



Message from Public Safety Committee Chair

Hi everyone. I am sure you are aware from the News recently, that the Government has finally published a reply to the national Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Task and Finish Group Report that was published last September:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/745516/taxi-and-phv-working-group-report.pdf

The Government is now recommending bringing in national minimum licensing standards and a number of other changes that will have a major impact on the Trade. Unfortunately, they don't yet seem to be willing to address the issue of cross border working at this time. Their report can be found on:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/775983/taxi-task-and-finish-gov-reponse.pdf

It is really important now that all drivers and operators read and respond to their new consultation paper (see link below) on new statutory guidance for local authorities 'Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Protecting Users'. You might think it is just another boring Government report, but it will have huge implications for the trade, and it is really important that you have a good read and put forward your views as part of the consultation.

We have set up a group of Councillors and officers to look at a Bristol response. You can respond to the Government consultation on-line or by email or write in by 22nd April through this link:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/778274/taxi-phv-licensing-protecting-users-condoc.pdf



A lot of the Government's recommendations seem to have been influenced by the high profile child sexual exploitation cases in other part of the country where taxis were implicated (whereas this has not been the situation in Bristol), and relate to safeguarding, improving training and tightening licensing criteria. For example, they are recommending new guidance on convictions like no licenses to be issued until 7 years have passed since a conviction for supplying drugs, dishonesty or possessing a weapon. If agreed, once these come in, the Licensing Team would have to look back at DBS's and apply the policy. It is recommended that no-one could have a license at all if they have been convicted of a crime involving death or abuse or exploitation. They also recommend that when the Public Safety Committee look at whether a driver is a 'fit and proper person' –an applicant or licensee should not be 'given the benefit of doubt' - so if the Committee is only "50/50", they should not hold a licence. The report also makes recommendations about tightening up the DBS process, CCTV, cross border enforcement and language proficiency.

What we need to do in Bristol is make sure all drivers and other interested parties are aware of the proposed changes and do comment, and then wait until the final recommendations are published, making sure all our policies are then changed in line with the Government's requirements. We will make sure everyone is kept updated through this newsletter, the Taxi Forum Reps and the Taxi Conference in October.

Act quickly on your driver checks letter, or risk not being able to work

IN THE MEANTIME we seem to have an increasing number of people asking for temporary licenses because their DBS forms have not come back. At the moment, drivers are given three months' notice that the DBS is expiring- which in almost all cases should be long enough (you get a letter to say the dates when your checks are due and it suggests you apply for the DBS immediately). We need to get a clear message out

to drivers that when you get a reminder, you need to do the DBS paperwork immediately as there are often delays (particularly if you have changed addresses, been abroad etc.) We can't just issue temporary licenses to drivers who have forgotten to send off their DBS forms, or have left it to the last minute before they get around to it. Help us to help you, and respond immediately to your reminder.

Patrick Masih chair of BBLTA



Hippodrome

The BBLTA request the drivers do not park by the Kebab Corner before Hippodrome.

Ranks

There is a significant progress towards ranks and we will continue work on the rank issues as a basic requirement for hackney drivers. The trade do understand the stress of hackney drivers for not having ranks at the heart of the 11th biggest city of the UK.

Private Hire Drivers

We are helping Private Hire drivers to create a WhatsApp group so they can share their problems and difficulties on the group. The Private Hire rep will convey them to the relevant organisations. This is the way forward for Private Hire drivers and good luck to Gary O'Neill for taking this initiative to form the unity.

Medical and DBS

Take extra care for your medical; ask your doctor if you are not satisfied with your medical.

Apply for DBS four months before your badge expires, it will save you hassle and stress.

Temple Meads

Roadworks outside Temple Meads has a big impact on the traffic flow, especially Fridays and Sunday evenings when hundreds of public cars come in the courtyard, it makes very difficult for taxis and buses to manoeuvre, more vehicles come in then going out. Please do not use excessive horns, we have informed APCOA for the overflow on the car park and how it affects taxis and the buses.

Change of Circumstances

You'll need to contact the licensing team if any of your personal circumstances have changed.

Change of name;

You'll need to supply official documentation if you've changed your name. We'll accept:

- A passport
- A driving licence
- A deed poll certificate



Change of address;

If you've changed your address you'll need to let us know so we can update your records.

You can report a change of address online here

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/licences-permits/change-of-circumstances>

Your appearance has changed;

If your appearance has changed significantly from the photo on your current badge then you should contact us as we will need a new photo to update your badge.

