

ECM PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE TRADE REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

MINUTES – 4th February 2026 (11:00 – 12:30)

Bolton Central Library and Museum, Le Mans Crescent – Meeting Room 2

Cllr Hamid Khurram (HK)	(Chair) Executive Cabinet Member
Andrew Bolan (AB)	Head of Regulatory Services
Patricia Clyne (PC)	Licensing Manager
Lisa Timmins (LT)	Principal Licensing Officer
Ellie McMaster (EM)	Senior Licensing Officer
Mahmood Akhtar (MA)	BPHA
Yasif Khan (YK)	BPHA
Charles Oakes (CO)	BBHA

Apologies:

Benjamin Brookfield (BB)	Greater Manchester Police
Garry Parker (GP)	Assistant Director
Joe Fox (JF)	Highway Network Management Manager

1. Apologies – LT

As above

2. Introductions – All

3. Minutes from Last Meeting - HK

Agreed by all attendees

4. Trade Representative Items - PHA: **MA/YK**

4.1 **Uber prices and deactivation**

MA raised concerns about Uber pricing, noting that the same journey can cost different amounts. He gave an example of a customer charged higher by Uber for the same journey on different days.

PC explained that private hire operators (PHO) are private businesses and can set their own fees. Bolton Council does not set fares for PHO's, and any issues with pricing must be directed to the relevant operator. PC asked MA to provide details of specific journeys to licensing so they can be reviewed.

HK asked about the procedure when operators increase their fees. PC clarified that operators must notify the Council, but the Council cannot determine what the fees should be. HK and CO both highlighted ongoing complaints about Uber charging more than local firms for identical journeys. PC confirmed that pricing is not a valid reason to refuse an operator application.

MA questioned how Uber is allowed to charge higher prices. PC again requested examples and noted that specific cases would help. MA said customers rarely complain about Uber prices because their accounts may be deactivated when they do.

YK expressed a desire for face-to-face meetings with Uber, like those held with Bolton Council Licensing. PC advised that Uber would be attending an upcoming meeting with Transport for Greater Manchester and suggested raising concerns there. YK advised they

could not attend, and PC encouraged attendance at such meetings to ensure views are heard.

CO noted that attendees to meetings are not always known in advance. PC clarified that the next meeting is for the 10 districts, trade representatives, and larger operators. YK said previous meetings felt too crowded to speak, and PC recommended asking in advance for topics to be added to the agenda.

CO asked whether Uber could be invited to the next Bolton Council trade meeting. PC said this could be explored, although it may not fall under the ECM. HK supported setting up a session to outline the issues clearly.

Action – PC/LT to enquire about meeting between Trade Reps and Uber.

Action - MA to provide details of specific journeys where Uber have overcharged to Licensing for review.

4.2 Bus lanes pickups and drop-off

MA reported that drivers are being advised about dropping off and picking up passengers at bus stops and are receiving penalty points in situations where they believe they should not be penalised.

LT asked whether the drivers had appealed, and MA confirmed they had. MA added that a police officer issued a notice and asked the driver to sign it, which appeared to state the driver had admitted fault. PC noted she was not aware that police officers could issue ticket for this area.

CO asked whether officers could make enquiries with the police about this issue. MA confirmed he would send the notice to LT for review.

LT provided an update from Highways regarding the bus lanes in Bolton. Drivers are not allowed to enter the bus lane to pick up/drop off passengers and must arrange a suitable pick-up location. Otherwise, it will leave the bus lanes open to abuse and lots of false positive PCN's which would cost money to assess and rescind.

Action – MA to send LT police notice for review.

4.3 Door stickers

YK reported that operators require drivers to display stickers showing the operator's name. Drivers feel forced to display these even when they do not wish to.

PC explained that operators are private businesses and are entitled to request their logo on vehicles. HK confirmed that this is not a Council requirement; it is a condition set by the operator.

CO asked whether the Council enforces the requirement to display the operator's name. HK clarified that the Council does not require the sticker, so no enforcement action can be taken. CO believed Bolton Council rules state that the operator must be displayed. PC advised that this there is a historical vehicle condition requiring this, but it is not enforced due to the PHO name being on the livery.

