

Notes of the Trade Liaison Meeting
30th January 2018,10.00am
Large Conference Room, Manor House

Present:

Mumtaz Mohammed (MM) - BCC, Chair
Chris Neville (CN) – BCC, Head of Licensing
Shawn Woodcock (SW) – BCC, Licensing
David Clayfield (DC) – BCC, Transportation
Dave Humpherson (DH) – West Midlands Police
Mohammed Rashid (MR) - Birmingham and Solihull Taxi Alliance & Elite Training
Sajid Mahmood (SM) - RMT
Rory McLaren (RM) – Elite Radio Cars Ltd
Amjid Afzal (AA) – A K Executive Cars
Kieran Harte (KH) - Uber
Mozafar Ali (MA) - RMT
Vusumuzi Moyo (VM) - RMT
M Farooq (MF) - RMT
Lee Denny (LD) – E.Passenger
Clive Thompson (CT) – BCC, Transportation
Rebecca Wilson (RW) - Notes

Apologies:

Martin Walker (MW) – Star Cars
David Wilson (DW)– Star Cars / A-Z Licensing
Imran Akram (IA) - TOA
Manawar Hussain (MH) - TOA
Chris Arundel (CA) – BCC, Licensing

2. Notes and Matters Arising from Meeting held on 29th November 2017

CN noted that there were four RMT representatives present at the meeting. The Terms of Reference (TOR) state only two from each organisation are allowed. MM agreed the four representatives could remain, but only two would be allowed at future meetings.

MR asked had the notes of the meeting of 25th September been ratified? CN replied they had been agreed at the last meeting and put on the Licensing webpage.

MR stated that he felt the consensus of Reps was to retain the word “elected” (member) in relation to the TOR. He had requested an amendment to the notes which asked for the word “elected” to be removed – yet this was not done. CN

replied that amendments to both the notes and TOR were to be raised at meetings, and done in agreement with the group.

MM suggested MR bring up TOR under AOB

The minutes were agreed as correct and true reflection

Actions:

Page 2: PH in Bus Lanes. MR implied details on the consultation had not been circulated. CN to chase up with David Harris. **ACTION: CN**

Page 3: DH had not circulated information on cancellation fees issued to HC from outside of Birmingham. CN to chase up. **ACTION: CN**

CN advised that DH had attended a meeting with the Cabinet Member regarding PH in bus lanes. DH is preparing a briefing note which he will share at the next Trade Meeting.

Page 5: DC to give an update under Item 3 - Transportation.

Page 6: Vehicle age policy. CN put forward two dates for a meeting to be held with Trade Reps. It was agreed 1pm-3pm on Tuesday 13th February (Small Conference Room, Manor House). CN highlighted that only two reps per organisation should attend the meeting. RW will send out an invite. **ACTION: RW**

Page 7: Vehicle Emissions (DW query). CN confirmed he has checked the Committee Report which refers to vehicles that do not meet the required necessary standard.

Page8: Breakdown of licensing costs. CN confirmed that a meeting was held two weeks ago.

Page 9: Minutes of meeting. CN had approved the notes of the September meeting in line with comments made at the November meeting. They have now been placed on the Licensing website. He acknowledged MR had raised discrepancies about what was agreed around TOR, and that this was to be discussed under AOB.

Page 10: Police engagement with PH and HC. IM to be invited to next meeting. **ACTION: RW**

Page 10: App users not using meter. SW had passed this issue onto an officer to investigate. A response will be then provided to the complainant.

MR made reference to some amendments raised by TOA (via email) to the notes of the November meeting. These were not shown in the notes. MM stated as TOA were not here to raise an objection, we were unable to discuss this further.

CN said that he felt it was reasonable for MR to raise issues on behalf of TOA. He acknowledged that he had seen the email, which had requested the notes reflected that TOA had walked out of the meeting "in protest". CN added that the notes were intended to capture the general tenure of the discussion, not the whole conversation. The notes reflect that they walked out of the meeting.

MR stated that amongst other items, he had requested TOR as an agenda item but it was not on. MM stated that if someone legitimately asked for an item to be put on agenda, it should be. CN apologised for the oversight, and suggested this be discussed under AOB.

MR stated at this point he was considering not attend future meetings

3. Transportation

Changes to Broad Street

DC stated that Amy Walker from Midland Metro Alliance was to have attended the meeting to give an update. However she was now unable to attend so he would give an update.

