

Hackney Carriage Association Meeting

Wednesday 04th August 2021

1) Introduction

Carol Stos opened the meeting and thanked everyone for attending.

Officers Present:

Carol Stos (CS)	Licensing Service Manager
Steven Knighton (STK)	Enforcement Manager
Elisabeth Spencer (ES)	Customer Service Manager
Samantha Kaye (SK)	Licensing Officer – Service Support
Fiaz Suleman	Bradford Hackney Carriage Taxi Trade Association
Sagheer Rehman	Bradford Hackney Carriage Taxi Trade Association
Tahir Riaz	Hackney Carriage Owners and Drivers Association
Mohammed Khan	Hackney Carriage Owners and Drivers Association

Joined electronically via Teams:

Shabbir Master	Hackney Carriage Owners and Drivers Association
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2) Outstanding Actions

No outstanding actions from the meeting held in September 2020.

1 outstanding action from the November 2019 meeting: Rank requests and the process for requesting one. This was covered in today's meeting.

3) Licensing Service Update

Drop in Sessions for Proprietors and potentially other Licensees

The Service appreciates the attendance of Trade Representatives at the meeting but also understands it can sometimes be difficult for everyone to voice their concerns, queries or requests. Going forward there will be 'workshops' and smaller 'focus groups' for the Trade Representatives and Hackney proprietors to give everyone an opportunity to speak and be heard by the Officers. This will also allow the Service to discuss any potential changes to the way the Service works in more detail and to be able to provide support to everyone if the changes affect you as a proprietor.

The sessions will either be held at the Depot or another Council building dependant on room availability to work with Hackney proprietors on any anything you think will help such as understanding policy and conditions as well as licensing queries about new or renewal processes, documentation, completing application forms etc. If you are interested in accessing this please email taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk for the

attention of Elisabeth Spencer with your Operator name and what support you would like.

Clean Air Zone (CAZ)

Bradford Council are directed by the Government to implement the Clean Air Zone and improve air quality by 2022 at the latest. Unless advised otherwise by Parliament this will be going ahead. The CAZ seeks to provide significant improvements in the health of our residents and achieve an estimated reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of 150,000 tonnes over the life of the CAZ Plan. The Council have launched the online application process for the £10m Clean Air Taxi Programme which will provide up to 3,000 grants of between £3,200 to £5,000 for taxi and Private Hire proprietors to upgrade their vehicles to CAZ Standard.

The Service does not have the scope to change the Clean Air Zone Standards for taxi or Private Hire vehicles without further Council Executive committee decisions.

Licensing Service & CAZ

As a Service we listened to the comments from the trade and have extended the maximum licensing life of a CAZ compliant vehicle to 15 years. We also helped the trade by allowing existing vehicles reaching their maximum age to remain licensed until December 2021. Proprietors can also keep their existing vehicle to the previous maximum age of 12 years for a WAV if they wished. It is important to consider that at maximum age every proprietor would need to have funds to replace their old vehicle. The CAZ grant is in addition to that to enable the transition to a compliant vehicle.

For an LPG conversion to be CAZ compliant the conversion must be done to a petrol vehicle only, by an approved LPG installer. Approved installers can be found at [Where Can I Find an Approved Installer? \(drivelpg.co.uk\)](http://drivelpg.co.uk)

The vehicle on which the LPG installation is done must be of the correct CAZ compliant Euro standard for that vehicle type. i.e. CAZ standard for a 4 seat PHV is Euro 5 petrol hybrid so a LPG conversion must be done on a minimum Euro 5 petrol car.

We will also consider a grant if someone has a Euro 4 or older vehicle who wants to buy a Euro 5 petrol vehicle and then convert that vehicle to LPG. The maximum grant in this case is still £3,200.

For those considering other retrofits there are also some available through CVRAS (clean vehicle retrofit accreditation scheme). These retrofits are very specific to vehicle models and years. Details of what retrofits are available can be found at: [Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme - Energy Saving Trust](#) where there is a register of approved retrofits and suppliers. This list also advises on what type, make and model vehicle the retrofit is suitable for.

The Clean Air team are unable to advise on the suitability of any retrofits. It is down to the vehicle proprietor to ensure that the retrofit they choose is compliant with Clean Air Zone standards.