The condition of your health has changed;

If you feel that your health is affecting your ability to drive your taxi safely then you should let us know as soon as possible.

You may need to carry out a medical examination with your doctor to ensure that you're fit to drive.

Don't forget! If you want someone else to discuss your application or licence with us on your behalf, you'll need to give us written permission.

Licensing Team information systems

The Licensing Team have recently completed the purchase of new computer software. This decision was made to improve the way we process applications and hold your data. Major changes will occur and you will soon be able to do more online.

The software is currently going through rigorous testing and will be put into use in the coming months. As with any major change, there may be an effect on the service we provide, however, any major issues will be communicated to you.

We will continue to do all we can to ensure that the service runs as smoothly as possible during this period.



Accessibility Policies

What is happening?

Bristol City Council is looking to improve accessibility in the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade. We are doing this by implementing certain sections of the Equality Act 2010.

On January 22 2019, the Public Safety and Protection Committee agreed to implement two new policies with immediate effect;

Exemption from carrying Wheelchair Passengers policy

Exemption from carrying Assistance Dogs policy

What does this mean?

- The Council will be legally responsible for maintaining a list of licensed vehicles which can carry wheelchair passengers, known as a 'list of designated vehicles'
- By having a list, drivers of these vehicles will have duties placed on them to carry wheelchair passengers in a safe and comfortable manner.
- By having a list, it will be a criminal offence, as well as an offence under council policy, for drivers to refuse a wheelchair passenger.
- Separate to the requirements to carry wheelchair passengers, it will also be a criminal offence to refuse to carry an assistance dog if you are not in possession of an exemption certificate.

1. List of Designated Vehicles

Hackney Carriage - All Hackney Carriage vehicles are required to be wheelchair accessible under existing council policy. This means that all licensed vehicles will appear on the list. All drivers who are driving these vehicles will be required to undertake the duties, unless the driver has an exemption certificate.

Private Hire - Only wheelchair accessible Private Hire vehicles will appear on the list. All drivers who are driving these vehicles will be required to undertake the duties, unless the driver has an exemption certificate.

2. Exemption Policies

There may be some licensed drivers who cannot carry wheelchair passengers or assistance dogs for various medical reasons. A formal policy and process has been created for licensed drivers who cannot meet these requirements set out by the Equality Act 2010. These policies will allow drivers to apply for exemption from carrying out these duties.

What can I do if I need an exemption from carrying Wheelchair Passengers or Assistance Dogs?

If you are seeking exemption from carrying wheelchair passengers or assistance dogs, please carefully read through the policies, and ensure your application is submitted to us by 5th April 2019. Although we do not have a definite timescale for publishing a list at this stage, we will continue to notify all drivers of developments regarding this.

Will this affect any existing policies?

No, all Hackney Carriage Vehicles will still need to be 100% Wheelchair Accessible.

Private Hire Vehicles which are wheelchair accessible will also be included on the list.

Where can I read further information on this?

Please see the following link for the policies;

<https://www.bristol.gov.uk/web/guest/licences-permits/exemption-wheelchair-passengers-assistance-dogs>



Broad Quay & City Centre Super Rank

City Centre Super Rank.

The City Centre re-design has been particularly challenging combining all the challenges of maintaining one of the key arterial routes through the City Centre, a bus interchange hub and provision of taxi ranks as part of the public transport infrastructure.

The 'super rank' located at the Cenotaph end of the Centre is key to making traffic flow work and is currently being refreshed to make sure it is better used, and in the coming weeks it will feature new vinyl wraps and illuminated signage to help improve its visibility. We hope everyone plays their part and starts using this rank which will be to everyone's benefit.

