

ECM PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

AGENDA - 16th OCTOBER 2024 - 11:00 to 12:30

Dido Suite, Bolton Town Hall

Cllr Haworth (SH)	(Chair) Executive Cabinet Member
Cllr Chadwick (DC)	Chairman LERC
Cllr Sajid Ali (SA)	ECM (Planning Committee)
Garry Parker (GP)	Assistant Director
Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Joe Fox (JF)	Principal Engineer Highways
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Licensing Manager
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Senior Licensing Officer
Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	GMP
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Yasif Khan (YK)	BPHA

Nosipho Khumalo (NK) Executive Support

Apologies:

Cllr Taylor-Burke (ATB)	Vice Chair LERC
Charles Oakes (CO)	BTDA

1. Apologies - LT

As above.

2. Introductions - All

As above and Cllr Sajid Ali.

3. Minutes from last meeting - SH

Minutes reviewed and confirmed.

4. Trade Rep. items - BPHA: MA/YK

4.1 Age limit for Hackney carriage

SH advised no proposal at present to stand down the 15-years mostly due to emissions standard present work. Various issues complementary to the 15-years are still being discussed. Will use this meeting to discuss questions asked at consultation and responses received. YK noted the 20 drivers who attended the workshop appreciated being included in discussions and are keen for more participation. YK said the biggest age limit challenges are sourcing vehicles within the 10 year threshold and affordability.

Action: PC will look at feedback and advise accordingly.

4.2 Dual badges see action at 4.1 above.

4.3 Train station, Highways and ECM Road Items

YK is still concerned about the unresolved long standing issues at the train station. Incidents of private cars, private hire cutting off, parking in and blocking spaces allocated to hackney carriages,

leading to up to 10 minutes wait during peak times which passengers are not happy about. Offenders usually refuse to move.

JF referred to a recent proposal to install bollards and barriers at the edge of the Hackney rank to control traffic and alleviate issues. DC suggested trial installing the barriers. JF advised it is possible but there would be installation cost.

The location needs careful consideration, including synchronising the sequence of the traffic lights, and how this would impact Hackney carriage. Blocking the whole lane it needs cameras.

- PC recommended trialling the barriers and getting feedback.
- MA recommended trialling with the cones first to see how many would favour the installation of bollards.

SH suggested the one way system on Newport Street would need to be reviewed to alleviate the traffic volume. Trade is of the opinion that the Bolton Train Station is badly designed, worse with the 3 modes of traffic competing for this single space, busiest during evening peak hours. Signage giving way to taxis would not work. A camera would solve the problem and identify offenders.

DC has received complaints due to inability to navigate around this area. Suggested asking TfGM to review the lights near the train station to improve traffic flow in the area. Is of the opinion that the new traffic light system has exacerbated the traffic issue. JF added traffic blockages are due to active travel reducing the number of lanes.

Action: JF to send NK a road map to be circulated with the minutes showing the congested areas in the area. (action complete) [Junctions at New Port Str/ Trinity Str / Manchester Rd/ Bridgeman Pl/ Lower Bridgeman Str/Bradford Str.](#)

SH will also make contact with TfGM regarding road junctions review as Newport St and Trinity St is notably affecting the taxi trade and the Interchange rank

An awareness email notification has circulated to drivers to avoid driving along the first 10 metres of Bradshaw and Deansgate (enforceable bus gate), so they can avoid fines. The 600 spotted drivers have been issued with warning notices but will be fined next time.

Taxi U-turns around Bradshawgate. YK/MA noted there are no alternatives for U-turns but option to go around Castle Street or use a back street. PC advised the 'no U-turn' was meant to alleviate accidents and there are nearer, shorter options available to go around the area and not Castle Street.

Yellow boxes. JF advised there is no tried and tested way of using them presently. Would need an auto detect system enforceable by GMP.

SH added that engagement with taxi drivers is important to understand what can be done for safe driving around Princess Street to ensure compliance. YK/MA do engage with drivers in English and their mother tongue except for non-group members.

