

TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 21st October, 2015

Present:-

Representing Chesterfield Borough Council:

Councillor Miles (Chair)
Councillor Caulfield
Mick Bargh
Emma Marriott
Russell Sinclair

Representing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade

Stephen Aldersley
Stephen Atkin
Jim Brookbank
Chris Brown
Ann Dickens
Victoria Naylor (Reserve)
Mandy Shaw

Representing Derbyshire County Council

Simon Tranter
Bridget Gould

Representing Derbyshire Constabulary

Inspector John Turner

**19 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS' AND OFFICERS' INTERESTS
RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations of interest were received.

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Vicki Diouf, Mr T Durham and Mr S Oliver.

21 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 JULY, 2015**

Subject to a correction to delete Jim Brookbank from the list of attendees, the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 July, 2015 were agreed as a true record.

22 **MATTERS ARISING ON THE MINUTES**

E Cigarettes

Further to Minute No. 9, it was noted that a recent Public Health England report had concluded that e-cigarettes could be a useful tool in helping smoking cessation. The Council's policy remained that smoking of e-cigarettes was not allowed in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, partly to avoid normalising smoking. It was confirmed that this would be reconsidered in the light of further guidance and regulations expected in 2016.

Concerns about Uber in Chesterfield

Further to Minute No. 10, it was reported that two Uber vehicles had been seen in Chesterfield. Mick Bargh confirmed that enforcement staff would look out for such vehicles.

Unlicensed Drivers driving Vehicles on the Public Highway

Further to Minute No. 11, Mick Bargh explained that there was an exception allowed within the legislation for a mechanic to drive a licensed vehicle on a test run, but not to drive it to a test station. Trade representatives were concerned that other licensing authorities allowed mechanics to drive licensed vehicles to test stations and requested that this be considered further. Mick Bargh agreed to discuss this further with operators and Trevor Durham.

Update on the Test Station Contract Tender Process

Further to Minute No. 13, Mick Bargh explained that procurement and legal checks were still being processed prior to tenders being invited for the test station contract.

Deregulation Act 2014

Further to Minute No. 14, Mick Bargh explained that two objections had been received to the proposed changes to the length of driver and operator licences and that these had been considered by the Council's Appeals and Regulatory Committee, which had approved the proposed changes to be implemented from 1 October, 2015 in accordance with the legislation.

23 **DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

Simon Tranter reported that a capital bid had been submitted for the 2016/17 capital programme for works to enable the use of bus lanes by hackney carriages. If the bid was successful, and subject to other factors not impacting the proposals (e.g. Northern gateway development), a Traffic Regulation Order would need to be processed, which would include consultation on each bus lane, followed by detailed design work. It was likely that implementation would take approximately 18 months in total.

The Police had confirmed that enforcement would be possible, although it was suggested that improved CCTV coverage should be considered to assist this in the event of hackney carriage use of bus lanes being introduced.

24 **PUBWATCH SCHEME**

Ann Dickens raised concerns that the monitoring of CCTV cameras could be reduced. Inspector Turner explained that staffing of CCTV was being reviewed with the aim of concentrating cover at the times of greatest activity, although cameras would continue to operate and record even when no staffing was available. He encouraged the trade to continue to report issues via the Pubwatch radios as this linked to Police on nighttime shifts and to other users of the scheme, such as door staff.

25 **CARRYING OF ASSISTANCE DOGS**

Councillor Miles raised the issue of the carrying of assistance dogs in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, following two recent cases of drivers being issued with penalty points for failure to carry assistance dogs. It was confirmed that there was a legal requirement for such dogs

to be carried, unless an exemption certificate had been issued to a driver on medical grounds.

26 ACTIONS TAKEN BY THE LICENSING TEAM SINCE THE LAST MEETING

Mick Bargh reported that during the past three months the Licensing Team had revoked two drivers' licences.

35 people had booked places on the first two training sessions for taxi drivers on child sexual exploitation. It was hoped to arrange more sessions based on feedback from these initial sessions. Council staff were also receiving this training.

35 vehicles had failed the vehicle test, with penalty points being issued in three cases.

27 POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Turner submitted the reported crime figures for the period 1 July, 2015 to 31 October 2015 for the Chesterfield and the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Policing sections, totalling 19 reports, including:

- 14 occasions where the driver was the victim
- 6 occasions where a member of the public was the victim
- 1 occasion where a taxi company was the victim
- 2 occasions which were racially or religiously aggravated.
- 1 occasion where the driver was a suspect

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

Violence against drivers – 4

Crime breakdown:

- 7 – making off without payment
- 5 – theft
- 2 – assaults on drivers
- 2 – public order offences
- 3 – damage to vehicle
- 1 – damage to vending machine
- 1 – sexual assault on passenger

The outcomes from investigation of these 19 reported crimes were:

- 3 – restorative justice
- 2 – fare paid, no further action
- 6 – arrested (5 enquiries ongoing, 1 insufficient evidence)
- 2 – investigations ongoing
- 10 – undetected.

The detection rate for these crimes was higher than the rate for crimes generally.

Inspector Turner would liaise with the Community Safety Team regarding publicity about safe travel over the Christmas and New Year period and encouraged operators to use the magnetic signs issued in previous years.