

**Minutes of: TRADE LIAISON MEETING**

**Date of Meeting:** 30 November 2023

**1 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE 30TH NOVEMBER 2023**

Present:

Ben Thomson (BT) – Head of Public Protection – Chair  
Michael Bridge (MB) – License Unit Manager  
Nazmul Islam (NI) – Business Engagement Officer  
David Lawrie (DL) – Director of the National Private Hire Taxi Association  
Muhammad Warriach (MW) – Private Hire Drivers Association Bury  
PC Peter Eccleston (PE) – GMP Bury District Licensing Officer  
Sham Raja (SR) – National Private Hire & Taxi Association  
Khalid Hussain (KH) – Bury Hackney Association  
Cllr. Gavin McGill (GM) – Chair of Licensing and Safety Committee  
Habib Ur Rehman (HUR) – GMB Union  
Luke Solczak (LS) – Licensing Enforcement Officer  
Kirsty Wild (KW) – Magnum Whiteline  
Shahbaz & Shahzad (S&S) – Elton Bullitt

**Minutes:** Maureen Foden (MF)

**Welcome & Apologies**

Laura Swann, Charlotte Morris, Laura Jones

**Minutes & Actions of previous meeting 30.08.23 & Matters Arising**

The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true record.

The correct mechanism for reporting illegal ranking on taxis ranks should be reported through the following email address [carparking@bury.gov.uk](mailto:carparking@bury.gov.uk)

**GMP Update**

There has been a real reduction in reported cases concerning taxi drivers with only seven cases reported, and none were major incidents.

Updates for actions:

- Regarding investigating the operation being undertaken in Preston it was decided to look closer to home in Bolton regarding the Get Home Safe campaign. The team will be looking at introducing something similar to this in Bury once the Christmas and New Year periods are over.
- Cannot find any information regarding the police chase on Manchester Road.

- Regarding the crime number that is still be looking into.
- To look at other areas regarding crime that has been reported, all forces should be recording. If a crime has been reported this needs to be notified to the relevant licensing authority and it is up to them to take any action.

It was reported that a driver had their window smashed and spent two hours with the police however they were not given a crime reference number. PE to follow this up and report on it outside of this meeting.

DL has had meetings with Lanpak who are involved in safeguarding matters for hotels and pubs, they are looking at involving taxis in this to create a more combined approach.

Also, with the introduction of the NR3 database information should be uploaded for all Local Authorities to have access to.

On any new applications or renewal applications Bury Licensing do check the NR3 database if anything is highlighted the authority concerned will be contacted.

A concern that was raised regarding the safety of the bike riders for Uber deliveries as many of them do not have lights therefore they are riding dangerously and illegally, there is also an issue with scooters. Unfortunately, the Police are not allowed to pursue people using either of these forms of transport.

**ACTION: PE to contact Uber Eats regarding the safety issues concerning their delivery staff not using lights on their bikes.**

### **Bury Driver Safety Campaign – Progress Update**

A consultation was undertaken over a year ago which was required to feed into a bid for funding to run a pilot study on CCTV, unfortunately the bid was not successful.

This has not stopped the Council's commitment to still launch and run a safety initiative however it will have to be scaled back. Assurance was given that funding will still be sought to finance the CCTV element of the campaign.

BT showcased a poster which is for use within drivers' vehicles as well as being part of public and online campaign externally and within Council buildings. The aim of the poster is to safeguard drivers and has been developed in partnership with the Crime Reduction Service within GMP.

It will form part of an advertising campaign and will sit within a document that will go out to all drivers. It is based on situational crime prevention which are proven low-cost techniques and measures that can be adopted by businesses and drivers to help minimise and reduce incidents.

BT has asked representatives to get the message out to the drivers and proprietors that they need to take their own steps to minimise risks and reduce any potential incidents.

#### [Taxi Driver Safety Scheme Poster](#)

BT welcomed feedback from the group on the poster:

- It was asked if people are allowed to share the poster within national forums as well as

with local members, this will be permitted once it has been launched.

- There are concerns over the size of the poster and it being suitable to use within certain vehicles.
- There is a need to educate the public on the difference between Hackney Carriages being taxis and Private Hire.
- It was suggested using the term 'your drivers' instead of 'taxi drivers'. BT to raise this with the Comms. Team.
- In terms of the supporting material within the campaign, the difference between Hackney Carriages and Private Hire will be highlighted.
- It was welcomed that these messages are getting out into the community.
- It was requested if a short message advising that 'this vehicle has been licensed by a GM authority' could be added to give the public confidence.
- The aim is to try and get this out before Christmas.
- Everyone was asked to support in promoting the poster widely with all drivers and proprietors.

This is just a small part of a wider campaign and was overall well received by the group.

### **Update on recent policy changes and Committee / Council decisions**

A consultation took place with the trade and members of the public and this was reported back to the Licensing & Safety Committee on 19<sup>th</sup> October where members agreed to implement the changes. It was then taken to and ratified at full Council last week.

#### [Decision of LSC - Full Council Policy Changes 2023](#)

MB went through the new approved conditions with the group, and it was reported that they will be implemented as soon as possible once the procurement process regarding the new livery requirements has been completed.

There were concerns raised from some operators regarding the stickers, it is felt that this will be extremely damaging to their branding and will be detrimental for elderly people who use their services as they use these stickers to identify the taxis and for customers who do not have devices to receive text messaging. Further action is being considered due to the impact that this is going to have.

This was put before the committee and the council, and the decisions have been made and will need to be implemented. The consultation findings can be accessed on the internet, and through this [link](#). People need to be aware that these changes can only be introduced on new applications / vehicles they will not apply to existing licensed vehicles. There will be a go live date when a twelve-month transition period will commence.

