

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FORUM Meeting

Venue: Virtual via Zoom

Agenda: 14 January 2021

Attendees and who they represent:

Cllr Ruth Pickersgill (RP), Chair, representing Bristol City Council
Jonathan Martin (JM) representing Bristol City Council
Emma Lake (EL) representing Bristol City Council
Abigail Holman (AH) representing Bristol City Council
Saif Hussain (SH) representing BBTLA, Chair
Alan Dyte (SA) representing BPAC
Steve Lohia (SL) representing B Driven Bristol
Clive Burdett (CB) representing Unite
Mike Bullock (MB) representing Bristol Executive Cars
Karen Daniels (KD) representing Bristol City Council Transport Team
Gary O'Neill (GN) representing Private Hire Driver reps
Desmond Broster (DB) representing V Cars and Veezu
Patrick Quinton (PQ) representing Police, Taxi Compliance Officer
Mohammad Islam (MI) representing BBLTA
Ahmed Ismail (AI) representing BBLTA, secretary
Terri Knowlton (TK) representing Bristol City Council Schools Transport
Katie Porter (KP) representing Bristol City Council Public Health
Carol Slater (CS) representing Bristol City Council Public Health
Rachel Metcalfe (RM) representing Bristol City Council Public Health
Shaukat Malik (SM) Private Hire Driver
Shammi Raichura (SR) representing Uber

1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

- Apologies –
 - Andri Nicolou – Police Safeguarding
 - Steve Pick – Bristol City Council Transport Team

2. Agree minutes from last meeting

Minutes from 05-11-20

Actions:

- SP to contact BRI re directional signage and guidance – **ACTION AH follow up outside meeting via email and copy in managers**
- RP to write to Transport/Highways team to highlight that rank positioning should be considered in review of area currently underway - done
- DB to update Veezu/V Cars practices to JM - done
- Nationals standards focused meeting to be organised JM – update will be provided following committee
- RP to chase MP meeting – Meeting arranged for 22 January, invite to be sent out. It was asked that reps send through questions in advance to RP to be sent on to Thangam Debonnaire's office.
- RP to request attendance from senior officer in Transport/Highways - done
- SP to confirm SLA for issues to be fixed and contact for reporting road or rank issues – ACTION AH follow up outside meeting via email and copy in managers – addressed later by passenger transport.
- JM to review six month licences – resolved.

3. Latest Covid updates (Public Health)(Vaccine (flu and Covid), safety , testing etc)

An update was provided from the public health team on the following areas:

- Vaccine – this was rolling out in accordance with the government plan to vaccinate those who are most at risk first. Ashton Gate was now open as a mass vaccination centre.
- Infection rates – Bristol was currently below average on infection rates at approx. 500 per hundred thousand. The

positivity rate was high, but not as high as the average. There were high rates in a number of areas, and in the working population.

- Testing stations were located at Hengrove, Netham Park and the Victoria Rooms.
- Rapid testing centre – a rapid testing centre would be opening on Monday 18 January for people who did not have symptoms and were in a high risk profession and could not work from home. Taxi drivers fell into this category and could use the centre to get tested regularly. It was recommended that drivers get tested twice a week. Results would be given within an hour by text or email.
- It was highlighted that drivers still need to be following the rules on social distancing and hygiene as much as possible, particularly because they would be in an enclosed environment. Enforcement would be increasing to ensure people were following the rules because of the seriousness of the situation across the country.
- Information would be sent to the trade with details of the rapid testing and how to book.

4. Schools Transport update (TK)

TK summarised the position for school transport.

- She was aware that there were risks to drivers as well as escorts and children.
- She highlighted that they worked to guidance from the Department for Education which was different than that from the Department for Transport, and often different between the two.
- The majority of the school transport was for special schools, where the journeys would be with the same people

each day. The DfE advised that social distancing is not essential on school transport, but should be undertaken where possible. All special schools are open as normal, so journeys are being undertaken.

- Schools had been clear with parents that children should not be sent in if they had symptoms, and transport should not be used if the child develops symptoms in school.
- They had asked schools to reemphasise children should wear face coverings where they could do so, however there was a recognition that many of the children attending the special schools would not be able to do this for a variety of reasons including being exempt from wearing them.
- TK advised if drivers were concerned about a child not wearing a face mask they should contact schools transport directly, and should not challenge the child as this may cause distress.

