

REPORT TO: PLANNING & TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE – 19 AUGUST 2002

REPORT ON: PROVISION OF NON WHEELCHAIR JOURNEYS WITHIN THE TAXICARD TRAVEL CONCESSION SCHEME

REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION

REPORT NO: 630-2002

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report considers the tenders received for the provision of non-wheelchair taxicard journeys within the taxicard travel concession scheme.

2 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 Committee is asked to approve the tenders as indicated in Appendix B, with the proviso that agreement can be reached with the successful taxi operator to implement the introduction of a Smartcard scheme within the agreed specified timescale.
- 2.2 Committee is asked to approve a change in the condition for holding a taxicard. At present holders of the taxicard concession require surrendering their concessionary bus pass to qualify for the taxicard concession scheme as clients are only permitted to participate in one travel concession scheme. Committee is asked to approve that taxicard holders be permitted the flexibility to participate in either concession scheme.

3 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 There are no additional financial implications to the City Council, however, the recommended taxi company has offered a service enhancement for the citizens of Dundee which, if used to its maximum potential, would offer a saving of £30,000 per annum to holders of the taxicard concession.

4 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no detrimental effects on environmental matters.

5 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Access to social, recreational, leisure, health and work facilities to people with mobility impairment are important to social inclusion.

6 BACKGROUND

- 6.1 The taxicard scheme is a concession scheme which is designed for people who have permanent disability and are unable to use ordinary local bus services. The scheme was introduced in January 1992 and was revised in April 1996 at Local Government reorganisation.

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- 6.2 The scheme offers discounted taxi fares where the concession holder pays half the total metered fare up to a maximum concession of £2.50 per journey. The maximum number of taxi journeys permitted in any 12 month period is limited to 104 trips. There are approximately 2,000 clients who qualify for a taxicard.
- 6.3 Currently the Council expends approximately £90,000 per annum as a reimbursement to the taxi operators in respect of the scheme.
- 6.4 In order to display best value, Dundee City Council tendered the operation of non-wheelchair journeys within the taxicard scheme with a view to awarding the contract to an individual taxi company.
- 6.5 Dundee City Council is committed to providing quality services for the citizens of Dundee. This requires that the Council review the services it provides to ensure that they still meet the citizens needs and that they achieve quality and price standards.
- 6.6 The Council's Information and Communications Technology Strategy was agreed by the Policy & Resources Committee on 13 November 2000. This Strategy sets out the City Council's approach to using Information and Technology (ICT) to deliver focused local government services.
- 6.7 Agreement was reached that the taxicard scheme would be one of the first projects where the City Council would introduce Smartcard technology. It is proposed that the successful taxi operator will introduce the required technology at their expense in time for the contract to start on 1 October 2002. This facility must however be available within 12 months from the award of contract. A copy of the tender documents is attached in Appendix A.
- 6.8 At present within Dundee there are currently 6 vehicles which are wheelchair accessible and operate under a taxi licence and 9 vehicles which are wheelchair accessible and operate under a private hire licence. This represents 1.2% of the taxi fleet and 8.4% of the private hire fleet respectively. These vehicles are spread across different taxi companies and usually operate as individual service vehicles. It is often impossible to book your journey in advance and the customer requires to book on the day on a first come first served basis.
- 6.9 Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles are eligible for a grant of up to a maximum of £1,500 per vehicle from the Planning & Transportation Department provided that the operators participate within the Council's Taxicard scheme and that the vehicles are made available for alternative wheelchair work. The City Council is unable to specify the availability of each vehicle and this is entirely dependent on each individual operator. The grant is paid in recognition of the additional mileage/costs incurred by operators of these vehicles. During the 2001/2002 financial, year grants totalling £22,500 were issued and these payments were made in advance to encourage operators to facilitate this service.
- 6.10 Given the limited availability of wheelchair accessible taxis within the City Council it was decided to restrict the taxicard tender to only taxi journeys which can be undertaken in a normal saloon type vehicle. The successful taxi company will be required to work together with operators of wheelchair accessible vehicles (6 vehicles) in order that all taxicard holders who require to be conveyed in their wheelchairs will be able to utilise the new Smartcard initiative.