- Meetings were held with Trade Reps last week (only 2 came).
- Info was sent out to Trade Reps and others last week.
- First tranche of traffic works came into force yesterday (traffic lights near Bishopsgate Street). These will be removed when the Indoor Athletics Championships takes place beginning of March and will be reinstated thereafter.
- Police and various agencies will monitor over weekends, there will also be Marshalls around.
- Pick up areas for HC have been introduced in Cambridge, Bridge and Bishopsgate Streets.
- PH have been stopped access, as allowing them will lead to increase in traffic.
- Holloway Head. Temporary traffic lights were removed over Christmas, works ongoing now. There will be two closures at Holloway Head – both late pm / early am.
 - 4th–8th Feb (late pm / early am) closure of Holloway Circus roundabout - Holloway Head side of road for resurfacing.

- 11th -15 Feb roundabout will be shut - Smallbrook Queensway side (late pm / early am). Extensive diversions will be put on.

MA said that the traffic lights in Hill St / Navigation St sometimes freeze. DC replied that a permanent setting will be put in place to rectify this.

AA asked why is there limited access for legitimately booked PH to pick up on Broad Street? DC stated this is to lessen traffic (if normal vehicles see PH going through they will follow). The advice is for PH to pick up in the side streets.

AA made reference to traffic issues at Holloway Head. DC replied that there was a reliance on contractors to report back on such issues.

4. **Specific Issues**

Hackney Carriages Dual Licences

CN confirmed that a report has been prepared, and will be submitted to March LPPC.

LD asked would it be possible for HC drivers to freeze their licence for 1–2 years and claim it back when they could afford a newer, CAZ compliant vehicle. In the meantime, they could apply for a PH licence to tide them over. CN replied there would be a lot of implications to this. However he will look into it.

ACTION: CN

LPG Conversion Funding:

CN stated he had attended a meeting last week that looked at these issues across the country. He reported the Government have set up a unit which is responsible for the approval retro-fit devices. The only one so far is LPG, however they estimate that within 2 months they will start to approve retro-fit products. CN reported there is no further funding for LPG at present. He will give an update at the next meeting.

ACTION: CN

MR raised a query about the insurers of LPG converted vehicles not paying out following accident. CN replied that affected drivers could write to Licensing to request a letter confirming the details of the conversion.

Following a query from MA, CN added that we need an overarching policy that conversions have to be done to LPGA standard. If drivers use a garage unable to provide LPGA certificate, there would be concerns that the work had not been done

properly. SW suggested if drivers have a garage in mind, they should come to Licensing to check whether the garage is LPGA accredited.

SM made reference to the 65 vehicles already converted through the LPG scheme. The conditions state that any repairs must be carried out at the garage where the conversion took place. Many drivers have problems getting their vehicles into the garage and have to wait weeks. CN will raise this with Sylvia Broadley and ask her to liaise with the garage. **ACTION: CN**

Meter Testing

CN confirmed he had sent the total cost of meter testing to TOA - he will also send it to MR. **ACTION: MR**

MR asked had all the affected drivers received a refund? CN replied those that came forward to tell us they were charged twice were refunded.

Complaints Procedure – BCC Councillors and Officers

MR stated he had concerns that complaints about drivers remained on their file. However complaints against BCC officers do not. He felt this was double standards. He asked what is the process for complaints against BCC officers?

CN replied that this could be done with the Your Views portal on the BCC website (https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20208/contact_us/335/comments_compliments_and_complaints). CN then explained the process.

CN explained that complaints against drivers are kept on record so that Licensing Sub Committee can refer to them at hearings.

MA asked what is the procedure for complaints regarding Traffic Wardens? CT acknowledged that he had received a couple, which were passed to the Parking Enforcement Manager to investigate. CT to chase these up. **ACTION: CT**

Update on Trade Reps Details

MR stated he felt the meeting circulation list needed reviewing as there were people who no longer attended or were deceased. CN replied he and RW had recently cleansed the circulation list; there should only be the people who regularly attend the meetings.

MR asked can we see the attendees' email addresses. CN replied many Reps would not be happy with this. MR then requested a list of the names only of Trade Reps or organisations invited to meetings. CN agreed this could be provided.

ACTION: CN

Newsletter

CN confirmed he will attempt to get out a Newsletter within 4 weeks. MR said he would like assurance that they will come out on a regular basis. CN replied that the final hard copy will be sent out with a note saying future newsletters would be online.

MA asked could it be re-iterated that PH are not allowed to park outside nightclubs etc in next newsletter.

AA asked whether Euro 4 Euro 6 engines could be expanded on in the newsletter.

SM suggested adding a list of LPGA accredited garages to the newsletter and on the website. CN agreed to this. RM suggested adding a disclaimer stating conversions carried out at non-LPGA accredited garages are done at drivers' own risk.

