

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY BOARD

A meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Board was held on 2 February 2011.

PRESENT: Councillors Brunton (Chair), Councillors Biswas (as substitute for Councillor Ismail), Junier (as substitute for Councillor Cole), McIntyre (as substitute for Councillor J A Walker), McPartland (as substitute for Councillor Khan), Purvis, Sanderson and Williams.

OFFICERS: J Bennington, E Chicken and P Clark.

**** ALSO IN ATTENDANCE AS OBSERVERS:** Middlesbrough Borough Cars Limited representatives.

**** APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE** were submitted on behalf of Councillors Cole, Dryden, C Hobson, J Hobson, Ismail, Mawston and J A Walker.

**** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

No declarations of interest were made at this point of the meeting.

TAXI FACILITIES – CROSSFELL ROAD

In a report of the Senior Scrutiny Officer reference was made to a meeting of the Individual Executive Decision Making-Meeting of the Executive Member for Community Protection held on 11 January 2011 when it had been determined that matters concerning the provision of a Taxi Rank at Crossfell Road adjacent to Morrisons, Berwick Hills be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Board.

By way of background information a copy of a report regarding the development of Hackney Carriage Ranks which had been presented to an Individual Executive Decision Making-Meeting of the Executive Member for Community Protection held on 21 December 2010 was provided at Appendix A of the report submitted. The report included a reference to the provision of a taxi rank at the lay-by on the south side of Crossfell Road near to the Neptune Centre. It was confirmed that the meeting held on 21 December 2010 had subsequently been adjourned and resumed on 11 January 2011 when it had been determined: -

- ' 1. That the matter of taxi provision in the area serving Morrison's be referred to Overview and Scrutiny Board for discussion.
2. That the Board require representatives from Hackney Carriage Drivers, Private Hire companies, senior representatives of W M Morrison and the Council to provide evidence to assist that process. '

In order for the Board to gain an understanding of the geographical setting of existing arrangements and location of other possible adjacent sites for a taxi rank Members visited such areas immediately preceding this meeting.

Members considered possible terms of reference and lines of enquiry as follows: -

To assess the present taxi provision at Morrisons and the benefits a taxi rank would provide at Crossfell Road, Middlesbrough.

- To invite a representative from Middlesbrough Borough Cars Limited who presently provided the private hire vehicles to Morrisons.
- To invite a representative from the Hackney Carriage Association to determine the taxi issues.

- To invite a representative from Morrisons to present the current arrangements and preferred facilities.
- To meet with Officers of the Council to outline the Licensing and enforcement issues. Also Officers to present any impact on the school transport service.
- To meet with the Executive Member regarding the considerations addressed at the Executive meeting of 21 December 2010.

It was clarified that whilst the original intention was for the Board to receive information from two organisations at today's meeting it had subsequently been agreed by all parties concerned for them to attend subsequent meetings of the Board. The Chair indicated that the main focus of attention at today's meeting was to determine if the Board agreed to undertake the matter of taxi provision in the area identified and if so agree the scope of the exercise in respect of the terms of reference and lines of enquiry.

In discussing the proposed lines of enquiry Members suggested that in addition, information should be sought from the Council's Transport and Design Services, Schools Integrated Transport Service, Police and representatives of the nearby retail premises at Norfolk Place and adjacent Public House. Members referred to the report considered by the Executive Member for Community Protection with specific regard to the responses received following the consultation period in respect of the provision of a taxi rank at the lay-by on the south side of Crossfell Road close to the Neptune Centre. A request was made for such information to be made available to the Board. It was also suggested that funding issues should be considered as part of the Board's overall examination.

Members referred to the overall scrutiny process with particular regard to the importance of undertaking scrutiny reviews in an open and transparent manner and to gain sufficient understanding of the issues concerned prior to formulating any conclusions.

In relation to the suggested terms of reference Members discussed whether or not they should be widened to take into account consideration of other possible sites for a taxi rank adjacent to Crossfell Road.

The Scrutiny Support Officer referred to a statement which he had received from Middlesbrough Borough Cars Limited. The Board was advised that whilst Middlesbrough Borough Cars Limited had confirmed an invitation to attend a future meeting of the Board to respond to Members' questions and areas of clarification they had asked for the Scrutiny Support Officer to read out their statement at the meeting because of current legal implications. It had been agreed by all parties concerned that a copy of such a statement be made available to all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Board and to Members acting in the capacity of substitutes in attendance at this meeting. The Statement provided information on the Company's position with regard to their request for a hackney carriage rank at Crossfell Road, Berwick Hills.

ORDERED as follows: -

1. That the request for the Board to consider the matter of taxi provision in the area serving Morrisons be approved.
2. That the terms of reference as outlined in the report submitted be approved subject to the inclusion of the consideration of possible alternative sites for a taxi rank adjacent to Crossfell Road.
3. That the lines of enquiry as outlined in the report submitted be approved subject to the addition of: -
 - (a) Council's Transport and Design Services,
 - (b) Schools Integrated Transport Service,
 - (c) Police,
 - (d) Representatives of retail premises at Norfolk Place and nearby Public House,
 - (e) Funding issues.

4. That in relation to the current scrutiny topic arrangements be made for future meetings of the Board to be held in consultation with the Chair and the respective organisations.
5. That arrangements be made for the next meeting of the Board to consider the scrutiny topic to be held on Tuesday 15 February 2011 at 2.00 p.m. in the Mandela Room.
6. That information on the responses received following the consultation period on the provision of a taxi rank at the lay-by on the south side of Crossfell Road, close to the Neptune Centre be submitted to the meeting of the Board to be held on 15 February 2011.
7. That Officers of the Council be invited to attend the meeting of the Board to be held on 15 February 2011 to outline the licensing and enforcement issues.