

# Minutes of Public Taxi Meeting

Meeting Date: 12 November 2019 starting at 7.15pm  
Present: Councillor G Mirfin (Chairman)

Councillors:

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| J E Alcock | S O'Rourke |
| D Berryman | S Rainford |
| S Hore     | M Robinson |
| S Knox     | G Scott    |
| D O'Rourke | N Walsh    |

In attendance: Head of Legal and Democratic Services, Solicitor and Administration Assistant (Licensing).

Also in attendance: Stuart Banks (Lancashire Constabulary), Mick Kearns-Turner (Lancashire Constabulary), John Walker, Andy Bolton, Mohammed Amin, Orangzeb Mahmood, Shahid Ahmed, Shahid Mahmood, Mohammed Yousaf, Mohammed Jahangir Shafi, Mehboob Hussain, Qurban Hussain, Nasir Khan, Muhammed Ilyas, Waheed Akhtar, Akhtar Hussain, Zaheer Abbas, Mohammed Abbas Akbar, Ramzan Rehman, Naveed Zaman Choudhry, Mohammed Ismail, Raja Basharat Khan, Sanawar Khan, Moazzam Iftikhar, Tanveer Khan, Andrew Hargreaves, Alison Hargreaves, Javeed Akhtar, Tariq Mahmood, Taswar Hussain, Waqar A Mughal, Sajjad Hussain, Arshad Mehmood, Zulfiqar Ali, Muhammad Ziarab, Shafqat Mehmood, Shokat Khaliq, Mumtaz Ali, Rafaqat Hussain, Mian Khan, Shahid Ali, Imran Khaliq, Mohammad Shahbaz, Zafran Sarwar, Mohammed Kaleem, Javed Iqbal, Shabbir Ahmad Raj, Ali Shaukat and Anthony Paul Mayers.

## INTRODUCTION AND WELCOME

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting by the Chair and Members and Officers were introduced. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted that the items on the agenda were drawn from correspondence with drivers and that Councillors of the Licencing Committee were present as it is they who would make decisions on matters arising from this meeting. It was noted that Mr Tanveer Khan had been nominated to speak on behalf of the Hackney drivers and Mr Ramzan Rehman on behalf of Private Hire Drivers.

## UNLICENSED VEHICLES/DRIVERS PLYING FOR HIRE IN THE RIBBLE VALLEY

### HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE HOLDERS FROM OTHER BOROUGHES CARRYING OUT PRIVATE HIRE WORK IN RIBBLE VALLEY

[NB minutes for items 2 and 3 included together below]

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services briefly noted that the Council can only take action in relation to licences issued by this council and opened the floor for questions.

Comments were received from Mr Rehman from the floor concerning allegations of bullying and intimidation of Private Hire drivers by Hackney Carriage drivers including requesting to see job bookings of Private Hire and being told they are not allowed to work in this area.

Further comments were received from Mr Khan alleging incidents where some Private Hire drivers have undertaken Hackney Carriage work, i.e. picking up customers without prior booking.

The Chair explained the Council takes a very dim view of bullying and intimidation and any such incidents will be taken seriously. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services noted that this item pertained to unlicensed work and asked if it could be noted that this wasn't a significant issue, the floor broadly agreed. The Police were asked if they had received significant reports of intimidation which they confirmed they had not.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services reminded all drivers of the pro forma sent out recently for use to report incidents and issues to the Council Licencing section. She reminded all licence holders that they have no authority to ask for information from other drivers and doing so would risk contravening the requirement to be a fit and proper person. She further clarified some of the issues raised including:

- Only vehicles with Ribble Valley issued Hackney licences are able to use Ribble Valley Hackney ranks.
- Hackney drivers licenced from outside the Ribble Valley can undertake private hire work if working for an operator.
- Private Hire drivers licenced outside the Ribble Valley can, in certain circumstances e.g. sub-contracting, undertake work within the Ribble Valley.
- Drivers can park anywhere where it is legal to do so but Hackney Carriages may be hailed to collect customers whilst private hire work must be pre booked.

It was further noted that it may not be immediately obvious that pre booking has occurred, especially due to mobile phones allowing for on the spot booking.

