

LICENSED TRANSPORT FORUM

Thursday, 10 March 2022 (10:04 am – 11:28 am)

PRESENT:

Councillor David Airey	Chair - Cabinet Member for Transport
Councillor Derek Pretty	Cabinet Member for Economy
Councillor Wayne Irish	
Phil Bates	Licensing Manager
Andy Jeffery	Licensing Enforcement Officer
Nicki Moorhouse	
Leigh Dodds	Hackney Carriage Representative
Steve Lucas	Hackney Carriage Driver Representative
Kevin May	Vehicle Hire Owner Representative
Roger Vivian	Private Hire Driver Representative
Arron Andrews	Hackney Carriage Driver Representative
Helen Devereux	Legal Services
Patyrcja Ngalamulume	SCC Licensing Officer

Apologies were received from

ACTION BY

36. MINUTES

The Chair opened the meeting and requested that he had a request to add the following items to the agenda:

- 12.a) Fare Increase
- 12.b) Borough Identity Stickers

RESOLVED –

That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2021 be confirmed and signed by the Chair as a correct record

37. ACTION LIST

It was agreed that the following items had been resolved and could be removed from the Action List:

- Suitability Test & Handbook;
- SCC Bus Lanes & Clean Air;
- Private Hire Identification Labels; and
- Group 2 Medicals.

(NOTE: Leigh Dodds joined the meeting at 10.08am.)

38. ENFORCEMENT SUMMARY

The Senior Licensing Officer presented the Enforcement Summary (agenda item 4), and updated the Forum that they had undertaken mystery shopping recently and had received comments that all the drivers checked were polite and friendly, and all had taken card payments.

The Chair stated he was pleased to hear that that feedback.

39. SAFEGUARDING

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that they were currently setting up a provider and that the Council had confirmed that there would be no costs to drivers, either by using a code provided by the Licensing Team to existing drivers, or by reimbursement on the granting of a licence to new drivers.

40. GUIDANCE ON FITNESS AND PROPRIETY

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that the Licensing Team were looking to add another test provider to the current one available.

Kevin May raised concerns that the standard expected of drivers by the current provider was too high.

The Licensing Manager confirmed that a higher standard is expected of drivers when it comes to carrying passengers. He advised that higher first-time pass rates are seen when drivers book a refresher driving lesson before taking the test.

The Chair stated it was good that standards were high, but it could be difficult to get the balance right sometimes. He advised that Guidance on Fitness and Propriety stay on the agenda for the next meeting so that it could be continued to be monitored.

41. IVA TESTING

It was agreed that IVA Testing was now resolved and could be removed from the agenda.

42. MOT ADVISORIES (RV)

Roger Vivian raised concerns that the Licensing Team were enforcing tyre changes that were mentioned on an advisory on an MOT test and not a failure.

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that if an MOT advisory stated that a tyre was close to its legal limit, they would also

advise it is changed for public safety, as a blanket policy.

The Licensing Manager added that they could not carry out full individual assessments on all MOT advisories and had to ensure vehicles were safe to be on the road and carrying fares. He added they were hoping to carry out more spot checks on vehicles in the future.

The Senior Licensing Officer went on to say that if the driver/operator disagreed it was needed at that time they could have it assessed by the Depot on an individual case-by-case basis.

(NOTE: Steve Lucas joined the meeting by telephone via Leigh Dodds at the end of this item.)

43. HACKNEY TAXI METER IMPLICATIONS OF BANK HOLIDAY TARIFFS (SL)

Steve Lucas wanted to draw attention to the fact that, because of the bank holiday dates being changed this year for the Queen's Jubilee, the fares would be incorrect, and drivers would need a fare change to ensure they were charging the correct amount.

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that he was going to be sending an email to the trade to inform them that an updated fare would need to be injected to the meters.

Item 12.a mentioned at the beginning of the meeting was heard now.

