

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE
4 FEBRUARY 2010**

**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 1 October 2009, there have been three meetings with representatives of the Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum (BLTF), on 15 October 2009, 25 November 2009 and 14 January 2010.

2 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 2.1 The minutes of the meetings held are attached as Appendices A, B and C.
- 2.2 Mr Watson, Mr Yexley and Mr Tagoe currently own and drive hackney carriages in the Bracknell Forest borough, while Mr Hildreth and Mr Kemp represent the GMB Union, Professional Drivers Branch.
- 2.3 The BLTF has recently advised the Council that the trade do not want any increase in the fares charged by hackney carriages at this time. A letter from the BLTF is attached as Appendix D.

3 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 15 October 2009
Minutes of meeting held 25 November 2009
Minutes of meeting held 14 January 2010

Contact for further information

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MINUTES

MEETING NAME: Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

MEETING DATE AND TIME: 11.00 hours Thursday 15 October 2009

PRESENT: Steve Loudoun (SL) Brendan Kemp (BK)
 Laura Driscoll (LD) Andy Watson (AW)
 Robert Sexton (RS) John Yexley (JY)
 Niamh Kelly (NK) Cllr Cliff Thompson

1.	<p>Apologies Mick Hildreth</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting NK has raised issue of private vehicles parking on Point and Red Lion ranks with Parking Services and there is some extra enforcement planned in these areas.</p> <p>NK has been liaising with the landowner over the possibility of having a rest area behind the Bull. Unfortunately there is a permit parking system in place which is already oversubscribed and would cost more than £500 pa so this seems unlikely. JY mentioned that the trade would like a parking area near the top of the High Street so drivers can do their banking. There used to be a bay outside the Post Office but this was removed some time ago. RS will look into whether this is possible.</p> <p>JY also mentioned that the signage at the Great Hollands rank has been turned around, and the Harmanswater sign has not yet been replaced. LD has ordered a new sign for the Harmanswater rank but this has not yet arrived so LD will chase up and will also look into getting the sign at the Great Hollands rank repaired.</p> <p>Discussion over starting meter while assisting wheelchair users into the vehicle will be carried over to next meeting. LD is awaiting a response from the Institute of Licensing's solicitor on the issue.</p> <p>BLTF requested signage for area next to bus station rank to help the public understand that the vehicles parked there are not taxis. LD has raised with traffic section and permission from the landowner is required, which NK is looking into. JY mentioned that there is a private vehicle, a Mondeo, which is ignoring the restrictions in the bus station area. NK to continue to monitor area for any illegal plying for hire.</p>	<p>RS</p> <p>LD</p> <p>NK</p>

	<p>BLTF believe there are other local authorities with the same extra charge when more than four passengers being carried, BLTF to bring details of these local authorities to next meeting so LD can contact them to ask how their meters are set up.</p> <p>Train Station Redevelopment: BLTF raised concerns about the proposed new feeder rank at the Columbia Centre, and would prefer instead to continue to use bus station as feeder rank, possibly with a screen to show when there is space on the train station rank or a red/green light system. Also raised concern about how they would get out from the left hand side of the rank, and now feel this is impractical. LD passed these comments to the Traffic team but they did not feel the request could be incorporated now the works are well under way. LD to arrange site meeting with Traffic representative (also to consider the issue of toilets for use by drivers).</p>	<p>BLTF</p> <p>LD</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>TPI Survey: Recommendations</p> <p>SL was asked about his recommendation within the report that went to Committee on 1st October. AW said that Reading had a large influx of hackney carriages when they removed their limit and that this caused damage to the trade. SL explained that the recommendation was based on the content of the survey and current guidance available from sources like DfT. There was an economic argument brought forward from the trade at the Committee and SL supported the changed recommendation based on that argument. JY said that most drivers are earning an average of less than £4 ph and AW also wanted it noted that 90% of hackney carriage drivers are self-employed, so for example drivers do not get any sick pay if they are unable to work. SL advised that the Committee clearly recognises that there is a need to support a quality taxi fleet, hence the decision to maintain the status quo to allow everyone to take stock of the contents of the report.</p> <p>The recommendations made by TPI were discussed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It is recommended that if any change to the current licensing policy is proposed this should be reviewed in the light of any new DfT guidance to licensing authorities, expected to be published towards the end of 2009. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed: LD to check date this is due, but there were no relevant changes in the updated version received during the consultation process earlier this year so it seems unlikely this will have any impact. It is recommended that opportunities to provide new ranks at the Angels Nightclub and in Sandhurst and improvements to facilities at existing ranks (improved information or contact numbers to use if there is no hackney present, shelter for passengers and improved access for wheelchair users) as highlighted by the rank audit (see 3.40) are explored. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed: The Red Lion rank is very close to Angels and there are already ranks in Sandhurst, though these are largely unused. There was no support for additional ranks but the idea of securing improvements to the ranks is supported if funding can one day be made available 	<p>LD</p>

