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<b>Report To:</b>	<b>General Purposes Board</b>	<b>Date:</b>	<b>11 June 2014</b>
<b>Report By:</b>	<b>Head of Legal and Property Services</b>	<b>Report No:</b>	<b>LP/006/14</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Fraser Jarvie Managing Solicitor</b>	<b>Contact No:</b>	<b>01475 712121</b>
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Review of Wemyss Bay/Inverkip Taxi Licence Restrictions</b>		

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## 1.0 PURPOSE

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek the Board's decision on the Council's policy regarding the Inverkip/Wemyss Bay trading restriction currently placed on five taxi licences following a formal request to consider the matter made by the Board at its meeting on 11 December 2013.

## 2.0 SUMMARY

- 2.1 Inverclyde Council issues five licences to taxis to trade within Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. These licences are subject to the following condition:-

This licence authorises the within named Licenceholder to operate the undernoted vehicle (or such other vehicle as The Inverclyde Council as the appropriate Licensing Authority may approve from time to time) as a taxi within Inverkip and Wemyss Bay only, and that subject to the provisions of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 and the conditions contained in the attached Schedule of Conditions.

Without prejudice to the general terms of this licence restricting the operation of the vehicle approved under this licence as a taxi within Inverkip and Wemyss Bay only, the vehicle shall be permitted as a specific exception to that restriction to accept fares and pick up passengers in a public place within the remainder of Inverclyde if and only if the vehicle is returning to Inverkip and Wemyss Bay following the completion of a previous journey commencing in Inverkip and Wemyss Bay and running to a destination outwith Inverkip and Wemyss Bay, either within or outwith Inverclyde. It is expressly stated, however, that the right to pick up passengers or accept fares shall not extend to accepting fares or picking up passengers from taxi stances designated by the Council as the Licensing Authority outwith Inverkip and Wemyss Bay.

- 2.2 The proposal under consideration is that the above condition is removed permitting the five taxis to trade throughout Inverclyde with no restrictions on the condition the licenceholder agrees to permanently operate a multi-access (wheelchair accessible vehicle) on the licence.
- 2.3 The Board may wish to note that two of the Inverkip/Wemyss Bay taxi licences are personal to the licenceholder and therefore non-transferable, and, in addition, one operator currently operates a wheelchair accessible vehicle on his licence on a voluntary basis.
- 2.4 Consultation letters were issued to all Public Hire Taxi Operators, including the Wemyss Bay/Inverkip licence holders, Private Hire Vehicle Operators, and various shops, business premises, places of religious worship and educational establishments within Inverkip and Wemyss Bay. An advert was placed in the Greenock Telegraph requesting comments and information was placed on the Council's website.
- 2.5 Copies of responses received form Appendix 1 to this report.

### **3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that:

- 3.1 The General Purposes Board consider this report.
- 3.2 The Board decide to:
  - (a) Make no change to the Board's current policy; or
  - (b) Make such amendments to the policy that they consider appropriate.

### **4.0 BACKGROUND**

- 4.1 Councillor Ahlfeld had requested that the Board re-visit the licence restrictions placed upon the Inverkip/Wemyss Bay taxis as part of a broader review into the provision of wheelchair accessible vehicles within Inverclyde.
- 4.2 The Board have previously considered the vehicle specifications applicable to wheelchair accessible taxis.
- 4.3 The Board may wish to note that, at the point of preparing this report, there are sixteen wheelchair accessible vehicles operating under licences with the compulsory condition that such a vehicle must be utilised on the licence. The Council issue twenty such licences, and the remaining four applications have been applied for and are currently being processed in accordance with the three month time restriction previously approved by the Board.

### **5.0 RESPONSES**

- 5.1 There were responses from five taxi operators who have standard taxi licences, one taxi driver, one member of the public and the Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council.
- 5.2 The responses are against the removal of the licence restriction.
- 5.3 The Board may wish to note that no responses were received from the Wemyss Bay/Inverkip taxi licence holders.

### **6.0 IMPLICATIONS**

#### **Finance**

- 6.1 There are no financial implications

#### **Legal**

- 6.2 There are no legal implications

#### **Human Resources**

- 6.3 There are no Human Resources implications.

