

Taxi Liaison Group (TLG) meeting minutes
Wednesday 18th September 2019, 10:30hrs

Dings Crusaders RFC (Conference Room) Shaftesbury Park,
Frenchay Park Road, Bristol, BS16 1LG

Chair: Councillor Paul Hughes (PH)

Minutes: Hazel Everett

Councillors: Councillor Tony Davis (TD), Councillor Kim Scudamore (KS)

SGC Licensing: Emma Pain (EP)

Technical Support: Rebecca Patten (RB) Beverley Manning (BM).

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Service: Mike Worley (MW), Sharon Shaw (SS), Kerry Harding (KH), Bill Davidge (BD), Juan Sanzo (JS)

Apologies: Kevin Barley (KB), PC Patrick Quinton (PQ)

Item			Action
1	Welcome	(PH) welcomed everyone to the meeting, apologies made known from group.	
2	Previous minutes and matters arising	<p>(EP) Shared feedback from (KB) following previous meeting in May.</p> <p>Informed that all TLG information is now on the website, https://www.southglos.gov.uk/business/licences-and-street-trading/taxis-and-minicabs/taxi-liaison-group/</p> <p>Has been agreed to not send out individual letter invites after the last meeting as this is time consuming for one Technical Support Officer. (EP) showed an example letter.</p> <p>(KB) and (PH) agreed to following actions following meeting in May:</p> <p>Item 3: To agree a wait time when drivers have not brought the correct paperwork. Discussed during Item 3.</p> <p>Item 5: The WAV 12 week consultation will be commencing this week and all current licensed drivers, vehicle owners and operators will be written to with a generic consultation letter. For responses, there is a section in the survey which asks the respondent to state if they have a Dual or Private Hire (PH) driver's licence, and if they have a Hackney Carriage Vehicle (HCV) and/or Private Hire Vehicle (PHV).</p>	

		<p>To coincide with the public consolation all Members of the Regulatory Committee have been invited and encouraged to attend a WAV/disabilities awareness training session being conducted by a NALEO Officer. (KB), (PH) and (SS) will be working with the training provider to ensure all relevant points are covered.</p> <p>Item 6: (PH) and (KB) yet to speak with Heads of Service on IT constraints, there may a local supplier option which (KB) is going to explore, this would be flexiplates and options to attach to a vehicle. (KB) has agreed with Technical Support that all vehicle licence holders will have until the expiry date stated on the plates for them to be changed and then returned to the Licensing Service. The vehicle licence holder of course can change them over when on site for their appointment or an action will be set to remind licence holders to return them.</p> <p>Item 9: The door has always been left open for Members from both Councils (Bristol and South Glos) to meet to discuss drivers who are not working legally but no meeting planned. Officers from both authorities continue to discuss and work together in terms of the Taxi Cop and what future arrangements will be in place to further increase enforcement presence.</p> <p>Item 10: Lead Members have attended a recent Licensing team meeting and heard about and discussed about enforcement practices with all Officers. Many complaints are received by the Service on a daily basis and it is the responsibility of the team to ensure that all facts and evidence is collated before appropriate and proportionate enforcement action is taken in all instances, with a full audit trail which Members can review with (KB) at any time. Of course service users can submit Subject Access Reports at any time.</p> <p>Item 10: Future dates of all TLG meetings for the next year are stated in the May minutes, these have been booked at Dings RFC.</p> <p>Item 10: (KB) and (PH) have made communication with Gale Goodridge of Integra to talk to Integra about DBS check charges. (PH) explained that he intends to spend a day with the Integra staff when working in the Licensing office and that in principle, Integra offer a service but should be up to drivers if they use the service or if they use an alternative service.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that Integra offer less service, not a full DBS</p>	
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3	Licensing office - current service demand	<p>(RP) Gave an update on service demand. Informed of current wait tome of 4-6 weeks but aiming for 1-2 weeks. Longest wait is for new driver's licence/badge, 5-6 weeks. Drivers are not waiting for renewal appointments, these are prioritised and reminders sent 2-3 months in advance. Drivers can contact any time for an appointment. If drivers forget, they are fitted in.</p> <p>(SS) Stated that it is not fair to fit in drivers if they miss their renewal as some of her drivers had not received renewal letters but she still knew to renew from company computer system. Added they should also be charged for not filling forms in properly and that drivers should be accountable.</p>	

