

MINUTES - 19th February 2025 (11:00 – 12:30) AT BOLTON TOWN HALL

Cllr Hamid Khurram (HK)	(Chair) Executive Cabinet Member
Garry Parker (GP)	Assistant Director
Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Senior Licensing Officer
Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	GMP
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Sabir Hussain (SH)	BHA
Yasif Khan (YK)	BPHA
Charles Oakes (CO)	BBHA
Nosipho Khumalo (NK)	Executive Support

Apologies:

Cllr Sue Haworth (SH)	Chair LERC
Cllr Andrea Taylor-Burke (ATB)	Vice Chair LERC
Joe Fox (JF)	Principal Engineer Highways
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Licensing Manager
Zulfaqar Shah (ZS)	BHA

1. Apologies – **LT**

As above.

2. Introductions – **All**

Cllr Khurram introduced himself as the new Chair of this meeting, taking over from Cllr Haworth. His portfolio: **Executive Member for Highways, Transport and Regulatory Services – Place**. Includes Bee Network, Licensing and Trading standards.

3. Minutes from last meeting - **HK**

Minutes agreed by all present.

4. Trade Representative items – PHA: **MA/YK**

4.1 Door stickers

Trade is concerned with the ongoing issue they feel door stickers are causing. Drivers feel the current stickers are reflective and makes them easy targets for stone throwing etc, they believe removal would reduce attack incidents.

YK advised HK the previous ECM had told the trade that smaller stickers would be considered, citing Wolverhampton and other authorities with smaller versions.

LT/GP advised licencing's stance is that Wolverhampton's policies differ with standards than Bolton and having stickers is more beneficial for driver/public protection and safety. The number of incidents reported doesn't merit door sticker removal.

BB advised that drivers aren't reporting the incidents, leading to low official figures on record. They believe this issue affects all drivers in identified areas, not just taxis. Drivers need to be encouraged to report incidents.

All agreed that incidents in identified hotspots, need reporting to gather data, compare with other areas, and come with a remedial approach.

HK is aware that no authority is removing the stickers completely but would like more insight into this.

Action: LT to enquire with other GM authorities or their stickers requirements, including size and dimensions.

4.2 Medicals

MA asked why drivers with medical conditions are required to complete a 12-page form and suggested a shorter 1-2 pages for drivers with a 1-year badge.

LT/GP advised that a single form covers all cases, and Bolton does not have authority to modify the DVLA's 8-page statutory form (D4). Combing the forms into one, removes the requirement for different forms to stop the confusion previously reported by the trade. The licensing team has received no feedback in relation to difficulty completing the forms.

HK suggested everyone should acknowledge that the new medical form has greatly reduced issues.

MA/YK expressed confusion over the access to driver history required either full medical history or a medical summary.

Action: LT to clarify with DVLA about exact requirements.

Update from the DVLA: *For DVLA requirements the doctor completing the examination is required to indicate on the D4 medical form if they had access to the applicant's full medical record for completion of the examination of the report.*

As the full medical record is specified on the form this is what DVLA is expecting to would be used.

4.3 Train Station

JF unavailable, train station issues couldn't be fully addressed. GP provided an update from JF.

Keep Clear on the exit onto Newport Street. According to engineers the issue is more complex than expected. The ideal location for the marking conflicts with a detector loop for the signals. Keeping the areas clear would prevent the controller from sensing waiting vehicles. Relocating the loop would involve signals team in Manchester, TfGM, and relevant parties.

Cycle Lane. Trade suggested repurposing the unused cycle lane for additional parking bays. HK/GP replied this is unlikely to change as cycle lanes are a requirement for active travel.

HK requested JF/DL to propose solutions to issues and highways to be in attendance at next meeting.

Action: JF to consider long term solutions at the train station for discussion at the next meeting. This message was emailed to JF during the meeting by NK.

4.4 Drivers waiting for attending Committee hearings.

MA noted that drivers are waiting for extended periods (over 6-months) before being called to attend hearings, causing financial strain and stress over when they can return to work.

LT explained that cases are addressed based on individual circumstances, not a one-size-fits all approach. Delays stem from the complexity of each case and the investigations required to progress the case by Licensing and GMP.