- 6.11 Since the introduction of the taxicard scheme in 1992, the quality of local buses within Dundee City has grown considerably, so much so that over 80% of Travel Dundee's fleet are now low floor and many of them are wheelchair accessible.
- 6.12 It is considered appropriate that to promote a barrier free environment the City Council permits people with disabilities the freedom to choose which concession scheme better suits their individual needs.

7 CONSULTATIONS

- 7.1 The Chief Executive, Director of Finance, Director of Support Services, and Director of Corporate Planning have been consulted and are in agreement with the contents of this report.

8 BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 8.1 None

Mike Galloway
Director of Planning & Transportation

Iain Sherriff
Roads & Transportation Manager

13 August 2002

IFS/MHD/MS

Dundee City Council
Tayside House
Dundee

APPENDIX A

NOTES FOR TENDER SUBMISSION FOR THE PROVISION OF NON WHEELCHAIR TAXICARD JOURNEYS

Dundee City Council operates a taxicard travel concession scheme for people with mobility difficulties who are unable to use ordinary local bus services.

There are approximately 2000 clients who qualify for a taxicard. Each client is entitled to a maximum of 104 journeys in any 12-month period. The taxicard holder is required to pay a flat rate of £1.00 for every journey made under the scheme, as long as the total amount on the meter is no more than £2.00. If the fare is between £2.00 and £5.00, the concession holder pays half of the metered fare. Where the fare exceeds £5.00, the concession holder is required to pay £2.50 plus the excess.

Currently the Council expends approximately £90,000 per annum as a reimbursement to the taxi operators in respect of the scheme. As previously indicated, in order to display best value, Dundee City Council is putting the operation of non-wheelchair journeys within the taxicard scheme out to tender with the contract operation date being 1 October 2002.

Taxi companies submitting a tender must satisfy the following criteria: -

- Only taxi companies licensed to operate within Dundee City Council can submit a tender.
- A taxi company must have a central office with telephone facilities for 24 hours per day.
- The successful operator will require in car technology to read clients smartcards. This facility must be available within 12 months from the award of contract.
- The successful operator will supply full electronic audit trail of each journey applicable to each client.
- This information must be provided free of charge and be made available at all reasonable times to the Council.
- A fleet and availability profile must be submitted.
- Any wheelchair accessible or vehicles specifically adapted to assist people with mobility problems should also be listed.
- Details of the number of drivers who have attended a recognised disability awareness course must be listed.
- The successful operator will require demonstrating their ability to cope with the volume of work generated within the taxicard scheme.
- The successful company will require working with the operators of wheelchair accessible taxis to facilitate their inclusion in the smartcard scheme.
- Any incentives/discounts offered must be clearly demonstrated who is offering the incentive/discount, ie will the Taxi Company or the taxi driver offer the discount/incentive?

TENDER FOR THE PROVISION OF NON WHEELCHAIR JOURNEYS WITHIN THE TAXICARD TRAVEL CONCESSION SCHEME

Best Value

- Taxi companies must provide details of any discounts or incentives to either Dundee City Council or taxicard clients. Taxi companies must clearly show who is offering any such incentive or discount.
- The contract will run from 1 October 2002 until 31 March 2005, with the successful company required installing the required in car technology within 12 months from the award of contract.
- Tenderers should show a clear breakdown of costs within their tender submission form, ie cost for the introduction of a smart card scheme.
- Dundee City Council will award the contract on Best Value, ie the successful company will be the company, which offers the best quality package overall for the City Council and their Client Base.

Background Information

The taxicard scheme is a concession scheme, which is designed for people who have a permanent disability and are unable to use ordinary local bus services. The scheme was introduced in January 1992 and was revised in April 1996 when Tayside Regional Council was divided into three new unitary authorities.

