

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE FORUM Meeting

Venue: Virtual via Zoom

Agenda: 25 March 2020

Attendees and who they represent:

Cllr Ruth Pickersgill (RP), Chair, representing Bristol City Council
Jonathan Martin (JM) representing Bristol City Council
Abigail Holman (AH) representing Bristol City Council
Saif Hussain (SH) representing BBTLA, Chair
Steve Lohia (SL) BDriven
Mahad Jama (MJ) representing Magans Taxis
Desmond Broster (DB) representing V Cars and Veezu
Patrick Quinton (PQ) representing Police, Taxi Compliance Officer
Shaban Ali (SA) BUPHD Bristol United Private Hire Drivers
Pete Woodhouse (PW) representing Bristol City Council Public Transport Team
Mike Bullock (MB) – Bristol Executive
Gary O’Neill (GO)– PH Driver
William Sawyer (WS) – PH Driver
Kamel Abu Yusuf (KY) – Driver
Karen Daniels (KD) – Bristol City Council Public Transport Team Operations

1. Welcome, Introductions, Apologies

- Apologies – Shammi Raichura (SR) Uber

2. Agree minutes from last meeting

Minutes from 14-01-21

Actions:

- AH follow up on directional signage for BRI outside meeting via email and copy in managers – ACTION to be picked up for next meeting.
- AH to liaise with KD to ensure contacts are up to date

- There was a meeting with Thangham Debbonaire MP – she subsequently wrote to Minister of Transport regarding issues raised including cross border working raised however it is still unclear from responses whether it will be addressed by the Government at this point.
- Noted the decision on regarding status of workers for Uber and the potentially wide reaching impact across sector.

3. Latest Covid updates (JM)

JM provided an update:

- Bristol has seen a decline in infection rates in recent weeks, with a slight increase in the last seven days, which may be attributed to schools returning.
- Outdoor hospitality due to reopen on 12 April and indications that city centre venues all booked already. Still lower capacity in outdoor areas, but likely that it would be busy. The previous 10pm curfew will not apply and venues could open outside for normal licensed hours.
- Rapid testing centre on M32 was still open and it is important to flag this to drivers to use it, particularly those coming back to work as lockdown is lifted. It was identified as an important way of flagging cases early.
- Information on re-opening would be publicised in the newsletter and on social media prior to the 12 April

4. Licensing Team update (JM)

5. Policy Update including (JM)

JM provided an update:

- Emma Lake had now left and the Council are in process of recruiting to team leader post.

- Recently recruited four licensing officers.
- It was noted that licensing is funded entirely through licence fees, and we don't know what the longer term impact of Covid is yet. The council have to balance the resource with income, and time had been spent looking at current and potential demand.
- Taxi policy had recently been consulted on with some significant changes proposed, arising mainly from the statutory national standards. The consultation had gone further than previous ones to engage the trade, and lots of contributions had been received. It would take some time to analyse these, and there could be no decision prior to the elections in May. It was understood that there were some potentially challenging aspects, such as the certificate of good character, but the policy was based on national standards which must be implemented unless good reason not to do so.
- Because of the requirement to re-constitute the PSP committee after the elections it was likely the policy would be brought before the committee as soon as it is possible in the Summer.
- Certificate of good character (JM explained this is really like an overseas DBS)– it was understood that some countries, for example those which were war-torn may not be able to provide this, and those cases would be considered individually.
- An upcoming change was flagged relating to a new requirement for local authorities to undertake checks with HMRC to ensure that applicants are registered for tax. No additional details are available at the moment and will be provided as and when they are received.

6. Issues from BBTLA and issues from PH

- Concerns were raised about the information on Additional Restrictions Grants and how it was put out to drivers. It was highlighted that other authorities had given more to their licence holders. It was noted that no actions could be taken in this forum, and the concerns had been flagged up with the ARG Team who are doing all they can to progress them, but that the grants related to a wide range of businesses, not just taxi drivers and was a fixed sum so distribution was complicated. Bath has just introduced its Clean Air Zone and wheelchair vehicles had been exempted for two years. It was queried whether exemptions would be in place for Bristol when the CAZ was introduced here. JM confirmed that the final decision hadn't been made, but he understood that Euro 6 diesel and Euro 5 petrol vehicles would be exempt. ACTION: RP would write to the Mayor to ask.
- A query was raised as to whether the decision would be reversed on Euro 6 diesel vehicles for taxi licensing. It was clarified that this would not happen.
- No charges had yet been set for the Clean Air Zone.
- Concerns were raised about the cost of running electric vehicles and the additional time lost in charging them.

7. Taxicop update (PQ)

PQ provided an update:

- The police van was no longer in use due to events of the weekend, and more time had been spent on public order work at the moment.

- There was a recent press release from Avon and Somerset Police relating to taxis and safeguarding processes.
- PQ had undertaken a number of stops recently where drivers had been plying for hire. He had found in those cases where drivers were honest from the start and had no other breaches account of this was taken by the Committee. Where there were a number of issues including a lack of honesty this was not considered favourably by committees.
- A number of drivers had been caught driving suspended vehicles, for which the penalty was severe. He wanted to remind drivers not to drive vehicles which were suspended.
- He reminded the Forum that it was unlikely action would be taken against operators where they were not aware of a suspension or revocation of a driver or vehicle licence.
- He also thanked the Forum for the messages of support for himself and his colleagues over a challenging weekend. Best wishes were sent to the officers who had been injured.
- It was confirmed that Licensing were looking at how the information on suspensions and revocations could be shared in compliance with GDPR.

8. Highways update (PW/KD)

RP highlighted the previous concerns which had been raised around changes to the traffic layouts and the request for drivers to be included in early discussions to best utilise their knowledge and intel.

PW provided an overview of the City Centre Framework available [here](#). He noted that this was put together pre-Covid, however did form the basis of strategic proposals going forward. He highlighted some of the key objectives:

- Improving sustainable transport and public transport in the city.
- Consideration of constraints around kerbside space and how this could be improved by changing strategy on bus termination points.
- Providing better planning of taxi rank provision and creating a central space with less traffic.
- Consideration of extension of Covid related closures and changes to make them permanent in certain areas.
- It was proposed that the forum would be the best way to engage with the knowledge of drivers and operators and he would highlight this with the engagement team going forward.
- Some specific questions about traffic issues were raised, and it was confirmed that these should be directed to the Passenger Transport team at passenger.transport@bristol.gov.uk.
- The need to ensure kerbside allocation was used and configured correctly and efficiently was flagged, as well as consideration for spaces for private hire vehicles to drop off and pick up. The ability for customers to safely and legally get into and out of the vehicles was important.
- A request for the bus gate at the super rank to be made two way was raised, and PW agreed to take this away for consideration.
- KD provided a brief update, including that she was progressing posters on passenger behaviour and updating the operator contacts list.

9. AOB

JM showed a guidance video on helping visually impaired people, particularly during Covid. The final version would be

available on YouTube and the link distributed in the newsletter and via WECIL.

RP flagged that a meeting between WECIL reps and taxi reps was proposed, but would need to be arranged once Covid regulations permitted.

It was noted that this would be Cllr Pickersgill's final Forum meeting as she was stepping down from her Councillor role when the elections took place.

The Forum offered their thanks to her for her engagement with the trade, and with officers, and her fair and strong leadership of the forum. It was agreed that the Forum was in a good place because of this.

10. Actions for next meeting:

Action Point	Matters arising	By Whom	Completed?
1	AH follow up on directional signage for BRI outside meeting via email and copy in managers	AH	
2	RP to write to Mayor regarding Clean Air Zone charges.	RP	

Next meeting: 2 months time