

APPENDIX 2 TO REPORT 165/18
CIVIC LICENSING COMMITTEE – 17 MAY 2018

Response 1

From: Robert Innes
Sent: 04 April 2018 14:54
To: LAWlicensing; LEGDEM; MacaskillID
Subject: civic committee meeting taxi fares

“To Whom It May Concern

Today I received my letters for attending a meeting about taxi fares and other points I am unable to attend but I have a few points to put over on these points

(1) wheelchair accessible taxis why does the council not put in play any companies that have 3 or more cars on there fleet must have at least one wheelchair taxi on this would benefit every zone as in every zone there are taxi firms with 3 or more taxis it would save the single taxis that work on there own not to have a huge cost every firm that has there own zone would then take the hassle away from them and it then would be a level playing field for taxi firms (example) (3 taxi firms in Arbroath each one has to have a wheelchair taxi on there fleet that would cover the area also it would be fair that each company has to have a wheelchair taxi to supply the demand on that area the single taxi cars would not have huge debts to get wheelchair taxis and a company then cant say why do I have to get one yet the other companies don't its a level playing field and would stop all the problems)”

Response 2

-----Original Message-----

From: Valdas V
Sent: 13 April 2018 08:12
To: LAWlicensing
Subject: Proposal from taxi operator

“Dear Sir/Madam
my proposals attached below

Kind regards
V Steponavicius

Valdas Steponavicius

Equality Act 2010 (section 165 and 167) Consultation - how to address the unmet need for wheelchair accessible taxi private hire vehicles in the Angus area

Definitely, need to set up it more if it necessary consult with local taxi firms proprietors and decide how big it demand and how often people ask for the wheelchair accessible taxi. They receive phone calls and taxis are booked through the phone, in the same way like airport transfers, they do it a lot, but often they unable transfer to airport wheelchair user. Also if they have wheelchair accessible taxi should advertise it and let it know to the local community. Could be that people simply don't know where to order it, and only for lack of information.

Wheelchair users extremely rarely asking for taxi individual operators who working from taxi ranks or nightclubs at late hours. During the past year, I have been requested once to take wheelchair user and I was able to provide service, as my vehicle is big enough to put wheelchair in to the boot.

If local authority requests designate to replace the vehicle with individuals operators it could be not efficient, because they often work as part-time or late hours, and the target will not be achieved.

To achieve the best result will be good that firms operators set it up on the voluntary basis if this is not possible need to encouraging, and provide the proper time frame to prepare it. To prepare vehicle into wheelchair accessible taxi, in most cases impossible and only way to buy new vehicle, this could lead to bankruptcy especially individual operators, who have only one vehicle, and its main source of livelihood the same is who recently started a new business or have already replaced new vehicle in the past year. This situation could create other problem such as unemployment, welfare of the families and etc..

How to achieve unmet need of wheelchair accessible taxi:

I noticed that some firms and individuals operators use very old vehicles which works not efficiently, pollute the environment, badly represents the town and etc.. in other cases some operators run to small hatchbacks it's uncomfortable for passengers with overweight and in most cases they unable to take the family with child pushchair, as luggage compartment is too small. I will advice local authority to review a list of designated vehicles.

- 1) Designate firms to acquire this vehicle and advertise it
- 2) Designate replace the vehicle who vehicle is older than 10 year
- 3) Designate replace the vehicle who use 'Small cars/compact cars'
- 4) Provide time frame to prepare it"

Response 3

From: Mike Healy
Sent: 12 April 2018 12:08
To: LAWlicensing
Subject: f.a.o Tina Magson

“Unmet needs for wheelchair accessible Cabs

We have just ordered a new £30,000 WAV , I agree the situation at present is not ideal in Angus as a whole but feel that adopting a policy whereby operators are forced into putting on these types of vehicle will result in more Private hire vehicles , less cabs operating, a lower standard of vehicle, operators/drivers leaving the trade. We have operated a FORD Connect 6 seat vehicle for 6 months now , this was to allow us to review if the elderly and infirm customers that we have who do not use wheelchairs could get in and out of the vehicle, we decided that this vehicle was appropriate and ordered a wheelchair version of this vehicle, the (ford connect) will be able to be utilised as a daily working vehicle , E7 type etc cannot be used as a daily working vehicle as the elderly and infirm cannot get in them, as for E7 type as Taxis , ask Dundee etc , operators and drivers how many times they have been at the front of the rank only for the customer to walk past and get in a saloon car as they cannot get in to one of these cabs as they are too high and large. Able bodied people should not be discriminated against also.

