

Taxi Liaison Group (TLG) meeting minutes
Wednesday 22nd May 2019, 10:30hrs

Dings Crusaders RFC (Conference Room) 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)

Technical Support: Rebecca Patten (RP)

Police: PC Patrick Quinton (PQ)

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Service: Mike Worley (MW), Sharon Shaw (SS), Janet Platten (JP), Mohamed Roble (MR), Abdulkadir Ali (AA), Kerry Harding (KH), Bill Davidge (BD), Nikola Kutulov (NK), Amanul Islam (AM), Sarah Joyce (SJ), Irino Sedkysra (IS), Khalid Tonga (KT), Seded Nuti (SN), Eric Masih (EM), Mahmud Rasel (MR), Debu Dhar (DD), Mazhar Ali (MA).

Apologies: Tony Lidbury and Raj (South Glos Taxis).

Item			Action
1	Welcome	<p>(PH) welcomed everyone to the meeting at 10:35hrs, apologies made known from group.</p> <p>(PH) introduced himself as did (TD), (KS), (KB), (RP) and (PQ).</p>	
2	Previous minutes and matters arising	<p>Matters arising from previous minutes and subsequent actions were discussed.</p> <p>(SS) Discussing how to run through previous meetings, raise, discuss and minutes. Concerned that previously wouldn't return and gain closure.</p> <p>(PH) Advised issues will not be revisited if actioned but will if idea has not concluded.</p> <p>(SS) Concerned licensing not taking in relevant information. Then people get a second appointment within a week whereas others have to wait 6 weeks.</p> <p>(PH) Confirmed will be discussed in this meeting to get a conclusion.</p>	

		<p>(MW) Stated no actions noted on previous minutes.</p> <p>(PH) Confirmed this will now be rectified going forwards.</p>	
3	Licensing office - current service demand	<p>(RP) Stated that there has been a high demand for 2.5 years. There is 5-7 weeks wait time for appointment – this fluctuates. Hoping that this will be done in a timely way and to contact (RP) if not. IT systems are being developed. This is restricted but trying to be creative. There are 100 – 150 appointments a week. Many are unfruitful as the information is not available so drivers must come in with everything. Event Brite is being used for bookings for CSE awareness training.</p> <p>(MR) Advised that he has used Event Brite and received a reminder.</p> <p>(RP) Explained that Event Brite is a global software and will be rolled out for the knowledge and basic skills tests. This will save time on booking tests. Aiming for online system for appointments but this is a long way off.</p> <p>(MW) Asked that if drivers are unprepared then they should be made to wait so that next time, they get it right. Stated that waiting lists and rebooking effect everyone. Advised that if the office managed it better, it would be more efficient.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that drivers are not being recharged. Should be charging for time. Funds are being wasted on people who don't care enough. Posed question, how can they do their jobs correctly? Advised that if someone comes without the correct paperwork, they should wait for the next appointment. Stated that it was agreed that they should wait their turn. Asked why was this not in place? Stated that it was not fair to bring some appointments forward and feels time is being wasted.</p> <p>(RP) Advised that this was an oversight and that the appointments system can be run differently but with restrictions. Stated that it has to be a pragmatic approach and not blanket. Aims to make time lines less and reduce unfruitful appointments. Stated that there might be occasions where there were not enough spaces on CSE training as spaces were being taken up by new applicants. Advised they were trying to be pragmatic.</p> <p>(TD) Understands the frustration of drivers and that drivers feel that people should go to the back of the queue.</p>	To Agree a wait time when drivers have not brought the correct paperwork.

		<p>(MW) Advised that it should be identified why some appointments are unfruitful. Stated that South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) have the monopoly and clear guidelines will stop this. Feels that the reason for the wait time lies with the tech team as they are taking longer to license drivers as drivers are unprepared. Suggested that this needs dealing with by becoming enforceable.</p> <p>(PH) Asked whether people have fair warning and if they know what documents to bring.</p> <p>(KH) Advised that an email is sent with a bullet pointed list of what documents to bring.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that he understands points raised and they will be addressed.</p>	
4	CSE awareness training – Current driver licence holders, early booking advised before renewal of licence.	<p>(RP) Stated that demand has not dropped off and continues. Extra CSE dates have been blocked in. Explained CSE is a requirement for everyone and is an important piece of training.</p> <p>(SS) Advised that drivers should get updates on awareness and how things change.</p> <p>(RP) Explained that if a driver is due CSE then book it as places get booked up quickly. Drivers don't have to pay.</p>	
5	Wheelchair accessible vehicles & designated vehicles list.	<p>(KB) Stated that there will be a full report and a public consultation with a designated list on the website following the July meeting.</p> <p>(PH) Advised that the consultation will be thorough and so not worth a huge debate now.</p> <p>(SS) Asked that the consultation takes into account the amount of Hackney Carriage drivers (HC). 8% of trade completed last time but only 20% of drivers are HC. Stated that the figures show that drivers are not very concerned and that Private Hire (PH) vehicles will not be effected.</p> <p>(RP) Asked if the previous consultation asked what badge drivers had?</p> <p>(SS) Stated that it did not. Also advised that not everyone knew what a Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle (WAV) was. Explained that this meant that a passenger must remain in a wheelchair or a scooter. Stated that people voting need to be aware of what they are voting for.</p>	<p>For consultation to ask drivers what badge they have got.</p> <p>To make it clear what WAV is for consultation. (KB) and (SS) to make presentation.</p>

