

MEETING: HACKNEY CARRIAGE/PRIVATE HIRE JOINT WORKING GROUP  
DATE: Tuesday 5th March, 2019  
TIME: 10.00 am  
VENUE: Committee Room - Bootle Town Hall, Trinity Road, Bootle, L20 7AE

**South Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association**  
Richard Jarman

**North West Taxi Association**  
Trevor Jones

**North Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association**  
Tony Crabtree

**Southport Station Hackney Carriage Association**  
John Murrison  
Frank McLachlan

**Central Cabs**  
Alan Campbell

**Berry Street Garage**  
Joe Johnson  
Denise Bennett

**Sefton Fleet Association**  
Thomas Robinson

**All Whites**  
Adrian Hughes

**Aintree Garages**  
Mike Denning

**Delta Merseyside Ltd**  
Paul McLaughlin  
Gary Beesley

**Sefton Private Hire Fleet Operators Association**  
Mark Sanders

**Uber**  
James Kelly

**Antrec**

Frank West

**Advisor**

Paula Hodson

**Officers**

Mark Toohey (Chair), Principal Officer

Mike Foulkes, Senior Taxi Licensing Officer

Terry Wood, Environmental Health & Licensing Manager

MEETING OFFICER: Liz Risley - [liz.risley@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:liz.risley@sefton.gov.uk)

**If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.**

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# AGENDA

## Item No.

1. **Apologies for Absence**

2. **Minutes**

Minutes of the meeting held on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018.

3. **Matters Arising from the Minutes**

4. **Upfront Fee for New Driver Applications**

Item raised by the Chair.

To discuss the proposed introduction of an upfront application fee for new driver applications only. The Council can offer up to 27 appointments per day for new applicants - the current attendance rate for these appointments is in the region of 75%.

The committee report that went to the Licensing & Regulatory Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> January considered the introduction of an upfront fee for new driver applications but deferred any decision until the meeting to be held on Monday 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

The cost of a 3-year driver licence for 2019/20 will be £73.

Trade representatives are therefore asked for their views on the following;

- a. Do they support the introduction of an upfront fee which will be offset against the total cost of a new licence? (new applicants only)
- b. The suggested fee is around £25 - £30. Again, trade rep views are welcomed on the suggested level of the upfront fee.

The views from the trade will be incorporated into a report to be considered by the committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> March 2019.

Note - suggested fees for knowledge tests have been suspended until further notice.

5. **Task and Finish Group Report/DfT Draft Statutory Guidance**

Item raised by the Chair.

The Task & Finish group (TFG) on Taxi Licensing produced a report on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2018 which contained 34 recommendations for local authorities covering a whole range of topics such as safety, accessibility, training, DBS checks and cross border hiring. Following on from this, the Government has now produced its response to that report along with draft statutory guidance for licensing authorities which will be introduced using the Policing and Crime Act 2017. The guidance will not be mandatory but the Minister (Nusrat Ghani) has indicated that she expects all licensing authorities to adopt the guidance unless there is a compelling reason for not doing so. The draft guidance is subject to a consultation period until 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2019.

The original TFG report can be found here;

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-i-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-recommendations-for-a-safer-and-more-robust-system>

The Government response to the TFG report can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tax-i-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-government-response-to-independent-report>

The draft statutory guidance and further information on the consultation process can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/tax-i-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-protecting-users>

Any views, questions or comments concerning the draft statutory guidance are welcomed.

6. **Outcomes from the Spokespersons meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019**

Item raised by the Chair.

To discuss any issues arising from the meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2019.

7. **Ongoing Work Streams**

Item raised by the Chair.

To update the group on the following work streams;

- a. Testing Station Review (Item also requested by Joe Johnson)
- b. Unmet demand survey (Item also requested by Richard Jarman and Trevor Jones)
- c. Group constitution
- d. LCR harmonisation

8. **Enforcement Statistics**

Item raised by the Chair.

To update the group on recent work carried out by the Taxi Licensing Unit.

9. **Private Hire Operator Tariffs**

Item raised by Paul McLaughlin.

