



Minutes of the meeting of the HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE CONSULTATIVE PANEL of the TRANSPORT COMMITTEE held on WEDNESDAY 12 JANUARY 2000 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Conchie, Day, Mabbutt, O'Sullivan and Pugh

Officers: R Comitti (Regulatory Support Services Manager), G Uppington (Synergy Transport Manager), T Kirk (Passenger Transport Manager), P Bowen (Traffic Management and Parking Engineer) R Brill (Licensing Enforcement Officer), L Hurrell (Licensing Officer) and J Shaw (Senior Committee Manager)

Trade

Representatives: Derek Newland – Transport and General Workers Union
Peter Kirkham - Milton Keynes Taxi Association
Keith Weldon – Milton Keynes Taxi Association
Mark Steers – Milton Keynes Taxi Association
Ken Hendry – Private Hire Driver
Mike Kushner – Private Hire Operators Association

HC1/00 ELECTION OF CHAIR

RESOLVED –

That Councillor O'Sullivan be elected Chair of the Panel for the remainder of the Council Year

HC2/00 MINUTES

The Panel received the Minutes of the meeting of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Consultative Board held on 10 February 1999.

HC3/00 PROVISION OF HIRE DOOR SIGNS FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

The Panel considered a report that sought approval to the introduction of door signs for Private Hire Vehicles that clearly state the procedure for booking and outlined the implications, should these procedures not be adhered to.

RESOLVED –

That the introduction of door signs for Private Hire Vehicles, be approved.

**MATTERS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRADE –
HACKNEY CARRIAGE ASSOCIATION**

The Panel considered the following issues raised by the Hackney Carriage Association :

(a) The Midsummer Boulevard Rank

The Panel noted that the rank had now been in operation for 14 months and there were a number of issues that needed to be addressed primarily that the rank had not been designated as such and consequently had not been lined. The rank had also been incorrectly signed and manoeuvring was difficult. Furthermore, lighting at the rank was only adequate and the lining at the bottom of Lower 9th Street needed repainting. Concerns were also expressed about the height of conifers that led to safety concerns in some areas of the rank. It was agreed that officers would look to resolve these issues where possible.

The issue of Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles being able to use the bus lane was also raised. It was agreed that officers would contact the 3 local authorities that currently operated this system and report back to a future meeting.

(b) Private Hire – Return to Base when empty

Officers reported that they were awaiting further information relating to a legal case involving Telford and Wrekin Council. The issue was that Private Hire Vehicles should always return to base when empty as the issue of PHVs plying for trade as Hackney Carriages appeared to be particularly acute in Telford.

(c) Unused Taxi Ranks

The issue of removing unused taxi ranks was raised, specifically in relation to Westfield Road and Sainsburys, Bletchley and Waitrose in Central Milton Keynes.

(d) Milton Keynes Theatre

The Panel noted that there was currently no rank at the Theatre. Given that the rank at Waitrose was currently unused, it was agreed that officers would investigate moving this rank.

(e) Enforcement

Concern was raised by representatives that the trade operated 24 hours a day and as such, needed enforcement outside of office hours. Many of the enforcement problems occurred at night and especially at weekends. There was the further issue of the role and behaviour of the police towards enforcement matters.

It was agreed that officers should write to Thames Valley Police expressing concern over the activities of officers in relation to enforcement. Officers would also examine the issue of a nighttime enforcement officer and the flexibility of enforcement and monitoring and report back to a future meeting with costs.

(f) Yellow Plated Vehicles (South Northamptonshire)

Representatives of the Trade expressed concern about Private Hire Vehicles licensed in South Northamptonshire operating solely in Milton Keynes. Officers reported that although this situation was unfortunate, it was not illegal. The enforcement issues were complicated, however.

(g) Update on Disability Discrimination Act

Officers reported that the Department of the Environment, Transport and the Regions was hoping to submit draft technical specifications for the Hackney Carriages soon, along with Draft Regulations. Representatives of the trade stated that they would wish Milton Keynes to be exempted from the Act.

(h) Tariff Review

Representatives of the Hackney Carriage trade stated that they would wish to see a complete review of the tariff structure.

(i) Fiat-type Taxis

The Panel noted that Fiat and some other vehicle manufacturers had produced a taxi that was capable of carrying 3 wheelchair passengers. This had proved very popular and was around half the price of an FX4.

(j) Large Rank Signs

Representatives of the trade reported that the large rank signs had been removed, in error, from the CMK Station rank and the Queensway rank. It was agreed that officers would investigate this matter.

(k) Vehicle Tidiness / Livery

Representatives of the trade expressed concern regarding the tidiness and general appearance of some vehicles. Some roof signs were missing or in poor repair. In order to prevent theft, some plates were attached with velcro and removed when the vehicle was not in use. It was agreed that officers would circulate the numbers of stolen plates to the trade.

HC5/00

**MATTERS RAISED BY REPRESENTATIVES OF THE TRADE –
TRANSPORT AND GENERAL WORKERS UNION CAN SECTION**

Driver Safety

Representatives of the trade raised the issue of driver safety and specifically the need for operators to record incidents and report them to the Council and Thames Valley Police. It was agreed that a voluntary system should be established immediately with a view to making it compulsory.

HC6/00 OTHER ITEMS

Members expressed general concern about a number of issues including the need for developments such as the Theatre to be planned and co-ordinated better to take taxi and other public transport issues into account. Members also suggested that there should be better signage at ranks giving general information to the public.

HC7/00 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Panel agreed that the next meeting would be held on 30 March 2000 at 7.00pm

THE CHAIR CLOSED THE MEETING AT 9:15 PM