

Taxi Liaison Group (TLG) meeting minutes
Wednesday 8th January 2020 10:30hrs

Dings Crusaders RFC Shaftesbury Park, Frenchay Park Road, Bristol, BS16 1LG

Chair: Councillor Paul Hughes (PH)

Minutes: Hazel Everett

Councillors: Councillor Tony Davis (TD), Councillor Kim Scudamore (KS)

SGC Licensing: Kevin Barley (KB), Darren Keeler (DK)

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Service: Mike Worley (MW), Sharon Shaw (SS), Kerry Harding (KH), Bill Davidge (BD), Janet Platten (JP)

Police: PC Patrick Quinton (PQ), PCSO Caines (PCSO C)

Apologies: Juan Sanzo (JS), Tony Lidbury (TL), Beverley Manning (BM), Kayleigh Morris (KM).

Item			Action
1	Welcome	(PH) welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced each person. Apologies made known from group.	
2	Previous minutes and matters arising	<p>(SS) Stated that there are still some actions that have not been resolved and no closure has been gained. (PH) Agreed that actions that have not been solved need to be looked at. Some topics are ongoing but some do need closure.</p> <p>(PH) Referred to page 2, item 10. Informed he has met with Gail Goodridge at DBS Integra and observed drivers coming into reception, how thorough checks are and how the system works. Would advise anyone who is not aware to go and see how it works. It takes a lot of time as many issues arise with previous licences and passports.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that appointment time slots are not being dealt with fairly. Unprepared drivers are being subsidised by other drivers which causes confrontation. There is a 4-6 week wait. Service no different to ITU but costs £42 more.</p> <p>(MW) Stated that name issues should be sorted after obtaining other documents. (DK) Agreed that this should be the case but documents can contradict each other so Integra need to be sure.</p> <p>(PH) Said that there is some confusion with names and matching documents. Sometimes it can take the desk time to explain.</p> <p>(MW) Suggested that the form states that the driver's information needs to reflect what is on their passport. Stated that Integra should report incorrect documents to the Police as with passports.</p> <p>(TD) Stated that the issue of trying to make people conform is a</p>	

		<p>significant problem. Voluntary community groups could help to run a training course to save Integra time. (DK) Reported that he did training with the Somalian Association 18 months ago and could get in touch again. (PCSO C) Suggested Somali groups and translating services.</p> <p>(SS) Felt that new drivers need a basic understanding and need to be able to communicate in English effectively. Suggested 1:1 previously. If drivers don't have the correct information and have to have another appointment then they should pay for it.</p> <p>(PH) Suggested an organisation could help to discuss pre-application and the introduction to being a taxi driver – this needs re-emphasising in terms that can be understood. Explained that there are 93 different languages spoken in Bristol and that any change will have to go to Regulatory Committee. (DK) Explained that this information is available on the website and in emails.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that a balance needs to be found between technical and non-technical but we need to reach a conclusion. (KB) Suggested that this could be pushed ahead to be considered in March by committee.</p> <p>(PH) Explained that due to the WAV (Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle) awareness course, committee members will have a better understanding and points have been taken on board. They had a good demonstration and experience shared of what it is like to be a wheelchair user. Everyone learned a lot. Stated that hands-on opportunities are needed. Suggested Committee Members go out with (PQ) to experience what it is like on the ground. (PQ) Agreed and said that Licensing Officers also want a better understanding but said not on Friday or Saturday nights.</p> <p>(MW) Suggested Committee Members go out with a taxi driver on a Friday or Saturday. Stated that people make better decisions if they have knowledge and that a passenger gets a better service from an empathetic driver.</p> <p>(PH) Said that the public are protected from the driver. More information is needed about how the driver is protected from the public.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained that Avon and Somerset Police run a ride along scheme for any member of the public and the information is on the website. Has been pushing for BCC (Bristol City Council) to put signs on taxi ranks regarding the responsibility of the passenger. (PH) Asked if (PQ) can put something together about this for Committee Members.</p> <p>(BD) Explained that he has previously been badly assaulted as a driver which had a large impact on him. (PQ) Shared that thankfully, serious assault is fairly rare. Currently, liquid being thrown in a driver's face is being investigated and awareness has been raised through the Whatsapp group.</p>	<p>(PH) To make a plan at next meeting what information needs to be written on the form for new drivers to highlight what documentation /information is needed. (DK) To speak to Integra about this.</p> <p>(PH) To organise Committee members to go out on ride along with (PQ).</p> <p>(PQ) To put together information for committee members regarding the responsibility of the passenger.</p>
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3	Licensing office - current service demand	<p>(DK) Stated that 160 renewals were sent out in December for March.</p> <p>(MW) Said that it has been useful that someone is always in the garage as a point of contact.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that there is still the issue of the garage having the monopoly and making profit. This issue has been missed. Fran is running a better service and she communicates well.</p> <p>(KB) Stated that the garage do want the income but he needs to have a meeting with them. Explained that the statutory guidance proposes that a licenced vehicle is tested 3 times a year. He proposes that 2 tests would be sufficient. There is a 2 month wait time now. This needs reviewing if number of tests is growing. The garage is permitted to make a profit. Needs to be a discussion around the fitness test criteria as vehicles should not be being put up on ramps.</p> <p>(MW) Suggested that the service would improve if drivers could go somewhere else. This happened with medical tests. Should be taken more seriously as a trade. (KB) Suggested could be split over 2 garages for tests – procurement issue.</p> <p>(DK) Asked how the confirmation of appointments were received and (KB) asked was this being received by text or email. (MW) Stated that confirmation of appointment was received by email but not reminders. Suggested that changes should only be accepted after receiving a confirmation.</p> <p>(DK) Stated that it is difficult to recover the costs. Agrees with changes but difficult to prove that it is the same person. They wouldn't have the badge number as it is often a new vehicle. Charges are always argued. Stated this was frustrating and a lot of time is wasted chasing people.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that it is 95% new vehicles. The initial application should be paid for at the time of booking and be non-refundable. (PH) Said that need to be clear on a course of action over confirmations. The format needs to be looked at and this can be returned to.</p>	<p>(KB) and (PH) to discuss the service the garage offer and then to meet with the garage.</p> <p>(PH) To look at the format of how confirmations are sent and received.</p>
4	DfT Statutory Guidance	<p>(KB) Explained that this should have been before Christmas but that there was a delay because of the general election. The proposed statutory guidance will raise the bar with conditions and standards and will be aligned with policy. Briefing with licence holders. Briefing note for Committee. NR3 – Trying to push everyone onto it, national database of all suspended or revoked licences. Making sure everyone is DBS checked.</p> <p>(MK) Asked about the procedure of DBS checking in SG (South Gloucestershire). (DK) Explained the process with DBS checks and issues discussed.</p>	<p>(DK) To provide (PH) with DBS audit information.</p>

