

HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE JOINT WORKING GROUP

MEETING HELD AT THE COMMITTEE ROOM - BOOTLE TOWN HALL,  
TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE, L20 7AE  
ON TUESDAY 5TH MARCH, 2019

**Present**

Joe Johnson – Berry Street Garage  
Mike Denning - Aintree  
Trevor Jones – North West Taxi Association  
Richard Jarman – South Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association  
Paul McLaughlin – Delta  
Paula Hodson - Advisor

**Officers**

Mark Toohey – Chair  
Mike Foulkes – Senior Taxi Licensing Officer  
Liz Risley – Meeting Officer

**15. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Tony Crabtree – North Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association  
James Kelly – Uber  
John Murrison – Southport Station Hackney Carriage Association  
Mark Sanders – Sefton Private Hire Fleet Operators Association

**16. MINUTES**

All agreed recorded as a true record.

**17. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES**

RJ – Asked for clarification on plying for hire and prosecutions.

MT – Clarified that Sefton Council will prosecute private hire vehicles for plying for hire and no insurance. However licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicles will be prosecuted for plying for hire only and we will not pursue for no insurance.

PMcL - Stated he is still waiting for a response to his email regarding Licensed Operators who are breaking licensing conditions (tariffs).

MF – Stated he has not yet had the time to properly consider breaches of conditions of licence.

MT – Said he will consider this and respond.

JJ - Raised item 4: Enforcement Statistics and could the Group have a breakdown on this for every meeting.

MT – Made apologies for this meeting and said they will be available for future meetings.

JJ – Asked for update training for staff on GDPR.

MT – Stated that training is to be arranged with Solicitors – still ongoing.

## **18. UPFRONT FEE FOR NEW DRIVER APPLICANTS**

MT – Opened discussion on upfront fees for new driver applicants.

PMcL – Stated that there should be some cost involved for everyone who uses the Council's service. Whether they complete the licensing process or not. The Licensing Service must be run as efficiently as possible. It should be seen a business offering a service. It should not be for free. An administration fee if you would like to call it. The Service should not be out of pocket to timewasters, or people who do not finish the process. It cannot be run at a loss.

TJ – Asked is there any reason why we do not charge a fee? And is there a disadvantage to charging a fee?

JJ – Stated that the fee should be refundable on completion of licence. It should be charged at start of the application process and come off the final bill at the end.

It was agreed by all for to an upfront cost. To prevent time wasters and no shows for knowledge tests.

MT – Stated £50 maybe too much. Especially for one year licences. He will confirm final details once an amount has been agreed and share with the Group (fee was set at £25 by committee).

## **19. TASK AND FINISH GROUP REPORT/DFT DRAFT STATUTORY GUIDANCE**

MT – Gave the group an update on were the Task and Finish Group were up to and on the new DfT statutory guidance.

MT – Stated it is at consultation stage and is trying to set minimum standards for all licensing authorities to comply with.

PMcL - Stated some of the recommendations will not work for larger licensing authorities, as it will be impractical to enforce.

MT – Agreed and he will be submitting a response on behalf of Sefton Council with comments and recommendations. He also added it's setting the foundations for all Councils to have, at least, minimum standards.

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RJ – Stated that the document is aimed for Guidance only it is not set as law for local authorities.

JJ – Asked if three-year driver licences could be made to have DBS checked every year? Three years is too long for checks not to be made.

MT- Stated that the new guidelines are recommending all driver applicants must sign up to the DBS update service and DBS checks to be carried out every 6 months. Sefton Council will try to follow what is recommended. He also stated that the guidance gives advice for on-line applications.

RJ – Mentioned the guidance on CCTV in vehicles and what was Sefton Council position on this?

MT – Stated that Sefton Council have no plans to change what is already in place and will not be making it compulsory to have CCTV in all licenced vehicles. It is down to the individual driver have it installed or not. This will give the responsibility to the driver to follow the rules governing this. They will be the data controller and it will not be Sefton Council's responsibility.

