

EAST AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

**LOCAL GOVERNMENT LICENSING PANEL
20 DECEMBER 2007**

**PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES FOR USE
AS LICENSED TAXIS**

Report by Executive Director of Corporate Support

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 As agreed by the Licensing Panel, at the meeting held on 15 March 2007, this report is to advise the Panel of the current situation regarding the number of wheelchair accessible licensed Taxis available and to invite Members to consider allocating additional licences for wheelchair accessible Taxis as found necessary.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the meeting of the Panel held on 15 March 2007, the Members agreed:-
- (i) that the 13 additional taxi operators licences required for the North Zone be released in two phases, namely 6 by 30 June 2007 and the remainder to achieve the required percentage by 31 December 2007, each licence being subject to a condition that the vehicle would be, and would remain in perpetuity, capable of carrying a disabled passenger in his or her wheelchair; and
 - (ii) that the existing policy in respect of the surrender of a licence and the granting of the same to a nominated successor be disapplied for a period of 3 years in respect of the additional licences; and
 - (iii) that the additional licences be allocated in accordance with the arrangements set out in Paragraph 4.0 of the report dated 22 February 2007 by the Executive Director of Neighbourhood Services.

3. DISCUSSION

- 3.1 At the date of this report there are currently 5 wheelchair accessible taxis available in the South Zone out of a total fleet of 19 licensed taxis. This meets the 25% criteria agreed by the Panel.
- 3.2 In the North Zone, there are currently 20 wheelchair accessible taxis out of a total fleet of 99 licensed taxis, which equates to 20%. These figures are inclusive of the 6 additional licences agreed by the Panel in March 2007.
- 3.3 In order to meet the specified 25% criteria it would be necessary to issue a further 7 taxi operators licences.

- 3.4 The Panel may wish to consider whether or not to exclude the 6 successful applicants granted operator's licences earlier this year on the basis that this would give other operators or prospective operators an increased chance of obtaining a licence. However, it is also worth considering that the six new operators have taken the opportunity to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Nil.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Section 10 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.
- 5.2 The provisions relating to taxis contained within the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In terms of the Council's Community Plan, there is a commitment to continuously improve local transport, the safety and comfort of the travelling public and, in particular, to improve access to transport for the disabled members of the community.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1 As agreed by the Licensing Panel, at the meeting held on 15 March 2007, this report invites Members to consider allocating additional licences for wheelchair accessible taxis in order to meet the specified percentage.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Licensing Panel, having considered the contents of this report, agree:-
- (i) that 7 additional taxi operators licences be issued for the North Zone, each licence subject to the condition that the vehicle would be, and would remain in perpetuity, capable of carrying a disabled passenger in their wheelchair; and
 - (ii) that, as previously agreed by the Members, the existing policy in respect of the surrender of licence and granting of the same to a nominated successor, be disapplied for a period of 3 years in respect of the additional licences; and
 - (iii) that the additional licences be allocated in accordance with the arrangements previously agreed; and

- (iv) that the 6 successful applicants granted operator's licences earlier this year be either excluded or allowed to participate in this procedure ; and
- (v) to otherwise note the contents of the report.

Elizabeth Morton
Executive Director of Corporate Support

EM/GHS

11 December 2007

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee held on 24 February 1999.
2. Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Sub-Committee of the Community Services Committee held on 10 November 1999.
3. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Licensing Panel held on 22 May 2003.
4. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Licensing Panel held on 20 January 2005.
5. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Licensing Panel held on 19 January 2006.
6. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Licensing Panel held on 25 January 2007.
7. Minutes of the meeting of the Local Government Licensing Panel held on 15 March 2007.

Any person wishing to inspect any of the background papers listed above should telephone 01563 576061 and ask for David Mitchell, Head of Legal, Procurement and Regulatory Services or e-mail on david.mitchell@east-ayrshire.gov.uk