12:10 – JF leaves

4.4 Door stickers update

YK did not understand why Bolton is relying on what other authorities do rather than make own rules. SH advised the cabinet is keen on having an effective livery policy and all must be well informed to help make a decision. SH is still investigating to understand how other authorities are handling this issue, i.e. Wolverhampton, Bury.

4.5 Medical update

PC has met with reps. for local GPs and other providers and now drawing up the proposal and looking to have some changes implemented early next year. SH reminded trade that issues can take a while to resolve in government due to multi-agency nature of things.

4.6 Fees

SH updated that fees have to include all the licensing department workload and cost. Beneficial for licensing and trade to work to progress things. PC said even with online applications, more work is still being done to support online applications by the team, the accuracy of applications where drivers are not complying and submitting inaccurate documentation and applications. YK was concerned that online applications are not alleviating workload issues. Discussed previously submitted information – why it must be submitted with each application. PC advised the information submitted with each application is considered each time when a licence is granted, and policy and standards can change, giving sexual offences as an example. DBS update will hopefully speed up applications.

5. Trade Rep. items – BBHA CO (items 5.1 & 5.4 deferred to next meeting to allow CO to attend)

5.1 Update on rear loaders (hackney).

5.2 Dual badges update (hackney) see 4.2 above.

5.3 Medical update see 4.5 above.

5.4 The Council to conduct an unmet demand survey to take on broad the state of the Hackney service in Bolton.

5.5 No age limit for hackney carriages see 4.1 above.

6. Executive Cabinet Member items - SH

6.1 **Busy traffic areas for hackney carriage and private hire** see 4.2 above.

6.2 Taxi spot checks

Out of town taxis. SH is keen to find out how those other out of town taxi councils are conducting theirs in Bolton. Asked Reps to advise if they have seen or heard about other authorities do this in Bolton.

Action: YK/MA to ask drivers if they've seen other councils, not Bolton, carrying out spot checks in Bolton.

6.3 Disability training and safeguarding training - LT

LT reported over 200 drivers have not completed the training. A charge of £36 will be in place after 31st October. Communications have been circulated warning that non-compliance may lead to licence suspension. **YK noted this is likely drivers not in his group but he will encourage drivers to complete training before 31st October.**

DBS update - LT

DBS renewals are being received late. Trade not checking emails in good time and some submitting 2 weeks before renewal.

Action: YK/MA to encourage drivers to check emails so they don't miss out on important emails re renewals.

6.4 Taxi Watch

Next Taxi watch meeting is on 29th Oct at Astley Bridge Police Station at 1330. BB still needs to visit the sites and engage with operators. Intends to have one rep. from each of the operators at least 15-16 at the meeting.

Action: BB will send further details to MA/YK.

Driver complaint – abuse and threats from gangs. YK alerted about 24-25 year old gangs distributing drugs in taxis and has a list of the offenders around the Deane area. Abusive threats to destroy taxis if refused a ride. SH suggested they could be banned by operators and PC report to Crime Stoppers MA confirmed he had already done this following a conversation with PC the day before. PC suggested Taxi Watch is the ideal avenue to report this activity, information sharing and feedback, including progression, will address driver safety and reiterated the need for drivers to report issues, so they can be considered. AB suggested considering CCTV in taxis. YK pointed out that cameras are not deterrent because most offenders wear ski masks. The more they are challenged, the more aggressive they become.

Actions:

- **BB will investigate.**
- **MA/YK will provide information on offenders to BB when discussing this issue after this meeting.**

11:25 – BB leaves

7. AOB - All

7.1 Reporting incidents. Communications will be sent out via Taxi Watch which will provide reporting channels and the importance of reporting incidents.

7.2 Nighttime problem re food and drink consumption in taxis highlighted following a recent complaint and investigation. Signage in vehicles is being disregarded. Drunk passenger problem.

Action: PC will ask UBER/all Operators to ask riders not to consume food and alcohol in vehicles.

- YK is keen to get results on issues discussed today.
- The November meeting look at hackney Items.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: 20th NOVEMBER 2024