**20. OUTCOMES FROM THE SPOKESPERSONS MEETING ON 29  
JANUARY 2019**

MT – Gave group update from the meeting. Said that Finance are in process of completing the review and will share information once it has been given. All Arvato staff have now come back in-house to the Council. We are still waiting for approval to recruit any new enforcement officers as this will need to be assessed once once the final calculations have been completed.

PMcL – Added that he has called the office on numerous occasions and does not get an answer.

MT – Said he will address this but it is always easier to contact him on his mobile. He also gave an explanation on the new telephone system in the office. Officers must log onto a telephone and must share phones and put phones on divert when out of the Office.

JJ – Stated that he can get hold of Nigel, Carl and Liz on their mobile numbers. He also added that there is an obvious issue with staffing. He also questioned number of admin staff as compared with enforcement staff. He stated it will be interesting to see the figures from finance to see how much the service is costing to run.

MT – Gave update on Operation Brooklyn which checked licenced vehicles and drivers. The Road Policing Unit have asked if we can offer more support in the future.

JJ – Stated that the route of the problem is Testing Stations and they need to be managed with regards to unroadworthy vehicles being passed at inspection. Who's checking the Testing Stations?

## **21. ONGOING WORK STREAMS**

MT- Gave an update to the Group regarding outstanding work.

### *1. Testing Stations*

MT- Testing Station Review is paramount and dates need to be fixed so that it can move forward and be finalised.

### *2. Unmet Demand Survey*

PMcL – Stated if we did not have cap on the number of Licensed Hackney Carriages we would not need to have the survey. Who pays for this?

TJ – Said it's all about balance.

MT – Said cost would be in the region of £12,500 and will come from Hackney Carriage budget. There is still a hackney carriage waiting list.

### *3. Merseyside Officer Group*

4.

MT – Work still in progress. Discussions still taking place on joint policies, complaint reporting, enforcement officer's duties, minimum standards for drivers, and standardising the conviction policy.

### *5. Constitution*

6.

MT – On going

### *7. V4 Handbook*

8.

MT – On going looking like January 2020

## **22. ENFORCEMENT STATISTICS**

MT – To send out statistics with minutes of this meeting.

## **23. PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR TARIFFS**

PMcL – Raised issue of no response from an email sent to Senior Licensing Officer over a month ago regarding operators who maybe breaking licensing conditions regarding charging different tariffs as and when they like. To date he has received no response.

MF – Stated he has not had the time to reply.

PMcL - Said he would like a copy of the Councils complaint procedure, to make a formal complaint.

MT – To pass on details.

RJ – Stated tariffs should be visible to the public to see.

#### **24. ONE STOP SHOPS**

JJ – Raised issue of costing and staffing levels within the One Stop Shops - as previously discussed.

MT – Said there was no straight answer. Finance are working on the figures and he will report back when available.

#### **25. CURRENT GOVERNMENT CONSULTATIONS**

Item raised by RJ – said it was ok to pass on this

#### **26. DRIVER DRUG TESTING**

TJ – Asked if we can introduce drug testing as part of the application process. Like other driving professions who insist on his? Can it be extended to random and routine drug testing for all drivers? Especially with reference to the recent Merseyside Road Policing Unit statistics that have publicised.

MT – Stated that the Council have already been approached on this and will be considering the operational impact and cost this will have on the service. Also, we have been asked if we could work alongside the Police and possibly able to fund some operations within the Sefton area, targeting Sefton licensed drivers. This is all at the proposal stage.

#### **27. DRIVER LICENCE RENEWALS**

Item raised by RJ – and has been responded by email, no need to discuss.

#### **28. PROPERTY LEFT IN VEHICLES**

TJ – Raised issue of items left in licensed vehicles. Who is legally responsible?

MT – Stated that this has been an item in the past and has been agreed by the group. Operators have their own individual lost property policies and procedures. This seems to be working and the Council's view is that it is best to be managed this way by the operators themselves.

#### **29. PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR FEES**

TJ- Asked if the chair if the group could have a breakdown of the operator license fees. He asked if they have been subjected to any inflation raises like the driver licences?

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MT – Agreed to send out. All licence fees have been included with any inflation rise.

**30. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

TBC end of June 2019 (possibly Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> June 2019)

**31. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

None Raised