

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE

3 JULY 2018

Present: Councillor Mackie(Chairperson)
Councillors Murphy, Dilwar Ali, Goddard, Lancaster, Robson,
Williams and Wood

1 : APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jacobsen, Taylor and Davies.

2 : DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

3 : MINUTES

The minutes of the Public Protection Committee held on 5 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

The minutes of the Public Protection Sub-Committee held on 5 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chairperson.

4 : APPLICATION FOR THE USE OF TUK TUK'S AS PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES.

Committee were advised that an application had been received to approve the use of Tuk tuks as private hire vehicles for sightseeing tours in Cardiff. At present, Tuk tuks are unable to be licensed as they do not meet the Council's Private Hire Vehicle Licence Conditions. The Committee received a report and Members were asked to determine the application.

Members noted that the Tuk Tuk's would be used for pre-booked sightseeing tours and not for public hire. Members were provided with the technical details such as the vehicles being zero emission electric vehicles, no windows or doors and no wheelchair access.

Officers advised Members that if granted there were suggested conditions attached to Appendix 3 of the report.

The Chairperson welcomed Mr Dale Edmunds (The Applicant) and invited him to address the Committee, his presentation is summarised as follows;

Mr Edmunds stated that the vehicles were the latest standard model, 100% green and zero carbon and are road legal; they were produced in Amsterdam; they operate in 30 different countries including 200 operating in Lisbon. There were no

reports of any incidents or injuries to date, they were very stable with a maximum speed of 50kph. He added that he has researched the vehicles for over a year, he has received lots of interest from businesses including 2 major hotels in Cardiff. If Granted, Mr Edmunds stated he will employ 8 people to start with the hope to increase to 18 people; all drivers would be DBS checked, First Aid & Fire Safety trained.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members as follows;

Members asked what crash protection the vehicles had and were advised that they had none. Members were advised that passengers sit high in the vehicles and were unlikely to have much impact if hit by car, there had been no reported injuries or accidents.

Members asked about the safety briefing that the drivers would deliver to passengers and were advised that drivers would be put through a specialist course that would be designed specifically for Tuk Tuks, advising passengers on safety measures such as keeping arms and legs in the vehicles as standard.

Members asked if the railing on the side of the vehicle could be higher to provide more protection and were advised that the vehicles would come as standard and there would not be the opportunity to higher the railing.

Members noted the report referred to 8 members of staff and asked how many Tuk Tuk's and drivers there would be. Members were advised that there would initially be 3 vehicles, 1 full time driver and 6 part time drivers.

Members asked how many tours would be taken each day and were advised that would depend on whether there were full or half day tours booked, on average there could be 4-6 tours per day over all 3 vehicles.

Members sought more information on disabled access and were advised that there would be a single step in each vehicle to assist people to get in but the vehicles could not carry wheelchairs.

Members asked what safety training had been done and were advised that the vehicles have EC Type approval. When asked if any further safety had been done for comparison of safety compared to a normal car, Mr Edmunds stated that he was unaware of any but that the vehicles are road legal and are used in other cities including London, Manchester, Chester and others. He added that this was a golden opportunity for Cardiff to provide a new green tourist offer.

Members asked if the vehicles were fitted with seatbelts and were advised they were. Members asked if they were weatherproof and were advised that they have rain covers.

Members asked, if granted, when the applicant would intend to start the business. Mr Edmunds advised that he will have missed the most part of this year, so he would hope to operate between February and October.

Members of the Committee discussed the application. The Committee formed the view that, whilst most Members were supportive of the application, there were a number of concerns around safety and crash protection.

RESOLVED:

- I. That Tuk Tuks are suitable to be licensed as private hire vehicles and approved the licensing of Tuk Tuks;
- II. To approve the Tuk Tuk specific private hire vehicle licence conditions detailed in Appendix E to the report.

5 : CONSIDERATION OF THE USE OF DARKENED GLASS IN RESPECT OF LICENSED VEHICLES

Members were advised that the following licence condition currently applies to both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles:

'Windscreen & Windows

To be in a good clean condition and free from damage. The windscreen must allow at least 75% of light to pass through with all other windows allowing 70% of light to pass through.'

The Committee were asked to consider whether the condition should continue to apply to licensed vehicles.

Licensing Officers stated that they have increasingly noticed that owners of new licensed vehicles are having to obtain replacement glass for windows (at a cost of between £1,000 and £2,000), that do not comply with the condition above. It appears that many new vehicles, especially MPV style vehicles are manufactured with darkened glass as standard in the rear windows, which is restricting the choice of newer vehicles that can be licensed, and could potentially limit the trade to buying older vehicles or vehicles with a lower specification.

Licensing Officers advised that they had consulted with South Wales Police and there was no evidential basis to support the current condition; no other Welsh authorities have the condition.

The Chairperson invited questions and comments from Members and these are summarised as follows;

Members expressed some safety concerns and discussed the level of tint that would be acceptable. Officers explained they had consulted groups such as schools and disability groups who prefer the tinted windows, noting that these groups primarily used the taxis in the daytime. After much discussion Members came to the view that manufacturer standard level of tint would be appropriate.

Members noted that South Wales Police had no concerns over the tinted glass.

Members noted that increasingly manufacturers are producing cars with tinted vehicles as standard in higher specification models.

Members noted the list of authorities that allow tinted glass in taxis, noting that Cambridge allows as long as CCTV is fitted in the vehicle.

Members considered the survey completed by taxi drivers, noting that 62% were in favour, also noting that only 16 drivers completed the survey. Officers explained that they get a call at least once a week on the matter.

RESOLVED: To remove the existing condition for hackney carriage vehicles and private hire vehicles and replace with the following:

‘Windscreen & Windows

‘To be in a good clean condition and free from damage. All windows must comply with relevant legislation in respect of light transmission. Only original vehicle manufacture tints are permitted on the rear windows. Council approved CCTV to be fitted in the vehicle.

The meeting terminated at 2.20pm