		<p>(PH) Stated that consultations must be clear on what they are about as decisions will be made and that the point has been taken on board.</p> <p>(TD) Stated that only 20% of drivers are HC. Advised that disability groups should be asked about wheelchair use and this should filter into consultation.</p> <p>(KB) Agreed that (SS) point was valid and would work together to make a presentation regarding WAV so it is fully understood. Stated that HC drivers are key to the consultation. Intends to write to PH operators to propose half day conference to talk about WAV.</p> <p>(SS) Agreed to work with (KB) to make presentation. Stated that she is registered disabled so rules have to be reasonable as would put some drivers out of work. Stated that often WAVs cannot be used for business clients so a balance needs to be found as a service is being provided to all. Suggested a percentage in a fleet should be WAV.</p> <p>(MW) Discussed the economic impact of vehicles being wheelchair accessible. Stated that taxi drivers carrying wheelchairs are earning less than minimum wage.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that this all needs to go through consultation for consideration.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained that Bristol City Council (BCC) is fully WAV and the issues with training are not straightforward. Stated that people need confidence with loading and securing and this can be difficult, especially in rented or new vehicles. Asked who has responsibility for training? Explained that the vast majority of drivers are not resistant but don't have confidence.</p> <p>(AA) Explained that he has been advised by customer services that if he doesn't know how to use WAV then to not use them.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that everyone should be aware of different disabilities but the focus is on WAVs. Suggested Enhanced training.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that this could be arranged and had been noted. Advised everyone to get involved with the consultation.</p>	
6	Return of vehicle plates as part of	<p>(KB) Stated that all vehicle plates have to be returned and destroyed as part of the renewal process or drivers will not get their licence.</p>	To talk to Heads of Service

<p>renewal application process – licence condition.</p>	<p>(MW) Explained that drivers have to leave their licence plates on to do their jobs. Suggested 48 hours was reasonable. Stated that the legislation was for the odd person who abuses it.</p> <p>(KB) Advised that there must be consistency but that this was not his department. Stated that this is a licence condition so drivers could be prosecuted as it is in the policy.</p> <p>(MW) Explained that drivers have to drill holes in the plates so have to bring a drill and tools with them. Suggested drivers should have licenses removed if don't return plates and that people should be sanctioned so that not all drivers are punished.</p> <p>(KB) Stated that he was not aware of this and that it had been a licence condition for many years. Explained that it has to be consistent. Stated that intention was to get flexi plates which were easier to remove.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that pulling a vehicle out of work was not economic and was unreasonable. Stated that some people are let off if there are no holes in the plates and that incorrect plates are given out when plates are out of stock. Suggested that there should be an overlap when getting new plates. Explained that the issue is drivers driving with no plates or plates not supplied. Suggested bringing back plates and bringing tools should be on email for new application within the bullet points. This could be enforced.</p> <p>(PH) Suggested a service could be offered at Broad Lane to fix plates on.</p> <p>(KB) Stated that education needs to be at the application point.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained that out of date plates are a risk and that they make his job difficult because take up time. Made no comment on the exchange process but stated that old plates do need to come back. Stated that BCC and SGC allow magnetic fixings but feels that this should not be allowed. Stated that out of date plates should be securely destroyed and that thinking about plates needs urgent review. Stated that he has written a report which the Council have. Suggested that he would encourage use of rear, square number plates.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that it is important that legality meets practicality and that he would look at the report.</p>	<p>about the use of flexi plates (PH).</p> <p>To discuss process of changing plates before consultation in July (KB), (SS), (MW), (PQ).</p>
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7	E-cigarettes and vaping in public vehicles – Government policy and Guidance.	<p>(KB) Stated that smoking is banned in taxis. Stated that vaping is not included in the smoking regulations. Suggested HC and PH policy committee should discuss and a decision should be made locally.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that this is a grey area and stickers should be displayed saying 'no smoking or vaping'. Explained that as a driver, she does not want her vehicle to smell and it would make her uncomfortable.</p> <p>(MB) Stated that people know their rights so if he tells passengers that it is not allowed, is he breaking his license conditions?</p> <p>(TD) Suggested that no law doesn't mean there cannot be a local expectation as with CSE.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained Private Hire vehicles have the choice to take a passenger. HC drivers do have an obligation to take people. Feels that it is a reasonable excuse not to take passengers if they vape or have food or drink.</p>	
8	Next Regulatory Committee meeting.	(KB) Thursday 18 th July 2019, 10:30am at Kingswood CC.	
9	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Enforcement Update – Compliance checks with PC Patrick Quinton, ITU, Traffic Police and DVSA.	<p>(PQ) Explained that this is his 3rd year and that the drivers Whatsapp group is a success with 400 drivers subscribed. This is a good way to send and receive information and there have been 385 requests for assistance via Whatsapp in the previous year. Stated that he has defended anti South Glos (SG), feeling as SGC driving assessments and EU license requirements are higher than BCC. Explained that trying to make events work better for drivers and Whatsapp has helped. Invited drivers to join Whatsapp group and informed that messages sent on Broadcast list so that all members and messages can only be seen by (PQ). Stated that vast majority of SGC drivers are working legally.</p> <p>(TD) Echoed that most drivers are working legally and informed that he requested a meeting with BCC to discuss issues which nearly happened so still trying to arrange.</p>	To arrange a meeting with BCC to discuss drivers who are not working legally (TD) .
10	Any other Business	(PH) Stated that it was a good meeting. Thanked (KC) for all the work he has done and said that he had done a fantastic job over the years as he had created a good forum for people to express their views. Also thanked Shirley Potts for her incredible service to the council for years and years.	To talk to enforcement team about how they follow up complaints

