

**MINUTES OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE FORUM
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 22 SEPTEMBER 2010**

ITEM		ACTION
	<p>In attendance: - <u>Leeds City Council</u> John Mulcahy – Head of Licensing & Registration Martino DePlacido – Operations Manager Martyn Johnson – Licensing Manager Kate Coldwell – Service Development Officer Alison Calvert – Temporary Management Support Officer (Secretary) Clare McColl – Community Safety Co-ordinator, City Centre Area</p> <p><u>Hackney Carriage Associations:</u> Javed Akhtar – Streamline/Telecabs - LTOA Michael Utting – Telecabs/Streamline – LTOA Khaliq Ahmed – City Cabs – LAPTA Quadir Hussain – Eurocabs - LITDA</p>	
1.0	<p><u>Welcome & Introductions</u></p> <p>John Mulcahy thanked everyone for attending.</p>	
2.0	<p><u>Consumption of Alcohol in Licensed Vehicles</u></p> <p>Claire McColl introduced herself as the Area Community Safety Co-ordinator for the city centre area. The aim of her job was to address crime and disorder through the day and night as Leeds has a lively night time economy. Clare advised that she was aware that many people consume alcohol in taxis on the way into town. Bottles were being cast aside and used as a weapon. CM advised that Headingley and the city centre were designated Public areas. Police could approach individuals in these areas and ask for their bottles or cans & they can also arrested individuals. CM advised that she wanted to address the issue of people drinking whilst travelling and the related litter problems.</p> <p>Mike Utting advised that 99.9% of Hackney carriage drivers do not allow passengers to drink in their vehicles. Passengers are allowed to take home sealed containers. MU advised that in most Hackney carriages there was a no food and drink sign displayed. He advised that this may be an issue for Private Hire vehicles but not for Hackney</p>	

carriages. The Trade advised that most vehicles are owned by Proprietors who look after their vehicles and it wasn't in their interest to have a dirty vehicle.

CM advised that the Area Community Safety Co-ordinators were working with Pub watch to stop individuals leaving pubs with bottles and glasses.

MJ mentioned a token system used in Canada that may be of interested rather than 'promotion' nights to try to encourage sensible drinking.

JM thanked Claire McColl for attending and she left the meeting.

Statement from Nicolás Jackson

JM then went on to read out a statement from Nicolás Jackson in relation to DPB's return to work and in response to a letter from Mr Landau of UniteLeeds. The statement read:

Due to a prior commitment the Assistant Chief Executive (Corporate Governance) cannot be here. However she has asked if I would relay the following to you.

"I will be responding to the letter from Mr Landau making it perfectly clear that who the Council employs and in what role is entirely a matter for the Council. Such decisions are not subject to the approval of the trade and therefore any "threats" in relation to such matters show a fundamental misunderstanding of the respective roles of the Council and the trade, are pointless and will be ignored.

As with any other service, if any service user has a concern regarding the conduct of an employee, then such concerns should be made formally, be put in writing with the appropriate evidence, in order that the concerns can be investigated and, where appropriate, action taken. However rumour, gossip and insinuations will not be considered.

As previously stated, I will not be commenting on the current position with Des as that is entirely a matter between the Council and Des and is clearly not a matter for the trade. John, as Head of Licensing is covering the Section Head role with assistance from Tino and Martyn, therefore if you have any concerns regarding the service, then they need to be raised with John."

3.0 Minutes of Last Meeting

The minutes of the previous meeting were agreed as an accurate record of events.

4.0 Action points from the last meeting

Network rail – JM advised that Cllr Feldman had not responded and advised the meeting of their options. JM advised that he could not pursue the matter or the Trade could make a formal complaint. MU advised that they would discuss this at the next JTC meeting and report back on what action, if any, they wished to take.

JTC

Short stay car park – JM advised that this had been discussed at the last Private Hire forum and that drivers were being advised to use the Short Stay car park at the station. The Trade advised that Network rail also had a marshal who was moving people on.

