

## **TAXI CONSULTATIVE GROUP**

**Wednesday, 9<sup>th</sup> April, 2014**

Present –

### **Representing Chesterfield Borough Council**

Councillor Vicki Lang (Chair)  
Darran West – Head of Environment  
Trevor Durham - Licensing Manager  
Grace Dowson – Senior Licensing Officer  
Stephen Oliver – Assistant Solicitor  
Shirley Bates, Democratic Services Officer

### **Representing the Police**

Inspector John Turner

### **Representing Derbyshire County Council**

Simon Tranter - Traffic and Safety

### **Representing the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade**

David Hopton	Hackney Association and D&C Taxis
Eric Needham	Eric's Taxis
Jim Brookbank	Club
Scott Ashmore	Club
Ann Dickens	Central Cars
Mandy Briddon	Shaws Taxis
Steve Aldersley	A-Line Taxis

#### 41/13/14 **DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL OR PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS BY MEMBERS RELATING TO ITEMS ON THE AGENDA**

No declarations were received.

#### 42/13/14 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen and Burrows and Lee Wright, DCC.

#### 43/13/14 **WELCOME**

The Chair welcomed Inspector John Turner, who had replaced Inspector Steve Ball on this Group.

44/13/14 **MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January, 2014 were agreed as a true record.

45/13/14 **MATTERS ARISING ON THE MINUTES**

Town Centre Road Closures

Inspector John Turner reported that a trial of the removal of the restrictions within the Town Centre Road Closure had been carried out at the end of January/early February, in consultation with the Borough Council.

There had been no significant problems and no collisions, either vehicular or involving the public.

This would continue to be monitored to the end of June, when the Order expired.

The Road Closure Order had been made on the grounds of violence and disorder and in view of the reduction in these, the Police would not be applying for a renewal at the end of June.

An order could not be made on the grounds of public safety.

Ann Dickens asked who was monitoring the safety of pedestrians resulting from the closure. She referred to a recent incident where a pedestrian was almost involved in a collision with a car, not a taxi. She also asked for close monitoring of the situation over the Easter period.

Ann reported that Inspector Ball was to meet with representatives of Pubwatch before removal of the restrictions and asked for feedback on this. Inspector Turner confirmed that Inspector Ball had met with Pubwatch on the 15 February and agreed to report the result of that meeting to the next meeting.

Inspector Turner reiterated that an Order such as this could not be made on health and safety concerns. There was no legislation available to make an Order on these grounds.

He also confirmed that he would monitor the situation closely over Easter.

Eric Needham raised concerns that if accidents involving the public did occur, the responsibility laid with taxi drivers and requested that access be for taxis only.

An incident was reported regarding non-removal by the Police of a car parked in the flow of traffic on Stephenson Place. Inspector Turner reported that this incident could have occurred when there were more urgent priorities within the town centre.

### Taxi Ranks

Concerns were raised at the long process involved in changes to the taxi ranks.

Simon reiterated that there was a long process to follow. West Bars was being implemented. The other issues had received objections and therefore had to be reported back to the relevant Committee and would then need to be readvertised. The process was long but was continuing.

It was hoped that if there were no objections, the remaining issues would be agreed towards the end of April/May.

Grace asked that the County Council liaise with the Licensing Section when any works were to commence so that this could be passed onto the drivers.

### Future Agenda

The Chair requested that, in future, a written report be provided for despatch with the agenda, including any issues raised by the hackney carriage/private hire drivers. Support for this would be provided by the Council's Democratic Services Unit if required.

### **AGREED –**

1. That Inspector Turner report back on the meeting held with Pubwatch on 15 February, 2014.
2. That a written report on progress on the taxi ranks be reported to the next meeting.

### 46/13/14/ **UPDATE ON THE FORMULATION OF THE TOWN CENTRE ACTION PLAN**

The Group were informed that the Town Centre Action Plan had not yet been compiled. At the last meeting, Katy Marshall, Policy Officer, had given a presentation on the equalities audit of "A" Boards and had reported that a working group was to be established to consult on the Plan.

It had since been established that there was a working group, the Town Centre Forum, and representatives from this Group were welcome to be part of the Group.

**AGREED –**

That Ann Dickens be put forward as the Group's representative on the Town Centre Forum.

47/13/14 **ACCIDENT RATES FOR TAXIS AND BUSES**

This item had been included on the agenda at the request of Councillor Hawksworth. It was agreed that this item be moved to the next business meeting.

