

## **TAXI TRADE FORUM - MINUTES**

### **1 SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To improve customer orientation and access to Rochford's services.

### **2 FORUM MEETINGS**

- 2.1 In an effort to establish and maintain close links with the taxi trade of the District the Council agreed to host, on a regular basis, Forum Meetings to discuss current issues.
- 2.2 The last Forum Meeting was held on Wednesday 13 October 1999 but an additional meeting requested by member of the Taxi Trade was held on Tuesday 5 October 1999. The latter was in connection with the petition relating to the issue of Hackney Carriage Plates but some of those persons in attendance raised additional issues in advance of the Forum Meeting because they would not be available when it was held. Notes of both meetings are appended for Members' consideration.

### **3 FINANCIAL & RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

- 3.1 The cost of Forum Meetings can be met from within existing budgets but in view of the reduced numbers attending the forum meetings it is proposed that meetings be held twice a year (April and October) and that 'The Knowledge' newsletter be produced in July and January. Additionally, the Forum Minutes might now be circulated to all Members through the Chief Executive's Bulletin.

### **4 RECOMMENDATION**

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Sub-Committee **RESOLVES**:
- (1) that the Minutes of the Taxi Trade Forum be circulated to all Members with the Bulletin.
  - (2) that Forum Meetings and publication of the Taxi Trade newsletter be reduced to twice a year.
  - (3) the provision of training for drivers in the techniques for handling disabled persons be investigated. (HRHM)

S J Clarkson  
Head of Revenue and Housing Management

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**Background Papers:**

None.

For further information please contact Frank Spence on (01702) 546366

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**APPENDIX 1**

**Delegation of Rayleigh Taxi Drivers**

*Meeting with Hackney Carriage Officer held 5 October 1999*

Drivers were concerned that Council Members should have a background knowledge of the taxi and private hire to assist them with their decision making process. The meeting emphasised the over provision of Hackney Carriages in Rayleigh was creating a dilution of revenue and raised objections to the granting of company plates.

It was explained to the meeting that the issue of company plates had been part of the policy to encourage the licensing of wheelchair accessible taxis. If the Council wished to seek an exemption from the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, it would be necessary to demonstrate a sufficient provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles already existed within the District. The Council recognised that, to achieve the objective, the resources of companies would be necessary and, ultimately it may protect the freedom of choice of vehicle for individual drivers.

The drivers present urged the Council to conduct a survey amongst those licensed by the Authority to determine that a limit on the number was appropriate. It was suggested a pre-paid return envelope should be provided. They were reminded their concern related solely to the trade based in Rayleigh and any change in policy would affect the whole District.

Following a question on taxi subsidies, the meeting was advised it was a Central Government issue.

A request was made for signage to The Approach taxi rank from Rayleigh Station. The meeting was informed this was a matter for Great Eastern Railway and the request would be drawn to their attention at the earliest opportunity. Matters concerning the main station rank on Railtrack land were considered and the Council's situation relative to the facilities at that location. The meeting was reminded the Council had provided a rank at The Approach but it was not fully utilised by the taxi trade.

Types of vehicle were discussed including size and luggage capacity. Those present were not in favour of the increased use of MPV's but they were informed the Council could not refuse to licence them. Legislation allowed Local Authority licensed Hackney Carriage and private hire cars to seat a maximum of eight passengers.

Members of the trade were concerned about the implications of handling disabled passengers. They were interested to learn if courses could be provided to lessen the risks to all parties. Enquiries will be made to ascertain the options available.

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**APPENDIX 2**

**Rochford District Taxi Forum**  
**Minutes of Meeting held 13 October 1999**

**Present:** 7 Members of the Rochford Taxi/Private Hire Trade.

Members of the Rochford Taxi and Private Hire Trade were welcomed to the meeting. The timing had been changed to avoid clashing with school contracts but this had not encouraged an increase in attendance. Of those present, six were from one Rayleigh circuit and one person from Rochford.

An outline of matters to be heard at Transportation Sub-Committee was given to the Meeting and the possible implications.

The meeting discussed driver training and licensing. Concern was expressed at the lack of training available to those drivers handling physically handicapped passengers and it was agreed this would be explored. Objections were raised to Hackney Carriage drivers being allowed to hold Private Hire Driver's Licences. The meeting was advised anyone who satisfied the appropriate criteria had the right to apply for and be granted any licence.

The Essex Disabled People's Association Travel Voucher Scheme was outlined and the Council's intention to seek an exemption from the requirement to have a 100% wheelchair accessible fleet of taxis under the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. It was stressed the possibility of this succeeding was dependent on sufficient provision of wheelchair accessible taxis and those investing in them were increasing the likelihood of the Council's objective being achieved.

Problems with ranks were discussed. The mechanical sweeping of Rayleigh lagoon was raised and drivers were requested not to obstruct the operation. It was suggested the provision of a waste paper bin close to the rank would resolve litter problems. Difficulties at Rayleigh Station were considered. The Hackney Carriage Officer advised he was due to meet with First Great Eastern as part of the regular liaison which took place concerning station ranks.