

ECM PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 3rd October 2023

Bolton Town Hall

Present:

Cllr Sue Haworth (SH)	Executive Member
Cllr Sean Fielding (SF)	Chair
Cllr Andrea Taylor-Burke (AT)	Vice Chair
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Senior Licensing Officer
Garry Parker (GP)	Assistant Director
Joe Fox (JF)	Principal Engineer Highways
Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	GMP
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Yasif Khan (YK)	BPHA
Charles Oakes (CO)	BBHA

Apologies:

Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Licensing Manager
Eddie Shah (ES)	BTDA

1.	Apologies:
	Above.
2.	Minutes from last meeting:
	SH advised minutes from previous meeting due to be signed off and confirmed anything that needs to be raised from the minutes can be discussed today.
3.	Licensing Unit Workload
	<p>SH thanked trade representatives for the effort in assisting drivers as they have contributed to the improvements.</p> <p>SH explained staff absence is having an impact on service provision, but this will be addressed, and knowledge will be moved into the department then not reliant on one person. LT confirmed she can be contacted by the trade representatives with any matters.</p> <p>SH confirmed meetings regarding the online progression regrettably had to be cancelled but has given a commitment to improve this and it will be addressed as a priority.</p>
4.	BPHA Agenda items:
	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Fees2. Driver renewals and first applications3. Bolton Train Station

Fees

MA asked about the fees and when they be looked at and explained the trade frustrated as they have been asking for a couple of years for them to be looked at but they keep going up.

YK added that in Wolverhampton the one year fee is £49 and three year fee is £98, which is a lot cheaper compared to Bolton.

CO clarified he hasn't found anything that suggests Bolton Council are making a surplus from the fees, but advised the trade were given a promise the council was moving online and the price of the fees would go down and that hasn't happened.

SH advised that the drivers are still receiving a lot of help on a daily basis from the staff, and this has a cost and if fees assessed again this will be part of the cost. Other authorities where there is not as much contact with drivers have a reduced fee. But currently we still have a lot of contact from drivers.

YK stated the fees should have been frozen whilst being looked into.

LT confirmed the fee increase is the annual cost of living increment of 2%.

YK suggested the plates and stickers are expensive and could be reduced to help costings.

SF requested a summary of the differences in licensing standards along with fees be drawn up for some councils with cheaper licences than Bolton and compared.

SH summarised the points:

- Fee structure was due to be looked at,
- Concerns the officer support is still high,
- Improvements through help and assistance of applicants and applicants fully reading the feedback has been made since May 2023,
- Need to look at the digital improvements to reduce the contact,
- Want to see the digital forms improve the costs.

YF requested to sit down with the IT team to discuss difficulties with the forms. SH advised the IT are aware and know some of the issues but can look into it.

SH agrees to organise a sit down for Taxi reps to go through the on-line application process.

Medicals

MA advised drivers are having problems getting appointments with GP's. Often GP surgeries cancel the appointment when the date gets closer, this then means applications are being submitted late and putting pressure on officers.

YK advised his GP charges £130 for medical, but for his HGV/coach licence he can go to an independent provider and pay £50 for a three year medical.

MA discussed medicals being valid for five years and hackney carriage/private hire driver licences being valid for three years so never in sync and have to have one year licences for remainder of the medical period.

	<p>SH advised there is a commitment to changing the policy so that applicants can use some approved medical practitioners in addition to GP's.</p> <p>Action: Medical policy to be looked into</p> <p>Train Station MA raised issues with vehicles and parking at the train station. Private cars and out of town taxis parking on the zig zags and requested a visit as the layout is not working.</p> <p>JF advised the design and layout of the train station and surrounding junctions all work together and is a complex system to work in line with the highway and cycle facilities. Not any easy fix but can do a visit and do observations and talk through what the complexities are of the junction.</p> <p>LT requests images of licensed vehicles causing issues to be sent to her to share with enforcement, including out of town vehicles.</p> <p>Action: JF to speak to partners and arrange a site visit.</p>
6	<p>AOB:</p>
	<p>Bus lane enforcement JF gave an update to advise from the 9th October 2023 bus lanes in Bolton will be actively enforced and requested a message is shared out to drivers to adhere to signs.</p> <p>MA questioned why private hire vehicles (PH) cant use the bus lanes but hackney carriages (HC) can and YK added that PH are doing same job as HC and buses and should be able to use them.</p> <p>JF advised PH vehicles are not permitted to use the lanes. If it was going to change it would have to be a Greater Manchester (GM) decision/approach.</p> <p>Dual Badges MA requested an update on dual badges and advised HC drivers want to be able to complete private hire work when ranks are quieter.</p> <p>LT confirmed HC drivers can work for PH operators without a dual badge. MA advised Uber/Bolt will not accept drivers without a private hire licence.</p> <p>SH explained she needs to have an understanding what our responsibilities are to the public in terms of HC provision, how does app based taxi relate, what is the provision and what should we do before it can be taken further.</p> <p>HC age limit MA requested the age limit on HC vehicles is looked at as drivers state they were not consulted and did not agree to the 15 year age limit when it was implemented.</p> <p>SH advised that HC reps have had some consultation, the status quo is currently in place and there is a separate HC meeting where this can be discussed. (MA requested attendance)</p> <p>GMP update</p>

	<p>BB discussed the irresponsible stopping/parking on Bradshawgate and the issues that it is causing.</p> <p>Forward planning – GMP and Highways agenda items to be brought forward in future meetings.</p> <p>Action: Add MA to Hackney Carriage meeting</p>
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Next meeting: 5th December 2023