Centre he had undertaken with officers from METRO and LCC Highways to view the sites of current and proposed taxi ranks. 4 sites (Merrion Street; Wade Lane; The Headrow and Lower Briggate) had been identified as suitable to accommodate three-sided slim-line shelters for use at taxi ranks. The slim-line shelters would contain temporary seating, open out onto the kerbside and include a display casement. Each shelter would cost approximately £10,000.00 to include fitting and 5 year maintenance plan. Funding for the shelters had yet to be identified

Mr Roberts added that the three sided “cantilever style” shelters did not require planning permission. In response to the suggestion that

advertisements on or within the shelters could generate revenue, he responded that these shelters were not suitable for large scale advertisements although it may be possible to place small adverts within the display casement. This would require further consideration. Mr Roberts explained the fee included standard maintenance of the shelters. If the shelters were found to be subject of excessive damage METRO would review its maintenance commitment however he confirmed the structure of the cantilever shelters was robust and did include reinforced glass. The cantilever shelter was suitable for disabled persons to access HC vehicles.

Finance – A source of funding for the shelters was still to be explored with LCC Highways, Community Safety and City Centre Management. Members noted Mr Claxton's response that the Highways budget for 2008/09 was already committed

Enforcement – Trade representatives commented the Wade Lane rank identified as suitable for a shelter was hardly used due to night time private parking. Mr Broster responded the aim of the 4 shelters was to make the ranks as good and attractive as possible to ensure they were used. Responding to the parking problem he reported on enforcement activity undertaken the previous Saturday evening in the city centre. One LCC Enforcement Officer alone had issued 50 Fixed Penalty Notices to private hire vehicles for various offences. A meeting three weeks ago between West Yorkshire Police and LCC TPH Section had secured co-operation from WYP in the form of officers to be on duty with the enforcement team every other weekend, in addition to the Parking Services Officer now on duty until 03:00 hours at weekends. These measures would bring improvements to the problems encountered by HC drivers in the city centre

Rank Usage – the Chair commented on the perceived lack of uptake of the Greek Street rank. Mr Broster confirmed the new rank, which had been created by the removal of revenue making parking metres, was not used to capacity. Members noted the response from the trade that the rank was used; however as this was a new rank it would take some time for the computer databases used by firms to locate cabs to be updated to include the Greek Street location. Furthermore, the trade commented on the lack of advertisement of the new rank so the public still made use of the nearby New Station Street rank outside the railway station. Members responded there was no better advert than a rank in full use, however agreed that advertisement of the ranks should be pursued – using the Councils' own website in the first instance to be followed by the next issue of the Leeds Newspaper

Disability issues – Members noted the comment from Mr McSharry that consideration of disability inclusion issues had previously been omitted from the process of drawing up proposed ranks. He reminded officers that disabled groups had expressed a preference some time ago for the re-instatement of the rank on Briggate near to Marks & Spencer's which had been removed when Briggate was pedestrianised. Members were supportive of this possibility being investigated. Mr Bartlett expressed concern that additional matters were being added to the schedule already being progressed by

Highways Services; he made a case for priorities being set and funding attributed as necessary and that other matters should not now divert Highways from those already identified and agreed with parties as “high priority” for the 2008/09 financial year.

Signage – in response to previous discussions on the legibility of taxi rank signage Mr Claxton displayed a draft new style sign agreed following consultation with the HC trade which was proposed to be introduced at new ranks and then rolled out to existing ranks. Each sign cost approximately £200 to be fixed to existing poles, rising to £275 if new fixtures were required. These costs would be met by the Highways Department. Members welcomed the new taxi rank sign design

5 Joint Licensing Committee and Licensing & Regulatory Panel meeting - Minutes

The minutes of the Joint Meeting were presented and the Clerk reported an amendment was necessary as the Chair of the meeting had been incorrectly noted as Councillor Wilson.

RESOLVED –

- (a) That the minutes be amended to correctly identify Councillor R D Feldman as the Chair
- (b) That subject to that amendment, the minutes of the Joint Meeting held on 3rd June 2008 be noted

6 Taxi Rank Provision - Update Report

Further to minute 40 of the Panel meeting held 6th May 2008, the Chief Highways Officer presented a report updating the Panel on the current position with regards to provision of taxi ranks in Leeds. The report also outlined the outcome of discussions held with Hackney Carriage Trade representatives and members of the Access Committee for Leeds which had been held since the last Panel meeting.

Appended to the report was a schedule of taxi ranks suggested by the trade and including the comments of the Department in response. Members noted the ranks had been discussed by all parties and priorities for each of the ranks had been set and agreed. Those recorded as “high priority” would be progressed throughout the 2008/09 financial year. Mr Claxton set out the necessary legal process of consultation and advertisement required in order to progress the implementation of the ranks. It was noted the next step would be to draw up the detail of the proposed ranks in order to consult with the trade at a meeting scheduled for September. This would be followed by a period of informal consultation with emergency services, bus operators and local residents prior to formal advertisements being placed. Members noted that the Access Committee would be invited to take part

RESOLVED – That the contents of the report be noted

7 Licensing and Regulatory Panel - Terms of Reference

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report setting out the Terms of Reference and Officer Delegation Scheme associated with the work of the Licensing and Regulatory Panel for the

2008/09 Municipal Year. These had previously been approved by Annual Council on 22nd May 2008. Also included within the report was a copy of the Code of Practice for Determining Licensing Matters

RESOLVED –

- a) To note the Terms of Reference and Officer Delegation Scheme for the Licensing and Regulatory Panel for 2008/09
- b) To note the contents of the Code of Practice for Determining Licensing Matters

8 Draft Protocol for Undertaking Site Visits

The Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) submitted a report setting out a proposed Protocol for Undertaking Licensing site visits drawn up in order to provide an element of consistency of approach and best practice for the Licensing and Regulatory Panel and the Licensing Committee

RESOLVED –

- a) That the draft Protocol for Licensing Site Visits as presented at Appendix A of the report be approved
- b) That Panel agree to have regard to the Protocol when considering any requests for site visits and during any subsequent site visits in the future

9 Date and Time of the Next Meeting

RESOLVED – To note the date and time of the next meeting as Tuesday 2nd September 2008 at 10.00 am