### **Equalities**

6.4 There are no equalities implications.

### **Repopulation**

6.5 There are no repopulation implications.

**Fraser Jarvie**  
**Legal Services Manager**

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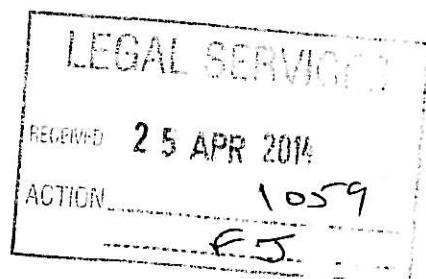
**From:** Jim McDonald  
**Sent:** 16 April 2014 20:35  
**To:** Alan Puckrin  
**Subject:** Review of Licence Restrictions - Wemyss Bay and Inverkip General Hire Taxi Licences

Reference: FJ/DS  
Jim McDonald

My personal views are that these licences should stay restricted as, at the time they were issued many years ago, they were seen a backdoor into the limited number of licences allowed to work within Inverclyde at the time.

Thanks.

Gary Wallace  
Public Hire Licence No. 15



17<sup>th</sup> April 2014

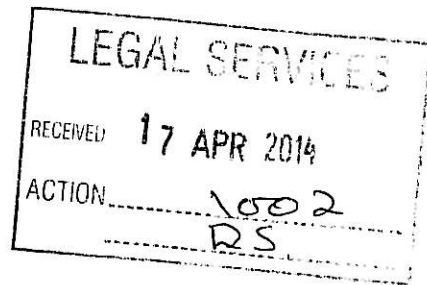
Dear Mr Jarvie,

I am writing to let you know that I am completely against the restrictions being removed on the Wemyss Bay/Inverkip general hire taxi licences. The supply of taxis in Inverclyde far exceeds the demands, most weeks making a wage is a struggle and the last thing we need is another 5 cars trying to squeeze onto already overcrowded ranks where police are constantly harassing drivers to move on. There are well over 150 public hire licenced taxis in Inverclyde and only around 30 official council rank spaces (only 8 in a town centre the size of Greenock, which is ridiculous) so where are we meant to go? These cars are in the Greenock area working from radio calls more than they are in the Wemyss Bay/Inverkip areas they are supposed to be in. Anytime I pickup customers in the Wemyss Bay they tell me they constantly have to wait 30 minutes and more for a taxi and that these taxis are never in the area.

There are far far too many taxis in Inverclyde and more than enough wheelchair accessible vehicles and I trust that common sense will prevail on this matter and look forward to hearing from you with the results in the near future.

Yours Faithfully,

Gary Wallace



Joseph swan

I am writing to you regarding the blue plated taxis I have been an operator for a number of years and I am totally against them operating in Greenock they were issued for Inverkip and wemyss bay and that is where they should be working. The number of times I have been sent down to do an Inverkip to Inverkip or wemyss bay to wemyss bay job is unreal. To do a job in wemyss bay we are travelling nearly 16 miles there and back and the majority of the jobs stay local and we are lucky if we receive £3 pounds for our troubles so I for one am against them coming up to Greenock to work up here how long do the people down there have to wait for there taxis I await your outcome on this matter.

A handwritten signature consisting of a single, fluid, sweeping line that starts from the left and curves upwards and to the right.

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**From:** JOHN MURDOCH  
**Sent:** 06 May 2014 08:13  
**To:** Fraser Jarvie  
**Subject:** Consultation

Public Consultation

Review of licence restrictions- Wemyss Bay Inverkip General Hire Taxi Licence

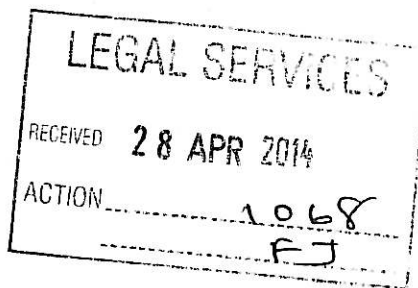
As an existing licence holder here are my views on the five Wemyss Bay Inverkip General Hire Taxi Licences. Two of the licences are being operated by John Harvey who has never asked for any consultations or variations to his licences. The other three licences that are being operated by ABC Inverclyde Taxis can be surrendered at any time to Inverclyde council and will be taken up by other operators.

ABC Inverclyde Taxis have more than enough general hire plates to add disabled access vehicle's to its fleet without eroding the plates that were put in place to serve the people of Wemyss Bay Inverkip.

Regards

John Murdoch  
Plate 233

Fraser Jarvie  
Legal Services Manager  
Legal and Property Services  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
GREENOCK PA15 1LX



16<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

Dear Sirs, **Review of Licence Restrictions – Wemyss Bay & Inverkip Gen Hire Taxi Licences**

I refer to your letter of 11<sup>th</sup> April to “all holders of General Hire Operators Licences (Taxi)” regarding the above.

I am against the proposal and would like the status quo to be retained. Currently it is extremely difficult to “make a living” running a taxi in the area, due to the number of public and private hires operating in the district.

