

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
23 APRIL 2009**

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**BRACKNELL LICENSED TAXI FORUM  
(Chief Officer: Environment and Public Protection)**

**1 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Since the last meeting of the Licensing and Safety Committee on 5 February 2009, there have been three meetings with representatives of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum (BLTF), on 11 February, 3 March and 8 April.

**2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings held are attached as Appendices A, B and C.
- 2.2 Mr Watson and Mr Yexley currently own and drive hackney carriages in the Bracknell Forest borough, while Mr Hildreth and Mr Flanagan represent the GMB Union, Professional Drivers Branch. Jane Robson owns a number of hackney carriages and runs the private hire firm JJM, and Stuart Jefferies and Neil Mathews work in the Bracknell Forest Council Transport Development team.

**3 EQUALITIES IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

- 3.1 There are no implications arising from this report.

**4 STRATEGIC RISK MANAGEMENT ISSUES**

- 4.1 There are no strategic risk management implications arising from this report.

Background Papers

Minutes of meeting held 11 February

Minutes of meeting held 3 March

Minutes of meeting held 8 April

Contact for further information

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## MINUTES

**MEETING NAME:** Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

**MEETING DATE AND TIME:** 11.00 hours Wednesday 11 February 2009

**PRESENT:** Laura Driscoll (LD)  
Andy Watson (AW)  
John Yexley (JY)  
Councillor Chas Baily (CB)  
Niamh Kelly (NK)

1.	<p><b>Apologies</b> Robert Sexton (RJS) (updated through minutes)</p>	
2.	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b> No amendments required. Outstanding actions as follows:</p> <p>RJS and MH to look into the issue of private hire vehicles displaying the word 'Taxi' in their door adverts.</p> <p>Details of GMB Health and Safety Rep to be provided to RJS.</p> <p>LD to look into whether meters can be switched on before the driver begins to assist the wheelchair user, to ascertain whether this is an offence under Disability Discrimination Act.</p>	<p><b>RJS/MH</b></p> <p><b>MH</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p>
3.	<p><b>Extensions for existing saloon vehicles</b> LD passed BLTF a list of the existing swivel seat vehicles with details of when they are due to be replaced, for BLTF to discuss with those concerned. BLTF will consider the argument for extension.</p> <p>LD also provided to BLTF a list of all hackney vehicles in the borough.</p>	<p><b>AW/JY</b></p>
4.	<p><b>Safety Advice and Awareness</b> NK is working with TVP on a number of initiatives with regards to driver safety, including a leaflet with advice, a notice for passengers regarding their behaviour and also a key fob to check for counterfeit notes.</p> <p>NK to liaise with TVP representative and BLTF to see if it is possible to attend next trade meeting to discuss and hand out leaflets etc.</p>	<p><b>NK</b></p>

5.	<p><b>Guidance Notes and Conditions</b> LD reminded BLTF that any comments re the proposed amendments to the Guidance Notes are to be raised by the end of the month.</p>	AW/JY
6.	<p><b>Survey Specification</b> A discussion was held about the specification for the proposed survey. The three core components are the monitoring of ranks (BLTF were keen on the video option), public consultation (with a need for explanation of the difference between hackney carriage and private hire) and stakeholder consultation. A suggested list of stakeholders was drawn up and LD explained that focus groups would be preferred wherever possible (within reason due to cost) to ensure a better quantity and quality of response. LD will feed back to RJS and a draft specification will be sent out for comment shortly.</p>	LD/RJS
7.	<p><b>Any other business</b> BTLF requested a meeting with the Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee plus any other members who would like to attend, to discuss issues currently affecting the trade. LD to try to arrange.</p> <p>JY reminded all present that he would be happy to assist with any work on training of drivers on how to deal with disabled passengers.</p> <p>BLTF have concerns about the extra charge for the larger vehicles, which is only added to the fare at the end of the journey, LD will carry this over to the next meeting for a fuller discussion on the matter.</p> <p>RJS has looked into provision of public toilets, provision is available from 8am until 6pm and there are no plans for additional hours or capacity.</p> <p>RJS will be taking a report to the April Committee meeting to seek approval of arrangements for public speaking.</p> <p>Work will start on the train station rank at the end of March for 4 months, increasing capacity at the station rank to 18+ vehicles. There are no plans in the short term for redevelopment of the bus station area.</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>LD</p> <p>RJS</p>
8.	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> To be confirmed.</p>	



## MINUTES

**MEETING NAME:** Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

**MEETING DATE AND TIME:** 11.00 hours Tuesday 3 March 2009

**PRESENT:** Laura Driscoll (LD)  
 Andy Watson (AW)  
 John Yexley (JY)  
 Councillor Marc Brunel-Walker (MBW)  
 Niamh Kelly (NK)  
 Stuart Jefferies (SJ)  
 Jane Robson (JR)  
 Mick Hildreth (MH)

