

ECM PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday 8th August 2023

Bolton Town Hall

Present:

Cllr Sue Haworth (SH)	Executive Member
Cllr Sean Fielding (SF)	Chair
Cllr Andrea Taylor-Burke (AT)	Vice Chair
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Licensing Manager
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Senior Licensing Officer
Joe Fox (JF)	Principal Engineer Highways
Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	GMP
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Charles Oakes (CO)	BBHA
Eddie Shah (ES)	BTDA

Apologies:

Garry Parker (GP)	Assistant Director
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1.	Apologies:
	Above.
2.	Minutes from last meeting:
	Agreed, no further comments.
3.	Online update
	<p>PC advised first draft of online form has been shared with the licensing team for review and feedback. This form has integrated the driver conviction and medical declaration forms that are currently uploaded as separate documents into the online form and the only documents that will need to be uploaded will be third party documents such as medical certificate, DVLA summary etc.</p> <p>PC has requested a paper copy of the form and once it has been reviewed will be shared with trade reps to look at and feedback.</p> <p>SH confirmed resources have been identified within Bolton Councils IT department to prioritise licensing.</p> <p>CO requested a simpler form and wants trade reps to be shown how to complete the forms correctly. PC confirmed this can be done once new form has been completed and reminded reps of the offer to train community champions to assist the trade.</p>

4.

BPHA Agenda items:

1. Medicals
2. Fees
3. Application rejections
4. Door stickers

Medical applications

SH questioned why so many applicants were applying late to their GP's for medical documents to be completed. MA advised drivers are struggling to get appointments with GP's and then waiting 4 to 6 weeks for the appointment, then the appointment is getting cancelled last minute by the surgery's.

MA continued stating full medical certificates used to cost £50 and now cost £170.

PC advised looking at outsourcing for the full medical certificate to DL4 providers as they are in a better place to understand the DVLA group 2 medical requirements.

MA asked why Bolton is taking a long time to implement when other GM authorities are already accepting medicals from 3rd party providers. PC advised will speak to Bury and Wigan to see how they implemented the changes.

MA questioned why drivers had to write down their medications and medical conditions on the medical declaration when the GP has completed a statement of fitness. Often applicant can't read what the doctors have wrote and applications are being rejected as the information is incorrect.

LT explained drivers should not need to read the doctors forms as they should know what medication they are taking and for what condition.

SH confirmed it is the responsibility of drivers to understand their medical conditions and medication they are taking.

PC stated the new form should fix these issues.

Licensing fees

MA asked about licensing fees and why do they go up every year and wanting to know when the review will happen, as licences in other boroughs are cheaper.

PC confirmed the cost of living rise will increase fees every year and they are unable to compare costs to other boroughs as each authorities' overheads are different. PC advised licensing fees are calculated on a cost recovery basis and figures need to do be taken away and looked at.

SH agreed other authorities have different operating models and if you looked at 100 councils, they would all vary, but need to look at the wider picture.

Application rejections

MA advised applications are being rejected and when resubmitted rejected again for a different reason and wanted to know why all issues are not mentioned on original rejection.

LT confirmed the full application is checked before it is rejected and all reasons for rejection should be listed but apologised if there had been instances where this had occurred.

