

Minutes of: TRADE LIAISON MEETING

Date of Meeting: 8 July 2024

1 AGENDA ITEMS FOR THE 8TH JULY 2024

	<p>Present:</p> <p>Chris Smith – Head of Public Protection - Chair Ben Thomson – Assistant Director of Operations Strategy Cllr. Charlotte Morris – Cllr. & Chair of Licensing and Safety Panel Michael Bridge – License Unit Manager Peter Eccleston – GMP Licensing Officer Habib Ur-Rehman – GMB NW Rep for Private Hire Matthew Freckleton – Cities Lead for Uber Lisa Rapport – Uber representative Harrison Kaye – Uber representative Kirsty Wild – Magnum White line Operator David Lawrie – Director of NPHTA Muhammed Warraich - Private Hire Drivers Association Sham Raja – NPHTA</p> <p>Minutes: Lauren Willetts</p>
1.	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Rizvi, Khalid Hussain</p>
2.	<p>Matters arising Agree minutes of previous meeting</p> <p>All agreed minutes from the previous meeting.</p>
3.	<p>GMP Update</p> <p>Since the 1st May we have received 30 calls, few in relation to bilkings (making off without payment) and a few flagged up that are more serious. On the 1st June there was a sexual assault by a taxi driver reported and on the 24th May a taxi driver was assaulted by passengers. Drivers are starting to report more incidents. There has been an increase in calls where people have left their belongings in taxis, but taxi services are saying they don't have them.</p> <p>At Parklife taxis were coming from all over the place to get customers, we had shut off the roads around Heaton park. Taxi's had parked up and were waiting on bury new road to pick up, this caused a huge back up of traffic and GMP were moving them along for around two hours. If you could please have word with your members and drivers that they are to use the designated drop off and pick-up areas.</p> <p>MB asked PE for conversation regarding the sexual assault report. Also the Parklife feedback from council officers was to give praise to our drivers as they used the drop off/pick up areas, MB questioned if the taxis moved on were from bury or out of town? PE responded to say the majority were outside of bury.</p> <p>MW questioned is the sexual assault from a bury driver? PE responded I have not delved into too much detail on the driver today, however I will share the information whether they are cross border or a Bury driver. MW added that for Parklife we publish detailed information on where drivers should go.</p>

	<p>DL stated he is pleased to see the number of reports is rising, also shares the same view on knowing the area of the taxi driver in regarding to the sexual assault report. I have spoken to other area's on how they use WhatsApp to communicate with taxi enforcement police officer, the answer was that the local authority provides them with a mobile solely for this purpose.</p> <p>PE added that reports have been made of valuables being left in vehicles when unattended, if a message could please be sent round for drivers to take their valuables with them when leaving the taxi. We do make the relevant authority aware of any reports in regard to a taxi driver and I communicate across the country with other taxi enforcement officers when needed to discuss a driver from out of town.</p> <p>MW asked what has happened with the incident regarding the victoria wood statue? MB stated that Bury council did take action and information was sent to Wolverhampton for them to take action as well.</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Clean Air Plan Update</p>
	<p>No major update for this item, the previous government didn't provide a response to the submissions from GM now that the new government is in place we will hopefully receive a response and there should be a more detailed update to be given at the next meeting. If there is an update from TfGM before the next meeting BT will inform everyone. In December an update was sent round to all attendees, this can be reattached to the minutes. Amendments to the transitional arrangements still stand, will need to start having compliant vehicles and those not compliant will not be able to renew from the 1st January 2025.</p> <p>SR thanked BT for the update, he stated it has been that the review signage has been taken down around Manchester and there are worries that charges will be brought to Manchester under the new government. BT responded when the plan was first looked at it would have been bringing in a charge, however this has changed due to covid, and GM then made the submission for a non-charging area and showed we could achieve clean air without charging. BT is not aware of any instruction to removal of review signage, the motorway network signage is now showing under review. With the change in government there is no need for us to re-submit our reports to the new government as they will be looking at them and we provide reassurance that we will be pushing for a decision.</p> <p>DL stated that in the meeting where it was agreed to move to January from April and that if the funding was not provided, we would move back to April, can I confirm that this is still the case? BT confirmed if there was changes, we would bring the matter back to committee, however we are set from the compliance deadline which is 1st January 2026, and there is an issue with the annual review that is 1st January 2025.</p> <p>SR mentioned that signs have been removed in areas. BT said he will take this forward as action to check this, and asked SR to send MB specific locations of where the signage has been removed.</p> <p>MB confirmed for the minutes that TfGM has sent the submission to the government not Bury Council.</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p>Enforcement / Service Issues</p>
	<p>There have been two immediate suspensions in regard to public safety and two immediate</p>