Steve Lucas stated that he had contacted approximately 25% of the trade, and that none wanted a fare increase to take place at the same time as the fare change.

He requested that the Licensing Team ask the companies who would be carrying out the fare change if they could charge a set rate of £10 instead of £20 to try to keep the costs down for the drivers/operators.

44. INFORMATION ON SAFEGUARDING ROLL OUT (SL)

This item was covered in Item 5 (Safeguarding) on the agenda.

45. INFORMATION ON NEW DRESS CODE CONDITIONS IMPLEMENTATION (SL)

Steve Lucas requested an update to how the new dress code had been received by the trade.

The Senior Licensing Officer stated that it had been embraced well, and that had not yet taken any enforcement action for anyone not abiding by the code.

He added that the driver policy and conditions for the appearance of drivers had been updated as follows:

“This policy is not intended to discriminate or control people, rather to provide a standard policy where no member of the public travelling is made to feel uncomfortable by a driver whose choice of clothing may be inappropriate. The dress code is there to convey a professional appearance, thereby improving people’s confidence of choosing licensed vehicles as a preferred mode of transportation and principally to protect the public and driver. This policy is not gender specific and is subjective.

The driver of a Private Hire Vehicle/ Hackney Carriage shall be clean and tidy in appearance and shall be attired to a standard acceptable to the Council. We have also added blouse and polo shirts to the acceptable list for clarification.”

The Chair stated that he agreed the changes to the wording were reasonable.

46. DISCUSSION OF CCTV

The Licensing Manager explained that there was statutory guidance in place which recommended CCTV systems in both taxi Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles, and he wanted to ask the trade what their current thoughts were on the guidance.

A discussion was held with the trade, and the forum put forward the following responses:

- The borough of Eastleigh did not currently have a real night-time economy, where most incidents that need investigation using camera recordings occur;
- It would be expensive in relation to how often they felt the cameras would be needed to protect both drivers and passengers;
- There had been no complaints received in the Borough where the data from a camera would assist.

It was agreed that a discussion regarding the introduction of CCTV would be brought back to the forum in a year’s time for review, but could be reviewed sooner if required.

Item 12.b) Borough Identity Stickers

Roger Vivian raised concerns that the magnetic signs he had used before the new signage policy was agreed by the Administration Committee in November 2021 had left marking to the cars when it was removed, and that he had been told by the Licensing Team that the new signage could not be placed in the same place.

The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that the policy, as agreed, had stated that the Borough identity stickers had to be placed on the rear doors and the operator signage on the front doors.

The Chair confirmed that the policy had been set and must be adhered to as the only way to change it would be to ask the Administration Committee to review it.

The Senior Chartered Legal Executive (FCILEx) also confirmed that the signs needed to be placed where the policy stated and that all vehicles needed to comply with the policy.

47. CHAIR'S STATEMENT

The Chair, Councillor Airey, announced that he would not be standing in the forthcoming elections in May and this would be his last meeting.

The Chair thanked all trade representatives, both Hackney Carriage and private hire, for all their hard work and input to the Forum during his time as Chair. He stated that the Forum had achieved a lot in that time and he was very proud of that, and the way they all worked together in a polite and friendly manner.

The Chair also thanked officers, especially The Licensing Manager, Phil Bates, the Senior Licensing Officer, Andy Jeffery, and the Senior Chartered Legal Executive (FCILEx), Nicki Moorhouse, for the enormous amount of work they had put into the Forum.

Councillor Irish thanked the Chair for all his work for residents, the Council and the trade, and stated that both the Chair and his vast knowledge would be missed.

The trade took turns to thank the Chair for his time, work and approachable manner, on behalf of themselves and recent retirees.

The Licensing Team thanked the Chair for his work, input to the Forum, guidance and counsel over the years.

The Senior Chartered Legal Executive (FCILEx) echoed the Licensing Team.

Councillor Pretty also thanked the Chair and stated he would be sorely missed.

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