MA raised that vehicles are not normally allowed to have advertising. PC clarified that operator identification is not considered advertising; approved Bolton Council livery is a separate matter.

YK expressed concern that livery makes Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles a target and removing it may reduce incidents.

CO said that removing livery makes it harder to identify vehicles, and there are increasing reports of unlicensed cars working because the public cannot identify the local authority. This raises safety concerns and whilst understanding targeting issues, CO noted this is ultimately a police matter.

YK commented that we are in 2026 and most information is provided via booking apps, so passengers do not need to rely on plates or external identification.

4.4 Fees

MA requested update regarding a fee reduction. PC clarified finance reviews fees at the end of the financial year each year. Further details on the overall cost of running the service will be available approximately around May. PC noted that a significant amount of Licensing Officer time is spent correcting incorrect applications and that material costs, including livery, must also be considered. PC reiterated that a reduction cannot be promised.

YK commented that the fees should decrease once the service went digital. PC advised moving to digital didn't reduce the workload as it had hoped, it simply shifted work from one team to another, so the costs remain.

CO noted that fees are significantly higher compared to other authorities. PC explained cost recover and that LT would cover livery costs and savings later in the meeting, with more clarity expected by the end of May.

5. Trade Representative Items - BBHA: **CO** – None submitted

CO stated he had no additional items to raise at this stage, noting that upcoming changes under devolution may impact existing policies across local authorities. CO emphasised the duty to support Hackney Carriage Vehicles, warning that numbers will continue to decline without action.

HK confirmed that this issue has been discussed at Cabinet, and that extending age limits may help retain many Hackney Carriages. PC added that an emissions update would be provided later and noted that across GM 190 Hackney Carriages have applied for vehicle upgrades.

CO advised he had a petition, signed by over 20 individuals, regarding the Taxi Marshalls. CO stated that Marshalls are not carrying out their duties effectively, taking extended breaks and sitting in their vehicles, and requested they be replaced.

PC explained that when concerns were raised years ago, the Taxi Marshalls were changed. PC also advised that a recent altercation between a Taxi Marshall and a driver may have prompted these concerns. PC noted that LT had asked CO for further details by email but had not received a response.

HK asked PC whether Taxi Marshalls were necessary. PC confirmed they are required for public safety. They are not employed by Bolton Council; the Council receives grant funding for them. Marshalls provide end of shift reports which are also reviewed by Greater Manchester Police.

CO said Taxi Marshalls are beneficial when they perform their role properly, but issues arise when they do not. HK reiterated that Taxi Marshalls support public safety and are no cost to Bolton Council, and that any complaints will be investigated. PC noted that Taxi Marshalls are equipped with radios and body-worn cameras and believes they provide good value.

HK encouraged CO to remind drivers to report issues when Taxi Marshalls are not fulfilling their duties. HK asked PC whether complaint records exist. PC reiterated that no details had been provided to date. HK stated that a complaint log is needed so matters can be reviewed.

CO confirmed he would pass this message on to drivers and send further information of complaint to PC.

Action – CO to inform drivers of above information regarding Taxi Marshalls and provide further details of complaints so they can be logged.

Update – all complaints made to the service are logged and actioned with a unique reference number. Any complaint received from the trade would be allocated to a Compliance Officer for action/investigation.

6. Garage Tender – **PC**

PC reported that since the last meeting, the previous garages contract ended in January 2026. Two garages have been awarded the new contract, which will run for two years. YK asked why the number was lower than usual. LT explained that one of the garages chose not to apply. Of the three that applied, one garage failed the required checks. YK asked which garage failed, PC advised that this information could not be disclosed. CO queried why garages cannot apply outside the contract period if additional businesses wanted to participate. PC explained that applications can only be made during the tender period, and the Council would only reopen the process if they lost garages and needed to start again. HK asked if the reduction was due to demand, but PC confirmed demand had been met by the two successful garages.

CO stated he had not been involved in any consultation regarding garage numbers being reduced to six. PC clarified that numbers had not been reduced; only three garages applied, and one failed, leaving two. CO requested a copy of the tender documentation and criteria. PC to confirm this could be provided.