	<p>MA stated the form is too difficult and PC responded requesting we review the new form and look into the issues.</p> <p>SH stressed the importance of applicants submitting applications in good time to give officers adequate time to process.</p> <p>Livery MA requested door stickers be removed from licensed vehicles. MA advised vehicles are being attacked again and stickers make vehicle a target. Drivers are put out of work and have to pay for damage to vehicle.</p> <p>Taxi watch PC asked if the taxi watch scheme was still in place with the trade and GMP. BB advised in the beginning they were receiving a lot of feedback but that tailed off and presumed this was due to the problem getting better, more information will be needed.</p>														
<p>5</p>	<p>BTDA Agenda items:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How many hackney vehicles are in system at the moment? 2. How many spaces are there at the taxi rank? 3. How many places four years ago for hackney vehicles? 4. Update regarding dual badges for hackney drivers? 														
	<p>PC gave figures in relation to hackney carriage vehicles.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="405 1070 1211 1317"> <tr> <td>Policy decision re the number of licences March 2020</td> <td>108</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Licensed in March 2020</td> <td>102</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Open plates - August 2023</td> <td>93</td> </tr> <tr> <td> • Licensed on the road</td> <td>73</td> </tr> <tr> <td> • Open applications pending a vehicle</td> <td>15</td> </tr> <tr> <td> • Applications refused at committee</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td> • Licences expired and no renewal submitted</td> <td>2</td> </tr> </table> <p>PC explained the unmet demand survey for hackney carriages is outstanding but due to the dropping numbers of licensed vehicles it was postponed until a better understanding of the fleet was acquired. In particular, with the open hackney plate applications and wanting to understand why these plates were not being used.</p> <p>CO voiced concerns hackney numbers will continue to drop due to cost of new vehicles and no work for the trade in Bolton. CO advised current cost of a hackney vehicle is £60,000+ or £90,000 through finance and there is a lack of second hand vehicles available. CO advised he has submitted a formal request for the age policy on hackney vehicle licences to be removed to release some of the pressure and highlighted it is unfair as private hire vehicles don't have an age policy.</p> <p>Hackney carriage vehicle age ES seconded CO's comment to remove the age policy as soon as possible.</p> <p>MA supported this stating if private hire has no age limit, same courtesy should be given to hackney carriages.</p> <p>SH agreed concerned about the public provision and the changing society and proposed a separate meeting to discuss the hackney issues.</p>	Policy decision re the number of licences March 2020	108	Licensed in March 2020	102	Open plates - August 2023	93	• Licensed on the road	73	• Open applications pending a vehicle	15	• Applications refused at committee	3	• Licences expired and no renewal submitted	2
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PC advised the department of transport is due to release its statutory guidance at the end of the summer and this will give a steer.

Taxi Ranks

Regarding the spaces on the ranks, JF confirmed there are currently 60 bays allocated to the hackney ranks in Bolton town centre. Breakdown below:

Current Bays:

Street Name	Type	Length	No of bays
Bradshawgate	Shared use	18	3
Bradshawgate	Shared use	15	2
Bradshawgate	Shared use	24	4
Manor Street	Timed	20	3
Crown Street	Shared use	32	5
Bridge Street	Shared use	18	3
Nelson Square	Shared use	42	7
Nelson Square	Timed	19	3
Nelson square	Timed	19	3
Bradshawgate	Timed	52	8
Ashburner Street	24hr	20	3
Howell Croft North	24hr	32	5
Knowsley Street	24hr	17	2
Station approach	24hr	48	8
Total			60

August 2019:

Street Name	Type	Length	No of bays
Bradshawgate	Shared use	18	3
Bradshawgate	Shared use	15	2
Bradshawgate	Shared use	24	4
Manor Street	Timed	20	3
Crown Street	Shared use	32	5
Bridge Street	Shared use	18	3
Nelson Square	Shared use	42	7

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Bradshawgate	Timed	52	8
Ashburner Street	24hr	20	3
Howell Croft North	24hr	32	5
Knowsley Street	24hr	17	2
Total			52

JF explained there were two differences between the time periods. Firstly the addition of Station Approach, previously there was an off-highway stand at this location but that was under TfGM landownership. Secondly Howell Croft North which has the same number of bays but now has been relocated along onto Victoria Square North (VSN).

CO requested a shelter to be added to the rank at the train station. JF advised would be down to landownership and would look into.

ES requested the rank on VSN is moved forward as pay and display spaces in front of the rank make it appear like hackney vehicles are parked up and not waiting for customers. JF explained that when the rank was moved onto VSN the road layout was changed and public parking was lost. It cannot be changed as need to balance available parking on the civic centre.

SH suggest additional signage could be placed, JF advised there are limits on what can be put on the highway, street furniture etc

Dual Badges

ES asked for an update on dual badges. PC confirmed work is under way and working through the process but would like to do the fleet engagement first as don't want to lose all hackney carriage drivers.

Actions:

Hackney age limit to be looked into and separate hackney meeting to be held

Rank at train station to be given a shelter

Update 17.08.2023 from JF

The area outside the train station entrance is a mix of adopted highway and private land. There is a section of footway approx. 3.0m wide between the kerb edge and the cycle lane. This is for use by pedestrians. I have checked with my planning colleague and there was no mention of the provision of a shelter for customers waiting for the Hackney vehicles. It should be noted that there is sheltering approx. 12m from the front of the Hackney Bay at the end of the Sky Bridge.

6 AOB:

None

Next meeting: 3rd October 2023