5	Wheelchair accessible vehicles & designated vehicles list public Consultation, ended 8 th December	(KB) Stated that the consultation has ended, report produced and submitted for agenda briefing yesterday and it will go to Lead Members next week. The report will be considered at the Committee meeting at then the final policy will be agreed.	.
6	Proposed disabilities awareness training	<p>(KB) Explained that there is a procurement exercise with 3 potential training providers and it will take time to select. Will be a potential training package similar to CSE and it makes sense to have a working group to look at it.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that they were initially looking at WAV training. Less than 3% of passengers need to remain in a wheelchair. There are other needs and disabilities. Feels that focus is on one. (PH) Said that this was not the case and other disabilities will be looked at.</p> <p>(MW) Asked if CSE and disability training can be done in one day. (KB) Explained that this would be a lot of training for one day. Will have to look at wider Council and working group. Has been crucial to use feedback and experiences. Need to cover content in Equality Act and make drivers aware of requirements.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that a working group could look at the proposed training and that input from (SS) would be valued. Need to be sure that Committee are aware of training agenda and what it is covering. Hopefully can offer a complete package.</p> <p>(PQ) Identified that SG are rightly proud of CSE training as mandatory in SG so would be good to add disability training. Explained that people with sight impairments can struggle with tinted windows and become disorientated. (SS) Explained that some windows need to be tinted for autistic people so it is about finding the balance.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that he wants to be on top of disability training so that SG can lead the way.</p>	(PH) and (SS) to form training working group
7	Officer delegated decisions and proposed amendments to Appendix A, Convictions Policy	<p>(KB) Stated that the report will go to Committee and that the update aligns to the Institute of Licencing convictions policy guidance. Will have more consistency nationally if LA's adopt it or follow the principles. Convictions amendments take into account length of time – Committee to consider and agree for consultation.</p> <p>(KS) Explained that an applicant for a licence with convictions can reapply if refused. (KB) Confirmed that an applicant has the right to keep trying and that they do have to pay. It is not possible to stop them from applying and they could try other local authorities.</p> <p>(PH) Explained that there are very little appeals to Magistrates' Courts. Decisions that Sub-Committee have made have been pretty good. Officers are making sound recommendations.</p>	

