

TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 19th October, 2016

Present:-

Representing Chesterfield Borough Council:

Councillor K Miles (Chair)
 Councillor V Diouf
 Steve Ashby
 Trevor Durham
 Martin Key

Representing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade:

Stephen Aldersley
 Stephen Atkin
 Ann Dickens
 Chris Naylor
 Victoria Naylor
 Mandy Shaw
 Nisar Suleman

Representing Derbyshire County Council:

Simon Tranter

Peter Swallow, Chair, Destination Chesterfield +
 Ivan Fomin, Destination Chesterfield +
 Vic Risorto, Destination Chesterfield +
 Dominic Stevens, Destination Chesterfield +

Iain MacDonald, Vector Transport Consultancy ++

+ For Minute No. 15
 ++ For Minute No. 16

**12 DECLARATION 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 Councillor Caulfield, Chris Brown, Stephen Oliver and Inspector John Turner.

14 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 20 JULY, 2016

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 July, 2016 were agreed as a true record.

15 PROMOTING A MORE POSITIVE VIEW OF CHESTERFIELD

Peter Swallow, Chair of Destination Chesterfield, and the representatives of Destination Chesterfield explained how Destination Chesterfield was seeking to promote a more positive image of Chesterfield and to attract businesses and visitors to come to the town and to return, emphasising that the developments planned for Waterside and Peak Resort would provide opportunities for local businesses, including the taxi trade.

Destination Chesterfield representatives reported both positive and negative experiences of using taxis locally.

It was noted that some taxi drivers had undertaken the Chesterfield Ambassadors course a few years ago, which they were then able to highlight in promoting their business.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- Operators sought to maintain good standards in respect of the cleanliness of vehicles and the appearance and knowledge of drivers;
- Some individual hackney carriage drivers did not achieve the same standards in these respects;
- Some drivers coming in from outside the area did not have good local knowledge and there was some mistrust of drivers and vehicles from outside the area;
- It may be possible to improve drivers' standards if there were more potential drivers to choose from and it took less time to obtain a licence – it was noted that the application process and test had recently been amended to simplify the process whilst maintaining reasonable regulation and protection of the public;

- Clearer information for customers on how to complain about poor service could help to improve standards;
- Hackney carriages had to pay East Midlands Trains to use the rank at the railway station, but East Midlands Trains did not enforce any standards;
- Traffic management systems in the town centre made it difficult to get around;
- The physical environment between the station and the town centre was not attractive;
- It may be difficult to improve the attitudes of some long-time drivers.

It was recognised that further dialogue involving the taxi trade and Destination Chesterfield would be helpful to explore ways in which the image of the town could be improved and how the taxi trade could contribute to, and benefit from, this.

Trevor Durham agreed to discuss this further with Dominic Stevens and Mandy Shaw in order to develop an action plan for consideration at a future meeting.

The Chair thanked the representatives of Destination Chesterfield for attending the meeting.

16 HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

Further to Minute No. 7, Iain MacDonald from Vector Transport Consultancy explained that he was undertaking the hackney carriage unmet demand survey for the Council and that this included a questionnaire of the taxi trade, camera surveys and consultation with stakeholders and the public in order to determine if there was unmet demand for hackney carriages and how significant this was, particularly taking account of the needs of elderly and disabled users.

Arising from discussion the following points were raised:

- It was confirmed that the survey would help to identify whether there were sufficient rank spaces (currently 32) and if these were appropriately located;
- The location of the night-time rank on Stephenson Place seemed to work well, but a separate location was required for day-time ranks;
- The majority of hackney carriages worked from the railway station;

- In the event of future planning proposals affecting the existing taxi rank on Elder Way, Licensing would work with the trade in order to maintain the number of rank spaces;
- The Highways Authority was in the process of making a Traffic Regulation Order to restrict vehicle access and parking above the Market Hall and New Square.

The Chair thanked Iain MacDonald for attending the meeting.

17 DVSA TAXI DRIVER ASSESSMENTS

Trevor Durham explained that the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) would no longer be conducting taxi driver assessments for local authorities with effect from 1 January, 2017 and that they had already stopped taking bookings.

The Council was currently considering whether a suitable alternative provider of driver tests could be identified. It was noted that in the meantime there was discretion for drivers to be issued with a temporary licence for a maximum of three months whilst awaiting a test, following the recent revisions to the policy.

18 DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Further to Minute No. 8, Simon Tranter distributed plans to the three hackney carriage representatives of suggested bus lanes for use by hackney carriages. He confirmed that the current bid only related to use of bus lanes by hackney carriages, not private hire vehicles.

Simon asked the hackney carriage representatives to submit their comments to him, following which he would arrange to meet with them to discuss further.

19 POLICE ISSUES

In the absence of Inspector Turner, it was agreed to defer consideration of any issues to the next meeting.

20 **ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE LICENSING TEAM SINCE THE LAST MEETING**

Steve Ashby reported that during the past three months two driver licences had been revoked.

22 vehicles had failed the six-monthly vehicle test, although it had not been necessary to issue any penalty points

The tender for the test station contract had been issued with the deadline for submissions being 21 October, 2016.

It was now possible to accommodate up to eight applicants on each written test.

Informal action had been taken to advise drivers to not turn right out of Elder Way and this would continue to be monitored.