

Minutes of	Taxi Trade Forum
Meeting date	Tuesday, 4 July 2023
Members present:	Councillors Jane Bell and Paul Wharton-Hardman
Officers:	Chris Ward (Licensing Manager), Justin Abbotts (Licensing Officer), Stephanie Newby (Licensing Officer), February Loughlin (Licensing Officer), Tasneem Safdar (Shared Legal Services Team Leader) and Clare Gornall (Democratic and Member Services Officer)
Other members:	Charles Oakes – Taxi Trade Dave Cox – Taxi Trade Ged Byrne – Taxi Trade Muhammad Mughal – Taxi Trade
Also in attendance:	Anna-Marie Knipe – South Ribble Dementia Action Alliance Karen Scarborough – South Ribble Dementia Action Alliance

7 Welcome

Councillor Jane Bell, Chair of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

8 Minutes of the Last Forum

The minutes of the last Taxi Trade Forum, held on 21 March 2023, were noted.

9 Any other business - Dementia Friends Initiative

Two representatives from the South Ribble Dementia Action Alliance, Anne Marie Knipe and Karen Scarborough attended the Taxi Trade Forum to provide information about the “Dementia Friends” Initiative and to encourage taxi drivers to become involved. This would involve signing up to a Charter, later being classed as “Dementia Friendly” and having a sticker in the taxi.

Members of the trade, whilst supportive of the initiative, raised some issues that may be of concern to the taxi trade. Ged Byrne gave the example if a driver picked up a dementia sufferer and was then unable to drop them off at home for any reason (e.g. that person could not remember their home address), would there be a 24 hour “drop off” point where expertise / assistance could be obtained. It might also be necessary to have access to a compensatory “slush fund” in case of non-payment.

Karen from the Dementia Alliance indicated that there are lanyards / badges for dementia sufferers that have emergency contact information.

Another suggestion might be to have the taxi operators as the accredited Dementia Friend, rather than owner drivers.

Anne-Marie and Karen indicated they would feedback the comments to the Dementia Action Alliance.

Justin Abbotts indicated that the Council's licensing team could assist in cascading information to the trade, for example asking operators to make drivers aware, and/or having designated "dementia friendly" drivers.

Charles Oakes suggested it would be useful to have information sessions for drivers.

Anne-Marie Knipe also indicate that information could be obtained from the following venues:

- Information Hub – Leyland United Reformed Church – held every first Friday of the month
- Sporting memories at Leyland Football Club – for dementia sufferer and their carers

Resolved:

- i) That the Council's licensing team send information about the Dementia Friends Initiative out to the trade
- ii) To look at setting up an information drop session at the Council for drivers.

10 CCTV policy

Chris Ward, Licensing Manager gave an update on the outcome of the CCTV policy proposals which were considered at the Licensing and Public Safety Committee held on 27 June 2023.

The Committee resolved:

1. To note the content of the report.
2. To acknowledge the consultation responses from both members of the trade and the residents of South Ribble; the crime statistics provided by Lancashire Constabulary and previous licensing cases.
3. That, having considered the all the evidence provided, Council is recommended to approve a non-mandatory CCTV policy that permits the vehicle proprietors, to have factory fitted tinted windows within licensed vehicles, provided that a compliant CCTV system is installed subject to the system being approved by SRBC officers prior to the licence being issued.
4. To submit a report to the next meeting of the Council as per recommendation (3) above.

Mr Ward stressed that the Committee had considered all the evidence presented very carefully, which included, both trade consultations; the public consultation

summary; Data Protection Impact Assessment; LGA Guidance; DFT Statutory Standards; and ICO guidance.

Councillor Paul Wharton Hardman, Vice Chair to the Committee, explained that he appreciated that an argument could be made to introduce a mandatory CCTV policy on both driver and public safety grounds. However, the Committee were mindful that this must be proportional and balanced against data protection and rights to privacy with regard to camera surveillance.

The Committee determined that based on the information before it there was no clear local evidence base of an overwhelming need for a mandatory CCTV policy within the area and to do so would leave the Council open to legal challenge of a Judicial Review and financial risk.

It was therefore proposed that a non-mandatory CCTV policy be introduced, allowing drivers to decide to install CCTV in their vehicle if they wished to do so.

11 Written request made by members of the trade

Chris Ward indicated that the Council had received a request from the South Ribble Taxi Drivers Association to consider a review of the hackney carriage fares. It was noted that out of the 16 councils in Lancashire, South Ribble fell within the mid range of fees at £6.30/hour. The cheapest was Pendle. South Ribble also offered good rates on extras, such as luggage.

Ged Byrne said that he was against a rise in fares; fuel costs are coming down, and the trade needs to consider the elderly and more vulnerable people. Drivers should try and ride out the cost of living crisis if possible.

Chris Ward indicated that the last time hackney carriage fares were increased was April 2022. It was a statutory requirement that the taxi trade be consulted on any proposed tariff increases, and the Licensing and Public Safety Committee would first need to approve the consultation.

12 Topics raised by the Trade

- A number of issues were raised with regard to the need for enforcement, such as that the tariff sign displayed on the cab should be linked to the meter. If the meter was on the driver's mobile phone, it can easily be hidden.

It was agreed that licensing officers would focus on this as part of targeted enforcement over the next month.

- The issue of the PDA policy was raised. Ged Byrne said that drivers could lose money due to lack of accuracy.

It was agreed that an update on PDAs would be brought to the next meeting.

- An update was requested on the “3 month grace period” for new drivers in relation obtaining a qualification. Chris Ward updated the Forum that the Council would now be running its own course internally.

Chris Ward also indicated that a policy looking at having a staged process for obtaining a full driver’s badge to spread out the costs, would be considered at the next Licensing and Public Safety Committee.

- With regard to CCTV recordings, Chris Ward confirmed that footage would only be retained for 30 days and only footage relating to a complaint would be downloaded to designated licensing officers’ laptop. This ensures ICO and GDPR compliance.
- A concern was raised with regard to illegal plying for hire by Uber drivers. Chris Ward indicated that if you witness this please make a complaint / give licensing officers a statement. If two statements from different drivers are obtained, it may be possible to prosecute.

12a Queries raised about the Taxi Trade Forum meetings

Scheduling of meetings

Chris Ward explained that meetings of the Taxi Trade Forum were scheduled after the Licensing and Public Safety Committee in order to update the trade on what happened at Committee, and so that any issues that need to go to the next Committee may do so, taking into account the timescales for writing reports and the publication deadlines.

Code of Conduct for the Forum

A Code of Conduct was circulated which was signed by all members present. Any new / subsequent attendees would also be asked to sign up to the Code.

Attendance and Meetings

It was agreed that all attendees who gave their signed consent to being named in the record of the meeting would be included in the minutes published on the Council’s website.

13 Date of next meeting

The next meeting of the Forum will be held on Tuesday, 19 September 2023 at 6.00pm in the Civic Centre, Leyland.

Chair

Date