

## **Business Operator Meeting**

**Wednesday 13<sup>th</sup> November 2019 – 10:30am**

### **1. Introductions / Welcome**

Councillor Ferriby opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Officers present:

Sarah Ferriby (SF)	Councillor
Geoff Binnington (GB)	Principal Officer
Steven Knighton (STK)	Enforcement Manager
Elisabeth Spencer (ES)	Customer Service Manager
Sadiya Patel (SP)	Senior Licensing Officer
Yousaf Hussain (YH)	Licensing Manager
Jamie Brown (JB)	Enforcement Officer
Clare Wild (CW)	Licensing Officer (Service Support)

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Association representatives were invited to attend this meeting. Representatives from both associations attended.

### **2. Actions from the last meeting**

There were no outstanding actions from the last meeting.

### **3. Police Update**

The Steerside police team are focusing on anti-social driving and are working in partnership with enforcement officers. If you have any concerns please email [bd.steerside@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:bd.steerside@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) along with any dash cam footage or any evidence.

- ❖ Operator: Kids are throwing stones at licensed vehicles in the Fagley area during the evening. Would it be possible to have police presence in this area?

Response: This will be passed to the Bradford East team to make them aware of the situation. If it is not reported, the police will not be aware. It is important to report the incidents every time so even though there may not be an outcome to individual incidents it will help the Police to be aware for the future.

- ❖ Operator: Vehicles have been damaged in the Woodside area, in particular Wibsey Park Avenue. We have reported this to the local police station and have been told that nothing can be done about it, why is this?

Response: If you got a police crime reference number for these incidents please send them by email to [bd.steerside@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk](mailto:bd.steerside@westyorkshire.pnn.police.uk) for

the attention of Jamie Wilkinson. These will then be passed onto the Bradford South team who cover this area.

**Afternote:** PC Jamie Wilkinson has passed on messages to both Police teams.

#### **4. Data Sharing**

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Service has recently signed a memorandum of understanding with the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA). This means Bradford Council will be sharing data with DEFRA about licensed vehicles and licensed drivers to populate a central database maintained by them. This data will help them monitor vehicles entering the Clean Air Zone when it is implemented in the Bradford district.

#### **5. Enforcement Update**

##### Vehicle Spec Proposed Changes

At the last meeting we advised that we may make changes to the vehicle specification. We now have 5 proposed changes that we will be engaging on, with many of these proposals coming from recommendations put forward by members of the trade. There may be further proposals as we are discussing vehicle recommendations with the other West Yorkshire and York Authorities and awaiting the decision on the Clean Air Zone for the Bradford district.

##### **Background (Proposal 1)**

For proprietors (owners) of vehicles which were first licenced prior to 1 November 2019 and whose vehicle is due to reach the maximum age for a licenced vehicle (10 years or 12 years for Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV)) on or before 31 May 2020, it is proposed that a dispensation be made available to allow such vehicles to be re-licenced for an additional period not to exceed 6 months or until clarity has been provided with regards to the Clean Air Zone vehicle requirements. This will provide time for Bradford's future Clean Air Zone emission standards to be clarified and thereby aide proprietors in not purchasing vehicles which may not meet future CAZ requirements.

Dispensation would only be granted subject to:

- ❖ There has been no break in the vehicle's licence.
- ❖ Vehicles which do not pass a vehicle safety inspection due to a major defect and an appeal is not upheld will not be licensed for this extra period.

- ❖ Vehicles which are granted a dispensation will be subject to random testing given 24hrs notice.

**Proposal 1** - Vehicle proprietors be offered the option to apply for an extension to their current vehicle licence (as above) beyond the 10 (12 for WAV) years maximum age limit.

### **Background (Proposal 2)**

During recent vehicle inspections it has been identified that the headroom in some brands of Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Hybrid and Electric Vehicles (EV)) is reduced due to the space required for vehicle batteries and drive systems. Reducing the minimum headroom required will permit the licensing of a wider range of factory built ULEV, Hybrid and EV's.

**Proposal 2** - To reduce the minimum vehicle headroom requirement from 34inches to 32inches from 1 April 2020.

### **Background (Proposal 3)**

The safety and engine emission features of newer vehicles are constantly and rapidly evolving to ensure that newer vehicles are safer for drivers, passengers and road users and also cleaner and more environmentally friendly. Many manufacturers are now offering various forms of Hybrid and Electric vehicles as standard models and this is forecast to increase substantially in the coming years. As part of its commitment to safety and also in anticipation of the introduction of a Clean Air Zone, as the Government requires Bradford Council to improve air quality and protect public health, it is proposed to limit the option for vehicles to first licenced to a maximum of 5 years of age.

**Proposal 3** - It is proposed that vehicles being considered for first registration be limited to a maximum of 5 years of age from 1 April 2020.

### **Background (Proposal 4)**

The Licensing Service recognise that there are now fewer vehicles which meet Bradford's vehicle licencing specification. Following a request for this to be considered by a number of Licenced Operators the Service is seeking the views of the public and trades regarding relaxation of seating requirements for vehicles with more than 4 passenger seats. By removing the sentence below from the current vehicle specification it would provide a wider range of factory built minibuses for proprietors to consider without a need to have vehicles adapted.

