

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FORUM MEETING

Venue: Puerto Morazan, City Hall

Agenda: 29 September 2022

Attendees and who they represent:

Councillor Christine Townsend (**CT**) (Chair) representing Bristol City Council

Jonathan Martin (**JM**) representing Bristol City Council

Dakota Ferrara (**DF**) representing Bristol City Council

Stephen Pick (**SP**) representing Bristol City Council

Karen Daniels (**KD**) representing Bristol City Council

Clive Burdett (**CB**) representing Unite

Mahad Jama (**JM**) representing Magans Taxis

Saif Hussain (**SH**) representing BBLTA

Jack Price (**JP**) representing V Cars

Christie Twelvtree (**CTW**) representing V Cars

Mohammed Aideed (**MA**) representing Bristol Blue Taxis

1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

- Apologies

Patrick Quinton (PQ)

2. Agree minutes from last meeting

Minutes from 21 July 2022

Actions: Minutes to be agreed on 17th November 2022.

3. Licensing Team Update (JM)

As we've discussed before, you have all been contacting me in various ways to chase applications, in the vast majority of cases, these licences haven't been issued because we haven't had all documents.

If you have any issues with applications, please let me know, and we will let you know the reason the licence hasn't been issued. We're currently working on moving all applications online to make the process more streamlined.

You will be aware we have had some issues with IT outages preventing people from applying online. This should now be fixed but is an issue across the whole authority. Obviously sometimes we're not aware until you raise this but thank you for doing so. If this happens again, please let us know so we can get it sorted as soon as possible.

We have had four licensing officers leave in the last six weeks. Staff retention is a problem, we're not paying our staff enough, and can't compete with other companies. We're recruiting temporary staff to help, but there will be backlogs. We are in the beginning stages of looking at restructuring the Licensing Team.

MA A lot of drivers are submitting stuff that's incorrect but not being told, could there be a tutorial on the website?

JM It is in the pipeline, but some of these issues are really basic.

DF We're receiving a lot of emails with very little information provided, for example we've had a driver respond to an email we sent out about the DBS Update Service over a year ago with his renewal application, it's really hard to identify that this is a renewal application. We've also had people request a link to apply for a DBS but have not provided a name or badge number so we're unable to identify who they are.

JP We do open days for drivers who are struggling, which has been beneficial.

JM we are doing taxi surgery, and are committed to that.
You've all got my work mobile, and email.

4. Taxi Tariff Update (JM)

The tariff change has now taken effect, it would be good to get a sense from you all how that's gone down? Also given, the cost-of-living rises, are you going to be putting a request in for next year?

SH This tariff change was a medium jump, I have spoken to drivers and customers, and we think there needs to be another small jump

CB This change has been swallowed up with costs rising

JM You need to consider the timing of when you want this to go through

MJ You have said you will give us one review each year

JM We are committed to an annual fare review, but this needs to be put forward by the trade

SH We didn't want one during covid, but having looked into it, I really think one year is a good review point

JM You submitted the last review around March, and it was approved in September. If you could start looking at the new review now, we will look to get it in place for next year

MJ How long does it take?

JM Around four months, it needs to meet the statutory deadlines

SH Would you like it in January?

JM Can you send it to me ASAP so I can review it.

CB The fees have gone up significantly

JM The price for short term licences has significantly increased because of the time it takes to process them, it's the same process as issuing a two or three year licence

CB A lot of drivers can't apply for longer licences because their GPs aren't doing medicals

JM We need the medical to come from a GP who works at the practice you're registered to. We've had situations where conditions haven't been disclosed, and the GP isn't aware of it, because they don't work for the practice.

MA Can't the NHS can provide it?

JM GPs are employed by the NHS, and they're not providing it

SH I have a question for transport, vehicles licensed by Bristol City Council are clean and compliant. However, 80% of vehicles in bus lanes are diesel vehicles, which are licensed by South Gloucester. Why are they allowed to use our bus lanes?

MA They're taking all of our trade, the standards are too high in Bristol

JP This is what the trade is evolving to

SP This discussion has come up before with who's permitted to use bus lanes, a lot of work went into looking into the issues. It's obviously a complex area with how we would enforce it, and whether it would be legal. I think getting to that point would be a massive cost.

MA Why can't it be that only BCC taxis can use it?

JM I think the outcome was that it's not lawful

5. Emailing Licence (JM)

When your drivers are applying for renewals via email please can they ensure they're putting the licence, or reference number in the subject, and sending all of the relevant documents in one email. A lot of drivers are sending multiple emails, we've had instances where drivers have sent ten emails which each contain one attachment. As we've discussed if we don't receive all of the necessary documents at the time of application it will result in delays in the licence being issued.

6. New vehicles

SH I've been looking for a new Private Hire Vehicle, and there's none available, we have about 70 people looking for vehicles.

MJ I don't understand why you didn't buy a vehicle last year

CB I don't understand, is this to do with CAZ?

JM No, this is to do with vehicles which are now ten years old and need replacing in line with policy. Saif has raised that there aren't enough vehicles which are compliant with our policy. The situation has got a lot worse since we started discussing this several months ago. I looked recently and CabsDirect only had one which is compliant, if you raise the age to 5/6 years there are more available, but they are more expensive than they were in the past. We have taken legal advice, and research and will be taking a report to committee to increase the age of new HCV, which are replacing an HCV. Private Hire Vehicles are less of a concern, there are vehicles available, but they have gone up in price.