The economics of running these types of vehicle are different from ordinary vehicles , for example a WAV driver may have to travel further to pick up the hire , he spends longer on the hire and potentially could lose out financially at the end of his /her shift to someone who is driving an ordinary Cab.

We do not have an unmet demand in our area (Carnoustie) , I have personally overseen our enquiries for WAV`s for about 3 years and there are potentially 5 customers in the Carnoustie area who cannot transfer and need a WAV , in saying that they are not out every day/week either. We have to do things that will not put our business in jeopardy and I think I speak for most operators on this matter, this is how we have taken the decision on the vehicle that we have , it can be dual purpose.

If everyone put a WAV on then who would pick up the customers who cant get in these vehicles?, same for electric cars , if everyone went electric the infrastructure is not there to cope with that and who would do Airport and long distance hires ? affordable electric cars have a limited range at present. Compromises have to be made.

I realise that there may be a problem and we as a company are investing in our business and hope that unlike other areas of our business we do not get undercut by unlicensed vehicles operating illegally (these matters are well documented), a more forceful enforcement of the people flouting the law would be most welcome.

We as a company are trying to be a full service Company, saloon cars , 6 seat vehicles , 8 seat vehicles and now wheelchair accessible vehicles, we have invested heavily to ensure that we meet the needs of every type of client and customer and hope this is taken into consideration when the outcome of your consultations are published.”

Response 4

Letter from L Adams/Neil Gibson, Wilco Cabs Ltd dated 8 May 2018

“The discussion on this matter was informative to all present with general agreement reached on the many issues which need to be taken into account and considered.

1. There is a requirement for W/C/A taxis in the burghs of Angus.
2. Enquiries from the public to operators is not high in volume however this service should be available in all burghs when required.
3. Providing and maintaining a W/C/A taxi is cost prohibitive to operators and previously given financial assistance from the council has been withdrawn.
4. Blanket enforcement that all new taxis must be W/C/A by some future date was strongly rejected by operators. Many reasons, explained in full, for rejection of this proposal were provided by the operators present.

5. Due to the design and features of many of these vehicles members of the public often refuse to use them. This includes some wheelchair users who often prefer to transfer from their wheelchair into a normal car seat.
6. Ownership of this issue needs to be undertaken by The Council in consultation with selected operators working in partnership taking the following into account.
 1. To ensure that each burgh has a W/C/A taxi available to the public the operator in question needs to be large enough to service the needs of users when requested. Operators of single/few vehicles may not have the manpower and availability to do this.
 2. Mature drivers may not have the physical requirements often needed to transfer wheelchair clients.
 3. Smaller operators will take holidays or can be off sick and therefore would not be suitable as a selected provider of this service.
7. Cross boundary restrictions to be waived for W/C/A taxis on wheelchair bookings. Example – In the event that a wheelchair user requires a W/C/A taxi in one burgh for a short local journey but is unable to access one in that burgh their only option may be to order this service from a neighbouring burgh.
 1. The operator would have to charge from point of origin.
 2. The customer could end up paying £20-£30 more for a small local journey.

OPINION

The Council has raised concerns over the issue of W/C/A taxis however the logistics of resolving this issue are not straight forward. I believe The Council should select and approach operators considered of suitable size in each burgh with the request that a W/C/A should be part of their fleet. Financial assistance to operators as previously provided by The Council for purchase/conversion to W/C/A should be reinstated.

The issue of volume of business was raised at the meeting. It was felt by operators that if Council contracts for these transports automatically went to these selected and council supported W/C/A operators at a reasonable rate this would be of benefit to both parties.”