

Minutes of: TRADE LIAISON MEETING

Date of Meeting: 15th February 2024

1 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE 15TH FEBRUARY 2024

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| | Present: |
| | Ben Thomson (BT) – Head of Public Protection – Chair Michael Bridge (MB) – License Unit Manager David Lawrie (DL) – Director of the National Private Hire Taxi Association Muhammad Warriach (MW) – Private Hire Drivers Association Bury Adil (A) – 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 Kirsty Wild (KW) – Magnum Whiteline Cllr. Morris (EM) – Cabinet Member responsible for Licensing Charles Oakes (CO) – The Hackney Driver Assoc. Ltd Minutes: Maureen Foden (MF) |
| 1. | Welcome & Apologies |
| | Habib Ur-Rehman, Mathew Freckleton |
| 2. | Minutes & Actions of previous meeting 30.01.24 & Matters Arising |
| | The minutes from the previous meeting were agreed as a true record. |
| | Attendees were requested to share with members the following reporting link for any issues with Wolverhampton licensed vehicles/drivers. Wolverhampton Licensing Service will then be responsible for investigation and action. The group were asked to share this link widely within their own organisations. https://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/licences/taxi-licences/taxi-complaints It was noted that Bury can act if drivers from other areas are committing an offence and confirmed they would review evidence submitted to Licensing. It was reported that Private Hire drivers are plying for hire. Attendees were therefore asked to provide evidence through the Licensing email address and confirmation was provided that Bury Licensing Officers will include during night / weekends working. |
| 3. | GMP Update |
| | PE reported that there had been an increase of incidents over the Christmas period. There were no serious cases however there are a four that are still under investigation, and one was closed due to the driver refusing to give a statement. |

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| | <p>There have been a number of occasions where advice has been given on the new standards as drivers are still trying to familiarise themselves with them.</p> <p>Concerns were raised by attendees regarding drivers from Wolverhampton who are driving unsafely. PE is trying to arrange an operation to target and monitor Wolverhampton drivers and their behaviours including working with Wolverhampton Licensing Officer(s).</p> <p>It was noted that there was no evidence available to rumours regarding Wolverhampton were going to issue licenses from drivers with international driving licenses.</p> <p>It was also alleged that Private Hire from both Wolverhampton and Bury are ranking up unlawfully on a regular basis and out of town drivers are parking up on disabled bays. Trade reps were asked that if they have any concerns over driving safety or illegal parking to report it through the following link / email.</p> <p>Email: carparking@bury.gov.uk Telephone Number: 0161 253 5353</p> <p>A discussion took place regarding the distinction between local conditions and offences that are committed and the relevant enforcement responsibility. It was emphasised that drivers need to make sure that incidents are being reported to enable triage and review by licensing within resource constraints and appropriate enforcement bodies.</p> <p>PE advised that when he is out in town, he will be on the alert for any of illegal behaviours raised at this meeting and will be reporting them through the relevant channels.</p> <p>It was agreed that the best way forward was to report any incidents to both Wolverhampton and Bury.</p> <p>It was noted that the triple lock rule is still in place, therefore vehicles need to be despatched by an operator that is registered to the same licencing authority. There is a need for partnership working to ensure that these rules are being adhered to.</p> |
| <p>4.</p> | <p>Proposed Policy Amendment implementation date for transitional arrangements for non-compliant (emissions standard) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles.</p> |
| | <p>The Chair recognised reported confusion regarding the proposals for the non-compliant (emissions standard) Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicles and outlined the proposals in detail.</p> <p>The transitional arrangements were initially agreed by Full Council on 24 November 2021 with subsequent amendments to the implementation date for transitional arrangements on 22 March 2023, The proposal seeks approval to amend by bringing forward the implementation date by three months to 1 January 2026. The justification for this amendment is to enable hackney carriage and private hire vehicle owners to meet the agreed GM emissions standard outlined in the revised GM Clean Air Plan submission to Government which will provide access to the Clean Taxi Fund to assist vehicle proprietors to upgrade their existing vehicle to an emission's compliant vehicle. The proposed amended policy will state that from 31 December 2024 a vehicle licence will not be renewed if the vehicle does not meet the current emission standard to ensure that on the 1 January 2026 all licensed vehicles in Bury will comply with the GM emissions standard.</p> <p>Licensing asked for support from the trade and consideration to make sure that affected vehicle proprietors eligible for the funding can access when available. If these terms are</p> |

