



Report of the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance)

LICENSING AND REGULATORY PANEL

Date: 6TH MAY 2008

Subject: HACKNEY CARRIAGE ISSUES - UPDATE REPORT ON PROGRESS SO FAR

Electoral Wards Affected:

ALL

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

1. This report is presented in order to update the Panel on the progress made so far with regards to matters discussed at the Special Meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Panel held in February called specifically to discuss taxi related issues

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

- 2.0 The report sets out a reminder of the issues raised by the Special Panel and provides updated information on the progress so far with each individual issue.

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 The Special Meeting of the Panel discussed matters relating to the publics' awareness of taxi rank locations, existing and new ranks, the role of WYPTE, liaison between interested parties and the current position with regards to Leeds Bradford Airport with representatives of the Trade and relevant LCC Departments.
- 3.2 All parties agreed to a number of proposals to move forward, and the following is an extract from the minutes of the February meeting:
 - LCC Taxi and Private Hire Section to lead on the investigation of funding opportunities and safety implications of bus stop style taxi shelters in conjunction with LCC City Centre Management and Community Safety. Mr Roberts of WYPTE offered to attend to any discussions regarding shelters
 - Officers to consider the legibility of the flag design taxi signs; the removal or realignment of the 4/5 historical taxi ranks which load from the roadside and to investigate the possible implementation of the taxi rank sign with lighting in Leeds

- Representatives of the HC trade to meet with Mr Darch to discuss their suggested ranks
- To note that officers of the T & PH Section intend to meet with representatives of the Access Committee to discuss their concerns regarding Leeds/Bradford transport arrangements
- That the Chair of the Panel write to all Members of Council regarding the forthcoming enforcement activity in the city centre to highlight the necessity of this work having regard to the safety of the public.

3.3 It was further agreed that update reports be presented to an appropriate Panel meeting in approximately 3 months time, having regard to the relevant legislation; future ownership and maintenance of the ranks and legal implications

4.0 Main Issues

4.1 The Councils' response to the issues raised by the Panel and the progress made so far is outlined below:

4.2 Bus Stop Style Taxi Shelters

Taxi Shelters – an initial meeting between officers of Highways, METRO and Taxi & Private Hire Licensing has been held to discuss the way forward on the taxi shelter issue. METRO have agreed to take the lead on this and are to put proposals to ADSHEL in respect of sites at The Headrow rank; Lower Briggate (outside Dysons) and Merrion Street (above the Wrens public house). Naturally planning issues will follow.

More appropriate colour schemes for the taxi shelters (black and white) are being considered in order to identify its taxi use rather than bus use. It has been agreed that public information will be displayed inside the shelter solely related to taxi issues, such as taxi association contact details, fare chart, safety information etc.

Additionally signage of the shelter will be night time reflective

It is intended that taxi shelters which will form part of the use of existing bus stops (if authorisation is received from the DfT for the signing and lining associated with using bus stop clearways as taxi ranks when the buses have stopped running) will be progressed in addition to these three new taxi shelter sites. The views of METRO will also be sought on some of the bus stop locations suggested by the taxi trade.

Bus stop clearway/taxi rank issue – a more favourable response has been received from the DfT but they require more amended information and a new application. The DfT is also still indicating that each authorisation should be site specific; however highways officers still intend to push for a more district wide approval in order to make it easier to implement new sites and change things as need be.

4.3 Taxi Signs – designs and legibility

Taxi rank signage – has been reviewed. The conclusion being that LCC does this correctly. Officers are in the early stages of seeking an alternative design for the 'flag type' stand sign drafted to assess what can be done within current rules, having regard to other forms of suitable sign equipment available and the "Book".

Public awareness – this remains in abeyance until the proposals for ranks and taxi shelters have been through the formal approval process.

4.4 Removal /realignment of historical taxi ranks

Taxi Rank at Greek Street/New Briggate – officers have not been able to conclude negotiations with the objector regarding the implementation of the New Briggate rank, however now intend to submit a report to the Highways Board recommending they over rule it. The taxi rank proposal on Greek Street and New Briggate could then be implemented as previously advertised. The work instruction is ready to be sent to the contractor once the objection issue is resolved.

4.5 Discussions on ranks suggested by the HC Trade

New Taxi Rank Locations and Changes – highways officers are considering the list the Trade has presented with a view to accommodating as many of the requests as possible however, a balance has to be achieved with all other kerbside demands. A meeting has yet to be arranged with Trade representatives

4.6 Leeds/Bradford Airport – There have been changes within the management structure at LBA and in order that any proposals are considered for the long term the arrangements for a visit by the Access Committee for Leeds have been held back but are now being progressed.

4.7 Enforcement Activity – Staffing levels have constrained some of the forward plans in respect of increased city centre night time enforcement activity. This has now commenced, but in view of the forthcoming election period it was thought appropriate that the proposed letter to all Members of the Council would be better placed after the elections

5.0 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

5.1 None

6.0 Legal And Resource Implications

6.1 Legal and resource implications will be identified and absorbed as required by the individual departments involved

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 To note the progress made so far and make appropriate comments.