Leeds Alternative Travel – Section 19 permit schemes. Section 19 allowed Companies to operate vehicles at cost & to recuperate costs from community transport schemes. MD advised that the manager/owner had been interviewed. All the relevant documentation was in place and had been licensed under VOSA. MD advised the Trade that any further concerns should be taken up with VOSA.

Drivers that had failed a Group 2 medical – MJ advised that there had only been 4 in total so far. 1 driver had had laser treatment to correct is vision. 1 driver had been referred to Occupational Health and only was to be referred. 1 driver had a prosthetic arm - MJ agreed that this driver would also be referred to Occupational Health.

JTC

Agenda items

AC

5.0 Q & A session at Civic Hall

MD advised that there had been problems in organising this due to the numbers of Council staff required to attend and the availability of the Banqueting Suite at the Civic Hall. AC would look to get some further dates.

Leeds Central Cars – MD advised that they were not now operating from Crown Street as their Planning permission had expired. No other application had been received by Planning. MD agreed to monitor the situation. MD advised that Taxi & Private Hire Licensing would be consulted should another planning application be received.

JM

60. Traffic Management System for the Train Station rank.

JM advised that Gordon Robertson was unable to attend. MD advised that the council's contract with the supplier would come to an end at the end of September 2010. A cheque dated 28 September 2010 was handed over for £17,5000 by the Trade. MD agreed to honour Leeds City Councils commitment of £7,500 towards the scheme. MD agreed to speak to Gordon Robertson to speed the process along.

JM advised that the Section would do a press/news article on the systems when it was installed and an article in our newsletter. JM advised that an agreement would need to be put in place between the Council and the Trade. JM advised that he would let the JTC have a copy of this prior to signing so that the JTC could have it approved for signing by their solicitors. JM advised that Keith Darch had advised

that there were no issues with planning permission.

Discussion took place on New Station Street and the Trade asked about the ownership of New Station Street. MD advised that he would look into this and permission would be needed to install new sensors if it was not owned by the Council.

JM & MD thanked the Trade for the cheque & their commitment to the scheme.

7.0

Staffing issues - Update

MD advised that he was looking into a different shift pattern for the new Enforcement Officers covering more nights of the week.

JM advised that there were 5 vacant posts and that while there was an overspend on the budget the Section would not look to appoint new Enforcement Officers until the fee increase had been agreed which would cover the amount of the overspend

Discussion then took place on the services the Section provided to Education Leeds and Passenger Transport Services. MJ agreed to provide information to the next meeting about what was paid to the Section from these departments.

MJ

MD advised that the section had two re-deployees who were working with the Section assisting the Enforcement Team.

JM advised the meeting that the staff shortages were helping the overspending at the section as the savings in salary was offsetting the forecasted overspend at the Section. JM advised that a Statutory Notice would be put into the local paper giving the public 28 days to make representations to the Chief Officer. JM advised that the discussion that had taken place at this meeting and the previous forum were pre-consultations. Due to a reduction in new applications (driver and vehicle) the Section had proposed a fee increase to cover the overspend. The Section was also looking to make savings where it could. JM advised that the section was financed through licence fees and that if licence fees are not agreed then the Section would have to look at other ways of making savings i.e. staffing.

MJ handed out papers showing revised fee proposal. JM advised that the number of application had reduced and this had begun in 2009. The Section was monitoring applications on a monthly basis and carrying out research as to why individuals were not following through with their applications. MJ advised that the proposed fee increase was mainly on renewals and our fees had been compared favourably with other Authorities.

Mr Akhtar suggested that the Private Hire seminar fee re-test could be increased from £20 to £30 & the Hackney carriage re-test from £30 to £40.

JM advised that the Statutory Notice would be placed in the newspaper before the end of the month.

Staffing & CRB – Discussions took place on carrying out a CRB check every 5 years. It was discussed and JM advised that 1 extra person would be needed to conduct this.