**Proposal 4** – To remove the following sentence from the vehicle specification for vehicles with more than 4 passenger seats – *“Access to every seat must be unobstructed and be easily accessible to all passengers and without the need to tip forward, fold or remove seats when the vehicle is fully occupied”*. It is proposed that if the amendment is passed the change will apply from 1 April 2020.

### **Background (Proposal 5)**

The majority of modern vehicles are fitted with headlights that require a specialist fitment or mechanical knowledge to replace bulbs, including HID and LED lights. Drivers are/may therefore not be able to change defective bulbs. The proposed change will include that it remains advisable for drivers of older vehicles to carry a spare bulb kit.

**Proposal 5** - To change the “requirement” to carry a spare bulb kit in licensed vehicles to a “recommendation” and for this to apply from 1 April 2020.

### **Background (Proposal 6)**

Decals (signs on the side of cars) provide members of the public with the operator’s information and inform potential customers that the vehicle must be pre booked. Decals should be easy to read and clearly visible. Increasing the minimum size will improve the visibility and awareness that the vehicle is licensed for Private Hire and what company the vehicle is working for.

**Proposal 6** - To increase the minimum size for decals fitted to Private Hire Vehicles from A5 to A4 and the mandatory wording ‘PRE BOOKING ONLY’ to be a minimum of 80% of the largest letter on the decal. This will apply to all new (not existing) decal applications immediately following Committee decision.

### **Vehicle pass rates**

The average overall first time pass rate for September and October is around 70% for all licenced vehicles.

A 70% first time pass rate is a better standard than we were seeing prior to 12 months ago so congratulations for the hard work you have recently put into improving the safety standards of the vehicles being operated in Bradford.

It has been identified 20% of failures are for minor failures. These include missing livery, headlights not working etc. The Service actively encourages all operators to

remind their drivers to check their vehicles daily. Operators are also required to deem every vehicle safe to be dispatched on any journeys on a daily basis.

Vehicle failures may impact on your Operators Licence during base audits and it is important your company has vehicle maintenance and safety check policies in place.

### 5 Star Update

It was the Council's intention to provide you with a further draft of the 5 star base audit at this meeting. With the introduction of Digital Forms this project has made slow progress since the last meeting. A revised draft will be circulated to all Operators for feedback.

We are focusing on the final elements of 5 star, (Customer service and equality) and we are still looking for ideas or examples of good practice from Operators who want to be involved in developing this part of the audit with us.

If you would like to have your input into the 5 star audit and attend the next meeting with the steering group then please email [taxi.testing@braford.gov.uk](mailto:taxi.testing@braford.gov.uk) and we will notify you of the meeting date.

- ❖ Operator: Are decals still going to be permanent?

Response: Yes all decals will remain permanent on a vehicle. Decals are important for the travelling publics to clearly see on all angles of the car which Operator that licensed vehicle is working for.

- ❖ Operator: You mention that there has been a 70% pass rate, is this for all vehicles or new or renewal ones?

Response: 70% is the pass rate for both new and renewal vehicles.

- ❖ Operator: If a firm has fewer vehicles than a larger firm will they still be measured the same?

Response: Every Operator will be measured in the same way regardless of size.

### **6. Customer Service Update**

Digital Forms will be used to apply for and renew your Drivers or Vehicle Licence, and will be going live in January 2020. A short presentation was made by the Customer Service Manager which covered the renewal process, and what the system looks like. Emails were also sent out to the meeting attendees to enable them to trial the test system and go through a dummy renewal for a vehicle. All tests

were successful, with comments regarding the simplicity of the application made by the people present.

Further training sessions will be available for anyone that requests it, or would like to go through it again. Emails have been sent to all Operators along with the drivers that will be expiring in the initial period. The Service actively encourages all Operators to participate along with the drivers that work for them.

Further information regarding transfers and exchanges will be provided.

The first batch of renewal reminder emails will be sent out on 02/01/2020 and will affect the drivers and proprietors expiring in mid-February.

GB mentioned that the Council have received requests by a number of Operators in relation to retrieving driver histories. This is still on the service's agenda. Operators will be able to ask their drivers for this information before recruiting them as a driver once this is in place. We would only provide personal information to the driver in question due to GDPR as it is their data.

- ❖ Operator: Why do you have to provide a V5C for a renewal vehicle, every time you renew?

Response: We check the V5C at every renewal to ensure no modifications have been made to the vehicle without prior agreement from the Service and the vehicle is still owned by the licensee.

- ❖ Operator: When are the digital forms going to take affect from?

Response: The system will go live on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020. This will affect existing licensees that expire in mid-February and any new licensees from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2020.

- ❖ Operator: Is payment made prior to renewal?

Response: Payment will now be part of the Digital Forms and will be made when completing the form.

## **7. Peer Review Update**

There are two outstanding actions on the peer review; these are the English Comprehension Test which is currently being assessed throughout West Yorkshire, and updating and publishing the flowcharts.

All updates on the peer review can be found on our website using the following link:

[Peer Review](#)

## **8. Agenda Points**

No agenda points were raised for this meeting.

## **9. Date of Next Meeting**

Tuesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

This meeting will start promptly at 10:30am. Please remember to arrive from 10am for registration. The meeting will be held at City Hall, Bradford.