

Minutes of Private Hire Meeting – 9TH September 2015

Present

(CS)	Carol Stos	Licensing Manager
(MB)	Matthew Bibby	Licensing Support & Systems Officer (Note Taker)
(SD)	Simon D'Vali	Highways
(PN)	Pervez Naik	Keighley Private Hire Association
(SH)	Stuart Hastings	Keighley Private Hire Association
(KS)	Khurram Shehzad	Bradford Private Hire Liaison Service
(NA)	Nadeem Ahmed	Independent Private Hire Association of Bradford

1) Welcome, Introductions & Apologies

The meeting was opened at 10.30am by Officers.

There were apologies from:

Saj Akbar	Bradford Private Hire Liaison Service
Nasa	Independent Private Hire Association of Bradford

2) Last Minutes

There was just the outstanding issue of the leaflets regarding seating.

Action: Service to conclude the leaflet and issue

3) Highways Update

A response to the previously asked bus lane / bus gate question was answered in full on the August minutes. However, since that time there have been some further developments on that subject. There has been a meeting with Cllr Val Slater, SD and a couple of members of the trade. This was related to access to Church Bank which is currently classified as a bus only street. PH trade wish to be able to use Church Bank.

Currently all matters relating to exploring the future of church bank are all at an early discussion stage. A new access order would have to be created allowing usage for vehicles between for example 10pm and 6am. There would need to be consideration / comment provided by the Police / Fire / Ambulance too. The road narrows considerably at the bottom end and therefore any parking contraventions or stopping could lead to problems for emergency services. Other things to be considered would potentially be the blocking up of junctions near Stott Hill.

If any changes are made there would then be a settling down period of around a month and then if there were problems then Officers would be spoken to with a view of altering / restricting again as necessary.

There is now dialogue open between the trade and senior council members. If anyone is having problems contacting Chris Bedford then they could copy Cllr Slater in to email communications. Highways officers will get back to the trade but do have an enormous amount of emails to pick up every day / week so please be patient.

Sheffield is now allowing certain authorised vehicles such as bikes and motorcycles to use bus lanes. There is currently no legislation about this authorisation so it is believed that Sheffield has applied to DFT (Dept for Transport) for an early start to effectively trial this usage. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) is being tasked with looking at bus lanes. There are many things to consider including safety; enforcement; and holding up of vehicles in such lanes should alterations be made regarding current usage. There would also have to be a change to current TRO which would bring in the issues surrounding costs.

Simon is road safety lead for West Yorkshire. He also reminded everyone that currently bus journey times are not affected by HC vehicles or cyclists being in the lanes.

The trade reps felt that with only a percentage of the vehicles working at any time there should be no negative impacts on bus lane usage with PH using them. It was pointed out that PH vehicles also transport medical supplies and people who are poorly etc as part of hospital transports. Using bus lanes also saves money for the public on journey time and distance in some cases.

There was confusion as to why there is the need for a 24 hour bus lane, as on Manchester Road. In the early hours of the morning the roads are clear.

Action: Simon will look at the orders behind the Manchester Road and other 24 hour bus lanes and take the issue to the WYCA.

4) Reminder about Cllr Val Slater meeting – 5th October

The next meeting is to be held Monday 5th October at City Hall

KS asked if specific minutes were produced. Officers explained that as we had not organised or chaired the meeting we had specifically not published any summary. There was however a list of key actions; such as communication update; clarification of officer responsibilities; workflow processes.

Questions were then asked around whether future summaries will be produced, who will do this, will they be available for public to view; if so, whereabouts! (Council website)

5) CSE

There were a number of concerns surrounding the issuing of formal warnings to operators that did not comply with the CSE requests. The initial CSE information was posted out in June and this was followed by emails to Operators, again in June. Checks from the enforcement officers showed that the majority of operators had not complied so officers rang a large percentage of operators in August to ask them to comply and notify the service within 24 hours. A handful of Operators did not do this and appropriate action is now being taken. This is in the form of a 21 day suspension notice.

The service reminded representatives that Operators were asked to complete 'a reasonable request' from the service this is a legal requirement which is prosecutable if operators continue to not comply.

Some of the trade feel that a more educational approach should have been taken by the council, in a similar vain that the council asked operators to come in and sign for conditions books. Also some drivers don't have a deep enough understanding of the language to interpret the information correctly.

Officers explained that the whole issue of CSE is extremely important, if operators did not understand what they were being asked to do, then this should have been communicated to the service at the time, there were a small number of operators who thought the Council should have provided the leaflets. It was explained that operators are expected to be able to communicate to all the drivers, that they are businesses and should have print facilities. This may mean using a third party to facilitate printing. Operators should ensure their drivers and staff understand the information that is given to them. Some operators have excellent systems in place whereby they give their driver's inductions and go through important information with their drivers. All drivers' refresher training now includes a module that includes CSE.

It was explained that the CSE campaign should be promoted in a positive and educational way. It is aimed at informing operators and drivers about what may well be going on around them and that being aware of the signs and reporting anything suspicious may well prevent a child from being abused / exploited in some way. It relies on operators communicating this important message to their drivers positively and enthusiastically. Becoming involved in this way gives a clear message to the public that the trade are doing what they can to protect children in our society by being aware of what to look out for and reporting anything suspicious to the Police. It is reasonable to expect that any trade reps being approached about this should also re-iterate the importance of the campaign and that it should be taken onboard in a positive way.

Additional Business:

Conditions Proposal

A proposal was put forward by 1 association to look at the vehicle policy. There has been an issue with a vehicle that has a rear step that scrapes on the road. The trade reps believe and would like to propose that there be consideration given to not having a step as mandatory on an exit that is primarily emergency only.

Officers thanked the trade for that proposal and agreed to take forward although items such as this are most likely to be dealt with as a request to depart from the specification within a given circumstance rather than a change to the whole specification.

Action – Looking at specification/policy

Operator Association

The purpose of the Operator Association was also questioned as Operators / Drivers is seen as the same thing by many of the trade. KS said that when he comes to the meeting he represents drivers and about 20 operators. He works closely with these operators.

There were then discussions about how often representative meetings might be held, whether they are monthly, 6 weekly; or bi monthly for example. It was asked if Operator Association meetings would be the same.

Action – frequency of meetings

Officers explained that the initial operator association meeting, to be held at the end of September will establish initial interest and the ways in which such an association might work in the future. It is very much an introductory meeting.

An invite letter has been sent to the associations who declared interest. The meeting date is 30th September at City Hall, 9.30am – 11.30am. Those parties who will attend have been asked to provide agenda points if they have any.

Responses from Operators should be received by 18th September