Various comments and questions were raised from the floor and answered by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services. The included questions on: stickers for out of borough Hackney carriages when undertaking local private hire work, reporting of out of borough private hire vehicles parked and collecting non pre booked fares and comments on public protection.

#### DRIVER CODE OF CONDUCT

- a. Incidents reported to police and Licensing Section
- b. Reports of threatening behaviour towards private hire drivers from hackney drivers

The Chair outlined thoughts on implementing a driver code of conduct. Discussion followed centring on the system of collection from Rendezvous Nightclub in Whalley. A previous system was mentioned where a small number of vehicles waited close to the nightclub for their fares with others further away and distanced from residents, moving to replace vehicles that had collected fares. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that the Landlords of the venues in question would be contacted with a view to returning to the previous systems. The options for enforcement were a strict interpretation or a more pragmatic approach that assisted with the aim of getting people home safely as quickly as possible with disruption to local residents kept to a minimum.

Private hire drivers expressed concern that Hackney carriage drivers were declining to accept very short local trips. The meeting was advised of the difficulties in setting up a 'sting' or test purchaser operation, due to possible allegations of entrapment and lone worker safety.

## DE-RESTRICTION OF HACKNEY LICENCE PLATES

- a. Hackney and private hire work using the same badge – legal position
- b. Sale of hackney plates
- c. Reversing the restriction on the number of vehicles licensed as hackney carriages

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services detailed that Councils can only restrict Hackney licences if it is determined that there is no unmet demand. A report to consider procuring a survey had been taken to Licencing Committee. It was further noted that dual licences cannot work where Hackney licences are restricted and the difference in vehicle requirements was detailed.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services confirmed that sale of Hackney plates was outside the purview of the Council.

The floor discussed the above issues. Private hire drivers raised points that; issues with lettering makes it difficult to identify Hackney Carriages which would be solved by requiring them to be lettered as Private Hire taxis are; Rossendale have implemented dual licence schemes; Hackney licences are difficult to acquire and should be returned to the council rather than sold between individuals; some Borough Councils have extra Hackney licences for issue direct to drivers. Hackney drivers raised points that: demand for Hackney licences was already met; Hackney rank space was not sufficient to accommodate further Hackney licences; dual badges would not solve issues of unlicensed vehicles; the situation in Rossendale pertaining to dual licences had its own issues.

Future meetings were requested to further discuss these issues.

## CLARIFICATION ON THE LOCATION OF HACKNEY RANKS IN RIBBLE VALLEY

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave an overview of the current situation with hackney ranks in the Ribble Valley noting that the Highways Agency in Lancashire County Council largely was in control of Hackney ranks. Ribble Valley Borough Council is seeking to establish a rank at the Platform Gallery but until such time as that is completed is allowing two Hackney carriages to park there. The floor noted issues with non taxis parking in those spaces, including staff at the gallery and out of borough taxis. The adequacy of signage and road markings at taxi ranks was also queried.

## ENFORCEMENT - POINTS

- Sub-Committee
- Suspension/revocation
- Confidentiality

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services gave an update on the work of the Taxi Enforcement Officer, noting the implementation of bodycam usage, working patterns and the need to cover the whole of the Ribble Valley rather than just problem areas such as Rendezvous Nightclub.

The floor commented that additional Enforcement Officers would be beneficial and Hackney licence holders believed that deregistration of Hackney licences would increase workload for the Enforcement Officer. A suggestion was made that drivers bring necessary documents, such as MOTs to the Enforcement Officer rather than him travelling to drivers to collect them.

The Head of Legal and Democratic Services detailed the points scheme and enforcement more generally. It was noted that whilst enforcement does take place, actually matters are confidential and not advertised so it may appear that less work is undertaken than occurs.

AOB

Drivers detailed incidents where items have been thrown at Taxis, often eggs but also stones etc. The Police outlined their knowledge of such incidents and measures taken to combat them. The difficulty of catching perpetrators was noted by all. The Police requested that all incidents be reported as they assist with data collection to understand the true scale of the problem and areas of particular concern.

The Chairman thanked all present for their attendance and confirmed that the matters raised would be considered by the Licensing Committee in due course.

The meeting closed at 9pm.

If you have any queries on these minutes please contact Diane Rice (414418).