1.	<p><b>Apologies</b>          Robert Sexton (RJS)</p>	
2.	<p><b>Train Station Rank</b>          SJ gave a presentation on the plans for the redevelopment of the station rank. Work is due to start before the end of March and access to the station rank is to be maintained throughout the works. The capacity will extend to 18-20 vehicles at the station rank, the bus station rank will remain as it is now and the plan is to have a feeder rank on Station Way outside the Columbia Centre, so the vehicles on the feeder rank can see the end of the new train station rank.</p> <p>JR stated that there is inadequate rank provision at the moment, as there is not enough work for wheelchair accessible vehicles, which leads to overranking. SJ explained that the station redevelopment will create a number of extra spaces. Also, the trade will be consulted on the proposals for ranks for the new town centre in due course.</p> <p>BLTF requested dates of what will happen when. SJ will pass to Licensing, who will notify BLTF and also monitor during works.</p> <p>MBW was glad to see that access would be maintained for taxis during the works. He would like consideration to be taken of improving signage in the area to help passengers requiring taxis to ensure they know where to go and what type of vehicle to get in.</p>	<p><b>SJ/LD</b></p> <p><b>SJ</b></p>

<p>3.</p>	<p><b>Unmet Demand Survey</b>  BLTF happy with the letter to be sent to the survey firms, LD to send by end of the day. There are still have concerns over the 'consumer benefit' issue and how survey will prove this. MBW confirmed that what the Committee want from the survey is what the current position is, and a view to the future with a look at what the impact would be on the trade. There is a general public interest test.</p> <p>JR explained that there was a concern that hackney carriage businesses would be worthless upon retirement unless a limiting policy was introduced.</p> <p>LD stated that the trade view is extremely important, and this is the function of the trade consultation element part of the survey.</p> <p>MBW explained that there should also be provision for public speaking at the next Committee for all Members to hear the view of the trade directly from the BLTF, which was a real step forward.</p> <p>BLTF also have concerns over the way the costing of the survey is presented in the letter to the drivers, and this may discourage them from responding to the letter. MH suggested some amendments to the letter to allow for further investigation by MBW of whether the survey cost can be spread over three years. LD to make some amendments to the letter and send new draft to BLTF. Letter will be sent out to all HC proprietors tomorrow.</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>LD</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b>  No amendments required. Outstanding actions as follows:</p> <p>Details of GMB Health and Safety Rep to be provided to RJS, details required within next week due to report deadlines for April Committee.</p> <p>Issue of whether meters can be switched on before the driver begins to assist wheelchair users is to be deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>BTLF requested a meeting with members of the Licensing and Safety Committee who may not have extensive knowledge of taxi licensing. LD to check with Legal whether this is possible.</p>	<p>MH</p> <p>LD</p>
<p>5.</p>	<p><b>Any other business</b>  Extensions for saloon vehicles: LD explained that the Committee decision on the recent appeal was final, and the Committee were unable to reconsider the decision. Currently under discussion are plates 95, 100 and 58.</p> <p>Safety Advice and Awareness: NK and TVP to attend next trade meeting to discuss and hand out leaflets.</p> <p>Guidance Notes and Conditions: No comments received from BLTF.</p> <p>BLTF have concerns about the extra charge for the larger vehicles, which is only added to the fare at the end of the journey, LD has been unable to find any meters capable of including this charge to the fare during journey. BLTF to request alternative solutions if required.</p>	<p>NK</p>

	<p>It was mentioned that an operator in the area is running a business from a Council house with a large aerial in his garden. LD to investigate and pass details to Planning.</p> <p>An issue of an unlicensed vehicle was mentioned, LD confirmed that the vehicle was licensed but had not been displaying its plate, so the driver has been issued with a warning.</p> <p>JR and BLTF both extended invitation to MBW to visit them for a short time to see how they operate, see the ranks etc. NK to arrange.</p> <p>Issue of bus lanes to be carried over to next meeting due to lack of time, LD to see if rep available from relevant Council department as requested by MBW.</p> <p>LD mentioned that there were to be some changes to the Right to Work in the UK for non-EU persons, with a points system dependent on skills.</p> <p>MH asked whether dual plating was allowed, LD confirmed that this is not the case in Bracknell. Details of a vehicle licensed by both BFC and the PCO were provided, LD to investigate.</p>	<p><b>LD</b></p> <p><b>NK</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b> To be confirmed.</p>	



## MINUTES

**MEETING NAME:** Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

**MEETING DATE AND TIME:** 11.00 hours Tuesday 8 April 2009

**PRESENT:** Laura Driscoll (LD)  
 Andy Watson (AW)  
 John Yexley (JY)  
 Niamh Kelly (NK)  
 Neil Mathews (NM)  
 Terry Flanagan (TF)  
 Robert Sexton (RJS)

