

Operator Business Meeting

City Hall – 15th February 2017, 10.30am – Summary of meeting

1) Introductions / Apologies

Councillor Ferriby, portfolio holder opened the meeting.

Apologies had been passed to the service on behalf of LEAP who had been unable to attend.

2) Previous Minutes

The list of actions from the October 26th meeting was read out. All actions had been completed as stated below.

- List of NPT Inspectors – sent via email 19th November 2016
- Proposed Conditions – Sent out on 19 November 2016
- Dates sent to confirm closure dates – multiple communications were sent throughout December and January and were loaded also on to the website.
- Date of next meetings – On website under the Operator Association section.

3) WY Police – Updates – Police

An update was provided re the previous issues at Holmewood in which Taxi's, PH Vehicles and buses had been subjected to attacks and 'stoning' in previous months. The Police were reported that since November things have improved significantly and crime rates have dropped significantly in the area.

There were allegations of robberies from Holmewood which Police have looked in to. Their research shows no crimes of such nature had been reported in the Holmewood or Bierley areas.

Police and Officers reminded the trade that issues should be reported. Once reported a crime reference number is provided to the complainant. When a customer refuses to pay, it is a criminal matter and the Police can and will take various actions to assist drivers.

If there is a dispute of fares, that is a civil matter.

When there are issues, the police can generate a form and the driver has to sign the form regarding the money owed. The customer then has 28 days to pay and sign the form. If the customer refuses to pay and sign the police initiate a prosecution.

The Police thanked the trades for their help and encouraged them to report all issues and to gain crime numbers so that can investigate accordingly. They very much appreciated the positive working relationship with the Operators.

4) Communications / Training

- Training

The training condition has been in since 2013. The deadline for passing training was 31st Dec 2016. Since January around 2 dozen drivers have been issued with 21 day suspension notices. They have 21 days to pass the training from the date the 21 day is issued or they will have their licence suspended. Training should be booked by the Operator via training department be contacting 01274 437967 or emailing fts.training@bradford.gov.uk

- Closure

Lots of information was circulated on the closure. It was evident that many operators did a great job in communicating to their driver's. Thanks to you for this. Several operators did not do such a good job and there has been service disruption since the service reopened with longer than normal waiting times. Things are returning to normal but the trade were reminded to try and book appointments where possible.

An Operator commented that he had an appointment for his vehicle test but then had to wait several hours to book his plate. Operators were encouraged to make appointments where possible to alleviate the queue time. Agenda point 6 covers more about the future of the service regarding appointments and other online things.

- Paperless future

In the last meeting officers spoke about a paperless future for saving fees and the environment and forgot to minute it – our apology. Officers re-iterated again and will present future meetings on the laptop and television screen. Copies of past minutes are on the website for anyone who wishes to print their own copies.

- Ambassadors and World Host

An Ambassador scheme. Similar to the above, had been trialled with HC side of the trade previously. The new scheme has been communicated to colleagues internally within the council and will be presented as an opportunity to the trade also. It is an excellent and positive way to promote the district and has potential to increase business. More will follow on this subject.

5) Consultation / Feedback/Results from Snap

Officers spoke about the consultation, using the Snap Survey tool, on the recently proposed condition changes. There were 8 questions and despite their being over 7000 licences in the trade, only 126 responses were received.

Regarding operators, only 9 completed the survey, out of 108 operator companies that are currently licensed. A full report of the figures will be circulated.

An Operator said he felt the survey had been hard to find. Officers explained that communication had been sent with instructions and that the web has been designed to

show all the latest monthly updates on the strap line at the top of the page. The banner of that strap line is coloured to draw additional attention. Officers are happy to work further with the trade and Operators are encouraged to email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk to receive further guidance on the website or to offer some suggestions that the service could consider for the future.

Several Operators commented on the CCTV proposal, some in favour and some against due to the potential high spec and costs that. Some final research has to be done on the CCTV proposal and will be updated on as and when more information is available.

Action: Officers to issue the full summary of results with the summary of the meeting

6) Licensing Updates

The focus was around IT future developments.

- Online Payments

Online payments are in the final stage of internal testing for vehicles. If any Operator wishes to be part of trials please email the service. Paying for vehicles online will save visits to the counter or save time waiting on the phone. Once a transaction is made by the customer the service will do back office checks and then ring the applicant back to arrange the test.

- Online Renewals

A first draft has been received from the company who are supplying this technology. This will mean that for renewals and new applications a person will be able to apply online and send necessary paperwork through to the service online. Cases will then be dealt with in the office and customers contacted by office staff at appropriate times in the process. The service is working with West Yorkshire

- Online Appointments – New System (Council wide)

The HCPH service is moving towards the Council's widely used ticket machine that is currently undergoing an upgrade. The current product that has been in place for the last couple of years has been unable to cope with the requirements of the service. Officers apologised for the inconvenience caused by a product which ultimately proved to be not fit for purpose.

Action for Operators: If anyone would like to trial the online payments with the service please email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk before 10th March 2017.

7) Enforcement Updates

Vehicle Pass / Fail rates were discussed. Third quarter figures were provided. Annual test pass results were 66%. This was an increase from the previous quarter. Random test results pass rates were 65% and this was also an increase from the previous quarter.

Enforcement officers are working with Operators to continue to advise on correct practice for are taking actions against operators who fail to adhere to policy terms and conditions.

Operator Attendance at 2016 meetings – Currently being reviewed and will be fed back to Operators.

Several Operators believed that as they are not mechanics they should not be responsible for vehicle maintenance around the underside of the vehicle. Officers clarified that there is no expectancy to be mechanically competent but there must be evidence of a suitable process in place concerning mechanical maintenance.

There was also confusion in that several Operators stated they should not receive letters regarding minor points. Officers clarified that letters are issued for serious and dangerous faults, not minor points (unless there are multiple minor points which show the vehicle hasn't been checked).

If an MOT has been conducted within a fortnight of a vehicle inspection at Shearbridge and the vehicle fails the inspection, DVSA are contacted to look at possible action against the MOT garage.

Enforcement officers work with Operators / Proprietors / Drivers and where sufficient evidence is in place would rescind any warning letter relating to the matter.

A1 Wibsey wished for specific information to be circulated to them regarding legislation and conditions. Officers are happy to do so and will also circulate links to the wider trade.

Action: Officers to send links to conditions and legislations surrounding vehicle safety checks.

8) Operator Agenda Points Submissions

Thanks to LOCAL Cars who raised the following 6 points: Answers have been provided.

- a) System Update – online bookings / appointments – This was covered fully under agenda point 6
- b) New Applicants
- c) English Communications / English Test – These two points (b & c) were taken to mean an update from July 2016 when officers spoke about working with West Yorkshire colleagues to look at an internal communications assessment or a move to ESOL level 3. The preferred council model would be for internal assessment not ESOL level 3. More updates will follow at the next meeting.
- d) Scores on the doors – The move to the new IT software will allow the capture of more data. The service will be able update at the May meeting on expected timescales for this
- e) MOT Procedure – Warning Letters. This was summarised in agenda point 7.
- f) Visors / Decals / Advertising – Officers introduced and circulated updated conditions and additional paperwork to the trades in October 2012 and subsequent months. Nothing has changed since this point. An Operator believed there is inconsistency in what is being authorised by officers.

Officers replied by inviting the Operator to provide evidence to taxi.testing@breadford.gov.uk .

9) Date of next meeting - MB

Wednesday May 17th 2017 at City Hall