

## **BRIEFING PAPER**

### **TAXI PARKING STRAND, TORQUAY**

Since July 2006 the local Bus Company has encountered numerous complaints from drivers stating that they have been experiencing problems mainly on Friday and Saturday evenings with Taxi's taking over the bus bays on the Strand. When this problem occurs the buses cannot get in close to the kerb to load or unload passengers this causes an issue with passengers having to alight in the middle of the road. Also, those with disabilities who find it difficult to get off the bus because it is not adjacent to the kerb cannot alight at their stop.

On one occasion a bus driver noted a number of taxis causing problems on a particular night and one Taxi driver was particularly offensive to him.

Torbay Council has regular meetings with the bus companies and this issue is constantly being raised. Whilst signing and Traffic Orders are in place to prevent vehicles from waiting in the bus bays the problem has continued and bus drivers are becoming very despondent because no one seems to be addressing the issue.

The operation Managers for Stagecoach Bus Company have previously sent in a number of reports over the years completed by their drivers highlighting the taxi drivers causing the offences. These have been passed on to our Licensing Department requesting action be taken against the drivers.

The Licensing Department have informed Highways that many taxi drivers have been spoken with and reminded that it is an offence to park/wait within the Bus Bays however they do not have the power to take away a Drivers Licence and this is a matter for the Licensing Committee.

This is a very frustrating situation for the Council, as the Public Transport Team work to encourage and promote the use of Public Transport throughout the area. This in turn reduces congestion and carbon emissions and ensures buses can access the stops promoting the use for disabled and those with restricted mobility. However if the Bus Companies cannot access their specific bus bays for loading and unloading this discourages customers from using this form of transport.

The Taxi Parking issue has been ongoing for nearly four years since it was originally brought to the Council's attention.

Lesley Dransfield  
Public Transport Officer

27<sup>th</sup> January 2010



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Lesley Dransfield  
Highways & Engineering  
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28<sup>th</sup> January 2010

Dear Lesley,

I write to confirm the ongoing problems with taxis parking at the Strand bus stops.

This issue has been ongoing for the full duration of my time in post as Operations Manager since September 2007. However, I am aware that the previous manager raised this problem as early as 2006.

The main concern from my perspective is one of safety. If my vehicles cannot properly access their designated stopping places they are forced to disembark passengers in the middle of the road. This not only blocks the road for other road users but puts my passengers at risk.

Being unable to pull into the curb at a bus stop increases the potential of passengers falling on to or out of the bus and sustaining physical injuries. It also adds the risk of cyclists colliding with passengers on the nearside of the vehicle, which is a hazard that would otherwise not have been present.

I might add that the vast majority of my passengers are over the age of 60 and therefore many struggle with mobility issues. The step height from the bus to the curb is much lower than that directly onto the road; this in itself can cause physical injury and pain to some passengers.

The act of a taxi simply blocking a bus stop can therefore cause untold damage and is a deterrent to my passengers using my services in future.

We work in partnership with Torbay Council and hope to reach a resolution to this issue as soon as possible.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

Christina Ratcliffe  
Operations Manager -Torbay  
Stagecoach South West

Mr Richard McAllister  
Operations Manager Torbay  
Stagecoach Devon  
Regent Close  
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Dear Richard

### **Operational Issues – Stagecoach Routes**

I am writing to update you regarding various issues you have raised concerning Stagecoach operations throughout Torbay and would ask you to pass the following information onto your staff.

Please note the following progress, which has been made to date:

#### **6. Taxis Parking on the Strand Bus Stops**

Following our regular meeting it would appear this matter has not been resolved. Agreed action - The Road Safety Officer along with yourself carried out a site visit on Saturday evening to understand the problems first hand of what the drivers are experiencing. The Road Safety Officer to bring this matter to the attention of the Devon & Cornwall Police at her regular meeting with Officers. Geoff Coleman to liase closely with Licensing to establish a way forward.

Mr Richard McAllister  
Operations Manager Torbay  
Stagecoach Devon  
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**Website:** www.torbay.gov.uk

**Date:** 04 July 2006

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Dear Richard

### **Operational Issues – Stagecoach Routes**

I am writing to update you regarding various issues you have raised concerning Stagecoach operations throughout Torbay and would ask you to pass the following information onto your staff.

Please note the following progress, which has been made to date:

#### **5. Taxis Parking on the Strand Bus Stops**

The drivers report regarding taxis parking the entire length of the bus lanes during the late shifts on Saturday nights has been passed onto my colleague Geoff Coleman to deal with at his request.