1.	<p><b>Apologies</b> None received</p>	
2.	<p><b>Bus lanes and ranks</b>          NM attended meeting at request of BLTF to discuss issues around bus gates/lanes. BLTF explained that in peak morning and evening rush hour periods there can be long delays which can add up to £2 to the fare on the meter. BLTF would like to be able to use the bus gates to cross Downshire Way to get to South Bracknell. BLTF are aware that this might disrupt the traffic flow on the Downshire Way but as the traffic is likely to be at a standstill at that time any impact would be minimal. BLTF are not aware that any buses use that particular bus gate at the moment, only minibuses.</p> <p>NM explained that the issue is that it crosses a strategic route for the town so this is not a decision to be taken lightly. There is an issue around signage; at the moment the route is for buses only and that is very clear but any change would require an amendment to the regulations and changes to signage. The subsequent amendment to signage may lead to potential for drivers of normal vehicles to misunderstand the signage, especially as Bracknell hackney carriages often look like normal vehicles so people may be misled into thinking it is acceptable to use the route. Abuse by private vehicles is already a problem so this is not a straightforward issue.</p> <p>NM also explained that there is a need to consider whether it is feasible taking into account the impact to those vehicles using the A322. It is possible to use a software model to gauge the impact but will need details of approximate numbers of 'south' journeys (e.g. a normal</p>	

	<p>working day) from BLTF to have a starting point for the model. BLTF to supply details within a fortnight, NM to report back to the June meeting.</p> <p>BLTF asked whether a trial period would be possible. NM explained that a lot of work will be required to even get to the stage where it would be legal for taxis to use the route, and it would be open to all hackney carriages, not just those licensed by Bracknell Forest. There will be a need to consider the legal issues, how to prevent misuse and the impact on the A322.</p> <p>NM also provided an update on the works to the station rank, which are now due to start in approximately three weeks. It should be business as usual for the first couple of months. BLTF raised concerns about the feeder lane outside the Columbia Centre and couriers using the parking spaces. NM explained that there are no concerns with regards to displaced vehicles and the rank may not take up the whole existing parking space in any case.</p> <p>BLTF raised concerns about the bus station rank and alleged illegal plying for hire by private hire vehicles. LD explained that the area had been monitored frequently for the last four months and no evidence of abuse of the area had been found. BLTF had only supplied one detailed complaint with regards to the area. TF believes there is a lack of enforcement and that the public are in danger so will raise this issue with the Chair of the Licensing Committee.</p>	<p><b>BLTF</b> <b>NM</b></p>
<p><b>3.</b></p>	<p><b>Minutes of last meeting</b> No amendments required. Outstanding actions as follows:</p> <p>No details have yet been received for the GMB Health and Safety Rep. TF explained this was due to a change in region. LD explained that Committee report deadline is next week so if they would like a meeting to take place the details must be provided as soon as possible.</p> <p>Issue of whether meters can be switched on before the driver begins to assist wheelchair users is to be deferred to the next meeting.</p> <p>Planning are investigating the issue of an operator running a business from home with a large aerial in his garden.</p> <p>NK to arrange for MBW to visit ranks and operators.</p> <p>BLTF raised issue of the vehicle licensed by PCO and LD confirmed this had been investigated and it did not appear to be licensed with the PCO. NK is to double check this with PCO. BLTF stated that the vehicle was also not displaying the Bracknell plate properly, NK to investigate this as not mentioned at the last meeting.</p>	<p><b>BLTF</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p> <p><b>LD</b></p> <p><b>NK</b></p> <p><b>NK</b></p>
<p><b>4.</b></p>	<p><b>Unmet Demand Survey Tenders</b> RJS detailed the results of the consultation with hackney carriage owners and explained that he is satisfied that all three tenders meet the required criteria, so the report going forward will recommend the option at the lowest cost. There is a need to ensure the survey does not clash with the works at the station rank.</p>	



	<p>If the Committee gives approval to go ahead with the survey, the increase to the hackney carriage vehicle licence fee must be advertised as per the legal requirements. If anyone objects there must be a separate meeting for the Committee to consider the objection. This must all take place before the Council engages a firm to do the survey.</p> <p>BLTF believe that Reading have imposed a temporary suspension on the issue of new plates, LD has emailed to enquire about the situation and will update in due course.</p>	<p><b>LD</b></p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Any other business</b></p> <p>RJS explained that an operator has been given three months to resolve an issue with door signs which are not compliant with the licence conditions, due to extra wording.</p> <p>RJS gave an update on the public speaking report going to Committee, the arrangements should be in place for the July Committee. If BLTF would like to make a statement at the April meeting, this should be submitted prior to the meeting to ensure it can be read out.</p> <p>TF raised the issue of extensions to age of vehicle. RJS explained that the criteria are specified within the Guidance Notes and anything over 200,000 miles is generally considered not abnormally low mileage. However, the policy allows for discretion on a case by case basis.</p>	<p><b>BLTF</b></p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Date of Next Meeting</b></p> <p>To be confirmed.</p>	