CAZ Queries

Association Representative: Leeds Council did not implement the Clean Air Zone, following the COVID lockdown they carried out another survey that highlighted air pollution had dropped below the requirement so they stopped the introduction but Bradford Council are still implementing theirs and have only given the trade 5 months to purchase and licence a vehicle that meets the CAZ and Licensing Specification. This just isn't enough time.

Response: Each council is given their own directive from the Government. When the emission tests were carried out again last year, Leeds had managed to reduce the emissions to a suitable level whereas the emissions in Bradford had risen. This resulted in Bradford still needing to implement the CAZ. Initial engagement with information began in March 2020 advising the Trade the implementation of CAZ was imminent. To read the ministerial direction this can be found here: - [Air Quality Direction Bradford](#)

Association Representative: We do not have an issue with the CAZ itself, we are all happy for the introduction; it is just the timings as there is not long left. The funds have only just become available; these should have been available sooner so we had longer to purchase a compliant vehicle. Once the CAZ grant has been approved you then have to purchase a new vehicle within 3 months. We just need more time.

Response: The time scales are set by the Secretary of State and Bradford has been issued with an implementation date. Please see response above.

Association Representative: If Manchester can get the CAZ introduction extended and that is a lot bigger than Bradford with a lot more vehicles why can Bradford not get the introduction to CAZ extended to give us more time.

Response: There are several factors taken into account when the Secretary of State makes the decision about the CAZ. If you wish to make any further comments about the CAZ, your local MP can put these forward for you.

Association Representative: The council cannot possibly change all non-compliant vehicles before CAZ is introduced in January 2022.

Response: HC vehicles that are Euro 6 diesel are compliant and can be licensed until 15 years of date of first registration.

Association Representative: Fares will start getting refused if the customer wants to go through the CAZ unless the customer is willing to pay the £12.50 charge.

Response: The £12.50 charge is per day not per fare so as the driver of a HC it is up to the Driver how they wish to recoup that money.

Association Representative: Can we be provided with a list of where all the air pollution sensors are around the district?

Response: The Clean Air Team will be able to provide this information to you when it is available. You can contact the team by using the contact form on the Breathe Better website here: [Breathe Better Bradford - Contact Us](#).

Association Representative: Is there any way the drivers can get a permit for a year.

Response: Please see above.

Association Representative: The price of vehicles has increased due to the high demand because of the CAZ, some people are upgrading a 10/11-year-old car where as some people have only just plated a new vehicle and theirs is only 4/5 years old. Is there any way that the grants can be worked out as a percentage on the current age of your vehicle as the people with older cars would have to change theirs any way?

Response: The Service has no involvement in the distribution of funds. Please contact the Clean Air team regarding this.

4) Enforcement Update

Activity during COVID and moving forward

During the initial stages of the pandemic around 2,000 licenses, including driver and vehicles were extended free of charge at a time when officers were having to personally adapt to the risks of COVID-19 and the significant limitations of home working.

In addition to licence extensions, drivers and proprietors were offered the opportunity to take a licensing holiday to help keep their costs down as there was a significantly reduced demand for licenced vehicle services.

Enforcement Officers patrolled the district throughout the pandemic issuing guidance on reducing risk of infection to drivers and passengers. They actively encouraged and advised drivers and proprietors to clean their vehicles between bookings; use PPE and apply best practices for social distancing whilst at the same time ensuring licensing conditions set by the Council were met and ensuring the safety of the travelling public.

Enforcement Officers distributed in excess of 30,000 face coverings, 6,000 bottles of hand sanitiser and 3,000 in-vehicle screens to drivers as well as arranging a COVID sterilisation service for licensed vehicles.

As restrictions have eased we anticipate that some form of normality will resume with our activity, but we do recognise the benefits of some of the changes we made as well as recognising the downfall of others.

DFT Statutory Guidance

The Department for Transport ran a public consultation between February and April 2019 inviting respondents to submit their views on Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards.

Following this consultation, the government issued statutory taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) standards to licensing authorities last year, outlining how they should carry out their licensing function.

The focus of these standards is protecting children and vulnerable adults, however, all passengers will benefit from the recommendations, which aim to better regulate the Taxi and PHV sector. As this is statutory guidance the DFT and Government expect it to be implemented by all local authorities unless there is a compelling local cause not to. Officers from the council have reviewed the guidance and the service already complies or does more than the guidance states.

There are elements of the guidance that council will need to consider in further detail and changes to policy and conditions will be made. This will mostly affect Proprietors. The Licensing Service would like to set up a working group to discuss the proposed changes and how it will affect Hackney Carriage Proprietors.