	<p>(SS) Stated that the hard work is appreciated from the taxi trade.</p> <p>(MW) Explained situation where a driver has been reported for wearing a hoody which obstructed the face and was not wearing a badge and questioned reporting a driver when the name was unknown. Stated that an assumption had been made that the driver was guilty and that complaints need to be checked so that bad drivers can be dealt with but that drivers have a chance to explain. Emphasised that facts must be checked and assumptions are not made. Stated that complainant needs to be anonymous but they should be interrogated by officer so that any patterns are picked up on.</p> <p>(PQ) Explained that a high percentage of cases are not as they first seem and they do receive malicious complaints. Stated that drivers are vulnerable to complaints so issues are discussed so that drivers' views can be gained. Agreed that sometimes complainants do give incorrect plate/badge numbers so drivers must ensure plate is displayed.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that he needs to talk to enforcement team and find out their approach and how they follow up complaints.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that she has received accusations of speeding and time has been wasted on getting CCTV. Said that there are two sides to every story so complainant should be accountable and drivers should receive apologies in writing.</p> <p>(KB) Advised that evidence must be clear before writing enforcement letter and there has to be an audit trail.</p> <p>(TD) Questioned what sanctions there are.</p> <p>(BD) Stated that the mechanic at Broad Lane (BL) did not know process for new MOT for plating.</p> <p>(KB) Stated that the application criteria is clear with the MOT and will reiterate to staff. Confirmed that a car can have an MOT at any time.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that it is frustrating when meetings change as they should be booked in advance and not changed without notifying everyone.</p> <p>(KB) Confirmed that everyone is given at least two weeks' notice and the template was sent out on time. A list is published in advance on the internet and that agendas and minutes are also on there. Suggested SMS could be used to inform of dates.</p>	<p>(PH).</p> <p>To confirm date of next meeting (PH).</p> <p>To talk to Integra about DBS check charges (PH).</p> <p>To discuss issue of drivers not receiving a destination before the passenger enters the taxi with Legal Services (KB).</p> <p>To look at Licence prices (KB).</p>
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		<p>(PH) Asked if there are enough meetings? Stated that this was a new team and that he will take issues on board to gain closure. Suggested a Doodle Poll could be used to vote on dates for meetings.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that councillors usually support the drivers and take issues forwards but they have to ask if anything has been done.</p> <p>(MW) Stated that if issues got resolved then there could be three meetings a year and that most drivers can come in school time.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that Integra are charging double for DBS checks as they charge an admin fee. Asked why Integra have the monopoly and also use the room free of charge? Stated that drivers should be able to make an appointment with anybody and SGC should not be recommending Integra.</p> <p>(MW) Stated that there should be a third party tender for fitness tests on cars so that there is a choice of where to go and more ability to negotiate as there would be competition. Showed (TD) and (PH) a leaflet and explained BL are trying to get people in but are not worried about their biggest customer.</p> <p>(PH) Stated that he needs to hear Integra's side to the story and will talk to Mark King.</p> <p>(KH) Advised that drivers can pay for an update service.</p> <p>(KB) Explained that it is a policy requirement that applicants sign up to an update check.</p> <p>(SS) Asked if PH policy is being enforced? Stated that some companies do not know where they are going until the passenger is on board and that this is a breach of licensing conditions and there should be a level playing field.</p> <p>(PQ) Confirmed that an address must be taken in law.</p> <p>(KB) Stated that the law must be applied.</p> <p>(SS) Discussed Licence prices and that one fee or increments is hitting small companies with admin time and fees.</p> <p>(RP) Stated that (KB) would look at this.</p>	
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		Meeting closed at 12:40pm	

Next Meeting: Wednesday 18th September 2019, 10:30am at Dings Crusaders RFC, Shaftesbury Park (Conference Room), Frenchay Park Road, BS16 1LG.