

Licensing Sub Committee of Corporate Services Committee  
24 January 2007

**IRVINE, 24 January 2007** - At a Special Meeting of the Licensing Sub Committee of Corporate Services Committee of North Ayrshire Council at 2.00 p.m.

**Present**

David Munn, John Moffat, Jane Gorman, Alan Munro and Donald Reid.

**In Attendance**

A. Fraser, Manager Legal Services, N. Alexander, Chief Legal Officer (Licensing and District Court), D. Wallace, Enforcement Officer, and A. Toal, Clerical Officer (Licensing and District Court); and M. McKeown, Corporate Support Officer (Chief Executive's).

**Chair**

Councillor Munn in the Chair.

**Apologies for Absence**

Elizabeth McLardy, Ian Richardson and Robert Rae.

**1. Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982: Taxis and Private Hire Cars Vehicle Specifications, Taxi Licence Numbers Limitations and Zoning, Signage and Advertising**

Submitted report by the Assistant Chief Executive (Legal and Protective) on a review of taxi and private hire cars vehicle specifications, taxi licence numbers limitations and zoning, signage and advertising.

The current vehicle specifications for taxis and private hire cars operating in North Ayrshire have been in place since 1987. At its meeting on 3 April 2006, the Licensing Sub Committee agreed that the vehicle specifications should be reviewed to determine whether or not they need to be revised in light of developments in vehicle standards and technology. The Sub Committee agreed that the Licensing Section should consult with other Licensing Authorities in Scotland, and seek the views of local taxi and private hire vehicle operators, groups and organisations representing service users, and the general public, by means of a newspaper advertisement and public meeting. The Sub Committee also agreed that the Council's policy of licensing taxis with regard to specified numbers limitations and geographical zoning should also be reviewed.

Subsequently, in June 2006, public notices were placed in the local press, advertising the reviews and seeking responses thereon. Interested parties were invited to attend a public meeting on 21 June 2006.

A letter was also sent to all taxi and private hire vehicle operators and their partners, and to a range of other consultees including Community Councils in North Ayrshire, hospitals in the Ayrshire area, Strathclyde Passenger Transport Authority, Caledonian McBrayne, the Ambulance Service, Educational Services and Social Services, the Council's Transport Services, and Strathclyde Police. This letter sought views on the reviews and enclosed a questionnaire on the issues arising.

The report provided a summary and detailed analysis of the issues raised and the views expressed by those who attended the public meeting, as well as those who submitted written representations. The Sub Committee discussed each of the issues raised in turn.

The Sub Committee, having considered the issues raised and the views expressed by consultees, agreed (a) in relation to taxi and private hire car vehicle specifications, that (i) the width of rear seats should be a minimum of 48 inches, (ii) the minimum engine capacity for both petrol engines and diesel engines should be 1600cc, and (iii) issues relating to vehicle age limits, accessibility of vehicles for wheelchair users (including the use of rear loading vehicles), and the use of Hackney vehicles, should be referred to a Member/Officer Working Group for further consideration; (b) that the Member/Officer Working Group should also consider the issue of taxi signs; (c) that taxi and private hire vehicles should be permitted to advertise their company name and phone number on sun visor strips on the front and rear windscreens of their vehicles, such advertisements to be of approved dimensions; (d) that the existing dress code should continue to apply to all drivers, with women being permitted to wear slacks; and (e) that a consultant be engaged to review the Council's policy on taxi numbers limitations and zoning and report to the Member/Officer Working Group in the first instance with recommendations.

The meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.