Break

5. Licensing Team update (JM)

JM updated the forum on a number of points:

- An email had been sent to everyone about the Additional Restrictions Grant. The original one was sent to licensing at very short notice and a lot of work was put into this one. It was available to Bristol drivers only.
- It was noted that a number of people operating without valid insurance and vehicle inspection checks. These must be in place, and there was an opportunity to SORN the vehicle if it wasn't being used. A pragmatic approach was being taken to relicensing later than the expiry date but proprietors need to let the licensing team know what is

happening with the vehicle so the information is there when the proprietor wants to re-licence.

- A query was raised about potential action against operators where a vehicle is not appropriately insured, PQ advised that if the operator was unaware of the insurance issue it would be unfair to take action against them.
- There were no current backlogs, but medicals were being taken on a case by case basis as some GPs were open for them and others not.

6. Issues from BBTLA and issues from PH

SH confirmed that the trade were pleased the ARG had been sorted and some concerns were raised about other funding or grant schemes. It was clarified that the ARG came from central government with constraints about where the money could be distributed. There was a difference between government schemes and local authority ones, and the council wasn't able to help with government ones. RP highlighted how co-operation between the trade and the council teams had a good result in the ARG. A query was raised about whether operators qualified for a grant, and it was clarified they had not been named as restricted businesses and this was in relation to government grants which the council did not have control of.

A query was raised about who was able to use the rapid testing centre, and it was confirmed it was any person who cannot work from home and was in a recognised high risk profession. Carers would be covered under other routes by public health.

It was confirmed that the policy in respect of tints was progressing with the rest of the policy but there was no specific

timescale for this. This would be sent out for consultation with updates in the newsletter.

There were no additional updates on implementation of clean air zones.

7. Highways update (KD)

KD provided an update on a number of areas:

- For maintenance of and issues with ranks, passenger.transport@bristol.gov.uk should be emailed. There wasn't an SLA at this time, but KD wanted to improve the processes and visibility.
- Whiteladies Road – the sign had been fixed and then immediately damaged again.
- They had been in contact with the BRI regarding improving messaging and directions and this was ongoing.
- It was important for representatives to attend the Transport Board meetings, and SH had been attending already.
- RP highlighted that drivers have good knowledge of the areas and potential impacts and should be involved from the start regarding road and city centre design.
- Road closures were sent out to operators, but need to make sure the contacts are correct. **ACTION: AH to liaise with KD to ensure contacts are up to date**
- PQ queried whether signs about passenger rights and responsibilities were still planned at every rank. KD confirmed it was planned, but hadn't yet been progressed. Liaison with the licensing team was needed as well.
- Issues were also flagged around signage at ranks for the visually impaired, and signage more generally about road closures needing improvement.

8. Taxicop update (PQ)

PQ provided and update:

- He had undertaken an audit of all ranks and would send the relevant issues through to passenger transport.
- A number of test purchases had been undertaken with 2 caught plying for hire. Test purchasing had been undertaken on HCDs with good results.
- The new signage in vehicles regarding face coverings had been popular, and drivers were still advised to check journeys were for essential reasons, the customer would be subject to fines if they were not travelling for essential reasons.
- There are still runners and PQ has been able to support some drivers with civil claims, which he would not always have time to do normally. He would be re-publicising the information sharing scheme on runners again soon and hoped it would be taken up across a number of operators.
- The driver who was stabbed a few months ago was doing well and the case would be in court shortly.

9. Policy Update including National Standards(JM/EL)

EL provided an update on the policy:

- All reports are available online:
<https://democracy.bristol.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=164&MId=8700&Ver=4>
- Documents include a list of changes, summary of the standards, changes to the current policy and how they link to the standards, draft policy document and equalities impact assessment.

- DBS Update service was one of the changes and this had been publicised in the newsletter and on the website to encourage people to sign up now to reduce the impact on drivers later. Under the new policy drivers could be suspended or revoked if not signed up.
- Certificate of good character – this was a new requirement that if drivers are out of the country for long period of time they will need to provide one. Guidance would be available to go alongside the policy.
- Convictions policy – there were a number of significant changes and it requires that we take a fresh look at all drivers.
- Operator policy – this was new, and had previously been to committee, but there were changes as a result of the national standards coming in.
- Credit card machines and tints policy are also included.
- There would be a meeting with trade to go through the changes once consultation had been approved.

10. AOB

None

11. Actions for next meeting:

Action Point	Matters arising	By Whom	Completed?
1	AH follow up on directional signage for BRI outside meeting via email and copy in managers	AH	
2	AH to liaise with KD to ensure contacts are up to date	AH	

Next meeting: 25 March 2021