

## **Taxi Liaison Meeting**

### **Minutes of meeting**

**1<sup>st</sup> August 2013 at 1.00pm**

**Venue: Town Hall, Knowsley Street, Bury**

**1. Welcome and introduction:**

Councillor Jones  
Janet Witkowski  
Andrew Johnson  
Michael Bridge  
Gerry Kelly  
Charles Oakes – Bury Hackney Drivers Association  
Paul Brent – National Taxi Association  
Ian Charles – Private Hire Operator  
Chris Hargreaves – Private Hire Operator (Limousines)

**2. Apologies for absence:**

Ray Porter – Private Hire Operator

**3. Introductions**

Councillor Jones introduced himself to the group and explained how he thought the meeting should progress, he explained that Mr Bridge had created an agenda but he did not intend to stick to it rigidly and that he would like to give all parties concerned an opportunity to speak. All other parties introduced themselves.

**4. Testing Station Fees:**

Discussions took place about the proposed increase in the charge of a vehicle inspection at Bradley Fold to £47.50, Councillor Jones and Mr Johnson advised the group that due to the licensing section making a surplus of approximately £6000 there would not be an increase. Therefore the charge per vehicle inspection will remain at £45.00. Mr Brent indicated that the cost of a test in Trafford was £71.00 and approximately £27.00 for a retest.

**5. Second Testing Station:**

Mr Oakes raised the issue of a second testing station and acknowledged that he had previously brought this issue before members in the past. He spoke about the Department of Transport Best Practice guidance issued in 2006 on this issue and indicated that all the hackney trade want is a choice to where they can take their vehicles to for a vehicle examination.

Mr Brent indicated that at Trafford Council, they used to have an in-house garage but have subsequently outsourced to a private company, however it still remains in the old Council garage.

It was asked whether or not the opening hours of Bradley Fold could be extended. Mr Bridge explained that this had been done previously on a pilot basis for Saturday mornings and both elements of the trade did not utilise the additional availability.

## **6. Council Fees:**

Mr Oakes indicated that he had asked for fees and charges to be completely reviewed to identify the actual cost of licences relating to the taxi trade. He went on to explain about the challenges relating to fees at other authorities such as Westminster (relating to sex shops), Guildford and Manchester.

The licensing service advised that they are currently looking at application fees in light of the recent court case concerning Westminster Council.

## **7. Maintenance of Vehicles**

Mr Bridge gave the group some examples of what both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles were failing on when they are presented for test. Mr Charles outlined that his vehicles go for a pre-inspection at a private garage prior to going for their test to ensure that all the necessary work that is needed is undertaken prior to the Council test. This ensures that his vehicles pass first time. He went on to advise the group that he did not see any problems with Bradley Fold, as they know his vehicles have been checked prior to test.

Mr Oakes raised the issue that in his opinion Bury Council was not dealing with the proprietors who are not maintaining their vehicles. Officers of the licensing service explained that the Licensing and Safety Panel had in June this year considered the hackney carriage age policy and the five fault rule. The five fault rule has been amended to be applicable to hackney carriage vehicles over the age of 6 years old. Members felt that this would ensure that the vehicles would be maintained prior to going for the vehicle examination which would enable them to continue to be licensed as a hackney carriage. Licensing Officers explained that there is not a fit and proper test for the proprietor of a vehicle.

Mr Oakes advised the group that other authorities undertake joint enforcement with partner agencies such as the Police and

VOSA. He stated that he feels that other authorities are dealing with proprietors/ drivers who are not maintaining their vehicles. Mrs Witkowski asked Mr Oakes what sorts of things they were doing. He explained that Council's have been criticised for undertaking exercises at the weekend and not for doing them at other times during the week.

**8. Future Liaison Meetings**

Mr Bridge advised the group, that it was his intention to attach the minutes of the meeting to the operational report which is due to be heard at the next meeting of the Licensing and Safety Panel on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September 2013. Councillor Jones said that he would discuss the meeting with the other members of the panel to take advice on future meetings.

**8. Any Other Business:**

Mr Hargreaves spoke about a recent prom that his father has been doing a job and there were a number of different types of vehicles fire engines, tractors and tanks which did not have the appropriate licences. He could not recall where the prom was.

Mr Charles mentioned that other Bury private hire companies are going into Ramsbottom and picking up. This was noted and will be looked into at a later date.