

# **Taxi & Private Hire Trade Consultation with SCC Licensing**

**10am Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> June 2019  
Committee Room 2**

**Attendees-** Cllr Catherine McEwing (Stand in Chair) (CM), Cllr Graham Galton (GG), Phil Bates (PB) Licensing, Russell Hawkins (RH) Licensing, Kevin May (KM) K and K, Clive Johnson (CJ) RDA, Sam Shahid (SS) PHO, Les Slater (LS) LS Commercials, Ian Hall (IH) SHPHA GMB (IH), Jim Martin (SHO), Perry McMillan (PM) Unite and Eugenie Teasley (ET) Uber.

SHPHA – Southampton Hackney and Private Hire Association  
RDA – Radio Taxis Drivers Association  
GMB – GMB Trade Union  
SHO – Southampton Hackney Organisation

Apologies from: Cllr Sue Blatchford, (Chair), Cllr Beryl Harris, Cllr Sally Spicer, Prad Athwal, Steve Lucas.

## **1. Apologies**

As listed above.

## **2. Minutes from Previous Meeting and Action points**

Wheelchair accessible vehicles – not well provided for in the private hire sector. Not changed for years.

RH – Advised that we have three firms catering for this now in the PH sector, Transmobility, Go Mobility (other one I could not recall at the time is SCA Transport Services)

ET confirmed that at this point they do not have WAVS at this time but have Uber Assist which supplies a normal car but the driver is trained to assist customers with disabilities.

.

## **3. July Licensing Committee Meeting (SCC)**

1. Safeguarding Training – PB informed the group that we had consulted on Safeguarding Training and needs to ensure that the training we provide to drivers is also accepted by Hampshire County Council to save drivers doing an additional course if they carry out a school run for HCC. We were looking at an online course but the council met resistance from safeguarding boards as there could be an issue of

ensuring the driver is the same person that is taking the test. Therefore it is looking most likely that SCC will have to adopt in person training, likely to be classroom based. SCC is trying to secure funding to pay for all existing drivers to take the course on renewal. New drivers will have to pay. The training will be required to be updated on every driving licence renewal. We are seeking options on the refresher training to ensure that it is economic and relevant as drivers will have to pay for it. IH asked if we considered the Banardos training and PB confirmed that we had but it is an online course. KM said that he was happier with a classroom based course. PB said it helped in engaging drivers that may not speak English as a first language. PM asked if this would be publicised within the trade? PB said it would be. LS added that the timings of the courses would need to fit in with the requirements of the trade. PB responded that we would try to accommodate this. CJ said that we should write to all drivers to advise them. RH pointed out that we already had done this. JM expressed concern that to report would mean becoming involved in a case and ending up having to give evidence and not all drivers would be happy with this. PB responded by saying that the course will explain this and options of reporting. CJ asked if when reporting you could do so anonymously? PB replied that you could, via Crimestoppers.

2. RH advised the groups on changes to conditions that will phase out Euro 5 diesel vehicles. In summary, no change of vehicle or new vehicle can be a euro 5 diesel from 1<sup>st</sup> Jan 2020 and during the year of 2022 no euro 5 diesel will be renewed.
3. Adoption of IoL Fit and Proper Policy – CM advised that we would discuss this at the end of the meeting.

**4. Please can we have clarification on the process of the upcoming taxi elections, will the results be given in an open meeting or closed doors? Also has all the letters been sent out to candidates & voters? (SHA)**

RH explained the process of the election that was currently in process to elect three hackney representatives and three private hire driver/operator representatives.

CJ asked why vehicle proprietors did not get a vote.

RH replied that some proprietors have multiple vehicles and so would get a far greater number of votes. This may not be fair.

CJ asked what legal bases we had to change to this system?

RH replied that there is no legal requirement for us to consult with the trade in meetings such as this but it is best practice. It is a legal requirement that we consult on changes of conditions etc. but we do this separately with the trade and the public.

IH Added that the Task and Finish Group report says that the council should consult with stakeholders.

KM also asked why vehicle proprietors had no vote.

RH responded by adding that it would be complex on vehicles with multiple proprietors to ensure a fair system.