If you would like to take part then please submit your details to the licensing service by **24th August 2021**, so we can plan the first meeting at a suitable location.

If you would like to review the guidance, then it is available here - [Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle](#)

Information on the consultation can be found [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Protecting Users](#)

Association Representative: If you are wanting all proprietors to be DBS checked who will be covering the cost of these DBS's?

Response: At this time it is only guidance and is not in force. Should the final decision be made that this will be implemented the proprietor will need to cover the cost of their own DBS.

Association Representative: If this is brought in we need to think about minimal cost, there are different costs for DBS's so we would need to look at this.

Response: Proprietors will need to have a standard DBS check not the enhanced one that drivers are expected to have. When the final decision has been made the service will communicate further information.

Association Representative: If the DBS is no longer online the driver/s cannot renew their badge, will they get a temporary badge until their DBS comes back.

Response: The Service does not issue temporary badges especially in the case of DBS checks as this is a matter of public safety so we will not issue a licence to a driver that does not have a valid DBS.

We now check DBS's 3 months before a driver's licence is due to expire, this allows the Service to carry out new DBS applications for drivers who may have allowed

their DBS to expire before the renewal is due. This is not fool proof as there are still some DBS applications that expire in the 3 months between us checking and the driver renewal, however this has significantly reduced.

Association Representative: Do you still do probationary periods?

Response: No, every application for a licence has the suitability applied to it to ensure the licensee is fit and proper.

NR3 – National Register of Refused or Revoked Drivers

In August 2019, the Service announced that Bradford was developing an NR3 Policy to form part of the 'fit and proper' test. This has now been approved and Bradford Council is using the NR3 register. Officers will be checking all applications for driver licences to confirm that an individual has not been refused or revoked with another authority. This check will be performed when an application for a new driver or a renewal driver has been submitted.

Equally, anyone refused or revoked by BMDC will have their details recorded. Those revoked or refused will be on the register for 25 years and the information recorded will be minimal.

Recording this information on NR3 does not mean that a person will be automatically prevented from securing a licence in future, but is intended to ensure that licensing authorities are able to access the full licensing history.

Association Representative: Will each case be viewed on its own merits

Response: Yes, every case is reviewed individually. Any application going through the Officer Review process is given the opportunity to put forward mitigating circumstance to be taken into consideration.

Visits to Shearbridge

Covid has resulted in several changes to the way we interact with our customers that mean we no longer require face to face appointments or written applications. This saves licensees time and reduces the need to travel for those that live further away. Customers will still visit Shearbridge for pre-arranged appointments or vehicle testing and it's important that visitors adhere to the sites safety requirements. If you have an appointment, please attend alone we cannot accommodate extra people at appointments unless pre-arranged.

The depot is a high traffic area with regular vehicle movements, therefore the potential for accident is high. Staff have set H&S requirements that they have to comply with. To keep visitors safe, please remain in your vehicles. Staff will be expecting you and will greet you at your vehicle at your appointment time.

Please do not get out of your vehicle, wait for the member of staff at the parking area you have been directed towards.

This includes those attending for vehicle tests, please wait in the parking bays for the vehicle testers who will come out and greet you at your car. Walking around the workshops is particularly dangerous.

Association Representative: As a lot of drivers are having to put in new cars that meet CAZ there are more tests that will be required at the same time each year. Is there any chance that we can take a short 6 month licence, this will spread out vehicle inspections throughout the year so they don't all come up at once?

Response: If there are more vehicle applications than usual we are able to arrange extra tests on a short term basis to deal with this.

Working Together

As trade representatives and business owners you are a crucial element of the licensing trade.

The Service understands that drivers will come to you with many questions or issues and you may require further support from the Licensing Service. Equally you will want to improve your services to benefit your customers.

With this in mind, we will be looking into improve how we communicate with HC licensed drivers and proprietors, how information is passed from the service to you and vice versa.

In the meantime, you can continue to contact us via the email address taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk and Officers will endeavour to assist with your enquiries.

5) Licensing Update

The Licensing Service understands that clearer instructions are needed for using the online service for submitting applications and uploading documents that have been requested via the Licensing Team. The Licensing Service would like to work together with Proprietors and Trade Representatives to offer further support to ensuring the trade have the skills and knowledge to be able to complete applications and submit documents with ease.