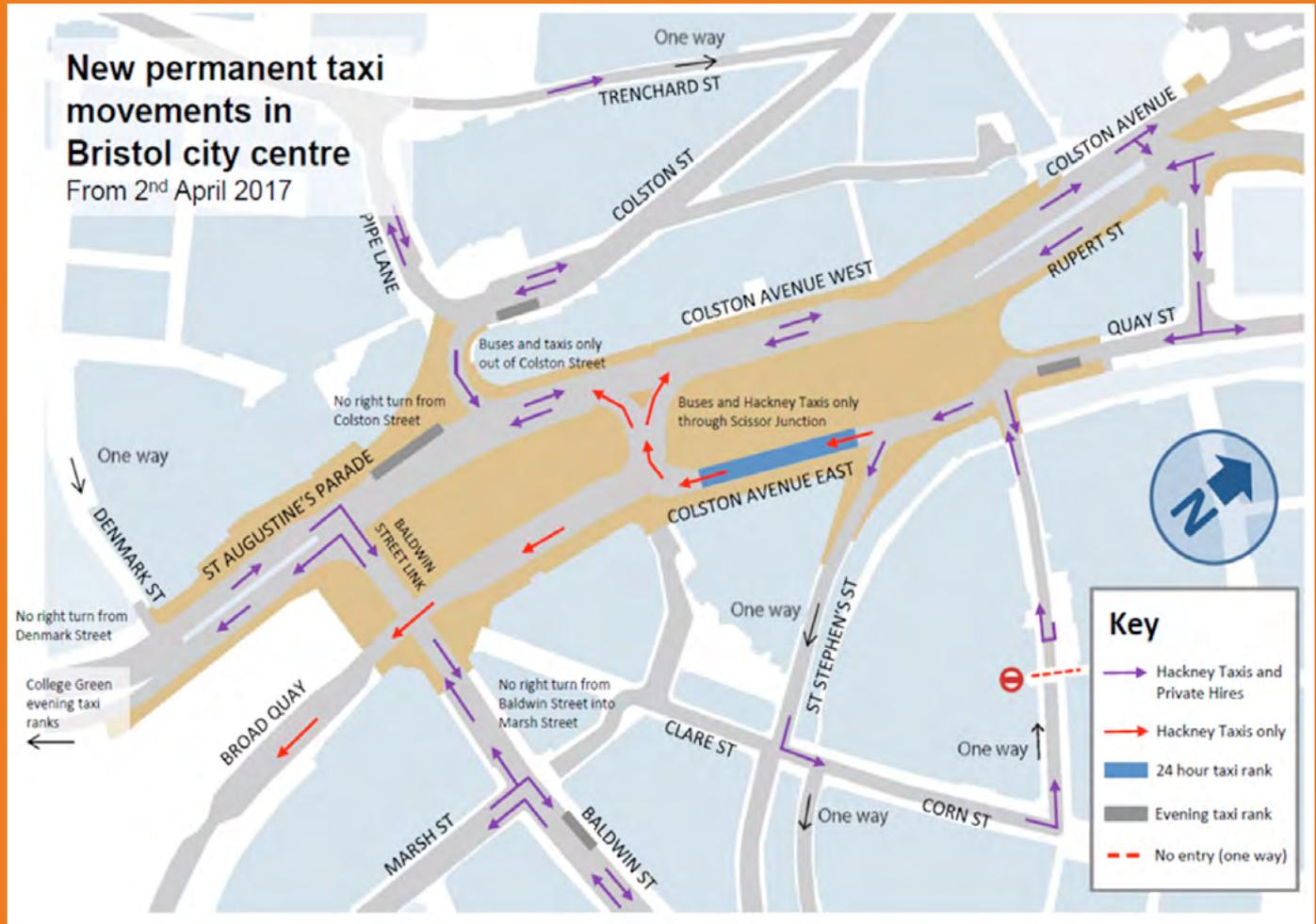
The 'new look' super rank was launched on 21st March 2019.

Broad Quay

The launch of 'super rank' will take place at the same time as when the enforcement of illegal vehicle movements on Broad Quay will start. This will be done using both enforcement officers and Enforcement Camera's with ANPR technology. This means ranking on Broad Quay and other illegal movements must stop and will be robustly enforced.

A quick reminder, Hackney Carriages can only travel south through Broad Quay towards Prince Street Bridge and Private Hire vehicles are excluded from Broad Quay completely.

To understand how the permitted vehicle movements for Licensed vehicles (Hackneys and Private Hires) work on the city centre please see the map on the next page;



You can also follow these links for all ranks in the City Centre and wider Bristol area;

<https://opendata.bristol.gov.uk/explore/dataset/taxi-ranks/map/?location=15,51.45223,-2.59258&basemap=jawg.streets>

<https://journeyplanner.travelwest.info/?poi=taxis>

Debit and Credit Card surcharges



Card surcharges - the Law

Did you know that from 13 January 2018 it became illegal to charge a surcharge on payments made by card? This applies to anyone selling a product or charging a service; including the taxi and private hire trade.

