

9 April 2026

Taxi Liaison Group

Location: Bristol and Bath Science Park, Dirac Crescent, Emerson's Green, Bristol.
BS16 7FR

Time: 10am

Chair Cllr Alex Doyle

Present

PC Patrick Quinton (PQ), Ian Fortune (IF), Lily Brine (LB) SGC, Jamie Cordy-Rugman (JC-R) SGC, Emily Horn (EH) SGC, Mike Drew (MD) SGC

Apologies

1 Welcome and introductions

Cllr Alex Doyle (AD) welcomed everyone to the meeting and everyone introduced themselves.

2 Previous Minutes, matters arising – Table of action reviewed

The minutes of the previous meeting of 8th January 2026 were agreed as a true record.

Table of action reviewed

WESTlink crossing zones – WECA forum:

Q LB - Where journeys are undertaken in vehicles licensed by South Gloucestershire Council, what regulatory distinction exists between a WESTlink booking and a standard private hire booking

A DH –

- WESTlink is registered as a flexible local bus service operating without a fixed route or timetable.
- It operates within defined zones and operating hours
- Picks up and drops off passengers at bus stops and virtual bus stops
- Journeys can be shared with fares charged on a per-passenger bus fare basis
- Where PHVs are operated, a Special Restricted Licence (SRL) is used which is a specific type of PCV operator licence that allows a licensed PHV operator to legally operate a registered local bus service using their PHV vehicles

Q LB - What procurement process was used to appoint the operators providing vehicles for WESTlink services?

A DH -

- Services were originally tendered competitively in late-2022 though a formal public procurement exercise
- More recently, the WECA Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) for Supported Bus Services for vehicle operation in the South Zones.
- Suppliers have to meet a criteria to be eligible to join DPS but any supplier is able to apply

Q LB - Were licensed taxi or private hire operators eligible to participate in the tendering process?

A DH - The original WESTlink tender in late-2022 was an open tender

Q LB - Are vehicles used for WESTlink journeys required to carry multiple passengers from separate bookings?

A DH - Single occupancy journeys are permitted

Q LB - What proportion of journeys undertaken by cars involve a single passenger booking?

A DH - Less than 35% but those journeys are predominately in rural zones

Q LB - Are WESTlink vehicles permitted to provide door-to-door journeys?

A DH - Yes, but only if you have a passenger has a disability or unable to walk to their nearest bus stop

Q LB - What is the average level of public subsidy per WESTlink journey undertaken in a car?

A DH - For all zones which operate in SGC, the average January 2026 cost per passenger journey was £18.45

Q LB - Has WECA undertaken any assessment of the impact of WESTlink services on the existing licensed taxi and private hire trade?

A DH - As WESTlink is a s registered as a flexible local bus service , an impact assessment on the on the licensed taxi and private hire trade has not been undertaken

Consider introducing an online booking system to ensure a consistent approach for the licensing system

LB reported that this is an ongoing action.

LB reported new and renewal vehicle licences applications are now online and this has improved processing times, now down to 10 working days.

Work is still being done to put driver applications online but looking towards May.

Concerns about the testing system for CSE session as some service users are concerned that people may cheat/put someone else's name on a certificate.

LB confirmed from the 1st April 2026, the CSE session has been removed from the licensing fees and charges and services users will need to pay for the session directly to the Councils approved provider as previously service users had raised concerns that missed and duplicate bookings were costing all service users additional money.

Legislation around Hackney carriages not wheelchair assessable and possible VAT exemption

LB confirmed that this is an ongoing action. However, asked if there was any further information on what was required from the trade.

Action: LB to complete

To invite representative regarding signage to future meeting. *Was there a particular type of signage the trade would like information on?*

Action: LB to complete

To investigate whether any new bus lanes introduced default to allow taxi/private hire drivers.

Action: LB/IF to complete

To continue to investigate making fitness inspections on up-front cost.

Action: LB/MD to complete

To ask the question of SGC implementing a £0 licence fee for hackney carriages- this is an ongoing action and initial queries have started.

3 Licensing updates:

(a) PQ update

PQ reported:

- Consider autonomous vehicles as a future agenda item.
 - It is unlikely to come to Bristol in the immediate future, may take a few years.
 - It is clear that autonomous vehicles will not be licenced by licensing as there is no driver.

Q AD – Any concerns about delivery robots?

A PCQ – No.

(b) Licensing team update

LB reported:

- Currently dealing with a lot of complaints relating to licence holders, however public safety matters are being dealt with in priority.
- The privacy policy that's been mentioned in previous meetings is still ongoing and working with our communication team.
- Confirmed that a response to the DfT consultation was submitted by South Gloucestershire Council.
- New Senior Licensing Officer starting imminently which should help the team manage the workload better.
- As discussed above, we're working on reducing the processing time for new and renewal applications. We're reviewing feedback from service users in relation to the online process and how we can implement improvements before going live with new and renewal applications for drivers.

(c) Update from the Broad Lane garage

IF reported:

- The possibility of opening on a Saturday:
 - It is possible but there would be a cost.

Q AD – Could there be a Saturday appointment premium? Pay more for a Saturday appointment to cover the cost of staff.

A IF – Yes, but need to work out what this cost would be.

Q LB – If there was a public safety issue, would cost also need to cover a Licensing Officer to be present?

A PCQ – You could delegate a garage member of staff to deal with any issues.

Action: IF to complete
IF to send LB details of course.

Q MD – Do garage staff want the extra work on a Saturday?

A IF – Yes.

- New payment system for garage.
- Survey done over February and March.
 - February
 - 29 surveys back
 - 7 = 100% excellent
 - 1 = 75% very poor
 - 2 = 50% very poor
 - Concerns related to the toilet facilities which have now been addressed, price increasing which has been explained happens every April, and Saturday openings which is ongoing.
 - March
 - 5 = 100% excellent
 - 2 = 100% very poor
 - Reported waitlist for appointment is too long (1 month).
 - Concerns related to the following-
 - Service users do not agree with not needing to be done for new vehicles.
- IF provided an overview on fitness inspections
- Majority of fitness test failures are due to cosmetic reasons.
- 1/5 of all fitness tests carried out fail which is very high.
- 29 no show appointments in March which means there are more service users not turning up for appointments than there are complaining of waiting times.
- Engine lights and missing wheel nuts are common amongst fitness tests.

Action: IF to complete
Make the survey responses ongoing for continuous feedback.

Action: IF to complete
To investigate the possibility of opening garage on a Saturday morning again.

4 Items for the trade

No issues raised.

5 Any other business

No issues raised.

7 Proposed date and venue of next meeting

TBC - 16 July 2026 at 10am @ Bristol & Bath Science Park, BS16 7FR

Meeting closed at 10.50am