By increasing the number of vehicles available in the main thoroughfare of Inverclyde would leave the villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay “short of cover” – i.e. the vehicles that would normally be operating in the area would not be available and customers would face a delay of up to half an hour between calling for a taxi and its arrival as the vehicles designated for the villages would be elsewhere in the area.

As an operator in the area, I feel that there is sufficient availability of “multi access” vehicles at present and these vehicles normally operate as normal vehicles – i.e. 2 or 3 passengers (able bodied) and only infrequently for the purpose for which they were designated.

There is also the matter of the congestion at major ranks (West Stewart Street, Greenock) causing problems for general traffic which has been subject to Police complaints.

Currently there is an overprovision of vehicles in the area and the competition between vehicles could lead to accidents, as drivers “fight” for positions in ranks and customers.

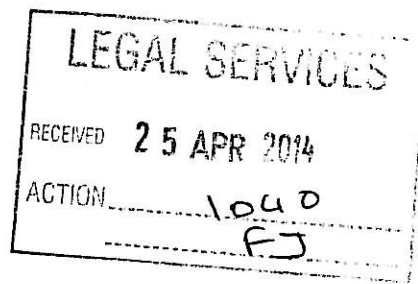
I trust you will take my comments into consideration when making your decision on this matter.

Regards

Mr S Black



Fraser Jarvie  
Legal Services Manager  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
GREENOCK PA15 1LX



16<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

Dear Sirs,      **Review of Licence Restrictions – Wemyss Bay & Inverkip Gen Hire Taxi Licences**

I refer to your notice in today's Greenock Telegraph regarding the above.

I am against the proposal and would like my comments to be taken into consideration when making your decision on this matter.

I am a backshift driver for an ABC Taxis affiliated owner and most nights find that in general there is an overprovision of vehicles in the three main towns. To add a further 5 vehicles to this would cause further congestion at the ranks and would leave the outlying villages of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay without cover for lengthy periods of time. Whilst I can appreciate the reasons why the operators of these vehicles would like the opportunity to operate district wide, I feel that there is a sufficient number of multi access vehicle operating throughout the area at present – normally carrying only 2 or 3 able bodied passengers at a time.

Thank you for taking my comments into consideration.

Mr G Black

Fraser Jarvie  
Legal Services Manager  
Legal and Property Services  
Inverclyde Council  
Municipal Buildings  
Clyde Square  
GREENOCK PA15 1LX

LEGAL SERVICES	
RECEIVED	28 APR 2014
ACTION	1067 FJ

16<sup>th</sup> April, 2014

Dear Sirs,

*Review of Licence Restrictions -*

*Wemyss Bay & Inverkip General Hire Taxi Licences*

*I refer to your notice in the Greenock Telegraph on the 11<sup>th</sup> April regarding the above.*

*I am against the proposal as a resident of Inverkip, who is "of a certain age", living alone, and does not drive.*

*I am a pensioner who does not have good health and rely upon taxis to take me to and from hospital, outpatient and doctor appointments. Currently I can call for a taxi and it arrives timeously but I am apprehensive that if you allow our village service to operate in the wider district that there will not be a vehicle available when I need it, therefore leaving me late for or missing an appointment.*

*I have also found it necessary to have a taxi called for me urgently when my late husband had taken ill and I was summoned to IRH as a matter of urgency.*

*I feel that the system should remain as it is at the moment, with perhaps the number of vehicles increasing in line with the expanding housing estates in the villages.*

*Yours sincerely*

Hi Fraser,

I am writing on behalf of Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council.  
We would like to register our concerns regarding proposals to adjust (or drop) the restrictions on taxi licences for Inverkip and Wemyss Bay.

We discussed the proposals at our community council meeting and after a unanimous vote, wish to voice our objections to any changes to the restricted licences.

We feel that restricted licences are very necessary to safeguard the service and availability of local taxis for Inverkip and Wemyss Bay residents. We do not have great coverage of public transport to the villages and especially to some of the housing estates, so taxis are often relied upon - a locally based taxi rank is a necessity, rather than a luxury.

If we had to wait for a taxi to come down from Gourock or Greenock during busy periods, it could be a considerable time. It is already a considerable expense to take a taxi out of the village to get to other towns in the Inverclyde area, we should not have to wait extra time for a taxi to drive down from Gourock or Greenock ranks.

Hope you can pass our comments on to the General Purposes meeting.  
Yours sincerely  
Eileen Virtue  
(Chairperson Inverkip and Wemyss Bay Community Council)