

MINUTES OF	TAXI TRADE FORUM
MEETING DATE	Tuesday, 17 September 2019
MEMBERS PRESENT:	Councillors Renee Blow (Vice-Chair), Jacky Alty, Mick Higgins and Jacqui Mort
OFFICERS:	Mark Marshall (Head of Licensing), Justin Abbotts (Licensing Officer) and Dianne Scambler (Democratic and Member Services Team Leader)
OTHER MEMBERS:	None
PUBLIC:	4

32 Welcome

The Vice Chair of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee took the Chair and welcomed everyone to the meeting.

33 Apologies

The Chair of Licensing and Public Safety Committee, Councillor Ken Jones submitted an apology to the meeting.

34 Note of the Last Forum

The notes of the last meeting were noted.

35 Policy Review for Vehicles

The Head of Licensing outlined a number of different policies that were coming up for renewal. Any changes would be fully consulted upon.

One yearly licensing:

It was considered not environmentally friendly to produce a yearly licence and although vehicles would continue to be tested twice yearly, the Council were looking to lengthen the licensing period. The Head of Licensing explained that there was a budget deficit within the service and that streamlining processes would help with costs. The team was also delivering in-house courses to generate income so as to avoid increasing fees.

Wheelchair Accessibility Vehicles being granted new Hackney Carriage Licences:

Most authorities have a capped number, however South Ribble doesn't. Plates that are subject to grandfather rights can be used on a Saloon or Disabled Accessible vehicle.

There was a proposal to issue new licences on those vehicles that met the green agenda criteria. Although the authority has a young fleet, there are still Air Quality issues.

Proposed changes to Private Hire Door Stickers/Signage:

The Head of Licensing explained that they were actively looking to improve private hire signage as a whole. Looking to fixed signage instead of the magnetic ones. The Trade talked about the consequences of uninsured drivers and that it was a real problem that was proving difficult to sort out.

Additional Hackney Carriage Stands:

Limited amount of stands currently provided within the Borough especially in the outlying areas of Bamber Bridge, Penwortham and Lostock Hall. Will consult on best places with the Trade.

CCTV's v Tints:

Tints are being heavily criticised for cost. Lots of cars are not able to pass our standards, so have to replace their windows at a considerable cost. The need for CCTV has to be justified. We have no evidence based so are unable to enforce a mandatory condition. Council are looking to amend the tint policy and that could make the installation of CCTV an option.

Age Policy Review:

The Head of Licensing outlined the history of the existing policy. Will be going out again for consultation, this time will include more research about the green agenda.

36 Remembrance Sunday Road Closure

Plans showing the road closures were provided on the agenda and had been widely advertised to the Trade by the Licensing Team. Copies would also be available at the Civic Centre reception from Friday onwards.

37 Knowledge Test

The Trade had concerns that some taxi operators were helping their drivers to pass the knowledge test by providing them with the answers to the questions ahead of the test.

The Head of Licensing explained that the team regularly changed the questions to avoid this from happening.

38 Taxi drivers speaking in a foreign language

Members of the Trade mentioned their concerns about some taxi drivers speaking in a foreign language whilst driving. For example talking to people on the phone. Some customers had mentioned this to them and said that they felt uncomfortable in this situation. Could something be imposed to prevent this practice?

Members also raised the issue of music being played by a driver. The Head of Licensing explained that this would something that he would have to look into. Drivers were not allowed to eat or smoke.

39 Notification of driving convictions

The Head of Licensing reported that there was a general lack of drivers not notifying the Council of any convictions they had received, either at the time of the conviction or upon renewal.

The Council was going to look into the creation of a simple online declaration to try to improve this process.

Chair

Date