	<p style="text-align: center;">through the redevelopment of the Town Centre.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that efforts should be made to encourage operators and drivers to address areas of potential latent demand by operating at peak times, serving more of the existing ranks, serving areas outside of Bracknell town centre and being more responsive to the demands of wheelchair users. Agreed: Outlying areas are often served better by the private hire trade, as taxis cannot wait around on a rank on the slight chance they may get a fare. There is potential to improve the service provided to disabled persons and ideas need to be jointly developed. • To address service accessibility, service quality and standards of customer care issues identified, consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In the short term</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ encouraging drivers to seek training in understanding the market opportunities offered by disabled people, passenger handling, disability awareness, customer care, knowledge and where appropriate language skills ○ providing information on the difference between Hackneys and PHVs and promoting the use of legitimate vehicles ○ ongoing monitoring of the outcomes of the above through customer surveys and random use of mystery passengers Agreed: (1) The possibility of working with TRL re mobility, and other disability awareness training is to be explored and will be reported back. The expectation is that the trade reps will help ensure take up. (2) the possibility of introducing a condition requiring the use of signage on the sides of private hire vehicles stating 'Advance Bookings Only' or 'No Booking – No Ride' to be subject of a report to Committee. LD will bring some mini-leaflets on the safe use of taxis (such as those used in Wokingham and Reading) for discussion at next meeting. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In the longer term</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ consideration of a more comprehensive quality taxi partnership (QTP) approach to increase liaison between licensing authority, police, other stakeholders and operators, provide a framework for bringing about mutually beneficial improvements across the taxi sector and a quality mark to participating operators, as has been found to be effective in other authorities. ○ the framework provided by a QTP could also be useful for facilitating discussion on how best to optimise supply to address peaks in demand, delays, congestion issues at ranks, environmental issues, markets available and the formation of standard frameworks for taxi commissioning, etc. Agreed: (1) There is a need to find ways to promote the service, such as a quality mark for certain vehicles or drivers. 	<p style="text-align: center;">All</p> <p style="text-align: center;">NK BLTF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LD</p> <p style="text-align: center;">LD</p>
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	<p>LD to raise with other authorities to see if there is demand for a Berkshire-wide QTP.</p> <p>(2) Taxiwatch is being launched at the end of the month to provide a forum for better liaison between TVP and drivers, and to help improve driver safety. SL suggested press release about this would be helpful.</p> <p>(3) Work in progress on the new station rank aims to reduce rank congestion, and may help the trade to address peak time demand in that area. The trade want to have an onsite meeting to review intentions and help allay fears.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The licensing authority should encourage operators and drivers to promote their services on a collective basis. Agreed: The possibility of using Community TV to promote the quality of the hackney carriage trade is to be explored; NK to contact Clare Sharp. • The licensing authority should seek to collate information on which operators and drivers operate wheelchair accessible vehicle/s, using drivers trained in the care of disabled people and are responsive to their needs and publish this as part of a guide to accessible taxis. Agreed: (1) A guide to accessible taxis should be produced by the Licensing Section, possibly tying in with the mini-leaflet idea mentioned above. (2) When all vehicles are fully wheelchair accessible, in February, there should be a press release to promote accessibility. The guide could be promoted to older people groups, day centres and the University of the 3rd Age. • The licensing authority should consider how it might assist those put off using taxis by the cost, perhaps by improving opportunities for taxi sharing or encouraging users to negotiate over the fare proposed. Agreed: RS to investigate how this might work in practice. Can also include details on fares in any leaflets/guides produced for the public. • The licensing authority should consider the request of hackney operators and drivers for access to bus gates, especially the Great Hollands bus gate. Agreed: RS to contact the Traffic Team to pass on the BLTF's request for a month's trial of usage of the bus gate crossing the Downshire Way. • Future Transport Strategies and policy documents should take account of this report. Agreed: LD to forward copy of survey report to Traffic Team for their information and consideration. • Extra charges by Broadmoor. Agreed: The report is misleading. It refers to different fares charges but these are all valid fares as follows: £7 (the private hire fare), £9.60 (standard hackney fare) and £15 	<p>NK</p> <p>LD</p> <p>NK</p> <p>NK</p> <p>All</p> <p>RS</p> <p>RS</p> <p>LD</p>
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	<p>(the night-time hackney fare). BLTF encourage use of return fares with a discount to encourage customer loyalty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal plying for hire (added at meeting). Agreed: Education of the public (such as the stickers identifying private hire vehicles as requiring to be pre-booked) may help, though there will always be people who do not care about the illegality and lack of insurance. Enforcement by licensing officers will continue around the bus station rank area. 	NK
4.	<p>Any other business JY asked whether driver licences are required for vehicle renewals. LD confirmed this is not the case. Drivers should refer to the checklist at the end of the application form which confirms the documents required.</p> <p>AW requested CRB form to be posted to him, NK to arrange.</p>	NK
5.	<p>Date of Next Meeting Wednesday 18 November 1.00pm Time Square Ground Floor South Room 3</p>	



