

CITY OF YORK COUNCIL – TAXI LICENSING

MINUTES OF MEETING WITH YORK HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE ASSOCIATIONS

WEDNESDAY – 12 JULY 2017

PRESENT: Lesley Cooke – Licensing Manager CYC (LC)
Angela Ruane – Taxi Licensing Officer CYC (AR)
Matt Boxall – Acting Head of Public Protection CYC (MB)
Helen Sefton – Licensing Enforcement Officer CYC (HS)
PC Ben Pepper – North Yorkshire Police (BP)
Tim Brown – York Private Hire Association (TB)
Mohammed Iqbal – York Private Hire Association (MI)
Jim Kerr – Independent Taxi Association (JK)
Kim May – Station Taxis/York Taxi Association (KM)
Colin Metcalfe – York Hackney Carriage Association (CM)
Yousaf Din – York Hackney Carriage Association (YD)
Anthony Green – York Hackney Carriage Association (AG)

1) MINUTES OF LAST MEETING

LC circulated minutes from the last meeting held on 5 April 2017. There was a query as to when they were published. AR confirmed the minutes have to be agreed at the next meeting before they are published.

JK also confirmed there is still no clear view from Tradex on insurance query at point 15. All Tradex will say is each policy is treated differently and on it's own merit, there is no blanket exclusion.

2) POLICE ISSUES

LC thanked PC Ben Pepper for standing in at short notice to attend the meeting.

BP was asked for advice if drivers are challenging out of town (OOT) drivers as to why they are working in York as some of the OOT drivers are becoming aggressive and many claim racial abuse is happening to them.

BP reminded all to keep public order, perhaps approach in pairs then you have a witness, and do not antagonise. Sometimes filming these confrontations does not help as this inflames an already fraught situation.

YD queried whether BP and the NYP force know the intricacies of taxi legislation. BP confirmed he has knowledge but by no means expert. They have access to advice from CYC and seek help where required. The conversation went over much of the enforcement issues being faced both by the trade, CYC and NYP over dealing with enforcement of the night time economy and taxi/PH issues.

AG queried why lack of Police numbers from 02.30 to 05.00 as this is busiest period. BP confirmed they may be dealing with other serious issues elsewhere and there is a finite number of staff on shift.

There was a discussion over the police role at the Races and their responsibilities. BP also confirmed if anyone had particular issues with an individual Officer's conduct there was a mechanism to report that Officer.

BP was thanked for attending and his time and left the meeting.

As JK had to leave early, two agenda items were brought forward.

9) UBER – CLARIFICATION RE AREAS PRECLUDED ON THEIR APP

JK queried which areas were precluded on the App as many still picking up customers away from short stay car park at Station?

HS to take up with Uber.

10) JOINT MEETINGS WITH PH

JK has been informed by a member that the HC association do not wish to have joint meetings with PH as there are many issues which do not overlap and it also draws out the length of the meeting.

YD made the point that it actually frees up Officers' time having one joint meeting.

MI had no issues with joint meetings.

LC will take to members for views.

3) RANK REVIEW

MB has looked at all ranks in detail, many are in a poor state, ideas open for discussion are:-

- a) Head of rank signage to be replaced and improved, a uniform style and perhaps a space for renewable messages (stickers)
- b) Road markings refreshed and renewed
- c) St Saviourgate re-develop, improve, create 'lay by', lighting and CCTV
- d) Litter bins at each rank
- e) Move Rougier Street to other side of road – utilise electronic screen for messages?
- f) Remove – Clifton Moor, The Crescent, Tower Street
- g) Make one rank at Clifford Street both on Kuda side, create feeder near Magistrates' Court (HS to raise smoking area outside Kuda which fills pavement)
- h) Possible new rank on Micklegate (pending consultation with local residents)
- i) Change round St Sampson's Square rank

All others will be spruced up, full consultation to follow and will be included in 'Taxi Times'.

4) UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

LC – LVSA has been engaged to do survey, 3 years since last one was done. LVSA recently met with trade, CYC were not involved. Public consultation will follow when results available and will also be published on web. Report will be sent to Licensing Committee who will decide if there is any unmet demand and therefore a need to issue more hackney carriage vehicle licences – those on waiting list will take priority if new licences are released.

5) NEW APPLICATION AND EXISTING DRIVER TRAINING

LC – Feedback from trade, customers and research with other LA's has shown a need to revise the training package for new and current drivers.

From September 2017 all new applicants will undertake a one day course with an exam at the end. It will be mandatory. The course will cover child sexual exploitation (CSE), customer care, driving standards, local knowledge, byelaws/conditions/legislation, disability training and equality. It will be delivered by an external trainer and there will be the ability to re-sit. Full guidance notes will be available.

Existing drivers will have to have undertake a half day course prior to their driver licence expiring, failure to obtain the new qualification will mean their licence will not be renewed. The package will be delivered by the external trainer and will include disability awareness, CSE, safeguarding of adults and children, equality and customer care. Any refusal to attend will be classed as not fit and proper.

It will be same course for HC and PH and the knowledge element will not be diluted.

LC also advised that the licensing team will be contacting all drivers over coming year to update their DBS status.

6) HATE CAMPAIGN STICKER

LC passed around a copy of a hate campaign sticker that we have been asked to gauge if drivers would display in their cars.

All felt it should be up to the individual to decide, it should not be mandatory.

7) CCTV

LC advised that at present anyone can ask for CCTV to be fitted as long as it is from an approved supplier.

LC attended LGA conference on this subject. Some authorities have made CCTV mandatory but it is fraught with issues particularly surrounding the requirements of ICO. This is a huge task for the team at York to do and it can be done but only with support of all trade. Feedback is needed on this before we embark on this project.

8) ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

HS updated the group on recent issues:

Various complaints around Uber parking on ranks, allegedly plying for hire, standard of driving, drivers smoking etc. There is daily contact with other LA's and investigation into all complaints.

York drivers/proprietors are reminded that it is not acceptable to display vehicle plates in windows. The plates must be securely fixed to the exterior of the vehicle. Door livery must also be present when working. PH drivers were reminded it is a condition of licence that they cannot smoke E-cigarettes whilst in the PH vehicle and all drivers were reminded it is an offence to smoke in a HC or PH vehicle. Penalty tickets will be issued with zero tolerance.

MB was asked to update on the vacant Licensing Enforcement Officer post. MB said we are employing two staff part time through Work with York but are awaiting their DBS clearance. This will be a temporary fix until more permanent plans can be made. MB pointed out that ALL taxi complaints are followed up and this is not the case with other areas such as Trading Standards.

The group said they were happy for fees to go up if it meant more enforcement staff.

LC pointed out even if there were more staff they would not be out on enforcement every weekend, and that the current posts are not 100% taxi licensing, they cover all areas of licensing.

11) RACECOURSE

There needs to be feedback to the racecourse about the new PH arrangements. LC advised there is a meeting to address this on 20 July 2017.

Due to time constraints the rest of the agenda had to be abandoned and the meeting was closed.

17) DATE OF NEXT MEETING

4 October 2017 at 13:00.