Not only is it illegal under consumer law, technically it is illegal under licensing law for Hackney Carriages also. Under Section 58 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, the driver cannot charge more money than displayed on the meter. This means that by charging a fee for using a card, you are charging more than the fee displayed on the meter.

You can read more on the government ban on card fees on gov.uk

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/card-surcharge-ban-means-no-more-nasty-surprises-for-shoppers>

Make sure you don't get caught out!

Taxi Licensing Drop-in Sessions



Following the recent trial of drop-in sessions, the Licensing Team will be holding a further limited number of sessions over the coming months.

The sessions are designed to help those with any complex issues which they may have experienced as part of the licensing process, and senior members of staff will be on hand to help. The sessions are not restricted to City Council licensing issues and both the Police and SARI are happy to be involved, but we do need to know what the issue is beforehand.

The service will run on an appointment only basis, and will take place at the Citizen Service Point at 100 Temple Street.

The next series of dates will be as follows;

Tuesday 9th April 2019 11:00 – 13:00

Tuesday 14th May 2019 11:00 – 13:00

Tuesday 11th June 2019 11:00 – 13:00

If you would like to book an appointment, please email licensing@bristol.gov.uk with the following information;

-Name

-Badge/Plate number

-Brief details of the issue you would like to discuss

Please note appointments will be allocated in order, and we will confirm your allocated time via email.

Application Timescales

We are approaching a very busy time of year, particularly in respect of vehicle licence renewals.

To ensure your application is processed in good time, we currently work to the following timescales;

- **Vehicle Licence Grants** - at least 10 working days
- **Vehicle Licence Renewals** - at least 10 working days (paper applications) and 7 working days (online applications)
- **Driver Licence Grants** - at least 10 working days
- **Driver Licence renewals** - at least 10 working days (paper applications) and 7 working days (online applications)
- **Private Hire Operator Grants and Renewals** - at least 10 working days

It is important that you submit the correct documentation at the time of application as this can also lead to delays in processing your application.

You can see what is required for each application by looking at our website, by clicking on the links above.

Changes to driver badges



Please note we will shortly be making changes to our driver badges.

In order to make it easier for you to see what is due and when, we will be adding in dates that your driver checks are due. This includes your DVLA, Medical, and DBS police check.

This information will be printed on your wearable badge, and not the badge displayed on your dashboard.

We will not be sending out new badges to each driver. You will receive new badges as and when you renew your licence.



You will be Prosecuted and fined up to £1000 if you drive on the metrobus guideway

The metrobus guideway is a private road, for use by guided buses only. No other vehicles are permitted – this includes Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

Despite this, growing numbers of taxis are being caught driving on the metrobus guideway every day.

There is no excuse – the access points to the guideway are clearly sign-posted with no entry signs and signs stating ‘guided buses only’.

Unauthorised access to the guideway is **trespass** and a contravention of ‘Article 36 and 42 of the Ashton Vale to Temple Meads and Bristol City Centre Rapid Transit Order 2013’. This means that if you are caught, you will be prosecuted and receive a court summons **which could lead to a penalty of up to £1000.**

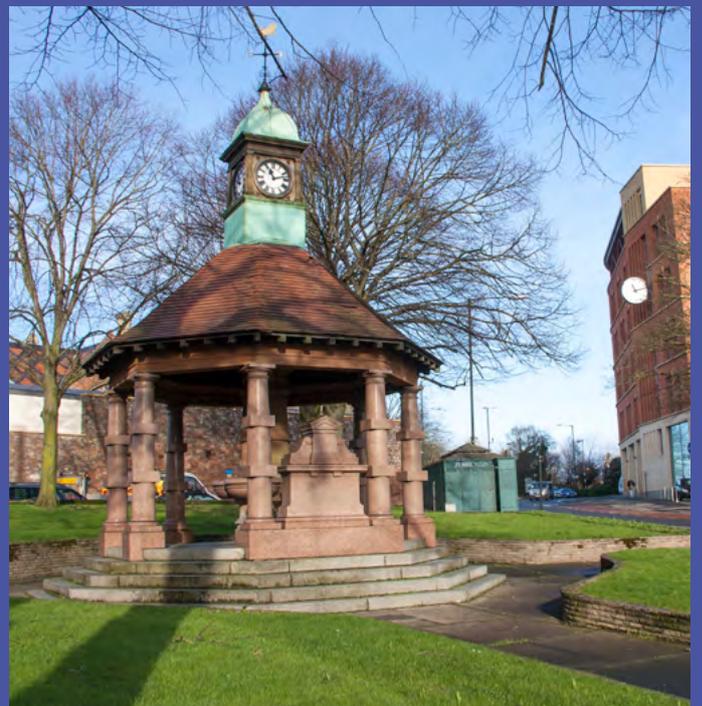
There is CCTV all along the guideway. You **WILL** be seen, identified and reported – don’t let it be you.

