

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Joint Working Group

Tuesday 11th 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.

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 1st January 2018 to 10th 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TJ – Asked how many licensed drivers have been revoked for drug driving following the latest Merseyside Road Police Operations?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?

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

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 5th March 2019, Bootle Town Hall