

## **TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE**

**Wednesday, 8th October, 2014**

Present:-

**Representing Chesterfield Borough Council**

Councillor Jean Innes  
Councillor David Allen  
Councillor Bob Gibson  
Trevor Durham  
Grace Dowson

**Representing Derbyshire County Council**

Simon Tranter

**Representing Derbyshire Constabulary**

Inspector John Turner

**Representing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade**

Stephen Aldersley  
Stephen Atkin  
Jim Brookbank  
Ann Dickens  
Victoria Naylor  
Eric Needham (representing Mandy Briddon)

**12 DECLARATIONS OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS  
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

**13 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Mr S Oliver and Mr R Sinclair.

#### 14 **MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 16 JULY, 2014**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 July, 2014 were agreed as a true record.

#### 15 **SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF VEHICLES BETWEEN TESTS**

Mr Aldersley raised a question about points being issued to drivers where safety inspections identified faults with the vehicle they were driving. It was explained that where faults were identified, the individual circumstances of the case were taken into account and points were only issued where it was reasonable to expect the driver to have been aware of the fault. The driver would have the right to appeal the issuing of points.

It was stated that, generally, vehicles were now in better condition when presented for testing than a few years ago, which it was felt was partly due to the potential for points to be issued acting as a deterrent. Maintaining public safety was a priority.

#### 16 **CHANGES TO THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY**

Further to Minute No. 7, and following the consultation period on the proposed changes to the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Policy, the Licensing Manager summarised the changes which had been agreed by the Council's Appeals and Regulatory Committee for implementation with effect from 1 November, 2014.

The changes covered the following issues:

- Operators to be allowed to advertise their own services on their vehicles, such as vacancies for drivers.
- Renewal applications to be accompanied by the vehicle V5 document.
- **Wheelchair accessibility** - all drivers to obtain one of the following qualifications if they are to drive a wheelchair accessible vehicle:
  - a) DSA wheelchair exercise;
  - b) An appropriate NVQ, such as:

- City & Guilds NVQ level 2, unit 228, Road Passenger Vehicle Driving (Taxi and Private Hire) (7439); or
- Perason Edexcel NVQ level 2, Road Passenger Vehicle Driving (Taxi and Private Hire) (QCF) module A/602/6061; or
- An equivalent NVQ from another provider.

c) Modules B1 and B2 of the Passenger Assistant Training Scheme (PATS).

Drivers to be given a period of six months to produce evidence they have obtained the qualification.

- **Suspension and revocation** - decisions to suspend or revoke to be made by authorised officers in consultation with the chair or vice-chair of the Appeals and Regulatory committee.
- **Length of insurance policy** - the minimum length of an insurance policy to be 3 months.
- **Test failures** - for the purpose of penalty points, the policy to apply if a vehicle is presented for test within 28 days of the previous licence having expired.
- Appeals against penalty points to be referred to the Environmental Health Manager instead of the head of service, reflecting recent organisational changes.
- The number of penalty points for smoking in a licensed vehicle to be reduced from 6 to 3.
- The use of e-cigarettes [e-cigs] in licensed vehicles to be prohibited.
- Further guidance relating to medical advice in respect of diabetes in accordance with updated DVLA guidance.

It was confirmed that information had been made available to trade representatives on the proposed changes and that there had been opportunity for them to submit comments during the consultation period, at the previous meeting, in writing or verbally.

The Council had received an indication of a desire to challenge through a judicial review the decision to set a minimum length for the period of insurance as three months, and the Council was currently taking legal

advice on this. This change had originally been suggested by some members of the trade, although it was recognised that other members were concerned that it would be unaffordable. The Licensing Manager undertook to notify drivers at the earliest opportunity if, following legal advice, it was decided to not introduce the three month minimum period of insurance from 1 November, 2014.

In respect of the wheelchair accessible qualifications, drivers would have a clear logo shown on their badge once they had qualified. It had been felt that six months was a reasonable time period for drivers to obtain a suitable qualification, noting that drivers already had a duty of care to their passengers.

## 17 **FEES AND CHARGES**

The Licensing Manager explained that the Council would be considering the setting of Licence and Registration fees and charges for 2015/16 during November/December. It was likely that an increase of at least 3% would be proposed, in order to enable the Council to recover the costs of providing the service.

The Licensing Manager would notify trade representatives of the proposed fees and charges once these were known, and there would be opportunity for representations to be submitted before a final decision was made.

## 18 **ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE LICENSING SECTION SINCE THE PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Licensing Manager submitted a brief report for information summarising key actions taken by Licensing during the previous three months. These included revocation of two driver's licences, suspension of two driver's licences, refusal by Committee of a driver's licence application and approval by Committee of a driver's licence application.

He explained that he planned to bring similar quarterly reports for information to future meetings of the Committee. These would not contain information identifying any individuals.

## 19 **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL ISSUES**

Further to Minute No. 9, Mr Tranter reported that the proposed changes in respect of taxi clearways and prohibition of waiting/loading in Chesterfield

town centre had been approved by the County Council Cabinet, excluding changes to the taxi rank on Knifesmithgate. The changes would be implemented over the next few months. He was looking at the use of finger posts to direct people to the taxi ranks, including at West Bars, and he would consult with trade representatives on how best to publicise these.

He explained that any cases of potential shared use of bus lanes by taxis would need to be considered on a case by case basis.

## 20 **POLICE ISSUES**

Inspector Turner provided crime figures for the period 1 July, 2014 to 30 September 2014 for the Chesterfield, Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Policing sections:-

- 15 occasions where the driver was the victim
- 1 occasion where a taxi company was the victim
- 4 occasions where a member of the public was the victim
- 2 occasions where the driver was an offender
- 1 crime was racially or religiously aggravated

Timing – 10 crimes were between 0000 hours and 0600 hours.

Violence against drivers – 1 robbery; 1 racially aggravated public order

Crime breakdown:

- 9 – making off without payment
- 4 – theft
- 2 – assault
- 1 – fraud
- 1 - robbery
- 1 – damage to vehicle
- 1 - damage
- 1 – public order

The figures showed a significant reduction in the number of reported incidents in Chesterfield since the previous quarter.

Inspector Turner referred to a campaign which he was planning to run in respect of the sexual exploitation of young people – ‘Say Something if

You See Something'. The campaign had been working with the hotel industry, and he would provide information for operators and drivers to encourage them to report any suspicious events.

In response to a question about Christmas drink driving campaigns it was agreed to enquire whether any posters or publicity information was available for operators through the Community Safety Department or multi agency group. Police Officers working in the town centre on the night time economy were briefed on working closely with partners, including taxi drivers.

**21 DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS DURING 2014/15**

It was agreed that the future meetings during 2014/15 would be held on:

Wednesday, 14 January, 2015

Wednesday, 15 April, 2015

commencing at 6.00 pm.