The scheme offers discounted taxi fares where the concession holder pays half the total metered fare up to a maximum concession of £2.50 per journey. The maximum number of taxi journeys permitted in any twelve-month period is limited to 104 trips.

To qualify for a taxicard concession the applicant must first be permanently resident within the boundaries of Dundee City Council and be a person aged over five years of age and satisfy one of the following:

Taxicard Eligibility - Automatic Entitlement

- Be in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate and be a wheelchair user.
- Be in receipt of Attendance Allowance at the higher rate.
- Be registered blind with the local society.

Taxicard Eligibility - through Assessment

- Be in receipt of the mobility component of Disability Living Allowance at the higher rate.
- Be in receipt of Attendance Allowance at the Lower rate.
- Be registered as Partially Sighted with the local society.
- Be in receipt of War Pensioners Mobility Supplement.

The applications are then forwarded to an independent Medical Advisor from the local health authority who contacts the applicant's family doctor for a report on their medical condition. An assessment is then carried out on their ability to use ordinary local bus services.

Introduction of a Smartcard

The City Council in partnership with other local organisations will be introducing a multi-application Smartcard this year.

Tenderers should indicate their commitment and proposed timescale for introducing a system that will support the application as outlined below.

Where tenderers are unable to commit to the introduction of such a system or where the proposed timescale determines that for an interim period, the card will act as a simple ID or “flash pass”, the submission must propose a method whereby the Council can receive the information required for it to efficiently manage the scheme.

Taxicard Application Outline

The taxi concession application will be issued by the City Council on smartcards with following data stored on the card in addition to the card number:

- taxi card number.
- number of remaining journeys.
- date/time of last journey.
- expiry date (optional).

The readers provided by the taxi operator must update this information following the process described below.

The information will be readable on the cards following at least one of the following standards to which suppliers must indicate compatibility of the readers:

- Contact interface ISO 7816 1-5.
- Contactless interface 14443 1-3 Mifare protocol and MAD card Structure.
- Contactless interface 14443 1-3 T=CL protocol and ISO7816 4-5 Application selection.

The card will be dual interface JCOP 30 64/16 Combination card provided by Schlumberger Sema.

Taxicard Functionality

- A photograph on the card will enable a “flash pass” element.
- The taxicard number will be different from the smartcard number.
- On issue the card will contain 2 x no of weeks worth of journeys to the year-end (31 March).

- The card will need to be validated before each use to ensure that the remaining journeys field is non zero.
- A person will not be able to take 2 taxi journeys within any 15-minute period.
- For each use the number of remaining journeys and date/time of last journey will be updated.
- The number of remaining journeys will be reset to 104 journeys on the 1 April.
- A list of the Smartcard and taxicard numbers for hot listing (lost or stolen) will be provided in XML format by the City Council and the readers must refuse usage of the corresponding cards.
- The following weekly analysis will be required from taxi companies - Company Name, Smartcard/Taxicard number, Journey details, date and time, cost of total fare, concession applicable, passenger fee.
- Taxi companies will provide a weekly invoice (paper).

APPENDIX B

Taxi Company	Licensed to Operate within Dundee City	Central Office with 24 hour availability	Fleet and Availability Profile Submitted	Smatcard Technology	Incentives/ Discounts	Recommendations
Computer Cab Co Ltd	Yes	Yes	No details provided	No detailed provided	Non	See Dundee Taxi Co
Dundee Taxi Cab Co Ltd	Yes	Yes	Yes	£56,620 investment by taxi company to provide smartcard equipment	Additional journeys to client base. Offers service enhancement up to £30,000.	Accept Dundee
Handy Taxis	Yes	Yes	Yes	£29,000 investment by taxi company to provide smartcard equipment	10% on metered fare	See Dundee Taxi Co
Tay Taxis	Yes	Yes	No details provided	No details provided	None	See Dundee Taxi Co
Tele Taxis	Yes	Yes	Yes	£24,000 investment by taxi company to provide smartcard equipment.	10% on metered fare	See Dundee Taxi Co