

## **Housing & Community Safety Select Committee**

A meeting of Housing & Community Safety Select Committee was held on Monday, 12th July, 2010.

**Present:** Cllr Julia Cherrett (Chairman), Cllr Robert Gibson, Cllr Bill Noble.

**Officers:** Dave Kitching, Jill Kitching, Bill Trewick (DNS); Graham Birtle, Michelle Jones, Fiona McKie (LD).

**Also in attendance:** Members of the Taxi Trade.

**Apologies:** were submitted on behalf of Cllr Earl, Cllr Javed, Cllr Mrs Nesbitt, Cllr Kirby, Cllr Mrs Trainer and Cllr Woodhead.

### **HCS 15/10**      **Declarations of Interest**

### **HCS 16/10**      **Review of Taxi Licensing**

Members of the Committee were provided with a written submission from the Stockton Hackney Carriage Association, Boro Cars (Middlesbrough) Ltd and Tees Valley Cabs Ltd. Members were also provided with various pieces of information as requested by the Taxi Trade, a petition, a letter from Mr Walker (Hackney Carriage Association), letters from Mr Nightingale. Members were also provided with a copy of the Trading Standards and Licensing Organisation Structure at the meeting.

The Taxi Traders were invited to provide verbal submissions at the meeting.

Mr Fidler provided a detailed submission. He felt that the fees varied significantly in Stockton as opposed to other similar authorities. He provided detail on the cost of licences for a number of authorities to highlight the differences. Mr Fidler was informed that Mike Batty was carrying out a detailed piece of work to provide information on comparative costs to ensure that the Committee were comparing 'like for like'.

Mr Fidler stated that Stockton had not increased its fees since 2005, but the fees were still higher than other authorities. He felt that the administration of licensing could be streamlined in a number of ways which he highlighted to the Committee.

Mr Khazir addressed the Committee and also felt the system for issuing licences was long and drawn out. Delays in receiving licences would mean taxi drivers were unable to work, therefore causing loss of income. Mr Khazir spoke of the issues around purchasing new/used vehicles and the length of time it took to receive log books from the DVLA and how this could cause delays with cars not being able to be used until the correct documentation had been received by the Council.

Mr Walker raised the issue of limiting taxis and having an unmet demand survey. Mr Kitching stated that according to best practice guidance it was felt that it was better to not have a fixed number of licences.

Mr Fidler continued to highlight financial information from the tables that had

been submitted and stated that he could provide a source for his data if required.

Mr Walker requested that a taxi rank be installed in Thornaby Town Centre as the bays that they used previously were not in operation since the Thornaby Town Centre redevelopments. Mr Trewick stated that the bays that were in operation previously were not an official hackney carriage stand but in the Pavilion car park outside ASDA enforced with a Stockton Council Control of Use Order. This method of control was not possible since Thornaby town centre was now privately owned and managed land. Mr Trewick stated that he would look into the matter with the Town Centre Management Company and identify if there were any appropriate areas that could be utilised and report back to the Committee.

An update was requested by the Taxi Trade on the feasibility of taxis using bus lanes. It was stated that the promised consultants study would not be proceeding due to recently imposed financial constraints but that an in-house study would be carried out in the Autumn so this request would be investigated.

Members thanked the Taxi Trade for their input.

CONCLUDED that the information provided be noted.

**HCS  
17/10**

### **Work Programme**

The next meeting would take place in Stockton Library on Tuesday, 10th August at 1pm.

CONCLUDED that the Work Programme be noted.