		<p>(BD) Asked if people could be made aware of previous refusals. (KS) Stated that they could not. (TD) Explained that the criteria has to be kept too legally and that very few get through.</p>	
8	Proposed amendments for vehicle signage	<p>(PQ) Explained that PH (Private Hire) to have no front plate but to have a window sticker. HC (Hackney Carriage) proposed to have number marking on door and bonnet. Moving away from roof sign plates as can be hard to see the expiry dates. TfL don't display plates, instead have a tax disk sized sticker in rear window which is a bad idea as very difficult to see at a distance especially if windows tinted.</p> <p>(MW) Agreed that this is a good idea which helps with bus lanes and can be seen instantly.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained that doors and bonnets can be wrapped to show car is a taxi and displaying number. This is unlikely to be copied and is distinctive. Costs about £150. Colour doesn't change as it is like a sticker. Not easy to peel off by member of the public. (SS) Queried how to enforce a stop notice. (PQ) Explained there would be a sticker over the top saying 'suspended'. This would be on a HC not PH. (MW) Questioned how a wrapped taxi could be made back into a normal car. (TD) Explained it is like cling film and is easy to peel off. Used on fire engines for advertising.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that it was better than spraying. Asked if (PQ) could provide a picture of the design.</p>	(PQ) To provide picture of wrapped taxi design.
9	Proposed Licencing fees and charges 2020-21	<p>(KB) Stated that the service costs have been predicted to go up by 15% but no changes are proposed to the fees and charges, with a surplus to be applied. (MW) Queried change being applied for people applying for plate exemptions.</p> <p>(KB) Explained that outside of licence fee scope – can charge for plate exemption request of just over £100 that is the actual cost, and is an indefinite fee. If you get another vehicle then you have to do it again.</p> <p>(MW) Asked to discuss requirements as if drivers have an exemption from displaying plates, you have to provide a list to customers.</p> <p>(KB) Explained there is also a new fee coming in after legal advice – will be a charge for a new vehicle over 5 years old to be considered for licensing request. Just over £100 fee so would expect to see less requests, but again this is to cover the actual cost.</p>	(MW) and (KB) to discuss displaying exemption lists
10	Proposed Hackney Carriage Table of Tariffs and Fares	<p>(KB) Explained that it was time for an annual review and anticipated that there is to be a proposal for no change.</p>	

11	Next Regulatory Committee meeting	Kingswood Civic Centre (Council Chamber) – Thursday 30 th January, 10.30am.	
12	Child Sexual Exploitation awareness refresher training – working group to agree proposal to committee	<p>(KB) Explained that CSE training was in place. Some people did it 5 years ago so looking at how they can be refreshed. Looking at what should be included.</p> <p>(SS) Suggested that drivers who do not speak English or are new to the language should have 1:1 or smaller group training to fully understand the rules as a duty of care. System must be updated if law changes. This has been noted in previous meetings.</p> <p>(PQ) Advised that he is in early stages of a project. Feels that Council websites not user friendly and need to include a clear FAQ page as information is hard to locate.</p> <p>(KB) Explained that Digital have now made it possible for all SG residents to have an account, waste services rolled out, but will be limited for licensing. Licence holders outside SG can't have account. Suggested moving forwards with SMS. (PH) Stated that computer systems are being gradually updated. Something useful need to be designed at not a huge cost – SMS communication.</p>	(KB) to look at what should be included in CSE refresher training
13	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licencing enforcement update – compliance checks with PC Patrick Quinton, ITU, Traffic Police and DVSA.	<p>(PQ) Advised that most people see the regular updates on the Whatsapp group. A big issue is the standard of driving which is hard to detect and not enough evidence to take to court. Ways of retraining are being explored. This reflects change in industry where drivers often have additional jobs and are not professional drivers full-time. SG has a driving assessment but BCC does not.</p> <p>(PH) Suggested that this needs considering as an authority and IM training should be given. Wants Committee to look at heading towards all SG registered drivers to be advanced drivers.</p> <p>(PQ) Stated that the argument against this would be cost but it would have its advantages. SG already have driving assessment – looking to enhance this and it is a good aspiration to have. This needs a working group.</p> <p>(MW) Explained that he learned a lot from being observed driving and this could be a good way but conscious of adding too many hurdles initially. (PH) Suggested that 12 months could be a good time frame. With driving assessment, this would make SG a lead authority for passenger and driver safety. (SS) Added that this could be done upon first renewal and this could be easier to administrate.</p> <p>(JP) Informed that she has enrolled on advanced driving course and will feedback.</p> <p>(PQ) Advised that PDAs in windscreens are getting bigger. This affects the standard of driving.</p>	(PH) To look at all SG registered drivers becoming advanced drivers with working group and how to implement and administrate this.