*“To discuss availability of online tariffs from PH Operators”*

Item raised by Richard Jarman.

*“Visibility of tariffs in PH vehicles.”*

10. **One Stop Shops**

Item raised by Joe Johnson.

*“To discuss costs & staffing levels within the One Stop Shops.”*

11. **Current Government Consultations**

Item raised by Richard Jarman.

12. **Driver Drug Testing**

Item raised by Trevor Jones.

*“Due to the growing increase in Merseyside licenced private hire/hackney drivers being found positive for drug driving, the necessity for a drugs test to be included in all licence applications, new and relicensing.”*

13. **Driver Licence Renewals**

Item raised by Richard Jarman.

*“Notice of driver licence renewals and lead times”*

14. **Property Left in Vehicles**

Item raised by Trevor Jones.

*“The return of luggage or shopping to the passenger that the driver has put in his boot, and who is legally responsible once the driver places the items in the boot of his car away from the passenger.”*

15. **Private Hire Operator Fees**

Item raised by Trevor Jones.

*“Provide a breakdown of Private hire operator licence fees. Snapshots over the last 10 years to where they stand now.”*

16. **Date of next meeting**

4<sup>th</sup> June 2019 – Southport Town Hall

17. **Any Other Business**

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## Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Joint Working Group

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> December 2018

### **Present**

Joe Johnson – Berry Street Garage

Denise Bennett – Berry Street Garage

Thomas Robinson – Sefton Fleet Association

John Murrison – Southport Station Hackney Carriage Association

Trevor Jones – North West Taxi Association

Tony Crabtree – North Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association

Tom Younger – Uber

### **Officers**

Mark Toohey – Chair

Mike Foulkes – Senior Taxi Licensing Officer

Liz Risley – Meeting Officer

### **1 – Apologies**

Richard Jarman – South Sefton Hackney Carriage Drivers Association

Paul McLaughlin – Delta

### **2 - Minutes of last meeting**

MT- Apologies for no minutes from the last meeting.

### **3 - Matters Arising from the Minutes**

MT – Read through last meeting agenda items.

TC – Said minutes should be sent out as soon as possible after the meeting and not the week before the next meeting.

MT – Agreed.

Open discussion on signage on PHV.

MT – Said he was asked to consider similar signage that Liverpool City Council has on their private hire vehicles (No Booking, No Insurance, No Journey) as part of joint/more Enforcement with Liverpool City Council in an attempt to help reduce plying for hire in the City.

# Agenda Item 2

TC – Mentioned signage, stating that new rear plates for hackney carriage vehicles and private hire vehicles are too similar.

MT - Stated no plans to change rear plates. Discussion is for private hire vehicle door signs.

JJ – Stated it is a Liverpool City problem with plying for hire and out of area private hire drivers “waiting” for fares and Sefton do not need the expense/cost of extra door signs.

## **4 – Enforcement**

MT – Gave the group a handout on Enforcement statistics from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 to 10<sup>th</sup> December 2018 and went through figures.

TJ – Asked how many licensed drivers have been revoked for drug driving following the latest Merseyside Road Police Operations?

JJ – Asked for a full break down of revocations on the Enforcement statistics for the next the meeting. Stating that it would be useful for the Group to know what the revocation was for.

MT- Agreed.

JJ – Mentioned DPA requests from Solicitors and asked for all Enforcement Staff to be fully trained on what they can and can't disclose as part of the new legislation on Data Protection.

MT – To seek advice from the Council's Data Protection Team.

## **5 & 7 – Enforcement Team/One Stop Services**

JJ – Asked about more enforcement staff.

MT – Gave update on staffing levels. 5 Enforcement Staff. 8 One Stop Shop Posts. He also stated that, according to informal finance calculations, there may not be enough income in the taxi licensing reserve account to pay for another member of staff but this was before the 2.4% inflation rise on all licenses next year.

TJ – Asked for the breakdown of cost of service, as we have more than 1,000 plus extra drivers than last year figures.

JJ – Agreed and asked does the trade need all the extra staff in the Bootle One Stop Shop? The trade needs to see the costing to make sure they are getting value for

service. Can the trade have the figures from Finance or does he need to put in a FOI request?