MINUTES

MEETING NAME: Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

MEETING DATE AND TIME: 13.00 hours Wednesday 25 November 2009

PRESENT: Laura Driscoll (LD) Andy Watson (AW)
 Robert Sexton (RS) John Yexley (JY)
 Niamh Kelly (NK) Mick Hildreth (MH)
 Jonathon Tagoe (JT)

1.	<p>Apologies Marc Brunel-Walker (MBW) Jan Angell (JA) Steve Loudoun (SL)</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting JY mentioned that the trade would like a parking area near the top of the High Street so drivers can do their banking. There used to be a bay outside the Post Office but this was removed some time ago. RS looked into whether this was possible. It was not a taxi rank, therefore not enforceable if a member of the public parked there, so only a parking place open to all cars is provided.</p> <p>JY mentioned the Harmanswater sign has not yet been replaced. LD has ordered a new sign but this has not yet arrived. JY & AW also requested that the bay markings should be inline with the steps leading from the shops. LD has requested the sign at the Great Hollands rank be repaired as it has been twisted around.</p> <p>Discussion over starting meter while assisting wheelchair users into the vehicle will be carried over to next meeting. LD is awaiting a response from the Institute of Licensing's solicitor on the issue.</p> <p>JY mentioned that there is a private hire vehicle (Doblo) which is ignoring the restrictions in the bus station area. NK to continue to monitor area for any illegal plying for hire. RS advised that there is no traffic order in place there so it is not enforceable on parking issues but we are entering into a consultation where there might be a TRO on the area within the coming year. JY put forward that Doblos should not be licensed as private hire vehicles and that they should not park within 10 metres of a rank.</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>NK</p>

	<p>AW requested MH to organise a mystery shopper to approach a Private Hire vehicle parked adjacent to the bus station rank.</p> <p>BLTF believe there are other local authorities with the same extra charge when more than four passengers are carried, MH brought details of Brighton & Hove to the meeting so LD can contact them to ask how their meters are set up.</p> <p>Train Station Redevelopment: BLTF raised concerns even after the site visit about the proposed new feeder rank at the Columbia Centre, and would prefer instead to continue to use the bus station as a feeder rank. BLTF wants Columbia Centre open before new train station rank opens. MH suggested that a red/green light system be supplied and paid for out of licence fees. RS to enquire regarding the possibility of this being obtained.</p> <p>AW & JY agreed best way for new rank to work would be single file of 8 vehicles as passengers & drivers would have difficulty in getting out of cars and vehicle damage will be unavoidable.</p> <p>JY requested all signage and road markings including a sign of a HC vehicle should be in place before the existing rank closes. RS said it was a ring system and would not be easy for private hire vehicles to pick up. JY also raised concerns that the higher kerb was not installed as yet on the new Train Station Rank as is at Legion & Point ranks. RS to raise with SJ.</p> <p>RS to get an opening date for the Train Station Rank from SJ. Officers will monitor new rank for first few weeks to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>JY stated that under Health & Safety toilets should be available to drivers. MH said that since the drivers are providing a service to the train station, and BFC pay for the use of the rank, then drivers should have use of the toilets. LD to enquire with SJ/South West Trains and MH to pursue this issue through his contact at South West Trains in Elmbridge.</p>	<p>BLTF</p> <p>LD</p> <p>RS</p> <p>RS</p> <p>RS</p> <p>BLTF</p> <p>LD/MH</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>TPI Survey: Recommendations</p> <p>The recommendations made by TPI were discussed as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is recommended that if any change to the current licensing policy is proposed this should be reviewed in the light of any new DfT guidance to licensing authorities, expected to be published towards the end of 2009. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Agreed: No due date available from DfT website. There were no relevant changes in the updated version received during the consultation process earlier this year so it seems unlikely this will have any impact. • To address service accessibility, service quality and standards of customer care issues identified, consideration should be given to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>In the short term</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ encouraging drivers to seek training in understanding the market opportunities offered by disabled people, 	

