



CHESTERFIELD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

ANNUAL REPORT

2017/18

Taxi Consultative Committee

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1. Background

- 1.1 The Taxi Consultative Committee was established in March 2011 as an informal consultative body for the Council and the taxi trade locally in Chesterfield.
- 1.2 The purpose of the Committee is to meet with local representatives of the taxi trade to discuss matters of mutual concern and interest relating to the licensing of vehicles, drivers and operators.
- 1.3 The Committee's aim is to act as a representative body for the whole hackney carriage and private hire trade, ensuring consultation with all licence holders to enable the Council to make fully informed decisions, through the delegated authority granted to the Appeals and Regulatory Committee or appropriate Council officers.
- 1.4 The Committee's terms of reference are included in the Council's Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy. These terms of reference were most recently reviewed and updated in May, 2017.

2. Membership and Meetings

- 2.1 The Committee meets at least four times per year. During 2017/18 it met a total of five times – the nominations meeting in June, 2017, and then regular meetings in July and October, 2017 and January and April, 2018.

2.2 The Committee is composed of nine members - three hackney carriage licence holders (persons who drive or own a hackney carriage), three private hire licence holders (persons who operate or drive or own a private hire vehicle) and three elected members of the Council (selected in accordance with the political balance of the Council).

2.3 For 2017/18 the three elected members were:

Councillor Caulfield (Chair)
Councillor Burrows (Vice-Chair)
Councillor V Diouf

the three hackney carriage licence holders were:

Mr S Atkin
Mr C Brown
Ms M Shaw

and the private hire licence holders were:

Mr S Aldersley (until January, 2018)
Mr J Brookbank (from April, 2018)
Ms A Dickens
Mr D Madin

2.4 Following the review of the nominations process by the Committee in April, 2017 and the subsequent approval of the revised terms of reference by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in May, 2017, the appointment of the above hackney carriage and private hire licence holders in June, 2017 was made for a two year period.

- 2.5 In January, 2018 Mr S Aldersley resigned as a representative of private hire licence holders, and, following invitation of nominations for a replacement representative, Mr J Brookbank was appointed in April, 2018 until May, 2019.
- 2.6 In addition to the above nine members of the Committee, officers from the Council's Licensing and Legal sections and from the Police and Derbyshire County Council Highways department are invited to attend the Committee to advise the Committee members.
- 2.7 Attendance at meetings during 2017/18 has been good with average attendance as follows:

Elected members – 2.25 members per meeting

Hackney carriage representatives – 2.75 per meeting

Private hire representatives – 2.75 per meeting

3. Issues Considered

- 3.1 At each of its meetings the Committee considers the reported crime figures relating to the taxi trade in the Chesterfield and the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire policing sections, along with any other Police related matters, issues relating to Derbyshire County Council Highways and actions taken by the Licensing team since the previous meeting.
- 3.2 The taxi related crime figures varied between 23 and 39 in the four quarters of the year, with an average of 30 per quarter. The most common type of crime was passengers making off without payment.

- 3.3 The main Highways issue throughout the year has been the development of the proposal for the use of bus lanes in Chesterfield by hackney carriages, initially on an 18 months experimental period.
- 3.4 The Licensing team reported on the number of licences suspended or revoked and the number of vehicles which had failed the vehicle test in each quarter. It also reported on the test purchase operation carried out in September, 2017 to identify any private hire vehicles plying for hire, when no offences had been detected.
- 3.5 In addition to these standard items, the Committee has also considered the following issues during 2017/18:
- Discussion with a major private hire operator on matters of common concern;
 - Concerns relating to the issuing of vehicle licences and plates at the Eckington test station following the introduction of a new contract there in May, 2017;
 - The availability of appointments for applicants to undertake the knowledge test and the introduction of an electronic system of knowledge tests to improve availability and consistency;
 - A proposal from the hackney carriage representatives to increase the hackney carriage tariff;
 - Discussion with the Council's Health and Wellbeing Officer and the Dementia Friendly Communities Co-ordinator of the Alzheimer's Society on issues related to dementia and opportunities for operators and drivers to become more dementia friendly;
 - A draft revised version of the Licensing Policy which aimed to make the policy document easier to understand;
 - An update on the town centre developments at the Northern Gateway;

- Concerns regarding revised arrangements at Chesterfield Railway Station for buses and limited space for taxis dropping off passengers.

4. The Committee's Main Achievements / Outcomes

- 4.1 Information being made available for customers about how complaints could be submitted.
- 4.2 Greater availability of test appointments for applicants and the introduction of an electronic system of knowledge tests to speed up the process of applying for a licence.
- 4.3 Approval by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in November, 2017 of the proposal to increase the hackney carriage tariff.
- 4.4 Information made available to operators about dementia friendly initiatives and opportunities. Approval by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in February, 2018 of an exemption within the Licensing Policy for the display of dementia friendly signs where drivers had completed the appropriate awareness training.
- 4.5 Approval by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in April, 2018 of the revised Licensing Policy, resulting in the document being easier to understand.
- 4.6 Extended hours during which licence plates could be issued at the Eckington test station.
- 4.7 Development of a proposal to introduce an 18 months experimental period for the use of bus lanes in Chesterfield town centre by hackney carriages.

5 Conclusion

- 5.1 The Committee has continued to provide a forum for the consideration of matters of mutual concern relating to the hackney carriage and private hire trade locally, with input from the Council's Licensing team, the Police and the County Council Highways team.
- 5.2 The role of trade representatives in raising concerns, considering issues and communicating with other members of the trade more widely is a positive and valued contribution.
- 5.3 The Committee aims to continue to operate as an informal consultative body in the year ahead to enable relevant matters to be considered and to inform the practical application of licensing procedures and decisions to be taken by officers or formal decision making bodies.

Councillor Kate Caulfield
Chair, Taxi Consultative Committee
Chesterfield Borough Council