ACTION: CN

Engine Sizes

CN advised that a working group meeting of Councillors and officers had been convened to discuss engine size issues. The Councillors agreed for a report to be submitted to March meeting. Following this, the proposals will be put out for consultation and another report submitted in June/ July. The proposal is that we would licence any vehicle, as long as it has the necessary dimensional requirements, passenger amount etc. The requirement of having 1.6 litre engine vehicle or bigger would be removed. This would also include electric and hybrid vehicles.

VM queried what is the procedure for requesting a policy change to increase seat capacity (from 6 to 7)? CN replied this would be down to the dimensional standards in that we specify how large a seat can be.

Euro 4 and Euro 6 Engines

AA felt his query had been answered by the newsletter going out.

Taxi Fares

It was noted there was still no news on the change of tariff proposal put forward by TOA. CN stated there was a dispute over whether Licensing or Cabinet Member.

He was aware that not all trade want an increase, so some consultation with wider trade was required. He will look to progress this. **ACTION: CN**

TOR

Discussion ensued around whether Reps had agreed to retain or remove the word “elected” (member) from TOR at previous meetings.

CN was of the opinion that 1 or 2 Reps wanted it left in, but the majority didn't. He stated as Head of Licensing, he would not be in favour of the word “elected” as it would mean no operators could attend and trade meeting would be very small. It would also exclude a large chunk of PH representation.

MR agreed that operators should be allowed to attend. However, he was concerned feedback from non-trade reps could influence decisions made by LPPC.

SW asked of those in the room, how many were elected? MR, VM and AA confirmed they were elected. This showed that only MR, TOA Reps x 2 and RMT Reps x2 would be the attendees.

VM commented that Reps attending should be there to represent drivers, not just for their own purpose or to make themselves look good.

As Chair, MM declared that he was happy with the TOR, felt they didn't need changing and that we shouldn't restrict access to this meeting. MM added that there is no obligation that the LA takes on board what people suggest. It is a consultation process, not a decision making process. If we got to a situation when it became unattainable, we can revisit TOR.

It was therefore noted that the TOR will remain as they are.

Vehicle Signage Update

CN stated that the consultation had now closed. He was attending a meeting that afternoon with CA and SW to review the responses. 112 responses had been received, and from this a report will be prepared for March LPPC. The responses will be attached as separate appendix with the report.

MR commented that the Trade Reps had agreed the names of drivers should be removed. He was concerned LPPC may not take into account Trade Reps' comments, and base it on responses from individual drivers. CN suggested the Reps' responses could be provided separately from individual drivers' responses.

MR stated he would like to know why there was a requirement to add the names of drivers in the first place. CN replied that he was not in post when it was agreed, however he would attempt to find the committee report in which this was approved.

ACTION: CN

MF asked would it be possible to put forward a petition from drivers that don't want their names included on the signage? CN replied the consultation period had now ended, but we can't stop a petition being submitted.

PHVs in bus lanes

DH has met with Cabinet Member for Transport and is drawing up document to be shared at next meeting.

Penalty Points Scheme

SW advised that a report is due to go to February LPPC. The report will be available on the Birmingham City Council website next week. Following this, it will go out for consultation on Be Heard.

5. Enforcement Statistics (CN)

Statistics for September – October 2017 previously circulated with the agenda.

6. Any Other Business

DH stated HC drivers were starting to form a rank at the bottom of the ramp by McDonalds in Corporation Street. If they continue to do so, they will receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

CN confirmed he had met with Southside Business District, who were requesting feedback from Reps on the benefit of taxi marshals.

The general consensus was that they bring rationality and order to the taxi ranks. They also make it safer for passengers when using taxis.

CT confirmed he had received 3 request forms for new ranks. He will process these in the normal way and report back at next meeting. **ACTION: CT**

VM thanked MM for the good job he is doing in chairing the meetings.

MA referred to the two taxi ranks near Holliday Inn, Hill Street. The signage there states one rank. CT will chase this up. **ACTION: CT**

It was also highlighted that Holliday Inn is allowing cars to park on the forecourt. CT will pass this information on to parking enforcement. **ACTION: CT**

DH pointed out that the sign on Bennetts Hill had been knocked over. CT will put this on system. **ACTION: CT**

LD asked for clarification that when HC do a job on account, it should be charged at meter tariff. He was aware that some were charging more on account since 2011. SW will raise this with Procurement section. **ACTION: SW**

AA requested enforcement spot checks around Bordesley Green / Small Heath. SW will speak to DH who organises these. **ACTION: SW**

7. **Date and Time of Next Meeting**

28th March 2018, 10am - LCR Manor House