MT – Said he will get costings from finance once the review is complete.

JM – Stated that his members were worried that the service at the One Stop Shop would be affected. Will it be consolidated into one office and be move from Southport to Bootle, to save costs?

MT – Said there are no plans for this to happen. He has a meeting with finance to discuss the cost and the 2.4% inflation increase on all licenses. Also discussed a cost for knowledge test/application fee of around £40 - £50 per application, to cover more Enforcement Staff posts.

JJ – Asked if this was refundable?

MT – Said no. It was to stop time wasters and 25% of no shows. MT said that driver licenses were up by 33% and went through figures on sheet.

JJ – Asked again for full break down of costings. Figures for everything under Avarto and what the cost will be under Sefton Council. Stating it needs to be managed properly now it has come back under Council control.

MT – Agreed to speak with Finance. Once Finance have released the figures and we have a summary of the accounts he will share with the Group.

TJ – Asked for a review on Operator Licenses. As he stated this has not been looked at for some time. Bigger Operators should pay more for the service based on fleet numbers.

## **6 – Current Workstreams & Liverpool City Region**

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

### *1. Testing Stations*

MT- Apologised for the delay in the Testing Station Review. But other work demands have meant it has been put back.

JJ- Has made enquiries into obtaining an approved training course for Test Stations and considering costing involved.

### *2. Unmet Demand Survey*

MT – stated it is due in Spring 2019. Currently every 3 years at cost of £12-18,000.

JJ – Can it be reviewed to every 5 years to making savings?

# Agenda Item 2

MT – To make enquiries.

### *3. Merseyside Officer Group*

MT – Stated on-going discussions still taking place to steam-line; minimum standards for drivers, standardising the conviction policy, reviewing complaint reporting and joint authorities enforcement officer's duties. Work still in progress.

TY – Stated Uber has seen something regarding complaint reporting.

### *4. Constitution*

MT – On going

### *5. V4 Handbook*

MT – On going

## **8 – Driver Booking System**

MT – Gave update as follows:

130 new applicants per week in One Stop Shops.

80 Knowledge Test Bookings per week.

25% of which are no-shows.

Waiting times are down.

Target is aimed at getting an appointment in OSS within 10 working days.

## **9 – Insurance Prosecutions**

JJ – Item raised by JJ for clarification.

MT – Explained to group how the enforcement team manage prosecutions for no insurance. Will not prosecute for no insurance for out of area Hackney Carriage Drivers who ply for hire but will prosecute private hire drivers for no insurance depending on the wording of their individual insurance policy. Prosecutions are checked on an individual basis as some are covered and some are not.

JJ – Asked when was the last test purchase operation and are the Enforcement Team planning any more soon?

MT – Stated last test purchase operation was April 2018. No plans for further operations till after Christmas.

## **10 – DBS checks**

# Agenda Item 2

JJ – Raised issue of applicants who cannot provide a valid DBS check, who have not been in the country long enough to have one. Should we license?

MT – Said we have not had an applicant who has not been able to supply a full DBS for some time. The Mitigation Panel has not accepted any “good character” or similar reference. However, he will seek legal advice if the Panel did come across any in the future, as the mitigation policy clearly states, “applicants cannot license without a valid DBS”.

## **11 – Current License Numbers**

MT – Went through handout and figures. Driver licenses up by 33%.

## **12 – Taylor Report**

MT – Stated item raised by RJ but is not here so will discuss fully at a later date.

TY – Said he will send over Uber’s response. Outcome set for Court - June 2019.

## **14 - Minutes of last Meeting**

TC – Raised concerns of the minutes of the meeting being send to the group at the last minute. Can they be sent earlier for comments?

## **15 – AOB**

JM – Raised issue of equality for all aged vehicles. It should be the same for both Hackney and saloon vehicles. Not different 8 for saloon and 11 years for Hackney Carriages.

JJ – Agreed.

TJ – Agreed.

MT – Something that can be included the Testing Station and Handbook Review.

## **16 – Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 5<sup>th</sup> March 2019, Bootle Town Hall

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