		<p>(BM) Stated that the team does their best to fit everyone in and that drivers do forget. If they can't fit them in then they can't. (RP) added that they try not to turn people away.</p> <p>(PH) Queried whether waiting times were decreasing.</p> <p>(RM) Informed had gone down compared to 6 months ago. There are more staff now, trialled vehicle only days where 5 drivers could be seen in one hour. Constantly looking at improvements. Explained that the new 3 year driver licence starts to kick in in April 2020 so lots of licences will be due for renewal. Increased demand in office has been added to calculations. No drop in basic skills tests – have been 150 per month since April. Only a handful of knowledge tests.</p> <p>(SS) Requested an FOI as felt figures did not add up.</p> <p>(RP) stated that (SS) was welcome to put in an FOI and that (KB) will publish a forecast which will make better sense.</p> <p>(MW) Queried if TLG could have a Whatsapp group as (PQ) has a broadcast list that works well.</p> <p>(EP) Stated that nothing confidential would be able to be written. (RP) added that this would be a question for digital.</p> <p>(MW) Explained that every time a driver logs into the system, have to re-submit an email address so even if database has wrong address, it should be updated every time a driver logs in. This should ensure renewals are sent out.</p> <p>(RP) Asked for some information so that this could be investigated.</p> <p>(BD) Explained that to get a new licence/badge, you need to take a bank statement or utility bills that you might not have. Acceptable documents list needs modifying.</p> <p>(BM) Stated that the acceptable documents list is not a Council list so cannot be modified. (TD) Added that the list is restricted by government and they need to sort out what is regarded as suitable information as a lot of people are not going to have proof when they use online services.</p> <p>(PH) Advised that Officers will look at the list to see if it can be changed. (EP) Added that the list probably has not been checked in a while and they may need to add some ideas of where to go to get information.</p>	<p>(EP) to find out whether TLG group can have a Whatsapp group.</p> <p>Look at how renewal reminders are sent out.</p> <p>(BM) Look at list of acceptable documents to see if it can be changed.</p>
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4	Wheelchair accessible vehicles & designated vehicles list public consultation	<p>(SS) Questioned update on point 4 from previous minutes. Said it was employer's duty of care to give updates constantly.</p> <p>(EP) Asked to add action for above for (KB). All drivers need to know what is acceptable. (PH) added that drivers need to be aware of safeguarding rules in this country.</p> <p>(TD) Said that all Councillors are updated and everyone sat on Sub-Committees has a course so Councillors are informed. (PH) added that it is important that Councillors understand what is going on. Informed that there will be a guidance and training session on WAV's and a taxi in the car park with a wheelchair loading exercise so that everyone has a complete understanding, from a driver and wheelchair user perspective.</p> <p>(MW) Gave a document for guidance and training to (PH), (KS) and (TD).</p> <p>(TD) Advised that some people on the Regulatory Committee were not informed and this had been taken on board. (KS) Added that this group has a lot of access to Councillors and the input of drivers is appreciated.</p> <p>(EP) Stated that things have changed massively in the last few months and knowledge is rising quickly. (TD) Added that he has been invited to team meetings by (EP) and that the whole thought process has changed.</p> <p>(SS) Agreed that there were positive changes.</p>	(KB) to action point 4 on previous meeting minutes.

5	Next Regulatory Committee meeting	<p>(PH) Asked everyone to add meeting to their diaries: Kingswood Civic Centre (Council Chamber) – Thursday 26th September, 10:30am.</p>	
6	Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensing enforcement update – compliance checks with PC Patrick Quinton, ITU, Traffic Police and DVSA	<p>(PQ) sent a statement and apologies for his absence:</p> <p><i>Since the last meeting, I have done the SGC Safeguarding course with some new drivers and had the opportunity to explain about my role. I have also done a number of vehicle/driver inspections at Broad Lane with mixed results. It has been very helpful to meet drivers that I wouldn't normally and listen to their concerns but also issue warnings and advice to them. As there are so many issues with the signage on vehicles (particularly the display of plates), I have written a report for the Regulatory Committee proposing various changes which I hope to present in November. Details of that report will be circulated on my WhatsApp group beforehand for drivers to comment on before the final version is presented to the Committee. A reminder that the WhatsApp group is managed by Broadcast Lists, which means that no one can see anyone else on the group, and any replies and comments only come to me, not to the whole group. You can join by sending you name and badge number to 07469 400832. A number of drivers have joined the group recently and have been pleased with the practical information I put out. I am very behind with my investigations and tasks at the moment, so do please bear with me while I try to catch up. Best wishes to you all.</i></p> <p>(SS) Stated that (PQ) is doing a good job and he is very fair.</p>	
7	Any other business	<p>(BD) Informed that he has seen many PH vehicles licensed by South Gloucestershire Council (SGC) in Bristol and said that this is not an advantage to South Gloucestershire residents.</p> <p>(EP) Advised that applications cannot be refused and that enforcement is a struggle. All bookings do not have to be in South Gloucestershire. Some drivers live in Bristol so can appear that their vehicle is always there. It cannot be presumed that a vehicle started and ended its journey in Bristol.</p> <p>(JS) Stated that it is a legal requirement to keep records so (EP) could easily examine the public records. An SGC licensed driver must predominantly work in South Gloucestershire.</p> <p>(EP) Advised that she can only check what she sees and</p>	

		<p>that only 4.5 people work in Licensing. Explained for private hire work that the vehicle, driver and operator must all be licensed in the district. Licensing Officers are not out as much as they were. Licensing are recruiting an apprentice. (KB) may also advertise for a further full-time Licensing Officer.</p> <p>(SS) Explained that there should be enough money to invest in more Licensing Officers. She has threatened Uber with legal action for poaching customers. She had all of the information but SGC could not deal with it.</p> <p>(RP) Advised that all drivers within South Gloucestershire are entitled to work in Bristol.</p> <p>(SS) Asked for an update on redundancies and why SGC would potentially make Licensing Officers redundant.</p> <p>(RP) Explained that there will be a departmental restructure and the consultation is next week but not public. The information will not be known until 3 months after the consultation. The Council have a policy for workforce change to use people's transferable skills and there may be opportunities for ring fencing.</p> <p>(SS) Asked why the PHV MOT requirement is 3 years, what is the difference between vehicles?</p> <p>(EP) Explained there are HC by-laws and that the policy has not changed as has not been through regulatory. Stated that a decision to allow all current valid MOT's was made and reversed which caused confusion to Council staff. (BM) Added that PH have a 3 year MOT from new as policy.</p> <p>(TD) Advised that there is a community travel scam which may be happening so to be aware.</p> <p>(PH) Informed that (RP) is leaving after 29 years with the Council and wished her all the best. He thanked (RP) for all the work which she has done.</p>	
		Meeting closed at 12:30pm	

Next Meeting: Wednesday 11th December 2019,
10:30am, Dings Crusaders RFC, Shaftesbury Park (Conference Room),
Frenchay Park Road, BS16 1LG