These changes were welcomed from other members from a safety perspective for both drivers

and passengers.

Bury was praised for undertaking the consultation as no other areas have ran one however it was all online and this alienated a number of people who did not have the skills / facilities to complete it. It was also noted that many drivers are using magnetic stickers and are putting them on top of each other.

DL raised a number of questions:

- Group 2 medicals, he wanted to know if a driver has a medical within the last four months does that also apply if they had had one for their previous licence and they have not reached 45 yet. Because The Group 2 medical is valid once up to the age of 45 and then once every 5 years. Would they be asked to retake the medical if they have not received 45 yet.
- Signage, although mandatory requirements for operators' signage has now been removed, does it stipulate the voluntary requirement for local operators is not allowed or can they still put their stickers on their vehicles if they want to allow them a transition to get used to. Also, the DFT released its best practice guidance on 17<sup>th</sup> Nov and it stipulates that operator signage should be on the rear of vehicle and not on the window screen.
- Knowledge test, this should only be implemented for Hackney Drivers and not Private Hire drivers. There is a whole raft of information.
- Removing signage, does this apply to operators who own their vehicles as a lot of them do and therefore they should be able to advertise.

**ACTION: BT to investigate the points raised by DL so he can report back with accurate responses.**

The union welcomed the report and the changes to the stickers as drivers up and down the country felt that their cars were being used for free advertisement.

## **Enforcement / Service Issues**

### **Christmas closure of the Licensing Service**

The Licensing Department will be closing on 22<sup>nd</sup> Dec and will reopen 3<sup>rd</sup> January 2024.

### **Outstanding renewals (drivers & vehicles)**

Licensing has sent out a mass email twice to drivers and proprietors to remind them that they have eight weeks to renew their licenses. It was requested to widely push this message out to members to avoid any issues over the Christmas period.

As of today, there are 69 vehicles that are due to be renewed between 30<sup>th</sup> Nov and 8<sup>th</sup> Jan.

## Specific Items for Discussion

### Rear loading vehicles

Licensing received a petition in relation to a request to permit rear loading vehicles, the department wrote out to the petitioners and received a low number of responses.

The implications of introducing this was investigated and the costing to the Council to modify the current elevated kerb structure and design at the nine sites to facilitate rear loading to be compliant with the Disability Discriminations Act is in excess of £100,000.

The Council do not have the funding available at the moment however it is actively looking at obtaining funding, if successful in securing funding will then look into changing the governance and policy.

The advantages of rear loading vehicles were discussed, and this subject is covered in the best practice guidance. It is something that needs looking at urgently and it was suggested that there is disability funding available for schemes like this.

Side loading vehicles are not suitable for electric wheelchairs and scooters; therefore, it was noted that drivers are at risk of getting injured and wheelchair bound people are being discriminated against. It was stated that it is the responsibility of the driver to advise the public if their vehicle is not suitable for certain wheelchairs.

Licensing is not receiving many complaints from members of the public regarding wheelchair access, even considering the recent petition.

It was suggested looking at applying to the GM Mayoral office for funding.

### Private Hire drivers ranking up on taxi ranks

Private Hire drivers are ranking up on taxi ranks in various locations, this is both through the day and at night.

BT will pass the intelligence provided on to enforcement officers to investigate further.

If people are aware that this is taking place and they can provide photographic evidence it will be acted on by taking further action, this is what has happened in the past. This is why partnership working is important as the Council do not have the capacity to police the ranks and are reliant on information coming into them.

The majority of drivers who are ranking up are out of area drivers however if evidence is provided these drivers can be prosecuted.

### Private Hire drivers flagging (plying for hire)

When the drivers are ranking up, they are also plying for business, this is putting the public at risk as well as impacting on the Hackney Carriage drivers earning ability.

**ACTION: SR has offered to obtain evidence to prove that private hire drivers are plying for business illegally**

It was stressed to only obtain evidence if it is safe to do so, and that Private Hire operators need to

educate their drivers.

As it is the Licensing Departments responsibility to police this it will give consider doing an operation in the future.

KW offered support to the Hackney Carriage drivers, if they report that Magnum Whiteline drivers are ranking up. The Hackney Carriage drivers responded by offering their support if there are any unacceptable behaviours from their members.

Licensing do have enforcement officers going out with the Police each weekend coming up to Christmas, these issues will be fed back to them so they are aware and will act on any illegal activity.

#### **Out of town vehicles displaying 0161 numbers**

The answer is unfortunately no, the Council do not have the power as a licensing authority to restrict other areas using 0161 numbers.

The law allows this to happen however it was acknowledged that there is a need for a change in legislation nationally, and there is a commitment from the authority to do everything they can to bring about these changes.

This is related to a Wolverhampton plated vehicle displaying a Manchester number which is illegal and false advertising. However due to the changes in signage this will no longer be an issue.

#### **AOB**

Nazmul Islam was thanked for all the fantastic support he provides to the drivers.

The question of new badges was raised, and it was reported that the current contract for peripherals ends in April 24, therefore Licensing is actively looking at procuring a new contract. This will take into account all the concerns and issues that have been raised and discussed in the past in relation to the existing badges. This will then have to go through the Licensing & Safety Committee for approval.

The drivers were all wished a safe and profitable festive period.

The Licensing Department was praised for all their help and support throughout the year.

#### **Date and Time of next meeting**

**TBC**

**COUNCILLOR  
Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at Time Not Specified and ended at Time Not Specified)**