Blackboy Hill Toilets Scheme

The toilet block at the top of **Blackboy Hill** has been reinstated. The block will be available for use by taxi drivers only when they are closed to the public in the evening.

There is a padlock in place that has a code for access. **The access code is 11966.** Please ensure that this code is not shared outside of the taxi trade.

It is important that the padlock is locked up again after use. If it is not, then the Council will have to go back to a situation whereby it has to be closed again in the evenings.



| You Said...  | We Did...  |
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| <p>You wanted all the issues raised in Taxi Conference 2018 reported back on at next Conference.</p> | <p>This document gives initial feedback on the key issues. We are now planning the next Taxi Conference (to be held on 30th Oct 2019) with Taxi Forum Reps, and a full report will be available there along with information stalls.</p> |
| <p>You said the communication between drivers and the Council was not good enough.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The newsletter has been revised to be more accessible, and now goes out regularly to over 1900 drivers. • All licence holders who provide us with an email address receive a copy of the newsletter. • The 'Taxicop' sends almost daily updates to a 'Whatsapp' group of several hundred drivers. • Two on-line surveys have been used to capture trade views. • The Taxi Forum meets regularly and drivers and operators can bring any issues there via their representatives. |
| <p>You said there are delays in getting through to the Licensing Team on the</p> | <p>A new telephone system will be introduced in 2019 which should improve access to the service, where some calls will go through the Customer Services Centre.</p> |
| <p>You said there are delays in getting through to the Licensing Team on the phone</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We know that some of the processes need improving and a redesign project is now taking place to further improve the service our customers receive. • Due to the legalities of some application processes e.g. right to licence and DBS checks, options to move towards more on-line processes are limited. • However, we will continue to strive to improve accessibility and our on-line offer which provides for a quicker turn round times for our customers. We will be seeking feedback from drivers and operators when the new systems are up and running. |
| <p>You said drivers often have to put up with hate crime and racial and other abuse, and you do not have confidence in the police and other agencies.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SARI has worked hard with drivers to make them aware of their rights, and reporting of hate crime by taxi drivers has increased. • The appointment of the 'Taxicop' makes it easier for drivers to report immediately and the response of agencies is agreed to be better. • Campaign materials have been shared on social media. • Taxi Reps attend the regular meetings with the Council and SARI to look at equalities and public transport where they can raise issues. |
| <p>HC drivers were concerned that they had not had a fares increase in 2018.</p> | <p>This has been resolved, and the increase has been implemented. A calculator is being developed with Taxi Reps which will help to contribute to an annual fare review. We are planning the next fare review to take place in January 2020.</p> |
| <p>You said that licence holders find it difficult to access the service to discuss complex licensing related issues and so wanted to be able to talk to someone</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly 'drop-in' is being trialled at Temple Street and will continue this year, enabling applicants with more complex matters to discuss them face to face with the Licensing Team, and where appropriate, SARI and the Police. • Applicants are encouraged to contact licensing@bristol.gov.uk to arrange an appointment, and the dates have been circulated in the Taxi Newsletter. |

You Said...



We Did...



You were worried that the 'Taxicop' would not be funded in future

Funding is in place for 18/19 and 19/20, and we are currently working on the assumption the arrangement will continue for the foreseeable future.

You complained that drivers have little access to public toilets since the Council closed so many

We raised the drivers' concerns with the relevant team and Cabinet lead. The Council is promoting the Community Toilet Scheme, details of which have been promoted via the Taxi Newsletter.