	<p>revocations of licenses due to driver conduct.</p> <p>A thankyou to Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles working the parklife rank. Officers have been out doing rank checks, we have moved on coaches, private vehicles and private hire where they have ranked up and have spoken to the traffic warden who does issue tickets.</p> <p>On the 28th March MB went to Bury Blind Society to discuss Hackney carriage and private hire licensing, an email of thanks has been received from BBS.</p> <p>Email from BBS - On behalf of all of us at BBS, just wanted to thank you for coming along on Wednesday. Everyone found your session interesting and useful. It was also good to be made aware of the regular communication pathway between Bury Council and the taxi firms.</p> <p>There is a campaign being run by the Guide Dogs Association called open doors to stop illegal access refusals. MB has been sent a letter for all operators, this will be reviewed and circulated. There haven't been any complaints in relation to drivers refusing to take assistance/guide dogs recently.</p> <p>There was a recent court case regarding the appeal to refuse license as vehicle was written off, the judge dismissed this appeal as the decision the council made was correct.</p> <p>SR commented that their drivers are informed that they cannot use written off vehicles.</p> <p>DL asked for the Guide Dogs Association letter to be distributed as a bulletin, with thanks to trade and to raise awareness.</p> <p>MW reiterated DL's comment. MW also mentioned that some vehicles working in Bury are accident damage vehicles, but they get licenses from other authorities to still work in Bury. MB responded that this has been discussed with committees and yes there are occasions where drivers get into accidents, but the policies are the policies and if a vehicle is written off it cannot be licensed, we can send out a message to reiterate that written off vehicles should not be bought and unfortunately, we don't have any say in other authority policies.</p> <p>DL added that there have been discussions recently on what is decided as a write off, many authorities have now published what categories they will accept. Maybe Bury could review their policy and include this information. MB stated this will be taken on board and discussed.</p> <p>MB added that we have been sent guidance for taxi drivers and private hire vehicles from the sight lost councils which will be shared.</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Specific Subjects for Discussion</p>
	<p>Taxi Ranks</p> <p>SR stated that private hire and out of town taxis are ranking up on our ranks and we are receiving abuse when confronting them. We have asked for this issue to be looked into. MB confirmed that enforcement officers have been going out since this issue was last raised.</p> <p>MW there is a concern about out of town taxis on ranks, we suggest that there are discussions among local authorities to state what can't be done. LR responded to say Uber are happy to sit down and discuss these issues.</p> <p>DL added that there was a comment from Andy Burnham to ban cross border working with the new government and across GM. We cannot ban vehicles from entering a zone but can try to regulate this.</p>

HU-R agreed with DL's point and pointed out the infrastructure issues around GM for taxis and private hire vehicles.

Manchester Airport

SR stated that at Manchester airport the drop offs charge is at around £6 per drop off, however it used to be free – CS responded that MB has contacted Manchester council to discuss this matter, but we haven't yet received a response, but Manchester airport is private land, and they may have agreements in place with private firms for no charge. Unfortunately Bury have no powers to relieve drivers of the charges.

Licenses

MW asked if there is anything we can do regarding the number of licenses being given in Bury? MB confirmed that numbers have decreased in Bury, we would like to hear how legally authorities are stopping the number of drivers being licensed. DL added that there is no lawful justification to cap the number of licences, if there was a cap on how many can be obtained locally it would push people to other authorities.

Bus Lanes

MB we have contacted TfGM and all 10 GM authorities have agreed to maintain a standard approach to the use of bus lanes and hours of operation which permits the use for cyclists and taxis being hackney carriages only, this provides clear understanding for road users and causes less confusion for people travelling outside of GM assisted in bus lane enforcement challenges. we will add the response from TfGM in minutes, in respect of reviewing the operation of bus lanes it is a decision for each local authority but if Bury were looking to do this TfGM would strongly oppose.

DL stated that he doesn't agree that it would cause confusion, believe it remains unlawful for them to prolong the journey and this will carry on to be campaigned for.