YK commented that some businesses may not be aware of the tender opportunity. LT explained that tenders are advertised on The Chest, and it is the responsibility of businesses to monitor and apply. PC added that tenders always have fixed end dates. HK noted that it is up to businesses to ensure they apply within the specified timeframe.

PC confirmed the maximum number of garages remains six and that CO would be provided with the tender documents if it was confirmed that it could be shared.

Action – PC to provide CO with garage tender documentation.

7. Emissions Update – PC

PC confirmed that access to the HCV fund has been available for several weeks following a global comms and to date 190 have accessed it. Greater Manchester Combined Authority is also exploring the creation of a £4.45 million fund for Private Hire Vehicles, which may offer a £5k loan or £1k grant to support the transition to lower-emission vehicles. However, there are currently no details on how the scheme will operate, and further information will be provided once available.

YK asked whether the funding would apply only to vehicles that are not compliant. PC confirmed that the scheme is intended for non-compliant vehicles only and that the full proposal still needs to be formally approved. Once confirmed, further details will be circulated.

YK asked how the funding could be accessed for school-run vehicles. PC explained that the fund would apply only to private hire vehicles within the ten districts of Greater Manchester.

CO requested a copy of the information. PC stated that only a news announcement exists at present but confirmed that a full communication will be sent out once the scheme is approved.

YK referred to a previous discussion about the number of non-compliant vehicles. PC confirmed that approximately 1,189 vehicles are currently compliant and 319 remain non-compliant, primarily due to diesel engines, with very few of the remaining vehicles dating from 2005.

YK asked what would happen to any unused funding. PC clarified that the funding belongs to Greater Manchester Combined Authority rather than Bolton Council, and that details regarding funding sources are not yet known. Further information will be provided once the scheme has been formally approved.

8. Livery Update – LT

LT reported on proposed amendments to the current vehicle livery and presented example plate designs, which are not yet approved. LT confirmed the proposal to remove the licence expiry date from the front plate, meaning the plate is only issued at first grant. The rear plate

would also have no date and would remain in place, with a replacement disk issued at each renewal rather than a new plate.

LT elaborated that door stickers would be reduced to A4 size, and the operator's name would be removed, although the licence number would remain visible.

YK asked whether front plates are necessary. PC confirmed they are required for public safety, so vehicles can be identifiable for example from a rear-view mirror.

LT advised that a full report including costings will be provided to HK for approval.

9. DfT consultation/Government's Minimum Standards & Transport Committee (TC) - links to additional information, consultation document and TC meeting(s):

[Local transport authorities and the licensing of taxis and private hire vehicles - GOV.UK](#)

[New national standards on taxi licensing proposed to protect passengers - GOV.UK](#)

[Parliamentlive.tv - Transport Committee](#)

PC confirmed that the consultation recently shared will close on 1 April 2026. The consultation was structured as a series of questions, and attendees were encouraged to circulate it widely. PC noted continuing national discussion about the potential transfer of taxi licensing responsibilities from local authorities to Transport Authorities, following recent reports on child exploitation in the sector and the Mayor's earlier taxi survey, which also referenced the possibility of a TfGM-led licensing model. PC reiterated that all drivers and operators should be aware of these developments.

PC advised that the Devolution Bill includes proposals for national minimum licensing standards (MLS) for both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles. PC explained that the consultation responses would be reviewed and reported back to the Minister.

CO requested further information. PC confirmed that outcomes cannot yet be confirmed and that the future role of the Transport Authority remains at the consultation stage.

YK commented on the strong working relationship with local authorities and expressed a preference to retain licensing locally. HK stated that the priority is improving services for drivers and the trade; if a Transport Authority model achieves this, he would not object.

HK emphasised that all views can and should be submitted through the consultation process. PC outlined the themes of the consultation questions and encouraged engagement.

HK asked that attendees to encourage drivers to complete the consultation to ensure their voices are heard.

CO highlighted potential challenges if licences were issued for Greater Manchester as a whole, including the possibility of drivers concentrating in more populated areas. CO suggested the need for a intended use policy defining primary operating areas.

10. Concerns around safety driver email (email attached to the agenda) – All

HK advised that this item should be moved to the next meeting due to GMP's absence and requested that the Councillor be invited.

11. AOB - All

None

DATE OF NEXT MEETING: TBC