HC drivers are concerned at the number and location of ranks

Concerns with ranks have been raised with the Transport Dept., Mayor and Cabinet lead. Several new ranks have been allocated at:

- College Green (5 spaces facing City Centre and 4 spaces behind the bus stops)
- Park Street (outside Mauretania extended to 3 spaces and made legally enforceable)
- Park Street (outside Woodes: 3 spaces - extended)
- Park Street (opp St Georges Rd: 4 spaces extended and made enforceable)
- Victoria Street – outbound (3 new spaces – trade off for Baldwin St)
- Prince Street (extended and preserved when new bike lane installed)
- Old Market Street - new taxi rank markings have been installed and an order has been placed to install new signage which should be installed by mid-March.
- Queens Avenue - an order has been placed for the new road markings to be installed along with the new signage. This should be complete by the end of March at the latest, and has been delayed due to co-ordination with other works.
- Bristol Royal Infirmary, Baldwin Street and Motion Nightclub – designs are currently being drawn up for these locations and more information will become available.

We continue to work with Transport colleagues to address the needs identified by BBTLA earlier this year and meetings are being held to progress the request being made. Full details will be provided detailing what is possible and timescales once finalised.

HC drivers are concerned about the signage and lack of enforcement of ranks

- We are improving the rank lines and signs so they are more visible and easier to use - this will be finished by Spring 2019. We are proposing to have illuminated Taxi Beacon at key ranks. Posters will be put up in display cases to give public information.
- We are working with Travel West to improve the taxi information on their website including an interactive map of ranks.
- We are working with Enforcement Officers to try and keep ranks clearer for taxis.
- The main Centre rank will be dressed in a visible wrap week commencing 11 March 2019. Illuminated signage will be installed week commencing 18 March 2019.

You Said...



We Did...



You said you would like bus lanes restricted to Bristol licensed vehicles only

This was raised with the Transport Team who looked into it, but concluded it was not possible due to issues with the legality and enforcement.

You said the MOT complaint process was not accessible

- We will print advice about the process in the newsletter.
- In the event of complaint, customers are requested to complete a complaints form. This is then reviewed by senior officers who decide if the complaint is upheld. If the decision is not accepted by the customer, they can seek a meeting with the Fleet Services Manager.
- In respect of complaints that relate to the MOT, customers may complain directly to DVSA.
- Full details will be provided in the newsletter and are provided within Fleet Services which is a legal requirement like any other MOT stations.

You asked that we opened more MOT stations and bays and were unhappy with the MOT fee increase

- This was considered last year, and a survey with drivers provided a mixed response. Public Safety Committee decided that there was not a strong case to open more stations. Data from Sandy Park does not show there are any delays which would need an additional bay.
- The increase in fees related to Certificate of Conformity and was in line with corporate increases for fees and charges.

HC drivers are concerned about the lack of spaces at Temple Meads station and lack of prioritisation for their service

Network Rail operate a permit scheme to allow HC's to pick up at the station which is their private land, and so there is not a lot the Council can do. We have raised the issue and some additional spaces have been provided by Network Rail however other issues are still under discussion. Unfortunately our hands are tied, as the land and management is the responsibility of Network Rail, but we are trying to facilitate ongoing discussions to help improve the relationship.

You raised on-going concerns about out of town operating as PH in the Bristol area and the impact of App Based Private Hire Operators.

- HC's licensed outside Bristol are making use of a legal loophole to work in Bristol as PHV's - undermining our own licensing policies. App based bookings through Private Hire companies have a similar impact.
- Public safety is compromised as BCC has no regulatory control and trade is being taken away from the licensed Bristol trade.
- The Council has no control over this issue, but has lobbied through the Mayor and MPs, who have raised it with other authorities and Parliament. A national Task and Finish Group have made a number of recommendations which may help resolve this (e.g. that journeys to start and finish in the area a vehicle is licensed), so lobbying is needed to get recommendations turned into legislation.
- The Government has just issued a formal response to these recommendations, which will require legislative changes to address the problems we all recognise are a national problem not just local to Bristol.
- Anyone can put forward their views to the government on their proposals on future taxi licensing :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-licensing-protecting-users>

You Said...



You said that Bristol's strict licensing standards means that people are going in large numbers to get licensed in neighbouring authorities, but working in Bristol without proper enforcement.

