

MINUTES OF	TAXI TRADE FORUM
MEETING DATE	Tuesday, 25 September 2018
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillors David Suthers (Chair), Jacqui Mort, Ken Jones, Paul Wharton and Claire Hamilton
OFFICERS:	Mark Marshall (Head of Licensing), Dianne Scambler (Governance and Member Services Team Leader), Louise Hawkins (PA to the CEO), Chris Ward (Licensing Officer) and Justin Abbotts (Licensing Officer)
OTHER MEMBERS:	Kenny Dodds (Autocab)
PUBLIC:	Three representatives from the Trade.

9 Welcome and Introductions

The Chair of Licensing, Councillor David Suthers welcomed everyone present to the meeting and asked everyone to introduce themselves, including fellow members, officers and representatives of the Trade.

10 Note of the Last Forum

The notes of the last Forum meeting held on 14 June 2018 were circulated.

11 Digital GPS meters

The Head of Licensing introduced Kenny Dodds from Autocab who provided an overview of the digital GPS meter system and how it works. Members of the Trade explained they had issues with the tariff crossover at midnight and which tariff to charge the customer that at times caused ambiguity and conflict with customers. The GPS meter system provides a more accurate reading than a conventional taxi meter and could also help with customer queries/complaints.

As not all taxi firms used the digital GPS system, the Committee members present acknowledged that this was an area that needed to be looked at in further detail and asked the Head of Licensing to provide a report to the next meeting of the General Licensing Committee.

Councillor Suthers thanked Kenny Dodds for attending the meeting.

12 Professional qualification

The Head of Licensing explained that there was a requirement in the policy for drivers to attain a relevant qualification within the first 12 months of gaining a license. As funding had been withdrawn by the Government for the formal B-Tec qualification, most education providers had ceased its delivery. The Council were

now looking to provide this course in-house at a cost of £150 per candidate. The course would be offered out to neighbouring authorities and was of huge benefit to the Trade in the respect that it will speed up the recruitment process for the drivers. The initial course will be provided on a demand basis and would be reviewed in March 2019.

A representative of the Trade expressed concern with the Gateway Team and how they deal with new drivers wanting to apply, the process was too long and advice given was inconsistent. The representative of the Trade also expressed further concern with the knowledge test that new drivers complete on application, however, the Committee were still of a view that the knowledge test was still a crucial part of the process and had been reviewed recently by the Licensing Team. The Licensing Team reported that additional training was being provided that would alleviate some of his concerns.

Councillor Suthers thanked the Trade for their comments and explained that all comments will be taken on board.

13 CCTV

The Head of Licensing updated the Committee, on the recent review that had been undertaken on the installation of mandatory CCTV in taxis. He explained that crime figures were low in the Borough and that complaints from customers were few and far between. There was no need for CCTV in any issue that had arose. If the scheme was to be rolled out nationally then it would be supported by South Ribble but at present there was no local need.

Members of the General Licensing Committee had considered that the cost of its provision (estimated at £500) was unfair to impose given the fact that the crime statistics did not support implementation of the scheme. They had agreed to continue with the existing approach that allows for CCTV to be installed at the drivers discretion subject to the system being approved by SRBC.

14 Rank painting/signage requirements

The Head of Licensing reported that there had been no response from the Highways Department at Lancashire County Council (LCC) regarding ranking painting and signage requirements. He commented that if any driver had concerns with this issue, they could email the Licensing Team with a supporting picture that they could forward to LCC for further action.

15 Vehicle Age Policy

The Head of Licensing reported that a report was being taken to Full Council on the 26 September 2018 for approval to standardise the age limits. However, due to the implications of any Air Quality Study that was part of the Councils Corporate Plan there was a recommendation to undertake a further review to lower the age policy at the lower end.

Members of the Trade were told that any questions/concerns/issues could be raised as a question to Council on 26 September 2018.