Online Applications

Due to advances in technology, in January 2020 the Licensing Service introduced an online system to submit new and renewal applications for both drivers and vehicles, less than 3 months later the pandemic forced the Service to suspend all new driver applications and modular training due to the face-to-face appointments. From Friday 23rd July 2021 the Licensing Service re-commenced new driver applications, the applications that were already submitted before the March 2020 lockdown will be processed as a priority. The new driver interviews will no longer be face-to-face and will be conducted via Microsoft Teams, this is to streamline the new driver application process and to enable a smoother and more time efficient service for an applicant to acquire a HC driver licence.

Customer Surveys

Over the last few weeks the Service have put in place customer surveys that will be emailed to those that have requested any help or support. The surveys are no different to the ones you may have been emailed from utility companies or from your broadband provider asking you to rate their service. The Service will email the relevant survey to a customer at the end of the interaction with the Service asking for feedback. Please encourage everyone to complete the surveys – they take a few moments of time and provide valuable feedback to the Service to allow improvements in the Services offered or to signal what is working well.

Work Shops and Drop in Sessions

Following on from previous feedback, the Customer Service Manager will be providing valuable 'work shops' and 'drop in sessions' around the district with times and days to suit the needs of licensees. This will be to provide support with anything from issues you may be having with your vehicle or helping to support drivers fill out applications or upload documents. It's beneficial to the driver and to yourself and us to ensure everyone has the skills and knowledge and to feel confident emailing documents, using smart forms and completing online applications.

The Service is aware that further support is required in regards to maintaining subscriptions with the DBS service, the new application process & uploading documentation. If any further support is needed please email the Service at taxi.testing@bradford.gov.uk for the attention of Elisabeth Spencer with your ideas and it will be incorporated into the 'work shops'.

6) Ranks

When setting up a new rank permission is required from the land owner, this may be on a public highway or on private land. After permission has been sought the service can accept the application for a new rank which they will pass onto the highways team. Once an application has been made the rank would need to be advertised for one calendar month so the public would be aware and the chance to make any comment.

Action - The service will send the rank request form to Trade Representatives once it has been updated

If you spot a rank that is in need of some upkeep so may need to have the paint done again or there are missing signs please email the Service who will get this rectified. Council Wardens across the Bradford District and cover as much of the district as they possibly can at any one time. If you notice someone parking on a rank that is not a HCV, then please report this to the Council Wardens who will look into the complaint.

Association Representative: Do we have an update on the Morley Street Rank request?

Response: This was approved last year however there has been no further update.

Action – The service will contact the highways team for an update.

Association Representative: Can we look at having a new rank near the railway station in Ilkley.

Response: As detailed above in the ranks section a formal request is needed in writing to the service.

Association Representative: Have some of the bus lanes changed to buses and bikes only? There are some where the signs do not show taxis.

Response: For updates on bus and cycle lanes please contact the Council Wardens who will be able to provide further information on this.

7) Unmet Demand

In the next few months an unmet demand survey will be carried out in the Bradford District. The last survey revealed that there were too many Hackney Carriages for the district. To avoid this happening again please review your own business plans to upkeep your business. Should the survey result in high numbers again the service will need to take this into consideration.

Please ensure your vehicle remains in licence as legally a Hackney must have a continuous licence with no break. If for any reason you would be unable to renew your Hackney in time, please contact the service in plenty of time and we will be able to help you.

Association Representative Comment: I have found that having a card machine helps bring in more customers as not everyone carries cash anymore, I am also going out and actively looking for customers rather than just sitting in the vehicle and waiting for a customer to come to me.

8) Agenda Points

The Licensing Service received agenda points prior to the meeting. Thank you to those that provided these questions or queries beforehand.

Point 1 – Fees

As the age limit is finish now so there should be no different fees for less than 6 years and over 6 years old vehicles.

Also we want to discuss about when someone pay full fee and in middle of year he need to change vehicle (accident or some other reasons) why he need to pay full fees again it used to be only £54 to change vehicle

Response: Prior to 2015 vehicles over 6 years old were subject to and charged for 2 tests per year, costing the proprietor £350 per year. This was replaced with Random vehicle testing in 2015 reducing the vehicle cost to £240 for vehicles that are over 6.

The difference in cost covers the additional administration, testing and Enforcement requirements for vehicles over 6 years of age.