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| | <p>not adopted, then there will be a risk of losing out on the funding as part of the proposal is the condition to have a compliant fleet by 1st January 2026. If proposals not implemented, the affected 225 vehicles will have to be compliant by 1st April 2026 with potentially no funding to assist with upgrades. This information needs to be relayed to all members as it is felt that it is in the driver's best interest.</p> <p>The proposed fund is approximately £30.5 million which will be shared across GM, which is an increase on the previous proposal. What funding will be available to vehicle proprietors is not yet clear.</p> <p>Bury Hackney Reps concerned over the implications and impact of the proposals. Reporting some may be put out of business and disabled customers will be disadvantaged.</p> <p>It was recorded that on 11th January 2024 there were 225 vehicles that were non-compliant and there is no age limit for the transition period.</p> <p>The understanding is that vehicles will need to be plated before funding can be issued however these proposals may change. Also, the stipulation on where to buy vehicles with the funding has been removed.</p> <p>It was asked if a provisional agreement could be given with a caveat on the basis that if funding is not received then to revert back to the original date. It was agreed a further report could be made if there are significant changes or delays in response from Central Government.</p> <p>The purpose of this discussion today is to understand the groups views and take them and an agreement to make changes to the implementation date from 1st April 2026 to 1st January 2026, the vote to change the date was unanimously in favour.</p> <p>It was noted that this will be going to the next Licensing Committee on 22nd February and will then go to full Council on 20th March. If any information is received by the team, it will be shared with the group.</p> |
| <p>5.</p> | <p>Enforcement / Service Issues</p> |
| | <p>Vehicle Livery</p> <p>The changes regarding livery came in on 1st January 2024 with a 12 month transitional period for all to be transferred to the new conditions.</p> <p>Licensing reported 31 occasions where vehicles have had either missing or unauthorised signage. Trade reps and operators to remind their members that they should be using the correct signage.</p> <p>From 1st January 2025 all Private Hire vehicles will have to be compliant and adhering to the new standards which means that operator signage should be displayed at all times on the front window passenger side.</p> |
| <p>6.</p> | <p>Specific Items for Discussion</p> |
| | <p>Drivers ranking up on Hackney Carriage ranks</p> |

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| | <p>This has been discussed previously, drivers have been asked to persevere, send in any evidence of illegal activity and it will be followed up by parking services.</p> <p>It was acknowledged that where Private Hire vehicles are parked it is difficult to establish whether they are pre booked, However some reports vehicles parked for over two hours which indicates that they are plying for fares. Reps were asked to remind members to report intelligence which will be used by Licensing to inform targeted operations. Members need to be assured that all reports will be treated in strict confidence as the Council are bound by GDPR rules.</p> <p>Private Hire – bus lanes</p> <p>It was requested that Private Hire drivers are allowed to use bus lanes. This has been sent to Traffic Management as they are responsible for the enforcement of fines. It was acknowledged that this request should only apply to locally licensed drivers.</p> <p>ACTION: MB to follow up on the email sent to Traffic Management requesting that Private Hire vehicles can use bus lanes</p> |
| <p>7.</p> | <p>AOB</p> |
| | <p>BT informed the group that it is with regret that the Licensing Engagement Officer is leaving the Authority. Thanks were minuted for his hard work, contribution and commitment to trade engagement. It is hoped to continue that good work in his absence, therefore can any correspondence be sent to licensing@bury.gov.uk</p> <p>DL has been asked to raise the issue of fire extinguishers. The Licensing Unit manager confirmed there is no requirement to carry a fire extinguisher, however if there is one present in the vehicle it must be in a serviceable condition if not then the vehicle will fail its compliance test. Confirmation was also given there is no stipulation regarding the location.</p> <p>It was confirmed that first aid kits remain a mandatory requirement to have and must be checked to ensure contents are in date.</p> |
| <p>8.</p> | <p>Date and Time of next meeting</p> |
| | <p>TBC – 2 months on Teams</p> |

**COUNCILLOR
Chair**

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