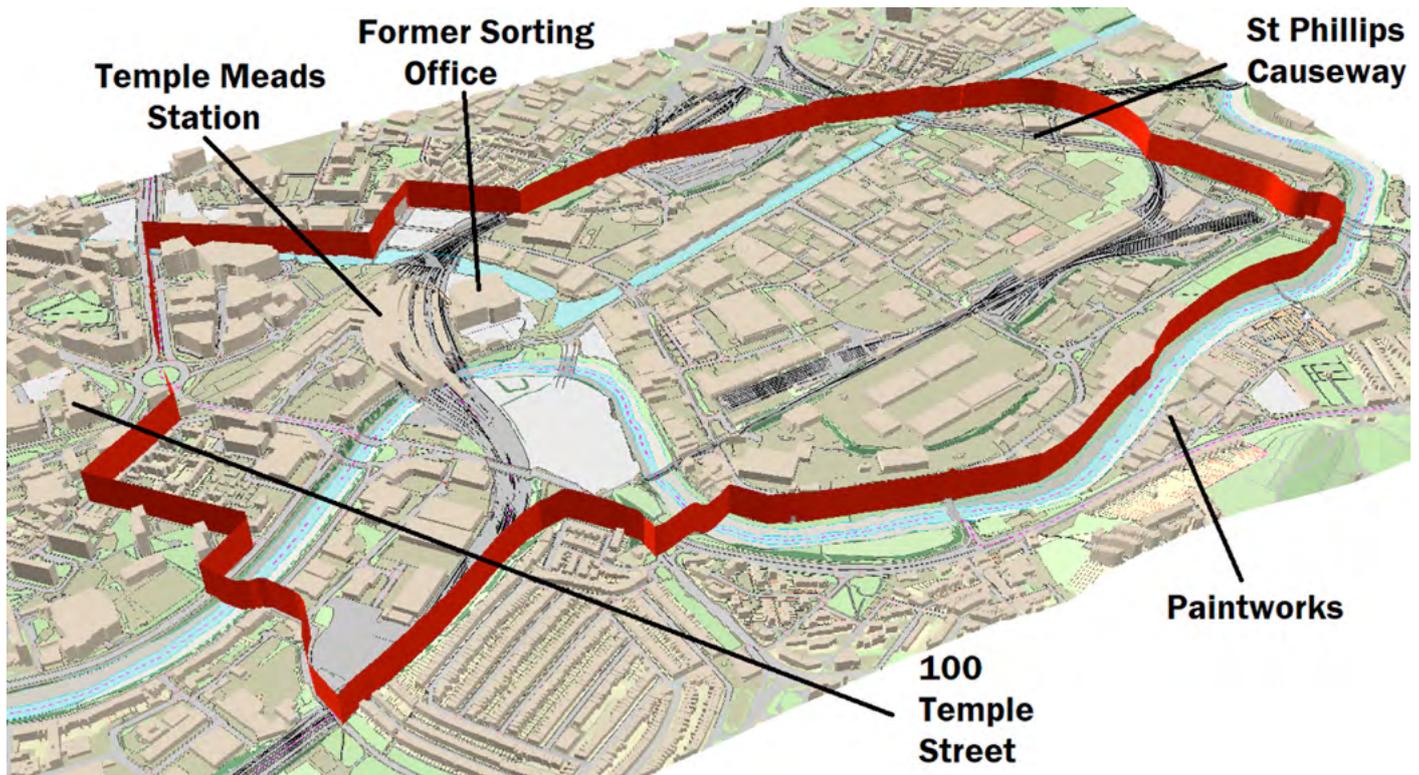
You made a number of comments on current licensing policies where you did not think drivers' views were considered.

We Did...



- Bristol is proud to have high standards for public safety.
- We are pleased that the Government are consulting on bringing in the minimum licensing standards for all local authorities, as well as more ability to carry out joint enforcement.

Each time a policy is reviewed it now goes beforehand to the Taxi Forum so that drivers and operators can give their views. Views are also sought through the newsletter and surveys if necessary.



Future plans for the Temple Quarter

Bristol City Council and its partners are currently working on plans for the long term development of the Temple Quarter area, including Temple Meads station and St Philip's Marsh. Let us know your views by completing this short online survey:

bit.ly/FutureTempleQuarter

Previous Newsletters:

The Taxi Newsletter is a good way for the Licensing Team to communicate with the Private Hire and Hackney Carriage trade. Past issues of the newsletter are available on our website: bristol.gov.uk/licences-and-permits/taxi-forum

What would you like to see?

The Licensing Team aim to improve communication between the council and the trade.

Remember, this is your newsletter! If you have something you think would be useful, or would like to see included in future issues, or you have a good news story or information you want to share, please get in touch at licensing@bristol.gov.uk with the subject 'Newsletter'.