Discussions also took place on the checks needed for people who have been out of the country for a period of time. MJ advised that the Section needed a full history for drivers and that all reasonable steps had to be taken to obtain this information.

8.0 Taxi Marshall offer from UniteLeeds

JM advised that Leeds City Council had been approached by Mr Cooper from UniteLeeds at Pubwatch meeting. MD advised that the Trade were willing to fund marshals at Christmas on busy ranks. JM agreed to feed this back to Pubwatch as he was not aware of this.

9.0 Licensing - update

MJ advised that the late night opening on a Tuesday and Thursday was not proving very popular. MU advised that after 4 pm was a busy time for the Trade. MJ advised that number attending the Section, phone calls received and monies taken over the counter during this time would be assessed to see if it was cost effective.

Discussions took place on what business could be conducted at the reception counter.

10.0 & 11.0 Vehicle Inspections/Operations – Update

MD gave an update on the vehicle checks carried out since April 2010. Unfortunately due to the system it was not possible to give a split between Private Hire vehicles and Hackney Carriage vehicles.

MD also advised that a number of Construction & use file had been prepared. MD advised that drivers were being prosecuted and receiving a final written warning. He also advised that repeated offences of this nature may lead to the suspension or revocation of a licence and that each case would be judged on its own merits.

Leeds Festival – MD advised that this had gone very well this year. Involvement with the event organisers by the Trade at an early stage had helped. JM advised that Event management Plans were now being referred to Taxi & Private Hire Licensing to prevent issues arising.

MD outlined the process for a 'wrap' to be fitted to a Hackney Carriage. JM advised that a request had been received by Mr Landau for a review of the age limit for Corporate 'wraps'. MD advised the meeting of the process for a variation to a condition.

MJ agreed to review this policy and report back.

MJ

12.0 Equality Impact Assessment – VRQ/NVQ Policy

KC handed round an Equality Impact Assessment that had been carried out on the NVQ/VRQ policy and asked for any comments to be fed back to her. JM advised that this assessment would be carried out for every new policy or when the Section reviews its policies.

13.00 Proposed Licence Fee Increase

Covered under item 7.0 Staffing Issues - Update

14.0 Hackney Carriage Forum Constitution

JM advised that he had not received any comments on the constitution but had received some of the documents by one of the associations.

JM advised that he was waiting for confirmation that this was an Officer delegated decision.

The Forums would have to be disbanded and associations would then have to apply providing the required documentation. The forums would then have a new constitution.

AC agreed to e-mail a copy of the Hackney Carriage constitution to the associations.

AC

15.0 Any Other Business

Peugeot Premier – MD advised that a final decision had not been made with regard to this vehicle. Cab direct were looking at a few issues with regard to luggage and the step. MD advised that he would notify the Trade when a decision had been made.

Amber & International students – MD advised that he had received a number of complaints from the Association about this. He had investigated and had established that the Service provided was legal. MD explained the process students went through before their arrival and what happened on arrival.

The use of the word 'Taxi' in advertising by Private Hire Operators – MD advised that Operators doing this would be spoken to and asked to change their advertisement. If this did not happen then further action would be taken by the Section.

Transfers – Mr Akhtar asked why vehicle inspections could not be done prior to a vehicle transfer. MD advised that an inspection could be done up to 30 days prior to a transfer but that the Section could not guarantee this and that the Section could not get involved in a private transaction.

Computer system – JM advised that the contract with the proposed supplier had been terminated and that the section was looking into using an existing system already in use by the Council. The section

needed to be sure that this system met the requirements of the section. The alternative would be an in house team to build a new system which would possibly take longer.

Vehicle inspections – discussion took place on the fail to attend system for vehicle inspections. MD advised that if a vehicle fails to attend then the vehicle was suspended and a letter sent out to the Proprietor. The Trade asked that this could be done via e-mail to the Associations so that they can be informed straight away.

Rank on White House Lane – The Trade had asked for this and had been advised that there was not any funding for this due to the economic climate and the cuts being made within the Council.