48/13/14 **CRIME FIGURES ON TAXI RELATED CRIME**

Inspector Turner provided crime figures for the period 1 January 2014 to 31 March 2014:-

23 occasions where the driver was the victim  
2 occasions where a taxi company was the victim  
1 occasion where a member of the public was the victim  
0 occasions where the driver was an offender  
5 crimes were racially or religiously aggravated

Timing – 21 crimes were between 0000 hours and 0600 hours.

Violence against drivers – 7 assaults, 3 threatening behaviour, 1 robbery

Crime breakdown:

8 – making off without payment  
4 – damage to vehicle  
4 – common assault  
3 – actual bodily harm  
2 – actual bodily harm racial/religious  
2 – threatening behaviour racial/religious  
1 robbery  
1 wounding  
1 threatening behaviour

Inspector Turner was asked whether the opening hours of licensed premises could affect the amount of incidents and whether premises could be closed down, if this was the case.

Inspector Turner reported that evidence of violence and disorder would need to be gathered before an application to curtail opening hours could be made to the Council.

Taxi representatives expressed concern that there were no Police contact numbers to report incidents. Inspector Turner urged them to use the 101 or 999 numbers.

#### **AGREED –**

That a further report on crime figures be provided to the next meeting of the Group.

#### **49/13/14 VIOLENCE TO TAXI DRIVERS**

Incidents of non payment of fares were reported to the meeting and the fact that drivers did not report incidents, as they lost earnings whilst waiting for the Police to attend.

Inspector Turner was asked whether there could be a faster process or whether the matter could be dealt with the next day. The difficulty with this was that if the matter was dealt with the following day, then drivers had been informed that the matter became a civil matter.

Inspector Turner reported that incidents were given either “Immediate” or “Priority” ratings and were dealt with when resources were available.

It was reported that when a beat officer attended at an incident, the fare was often paid.

It was suggested that drivers be urged to obtain payment in advance.

Inspector Turner urged drivers to continue to report incidents to see if beat officers could attend on site to rectify the matter.

Clarification was sought on the installation of CCTV in vehicles.

Grace reported that CCTV could be installed but the Licensing Section must be notified. Currently some drivers used fake CCTV as a deterrent.

If CCTV was installed then advance notice must be given in the vehicle. Drivers would need to comply with Home Office guidance, for example, making passengers aware of filming.

## **AGREED –**

That an advice note be drawn up for drivers relating to these issues.

### **50/13/14 WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBILTiy EXERCISE**

Grace reported that, in liaison with the Derbyshire Mobility Shop and Stagecoach, a wheelchair loading exercise had been undertaken in March. Of the 8 tested, 2 drivers were unable to load. They were given 14 days to rectify the situation and both passed on retest. Further exercises would be undertaken.

The Council were once again requested to suspend any driver who failed the test, or refused a wheelchair passenger.

Grace reported that there was an enforcement protocol within the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Policy. If a driver refused a wheelchair passenger, under the penalty points system, 10 points would be issued. Once a driver had received 13 points, then he/she would be referred to Committee and could face suspension.

Grace also reported that all new drivers were required to pass the DSA test, which included wheelchair loading, but existing drivers did not.

The Council were reviewing the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Policy and it was suggested that consultation should be undertaken on the inclusion of a wheelchair competency test as part of this.

A suggestion was also made for drivers to provide proof of competency when applying for a licence.

David Hopton asked whether the Mobility Shop was qualified to run this course and Grace agreed to find this out for the next meeting.

Mandy Briddon felt that it was also the responsibility of the owners of firms to ensure that drivers were competent.

Mandy also raised the issue that drivers should be able to complete the DSA test, which contained training on wheelchair loading, in Derbyshire, as this was not currently available.

## **AGREED**

That progress on the review of the Policy be reported to future meetings.

### 5113/14 **SAFETY INSPECTIONS OF VEHICLES BETWEEN TESTS**

This would be put on the agenda for the next business meeting.

### 5213/14 **ITEMS FOR NEXT MEETING**

#### **Standing Items**

DCC Issues

Police Issues – to include crime figures from April to June.

#### **Other Items**

Accident Data – Councillor Hawksworth's request

Revision of the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver's Policy

Safety Inspections on Vehicles between tests

### 5313/14 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 9 June 2014 – Appointment of Representatives

Wednesday, 16 July, 2014, commencing at 6 p.m.