Driver MA referring to is due to be heard at next committee.

4.5 Applications being rejected for minor mistakes.

MA raised concerns regarding applications being rejected for 'minor' reasons and gave examples of a date on an application form or missing conviction details that have been declared previously.

LT emphasized that the application form is a legal document, and it is the drivers responsibility to make sure the form is completed correctly. Licencing cannot contact every driver when errors are made to rectify. Similar to passport/visa application a form must be completed correctly to be accepted. Applicants are responsible for keeping records to refer back for future applications. LT gave an example of a driver who requested his conviction history and made the same request the year before.

MA outlined GP's making mistakes on the form and drivers not understanding what has been wrote. LT advised drivers should contact their GP direct to resolve errors in their applications and clarify any information they do not understand.

An acknowledgement by all that everyone makes mistakes. Focus needs to shift to training and skilling drivers to take ownership of their applications as it is their livelihood.

Action: LT to check if 'date of form completion' is automatic.

Update – Date is automatically added by system and would to be rejected.

Action: LT to produce and deliver training offer to trade reps from completion of forms.

11:00 BB leaves

5. Trade Representative items – BHA: **SH**

5.1 Signage at the station

Deferred until JF can attend

5.2 One age limit

SH asked why only Hackney Carriages have age limit, CO advised that the age limit on hackney carriages was implemented at trade's request many years ago.

HK asked why Bolton doesn't have a mixed fleet. LT will take question away.

GP/HK emissions - GM wide work is ongoing to address funding. £8m to be divided amongst all GM authorities. GMCA is exploring options for funding to support both hackney carriage and private hire.

Action: LT to provide response re mixed fleet.

5.3 Dual Badges

Refer to Item 6 below.

6. Dual badges update – **LT**

LT updated that communication is going out this week to all hackney drivers, informing them that the new licences will be issued over the next two weeks.

YK requested dual badges be given to private hire drivers (PHD) also. LT advised that was never agreed and asked how many PHD have access to a hackney carriage vehicle. LT conveyed concerns over opening up dual badges could lead to plying for hire in private hire vehicles.

Action: Trade to obtain the number of PHD with access to a hackney carriage vehicle.

12:00 GP leaves

7. Safeguarding training & DBS Update (standing items) – LT

LT updated 54 drivers left to complete safeguarding training. Trade Reps informed that they have been promoting the Safeguarding training at every meeting.

LT advised 1719 drivers are on the DBS update service. 43 records have returned with no results found and require further investigation. This takes officer time to resolve. The issues are usually due to drivers not updating their bank details on time or cancelling subscriptions. Drivers are notified of any issues that need addressing and the responsibility lies with the drivers.

Trade advised they have been promoting the importance of keeping subscription in place.

8. **AOB - All**

8.1 Unmet demand survey

CO stated the unmet demand survey is long overdue. The survey is needed to assess service delivery demand.

HK asked when last completed.

Action: LT to obtain date of last survey

Update: Unmet demand survey last complete 2019. Estimated cost would be £13,990 + VAT and as a cost recovery service the cost of the survey would be recharged to hackney carriage vehicle proprietors.

8.2 Licensing from other councils

Trade Representatives raised concern over drivers getting low cost licences from other authorities being allowed to operate in Bolton. In Wolverhampton the process is cheaper and easier. Not fair for them to compete for business with those who've paid high fees. It defeats the high licensing costs in Bolton and deters people from applying. Bolton sets the bar high but the standards are not matching.

LT explained that Bolton has a suitable entry standard and does not intend to lower the standards just to match other authorities and therefore cannot compare the two due to differences in policies, it would mean a race to the bottom for standards.

HK acknowledged this and noted that efforts are being made to prevent drivers from exploiting the system. GM are working on legislation to stop this, not just for Bolton but for all councils.

8.3 Licence applications following revocation

MA asked when a driver can reapply after his licence has been revoked. LT advised application can be done at any point but we suggest a minimum of 1 year and depending on circumstances applicant may have to go back before committee.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC

YK request to reschedule due to Eid. A week after if possible.