Association Representative: Do we have a percentage breakdown of the £100 failure fees for HC and PH

Response: The Service would normally provide all these statistics at these meetings. As we are coming out of the pandemic, vehicle tests will not be representative of normal times, these statistics would be inconsistent with previous results due to COVID.

Association Representative: When drivers wish to appeal a failure fee they are asked to provide a lot of evidence, for example 3 months of vehicle checks etc. just to get the money refunded. Why is this?

Response: The Service asks for evidence to ensure the vehicle has been maintained to high safety standards as stated in the conditions throughout the licensing period.

If you do not agree with the outcome of your vehicle safety inspection a second opinion can be requested at the time of the test and you have been given the reasons for failure.

Point 2 – Booking a new vehicle

Many drivers complaining that when they send email to asking to replace new vehicle they receive private hire application form where it says when this vehicle go off the road we can't put any date with this and we unable to fill form and it delays whole process.

Response: This has been addressed and rectified. Proprietors should now receive a link titled 'Change of Vehicle Link' which will request details of the old vehicle as well as the new vehicle along with space to provide a brief explanation for the exchange.

Point 3 - Removal on the restriction on H/C vehicles to be WAV's, and the option to replace these with a hybrid or electric car.

Members of our association feel that this would be a better, more flexible approach to take for Hackney Carriages going forwards for a number of varied reasons that would benefit customers, hackney carriage drivers and the environment:

- 1. It would help to better comply with the new CAZ in the Bradford district and to reduce pollution levels across the city. Hybrid and Electric H/C's that are not WAVs would have relatively lower emissions, and therefore would help meet CAZ targets quicker.**
- 2. Allowing H/C's to be hybrid or electric will give better flexibility and choice to both drivers and the general public.**

3. **There is current unfairness on elderly passengers, who struggle with their access onto larger vehicles. This proposal will help address this long-standing issue and drive business forward.**
4. **Economically, hybrid cars are more viable for H/C drivers, both on initial purchase cost and future running costs.**
5. **There is generally less need for Hackney Carriages to be WAV's. This is because:**
 - (a) **The majority of wheel chair passengers are now pre-booking Taxis as opposed to catching a rank taxi, so this demand can be met without the need for all H/C's to be WAVs Most private hire firms now have wheel chair accessible cars, as opposed to when the initial survey was conducted.**

Response: The Service has looked at your proposal and agrees that there are currently limited options for Electric WAV's.

What is required to initiate the Council to look into this proposal is to get together the trades reasons for change and demonstrate how this would be implemented to assure public confidence that a sufficient number of WAV vehicles would be available across the district. This was something which proved extremely difficult to achieve in the past. Accessibility to transport across the district is something the Council would wish to see and be able to evaluate.

Association Representative: This could be looked at under the unmet demand survey, one of the questions could be how many wheelchair users use HCV's. Having some saloon vehicles will help with the unmet demand as vehicles will become more accessible to more people, for example the elderly that struggle to climb into the larger vehicles.

Response: It is possible for the scope of the unmet demand survey to look at WAV demand. The Unmet demand will not be conducted until it is believed that normal uptake of taxi provision has resumed.

Point 4 - To have an extension of at least one year on the existing timeframe for the introduction of the CAZ proposals for Hackney Carriages.

This would give drivers more time to find suitable vehicles, so that they can make economically and environmentally more informed choices given the extra time. Secondly, there are too many vehicles that need to be upgraded in a very small time frame - this will also put a burden on the council's testing ability to process the required number of vehicles. Finally, the extension of one more year would mean that in that extra time-period, more vehicles will have automatically become CAZ compliant.

Response: There are several factors taken into account when the Secretary of State makes the decision about the CAZ. Much of this is available on the Breathe Better Website.

Point 5 – Fare Increase

This was received prior to the meeting.

Response: The Service is more than happy to facilitate a fare increase however you need to look at and amend the tariffs as they conflict with each other, you cannot have the same dates in more than one tariff. Once this has been corrected and sent back in it can be processed.

It is a legal requirement for a HCV to run the meter when they have a passenger however, you do not have to charge the amount on the meter if you do not wish to. You can never charge more than the meter but you can charge less if you wish, for example you could pre-agree a fare for a set journey.

Actions

1. The service will send the rank request form to Trade Representatives once it has been updated
2. The service will contact the highways team for an update about Morley Street
3. Trade Representatives will put forward a proposal on how a mix of HC WAV and saloon vehicles can be accommodated.