MW added we contacted authorities and they have said the matter with bus lanes will be discussed.

MF said Uber is interested in this topic and are taking up a project to map all PHV access areas across the country. MF asked for the contact at TfGM, MB to send over the contact details.

CS advised all comments have been taken on board and we will include a copy of the report in the minutes.

BT added that opening bus lanes to taxis and private hire vehicles will cause issues to the efficiency of buses. There are significant wider implications that would need to be discussed and looked at.

DL stated there would be a negative impact on emissions by not allowing them to use the bus lanes so it would work well with the clean air plan if this could be used. DL asked for this item to stay on the agenda until we get a solution.

TFGM response re: bus lanes/private hire drivers vehicles

The design of bus lanes across Greater Manchester has been defined by the specific layouts of particular sections of road, with a view to maximising the flow of buses whilst minimising any additional delays to other road users. Such designs means that bus lanes usually have minimal impact upon general traffic travel times in busy urban areas. This is because junctions are the critical points on the road network which dictate traffic capacity, and well-designed bus lanes should not interfere with junctions.

	<p><i>All 10 Greater Manchester local authorities (including Bury) have agreed and maintain a standard approach to bus lane hours of operation and other vehicles permitted to use bus lanes, which are cycles and taxis (Hackney Carriages only). This provides a clear understanding for road users and causes less confusion for people travelling from outside Greater Manchester, assisting in bus lane enforcement challenges.</i></p> <p><i>Giving buses priority over other vehicles at certain times of the day recognises the buses greater efficiency in the use of road space. For example, the typical space a bus occupies is that of two cars and the capacity of a bus is around 80 people. Such an approach in managing road space looks to maximise the flow of people, as opposed to individual vehicles. Allowing other vehicle types such as PHV's to use lanes designed for bus services at peak times undermines this principle and may make them ineffective to bus users and other permitted vehicles.</i></p> <p><i>It is also worthwhile noting that there are approximately 2,000 Hackney Carriages operating in Greater Manchester in comparison to over 11,000 PHV's that are licenced by Greater Manchester local authorities. Due to the significant number of PHV's licensed by the Greater Manchester Authorities, permitting their use in bus lanes would take away from the principle and benefits sought by introducing bus lanes.</i></p> <p><i>I hope that helps you to understand how the bus lanes currently operate, why they operate like this and why access to bus lanes is restricted to certain vehicles. With respect to reviewing the operation of bus lanes, ultimately it is a decision for the Local Highway Authority not TfGM, however it is something that we would strongly oppose for the reasons outlined above.</i></p>
<p>7.</p>	<p>AOB</p>
	<p>SR mentioned that it has been discussed previously regarding the dress code of taxi and private hire trade, drivers should be respectfully dressed. MB stated there is a dress code policy within Bury which was introduced in line with trading standards, please report any complaints of driver dress codes to MB. BT asked if we receive any dress code complaints from the public, MB confirmed we don't.</p> <p>SR asked if GMP can look into fake plates being issued in Rochdale. CS asked if this has been reported to the licensing authority in Rochdale? SR not sure if it has been reported. PE responded he will take up this action with the Rochdale officer and they can pass on to the authority. If anyone does get any details of drivers on false plates, please pass them on to me and I will follow up the best I can.</p> <p>KW commented that she has noticed fake plates before mostly from Manchester and added that as operators we always check the database with the badges and plates. MW suggested looking at insurance records as some change for a taxi to normal car policy. PE stated GMP have received this information before, and MB confirmed the authority can take action if a driver does not have the correct insurance.</p> <p>DL said there are issues between fake and ghost plates, and we need to make sure these aren't confused, DL also asked if ANPR systems pick up on the insurance? PE responded that this can be confirmed through PNC.</p> <p>MW asked if there is any policy in place where new drivers can be given a code, MB responded new drivers come to collect the plate from the Town Hall. Any further information received may give us new ways of working.</p> <p>MW asked if there is any progress on the smart badges. MB responded there are no further updates currently we are still going through the procurement exercise.</p> <p>DL added that there is currently a government consultation ongoing regarding the VAT</p>

	implications in the future, it is imperative that the consultation is responded to as the government need your views.
8.	Date and Time of next meeting Next meeting to be held in September in person, CS will be in touch to confirm a date and time.