

TAXI CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 24th October, 2018

Present:-

Representing Chesterfield Borough Council:

Councillor K Caulfield (Chair)
Steve Ashby
Trevor Durham
Stephen Oliver

Representing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade:

Stephen Atkin
Jim Brookbank
Chris Brown
Ann Dickens
Mandy Shaw

Representing Derbyshire County Council:

Simon Tranter

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

No declarations of interest were received.

10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor J Burrows and Inspector D Nicholls.

11 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 4 JULY, 2018

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July, 2018 were agreed as a true record.

12 MATTERS ARISING

Further to Minute No. 7, it was confirmed that under the proposed amendments to the taxi policy, it would be a requirement for drivers to notify the test centre of which operator they were working for.

Trade representatives expressed concern that there was still a significant wait for new applicants to have their AA Drive Tech driving test. It was confirmed that this was being monitored and that the waiting time was currently about one month. Representatives were concerned that delays would lead to operators using drivers licensed in other authorities, who may not be familiar with the local area. It was noted that a private member's bill proposing a duty for licensing authorities to report concerns about out of area drivers was currently being considered in parliament.

13 POLICE ISSUES

Inspector Nicholls submitted the reported crime figures for the period 1 July to 30 September, 2018 for the Chesterfield and the Bolsover and North East Derbyshire Policing sections, totalling 21 reports, which included:

- 9 – making off without payment (7 unknown offenders; 2 known offenders with ongoing investigations)
- 4 – damage to vehicle (3 unknown offenders; 1 known offender)
- 3 – alleged theft by drivers (property left in taxis by customers not returned)
- 1 – theft from vehicle (window smashed)
- 1 – public order (abusive to driver – unknown offender)
- 1 – racial abuse (suspect identified and investigation ongoing)
- 1 – alleged sexual offence (case ongoing)
- 1 – threat made in taxi office (investigation ongoing)

14 DERBYSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Further to Minute No. 6, Simon Tranter reported that the revised signage for use of the bus lanes was almost complete.

He distributed plans for the proposed location of the taxi rank and daytime loading bays on Knifesmithgate. He agreed to calculate the number of rank spaces which would be available in comparison to those previously available on Elder Way, in order to enable more detailed consideration by representatives.

15 **PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING POLICY**

Further to Minute No. 7, details of the proposed amendments to the taxi licensing policy had been distributed to all licensed operators and drivers and published on the website for comment by 16 November, 2018. Any comments received would be considered by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the end of November, following which details of implementation would be confirmed.

It was noted that rank etiquette was already covered by the existing policy, and Trevor Durham agreed to ask enforcement staff to monitor this.

16 **REVIEW OF LICENCE AND REGISTRATION FEES 2019-20**

Trevor Durham presented a report regarding proposed revised licence and registration fees in respect of private hire and hackney carriage licensing for 2019/20. A 3% increase was suggested for all fees and charges in line with Council policy in order to maintain the current cost neutral position. The fees and charges had not been increased since 2016/17.

The proposed fees and charges had been approved for consultation by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee and any responses received to the public advertisement would be considered by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee in the New Year.

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

It was confirmed that all current drivers had now attended the child sexual exploitation (CSE) awareness sessions and that sessions for new applicants were now being delivered jointly with North East Derbyshire and Bolsover. It had been agreed that school transport escorts could attend these sessions.

During the previous three months two drivers' licences had been revoked and one driver had been suspended.

19 vehicles had failed the six-monthly vehicle test, although it had only been necessary to issue penalty points in two cases. Trade representatives expressed concern that the reporting of a multi-agency vehicle test operation earlier in October had given a misleading impression that there were problems with the majority of vehicles. The Chair requested that further details of this be provided to enable the situation to be clarified.

The additional staff in the licensing section had now been recruited, providing additional enforcement officer, counter assistant and licensing officer time.

It was noted that there had been some issues relating to the drop-off zone at the Royal Hospital and the Licensing Manager was liaising with the hospital's Facilities Manager to seek to address these.

Chris Brown referred to an accident which had occurred earlier that day involving a community transport bus working on a school transport contract, which raised concerns relating to the maintenance and servicing of such vehicles and whether the appropriate permits were correctly displayed. It was agreed that this would be further investigated with the Derbyshire County Council Transport Manager and the Office of the Traffic Commissioner in order to seek to ensure public safety.

Ann Dickens expressed concern that private hire vehicles were having to use the car park at the railway station to pick up bookings. It was noted that this was on private land, but Trevor Durham agreed that licensing would continue to monitor.