PM hoped it would get more members to attend.  
CM responded that Cllr Spicer was changing her working hours so will be able to attend future meetings. Cllr Galton was also present and he indicated that he would attend future meetings.  
PB added that at Eastleigh, democratic services organise their meetings and this saves a lot of work. This is not possible at Southampton.  
ET asked if those not invited could still attend to watch?  
PB said that this would not be possible as there could be logistical issues of lots of the trade came to observe. However the chair was free to invite anyone else to the meetings that they felt were required.  
IH stated that he was not standing as he did not agree with it but did wish the new group all the best.  
KM said that he had been on Eastleigh's consultation group for many years and it is problematic when elected representatives don't show up for any meetings.  
CL asked if we should have a combined meeting with EBC  
CM responded by saying that we should not.  
ET clarified that she represented only the interests of Uber, not individual drivers.  
RH read out the received nominations:

Hackney Carriage Driver's Representative	Clive Johnson
Hackney Carriage Driver's Representative	Mohammad Shahid
Hackney Carriage Driver's Representative	Leslie Slater
Private Hire Drivers' Representative	Ali Haydor
Private Hire Drivers' Representative	Barry Doyle
Private Hire Drivers' Representative	Luke Hearne
Private Hire Drivers' Representative	Patrick J. Ross
Private Hire Drivers' Representative	Simon May

**5. Medicals - There is no consistency of prices that GP surgeries charge for this service. We are looking for a more positive approach from SCC – SHA**

IH brought up how there is no consistency on GP's charging for medicals.  
PM said it would be much better if there was a standard charge. His has gone up to £70 from £60 recently. Can licencing speak to the GP's on our behalf?  
CM answered that taxi medicals are considered private work and so the practice are able to set their own prices. SCC cannot interfere in this.  
RH added that there needs to be the restriction to own GP's only as we have received dubious medicals from other Doctors with questionable qualifications.  
LS asked if the council could look into one medical provider.  
CM said that the council will look into medicals.

**6. We would like a proper driver's manual for HC and PH's, similar to the Eastleigh one - SHA**

IH pointed out that Eastleigh have a drivers manual and could SCC create one for Southampton?

PB responded by saying that Eastleigh's has so many issues that he has to re-write the whole thing. If we did one for Southampton then it would just be our conditions as this is the only thing that is enforceable. This is freely available and online anyway.

**7. Better enforcement is needed particularly at night, too many private hires ranking up at nightclubs and train station, with no bookings - SHA**

IH raised the need for better enforcement.

PB responded by informing Ian that we do go out at night and we don't encounter private hire vehicles parked in this manner very often at all. PB added that he is currently in the process of seeking authorisation from his management to increase numbers of enforcement staff.

**8. Consultation - Trade groups have worked positively with the council. Why do we have so little confidence in the licensing office? We are stakeholders - SHA**

IH said that the trade tell him that they have little confidence in the licensing department.

PB responded by pointing out that when he took up his post the trade consultation meetings had ceased and it was him that started them again. He stated that he does not always see eye to eye with the trade. This is because our roles are different. The council are not running a taxi business but are protecting the public.

**9. Guidance Document - It is acknowledged that this Guidance Document cannot be fully achieved without the imposition of National Minimum Standards, so why is it so important to get this passed as a condition, when the Task and Finish report is already going through the government process? - SHA**

IH said that it is the view of all the trade reps that they want to adopt the Eastleigh Borough council system when it comes to points. This is that when a driver gets to nine points they should go on a drivers awareness course.

CJ added that it seems to work at Eastleigh.

PB pointed out that only one Southampton driver has more than seven points on their DVLA licence and about twelve Eastleigh drivers have more than seven points. It is likely that before a driver gets to seven points they have already been on an awareness course.

KM said he would agree with the seven points but only when it includes bin lorry drivers, bus drivers and PSV drivers – why is it only the taxi trade?. RH pointed out that this would be decided at the licensing committee meeting on the 24<sup>th</sup> July. However, the taxi trade would be well represented by drivers and the people in this room. However, the public whom are not so understanding of such policies are not likely to be there in the same numbers to give their opinion on the protection that they are getting.

Lastly, PM thanked CM for chairing the meeting so well.

Date of next meeting – TBA