

Taxi & Private Hire Trade Consultation with SCC Licensing

**10am Friday 1st March 2019
Committee Room 4**

Attendees- Cllr Sue Blatchford (SB) Chair, Cllr Beryl Harris, Phil Bates (PB) Licensing, Russell Hawkins (RH) Licensing, Clive Johnson (CJ) RDA, Barry Doyle (BD) RDA, Pradeep Athwal (PA) Transmobility, Sam Shahid (SS) PHO, Ajmal Sudhan (AS) PHO, Les Slater (LS) LS Commercials, Ian Hall (IH) SHPHA and GMB (IH), Jim Martin.

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

Apologies from: Cllr McEwing, Eugenie Teasley

1. Apologies

As listed above.

2. Minutes from Previous Meeting and Action points

RH – Operator licences now up to date online as promised in the last meeting.
BP – Picking up at bus stops – Sent an email checking this. Not legal and no permission given by the council. Drivers would have to appeal if they believe they were justified to use them but it would be a matter dealt with case by case by parking services.

3. Uber out of Town Door Stickers – SHPHA

IH had wanted to know if it was possible to force out of town Ubers to have door stickers. PB explained that we have no influence over the conditions of other authorities but will bring it up with the Hampshire Licensing Group.

4. Radio Taxis Response to Fit and Proper Policy

CJ - RDA's response to the new fit and proper policy is that of support with the exception of 7 points on a DVLA licence would lead to revocation with no re-application for five years. Eastleigh get drivers on an awareness test at 9 points. We should do the same.

JM, LS and IH agreed with CJ.

RH gave an example of a driver that committed a traffic offence just two days after his awareness course and so was suspended. Also when drivers have gained six points it is highly likely they have attended an awareness course already and so it is quite likely that they have been caught three times before this within the last three years.

CJ said it is driver's livelihoods at stake and we should take this into account. PB explained that we specifically are not allowed to take livelihood into consideration when making decisions. There is a lot of case law to back this up. Out of the 1500 drivers we had, when we checked in 2018, 4 out of 1500 had more than 7 points on their DVLA licence so evidence suggests that there is not a problem in this area. Consultation has ended on this. It is likely to go before committee in June/July, after the elections.

PB also explained how the fit and proper policy is just policy. It can be deviated from if there are particular circumstances that warrant it. We ensure that drivers get all evidence against them and have opportunities to respond to it. This response is always taken into account when considering the future of a licence.

CJ asked who would make these decisions.

PB responded that it depends on circumstances. It clear cut, he will, in consultation with the Chair of Licensing Committee. Or the decision will go to full committee.

PB asked what the trade would suggest instead.

CJ responded with 7 points, driver awareness course.

JM Drivers could get points from vehicle being left in an unsafe condition from previous driver if double banked.

PB responded by saying this is relevant and still would count.

PA said that the frequency in which a driver gets points should be taken into account. Also think that a one year ban is sufficient for totting up.

PB Can have alternative option on this if not agreed.

AS asked how this would affect the out of town vehicles.

PB It's a national standard so if adopted by all, it would be the same.

IH Pointed out that Philip Kolvin QC wrote the foreword in the document and is also Uber's lawyer. Is this a conflict of interest?

PB replied that as a Barrister he would have to abide by strict rules on conflict of interest therefore it is highly unlikely that this would have broken those rules.

5. Improve Numbers of Wheel Chair Accessible vehicles - SHPHA

IH pointed out the difficulty that customers have getting a wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV). Also the high cost of a WAV, in particular a low emission one. Most WAV hackneys are not on an operator circuit and so are hard to contact.

PA Said he was a WAV Co. he works with other operators to provide a service. He has spare capacity.

IH proposed that more PH Operators have more WAV's available.

LS Said that he owns hackney WAV's and gets phone calls late at night to provide service. Hard to get a driver.

CJ pointed out that they have just started a new service called Ride Radio. They install their equipment free of charge into a hackney WAV and when they are available they can log in and make themselves available for private hire work. The driver will then enter the metered fare into their PDA and they will get the fare paid on account, less 15%. There are no subscriptions for this. Radio keeps 15% of fares as commission.

PB said he was very interested in this app. The lack of WAV's is a national problem that needs legislation to address properly.

IH said there was still problems with assistance dog refusals.

PB We will do some assistance dog test purchases.

6. CCTV – Reliability and Checks - RDA

CJ said that he was aware that there are a lot of instances with cameras having faults.

LS said that his system (verifeye) has a visible warning light on the panic button if there is a fault. Some systems are now ten years old and are wearing out. He will not be able to fix older systems and they will have to be replaced in their entirety.

RH There is a new system available (SAFE) and another is in talks with us.

LS pointed out that it is the sound side of the setup that puts the price up.

IH asked if owners of dashcam should be registered with the ICO.

PB said he believes they should be.

7. Topography to be Re-introduced for Private Hire - RDA

CJ said that the topography test should be re-introduced but it was pointed out that it was him in 2017 that said it was too hard to pass.

RH said that it is up to the operators to ensure that they correctly trained their drivers for the area in which they worked if they wish. We do not receive any complaints regarding this and there is no public risk.

8. Medicals – Alternative Surgeries - RDA

CJ said that Radio had lined up an alternative doctors surgery that could do medicals cheaper for drivers. Does it need to be drivers own GP's?

RH said it does because of poor medicals in the past. If a driver cannot get a medical from his own GP, they can speak to a licensing officer who can talk them through a referral process but this is not the norm.

9. Task and Finish Group Consultation response

CJ asked if the trade can do a joint response with licensing.

PB said no. Important to respond independently.

Date of next meeting – 1000 on 6th June 2019