

Minutes of Taxi Liaison Group Meeting on Thursday 17th May 2012
Ridgewood Offices

Chair: Councillor Shirley Potts (SP)
Attendees: Councillors Keith Cranney (KC)

SGC Licensing: Kevin Barley (KB) Emma Pain (EP)

Taxi & Private Hire Service: Mike Andrews (MA), Patricia Andrews (PA) Sharon Shaw (SS), Angela Marsh (AM), Dave Blake (DB), Mike Worley (MW), Janet Platten (JP), Daniel Shaw (DS)

Apologies: Mark Pullin (MP), Peter Harris (PH), Keith Jones (KJ), Mark Parry (MPa), Alan Lawrance (AL), Gerry Treacy (GT) and Nick Bailey (NB)

| | | Action |
|-----------------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| I) Welcome | SP welcomed everyone to the meeting. | |
| II) Previous Minutes | <p>A run through and discussion of previous minutes and action notes from KB. All agreed a true reflection of meeting.</p> <p>SS still not receiving e-mails for taxi newsletter or update articles, KB not sure why as all other members of the e-mail group appear to be receiving e-mails when sent. SS receives emails from EP. EP to send details in future.</p> <p>The group still has issues with PSV 'O' Licence vehicles being used to pick up passengers outside of premises. Most feel that this is misleading the public as the word 'Taxi' are stated as advertising on the vehicle.</p> <p>KB re-iterated that the vehicles are not licensed by SGC and are operating under legislation enforced by VOSA. It was agreed that a joint letter should be put together from the T&PH Service, Licensing Team and Councillors to VOSA and await response from them.</p> <p>Following the invite to Trading Standards and VOSA, KB Clarified that he has spoken to Kevin Evans, Senior Trading Standards Officer, who confirmed that it would not be possible in law to enforce the word 'Taxi' being used on 'O' Licence vehicles. The content of Kevin's e-mail as follows:</p> <p><i>I have discussed the matter regarding the use of the description "Taxi" by these vehicles and have had a discussion with Peter Harris surrounding the "O" licensing regime.</i></p> <p><i>It would be extremely difficult to enforce the use of this term as a trade description issue; particularly as authority licensed vehicles are classified as either Private Hire or Hackney Carriage vehicles.</i></p> <p><i>If you take the generic definition of "taxi" – a means of</i></p> | <p>EP/SS</p> <p>ALL</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|-----------|
| | <p><i>transportation for which a fare is paid the operations of the "O" licensed vehicles are in essence doing just that.</i></p> <p><i>I also spoke to Chris Jones who advised that this was raised with Alan Fuller previously whose opinion was there was very little we could do from a legal perspective.</i></p> <p>KB stated that VOSA could not provide a representative to speak to the group, hence the agreement to produce a letter from the Taxi Liaison Group and send to VOSA.</p> | |
| III) Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Age Policy | <p>SP read through a copy of the resolution of the LR&GP Committee meeting held on 12th April 2012 regarding Wheelchair Accessible Vehicle Age Policy and a copy of the agreed resolutions were handed out.</p> <p>In short, all licensed vehicles may be licensed to a maximum age of 15 years from the date of first registration. From the age of 10 years from the first date of registration, 6 monthly Council fitness tests must take place. Any wheelchair accessible vehicle that is 15 years of age from date of first registration will require an exemption from policy to continue to be licensed, this is to be a written request to the Licensing Team.</p> | |
| IV) Law Commission Reform Consultation | <p>KB notified the group that there is currently a national consultation on taxi legislation reform. The Law Commission consultation runs from 10th May to 10th August 2012. This is an opportunity for the T&PH Service and Councillors to make comments and suggestions to help try and shape the way forward on a national scale.</p> <p>http://lawcommission.justice.gov.uk/consultations/1804.htm</p> <p>KB will send the consultation link to all for information and then await any comments or responses. KB will be meeting with Gloucestershire and Somerset Licensing Officers Groups to discuss and make response through the respective groups. KB will feed this back to the T&PH Service and has suggested that a response should be made by the Taxi Liaison Group as a whole.</p> | KB |
| V) Knowledge Tests | <p>EP stated that there have been a number of extra Knowledge Tests booked in due to high demand although it is very disappointing to note that lots of applicants (50%) in the last test are still not turning up. The Licensing Team charge in advance so this is obviously at a cost to the applicant but still a waste of Officers time. The Licensing Team will continue to monitor this and add extra tests where possible.</p> | EP |
| VI) CCTV Protocol in Licensed Vehicles | <p>KB stated that the Licensing Team are currently reviewing the CCTV protocol for South Gloucestershire as part of a tidy up exercise following the fitting of approximately 20 CCTV units in licensed vehicles. The vehicle licence holders will be contacted to receive a copy of the revised CCTV protocol in due course.</p> | KJ |