14	Any other business	<p>(KS) Asked about business over Christmas. (SS) Replied that her company was closed because of seasonal problems and giving drivers time off for health and safety reasons. (BD) Stated that there were lots of cancellations.</p> <p>(TD) Stated that he has experienced issues with corporate communications. SG one of the first authorities to bring in safeguarding as mandatory. Hopes corporate communications can process new initiatives. (PH) Suggested that a person from corporate communications could come and discuss as it is important the public know what we are doing.</p> <p>(MW) Suggested that there needs to be more public information to educate people about how to complain about taxis.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that on the minutes from 18th September 2019 there was a FOI request as the figures for licencing charges did not add up. This is ring fenced in taxis but money is still being used to pay for when people provide the wrong information. Also reported that she had asked for an update regarding redundancies but had not received a reply.</p> <p>(KB) Explained that ECS had a review and the outcome was no change for Licensing Service. There has been agreement for 2 extra, permanent Licensing Officers. Chris Jones is leaving on 20th January and will be replaced. An existing Licencing Officer is also being made a Senior Licencing Officer to oversee the day to day running of the service. (KB) can then work on policy, training, national and commercial issues. Technical Support were not part of that review. Review of Technical Support likely to happen and Licensing continues to be a standalone service. Mark's role will be reviewed. Service Managers have to reapply for jobs as there will be a slightly different structure. Likely to all be decided by end of January.</p> <p>(SS) Replied that this all seems to be very positive. Moved onto issue of pulling a vehicle out of work and enforcing to change plates. Before the consultation in July they were still being asked to take old plates off. Asked if anything had been done? (PQ) Informed that with the tax disc sized sticker change, the whole plate would not have to be changed. A sticker could be put on top of an old one.</p> <p>(SS) Referred to point 7 on previous minutes regarding no smoking or vaping and it being a grey area. (KB) Stated that there only has to be a red circle (prohibited) sticker with a cigarette on it under smokefree legislation. Suggested drivers saying no to customers who vape, but it is not illegal to vape.</p> <p>(SS) Replied that she does say no to customers who vape. Moved on to issue of UBER PH not having the destination before the passenger enters the taxi. Driver should get job information prior to pick up so that they can route it. UBER are in breach of PH law. Stated that she has received legal advice and this is a breach.</p> <p>(KB) Explained that there has been case law, but would like to</p>	<p>(PH) To invite someone from corporate communications to come and discuss new initiatives</p> <p>(SS) To receive an FOI concerning licensing charges. (SS) to email (PH) and (KB) so they are aware of what is being asked for.</p> <p>(KB) and (SS) to discuss UBER breaching PH law.</p> <p>(SS) to speak to (DK) about tech team and (DK) to speak to tech team about issues reported.</p>
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		<p>discuss to actual points of law.</p> <p>(SS) Discussed issues with a data breach. Also feel that she has been disrespected, talked about by the Technical Support team. (DK) Asked (SS) to speak to him about Tech team issue and he will speak to them. (PH) Stated that he can see upset caused and will arrange meeting to discuss.</p> <p>(MW) Explained that he was worried that the proposal to publish WAV vehicle owner's details for the public was causing distress. (PH) Said he will take this on board and will think about how to take this point to committee. (KB) Explained that the law and statutory guidance is clear on the requirements and there should be no sensitive information published under data protection. How would public be able to contact WAV drivers without any contact information? There has to be a public licensing register but his view is to not go outside of the legal parameters.</p> <p>(TD) Reported that the list of acceptable documents was supposed to be actioned as this was a problem for many people. (KB) Stated that the list of acceptable documents is from Home Office guidance and listed in current new and renewal guidance notes.</p> <p>(JP) Explained that with the clean air zone (CAZ) and diesel ban from BCC, SG were not consulted. Majority of vehicles licensed in SG but a lot work and live in BCC district. Charge for diesel vehicles is £9 a day regardless of how much you enter the zone. (PH) Questioned whether taxis were excluded. Not fair if BCC are exempt. Will flag this up – need to find more information.</p> <p>(SS) Suggested a change of venue as most people live and work in Yate. (KB) Explained that this venue is booked for the rest of the year but will look into a change of venue for next year.</p>	<p>(PH) To arrange meeting regarding GDPR issues.</p> <p>(PH) Wanted to flag up WAV drivers contact details being made available to public.</p> <p>(BM) To provide update on action taken regarding acceptable documents list.</p> <p>(PH) to find more information about clean air zone in BCC and how SG were consulted.</p> <p>(KB) to look at change of venue for meetings for next year.</p>
		Meeting closed at 1.10pm	

Next Meeting: Wednesday 25th March 2020,
10:30am, Dings Crusaders RFC, Shaftesbury Park (Conference Room), Frenchay
Park Road, BS16 1LG