MJ If you buy a 2017 Euro 6, you're still only going to get 5 or 6 years out of it

SH By then the mileage will be really high

JM We're looking at what will happen with the current Euro 6 when they require replacement, we don't want to be replacing diesels with diesels.

SH It's better to have an old vehicle, than no vehicle at all

JM We have around 400 HCV, and around a quarter of those are Euro 5. We need to future proof these plans, you need to consider whether to spend this amount on a five or six year old vehicle, or whether to spend 60k on LEVC which we'd licence for 15 years

MA How much are the grants for LEVC?

JM 15k

MJ Would you still get the grants for LEVC if you were to buy a second hand LEVC?

JM As long as it meets the policy for a grant application it would

7. Transport Update

JM How are we getting on with the signage on Queens Road, outside of Wilkinsons?

KD We are looking into that at the moment

SP Before the work started there was space for four taxis. That has all changed since Covid, we're looking into the options we have, we may reinstate what was there before, or look at other options, we don't want to lose any capacity

East Street in Bedminster - vehicles can drive one way overnight, we will keep you updated on what happens with it

CT It has become a de facto one way street at all times, people are using it all day, as it stands it should just be buses, not taxis or private vehicles. There's no enforcement, and it's a real issue for pedestrians and cyclists. I would be open for Taxis being able to use it if we could get private cars not to. I'm the ward Councillor, and think that it would be better if it could only be used by Taxis and Buses

MA Does the camera not work?

CT No, there is no enforcement. I have spoken to the police, but they were reluctant to enforce on it. The residents want some way of making it safer.

SP So your preference would be to permit taxis one way, if we can get rid of private vehicles?

CT Yeah, we want to stop normal cars, and have no parking.

SP There would still need to be delivery access.

SH We've been receiving fines when using the lanes on Milton Street, in Bath

MJ That lane is only for buses not Taxis

CB The rank on Colston street, is that 24 hours?

SP The one outside where co-op used to be?

CB Yes

SP It's an evening rank, there was a request for the hours to be extended, so it starts at 4pm as it's a loading bay in the day

CB There is no rank to set down in the daytime

SP Set down is a bit different to ranking up. There are loading bay requirements, so we need to maintain the loading facility

CB You're asking the trade to invest a lot of money into cars, and you're not giving anything back you're taking away. We're funding the service for disabled people but not getting anything back.

SP What would you like to see?

CB A 24-hour rank in the city centre

SP We've got the super rank

CB Years ago, there used to be four ranks in the centre. What have you got now? The one out by Colston street is the most prominent one, it should be 24 hours.

SP The challenge we have is balancing all the other demands, buses, loading across limited kerbside across the city. If we could make it 24 hours, we would, but we can't with the requirement for loading.

8. Clean Air Zone

As you will all be aware the Clean Air Zone is coming on 28th November

MJ Thanks for the hard work setting us up for this

JM We couldn't have anticipated everything that was going to happen in the world. We are still trying to encourage people to move over to electric, we have bought two LEVC vehicles which you can hire for free. Both are HCV, and should be available from October.

9. Issues from BBLTA and issues from Private Hire

JP The main thing from us is the time about getting licenses issued. I have just put 10 new hybrid applications. We're still having issues with multi-apping, we take bookings in good faith, but drivers are cancelling.

JM You've seen the articles in the newsletters, Drivers are logging onto several apps simultaneously, drivers are accepting a booking with Veezu, and cancelling to take a booking from another operator. That is a breach of conditions, so we've been taking cancellation information from the main operators, and looking at who the worst offenders are. We are speaking to them to make them aware that they are breaching their conditions. If it happens again, they will be put before PSP.

CTW Have you thought about saying no multi apping full stop?

JM We want to encourage people to get home, we want drivers to be able to fulfil bookings and it's important for them to be able to move across operators. I am aware that some operators are trying to only allow drivers to work for them

CTW Swindon has nailed it

JM We're a completely different authority, they don't have the events we do.

MJ They don't have Bolt or Uber

CTW We can see where our vehicles are at any time, so we take the booking thinking we can do it, and then the driver moves to another operator. My main concern is a driver could work for us 12 hours and go straight to working for another operator.

CT Is that a nationwide issue?

CTW Yes

JP There's going to be a massive issue, where someone gets stabbed or attacked waiting for a cancelled booking. We need you to help us put this right. It needs to come back to basics, we want them to only work for one company at a time, not multiple apps at once.

10. AOB and Date of next meeting

CT I'm sure you're all aware of the recent taxi break ins, I'm attending a meeting about this tomorrow

JM We've had some feedback from Alan Dyke, he's asked anyone who is using an electric vehicle to turn on the noise. He's noticed a change in behaviour of drivers. He's waiting with his assistance dog, and drivers aren't getting out to help him.

Action Point	Matters arising	By Whom	Completed?
1	Send across Fare Proposal	SH	
2	New HCV age policy to go before Committee	JM	
3			
5			
6			
7			
8			

Next meeting: Thursday 17th November 11-1