| | | |
|---|--|------------------|
| | <p>KB also stated that a current case is going to the High Court, brought against Southampton City Council. This is currently a licence condition for vehicle licences issued by that Licensing Authority; further details have been published in the previous edition of Private Hire Monthly. KB stated it is not the intention of South Gloucestershire Council to make CCTV a vehicle licence condition; the information is purely for reference.</p> | |
| <p>VII) Top Signs & Vehicle Plates Database Update</p> | <p>KB stated that the Licensing Team are still looking at database options at present but no further along. The Licensing Team will document all licensing functions specifications and wait for IT to agree a suitable option and timescale for implementation. The Licensing Team would like this to be completed as soon as possible and understand and agree that the plate design and how to attach them could be much better. Further consultation with the T&PH Service will take place when the final option has been agreed; this will be agreement of plates, badges and licences.</p> | <p>KB</p> |
| <p>VIII) Newsletter – June 2012</p> | <p>KB stated that Keith Jones is currently putting together the next Taxi newsletter. Anyone who has something that they would like to see added, please contact Keith, 01454 868001, or send to Licensing@southglos.gov.uk</p> | |
| <p>IX) Taxi Licensing Enforcement Update</p> | <p>KB stated that Section 50 inspections continue to take place where intelligence is received of non-compliance. There have been many instances of incorrect display of vehicle plates and these have been recorded and addressed. The T&PH Service is reminded it is a vehicle licence condition and any future non-compliance will be dealt with accordingly.</p> <p>KB stated that Licensing Enforcement Officers carried out a joint operation with Avon & Somerset Constabulary on Friday 11th May and there was a good level of compliance with about 10 vehicles inspected. DB raised that the Police were very direct in sending vehicles to Broad Lane even when carrying passengers, was also unsure of where to go at Broad Lane.</p> <p>There was also a joint operation with neighbouring Local Authorities, Police and VOSA at Bristol Airport on 17th May; some SGC licensed vehicles were issued PG9's by VOSA.</p> | |
| <p>AOB</p> | <p>MW stated that he has given information for the Licensing Notice Board a number of times and whenever he visits it's been taken. EP agreed that this happens to other drivers also and is very frustrating. When TS&L move to Broad Lane, the Licensing Team will ensure that adverts are behind a glass display to stop this from happening.</p> <p>SS commented that she has been having a number of mistakes from Licences and paperwork. Although she appreciates that staff are working hard and under pressure, she doesn't think it's fair that the trade end up funding the mistakes. EP and KB</p> | |

| | | |
|--|--|------------------|
| | <p>agreed that mistakes happen and always try and put them right as quickly and professionally as possible. The Licensing Team are currently under a lot of pressure and have very high work volumes. SP suggested that SS comments should be made gain in writing to be taken forward. SP will liaise with Steve Evans and escalate the need for more staff cover.</p> <p>KB stated that there is no fixed date to move Broad Lane and this will be circulated to the T&PH Service as soon as possible. The Licensing Team will operate the move as we have previously (estimate 3 days) and there will be minimum disruption to appointments.</p> <p>KB stated that the Olympic Torch was passing through South Gloucestershire on Tuesday 22nd May and Wednesday 23rd May so had sent out a website link detailing the road closures, the advice to avoid the areas where the Torch was passing through.</p> <p>KB also stated that the next six monthly fares review would be presented at the next LR&GP Committee meeting. A report will be produced in due course detailing the recommendation/s before the required public consultation.</p> | <p>MP</p> |
|--|--|------------------|

Next Meeting: 10.00am Thursday 26th July 2012 @ Conference Room, Ridgewood