	<p>passenger handling, disability awareness, customer care, knowledge and where appropriate language skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ providing information on the difference between Hackneys and PHVs and promoting the use of legitimate vehicles ○ ongoing monitoring of the outcomes of the above through customer surveys and random use of mystery passengers <p>Agreed: (1) The possibility of working with TRL re mobility, and other disability awareness training is to be explored and will be reported back. The expectation is that the trade reps will help ensure take up.</p> <p>(2) the possibility of introducing a condition requiring the use of signage on the sides of private hire vehicles stating 'Advance Bookings Only' or 'No Booking – No Ride' to be subject of a report to Committee. LD brought some mini-leaflets on the safe use of taxis to the meeting and will draft a new version for Bracknell by next meeting.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The licensing authority should encourage operators and drivers to promote their services on a collective basis. Agreed: The possibility of using Community TV to promote the quality of the hackney carriage trade is to be explored; NK to contact Clare Sharp. • The licensing authority should seek to collate information on which operators and drivers operate wheelchair accessible vehicle/s, using drivers trained in the care of disabled people and are responsive to their needs and publish this as part of a guide to accessible taxis. Agreed: (1) A guide to accessible taxis should be produced by the Licensing Section, possibly tying in with the mini-leaflet idea mentioned above. MH suggested the directory could contain contact details of drivers who volunteer to provide disabled services. LD suggested that she and NK will write to all operators and hackney vehicle owners to gauge interest. <p>(2) When all vehicles are fully wheelchair accessible, in April, there should be a press release to promote accessibility. The guide could be promoted to older people groups, day centres and the University of the 3rd Age.</p>	<p>NK</p> <p>LD</p> <p>NK</p> <p>LD</p> <p>LD/NK</p> <p>NK</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>LD to check if there are any legal requirements reference having CCTV cameras in vehicles.</p> <p>NK to check the CSC scripting for all taxi licences as some drivers are being asked for irrelevant information.</p> <p>BLTF to suggest a couple of members to attend Time Square to see how a renewal is done from start to finish in order for the trade to understand the procedures and processes that must be followed.</p>	<p>LD</p> <p>NK</p> <p>BLTF</p>

	NK advised the meeting that a current hackney carriage licence holder has notified her that he has moved away and will not be renewing his licence, so his vehicle appears to be available for sale. JY to advise members of this situation in case any would like to purchase the vehicle.	BLTF
5.	Date of Next Meeting TBC	



MINUTES

MEETING NAME: Bracknell Licensed Taxi Forum

MEETING DATE AND TIME: 11.00 hours Thursday 14 January 2010

PRESENT: Laura Driscoll (LD) Andy Watson (AW)
 Robert Sexton (RS) John Yexley (JY)
 Niamh Kelly (NK) Cllr Jan Angell

1.	<p>Apologies Cllr Jacqui Ryder Mick Hildreth (MH)</p>	
2.	<p>Minutes of last meeting</p> <p><i>Correction from last minutes:</i> <i>JY put forward that Doblos should not be licensed as private hire vehicles and that private hire vehicles should not park within 20 metres of a rank.</i></p> <p>JY & AW mentioned that there are private hire vehicles continually plying for hire and ignoring the restrictions in the bus station area. NK to continue to monitor the area. RS advised that the trade need to provide evidence of times, dates, and details of the vehicles/drivers breaching the restrictions so that officers can investigate and enforce where appropriate, as officers cannot monitor the rank 24/7. There must be good evidence of mis-practice if officers are going to be able to go to Members to ask for the changes that the BLTF are requesting.</p> <p>AW requested MH to organise a mystery shopper to approach a Private Hire vehicle parked adjacent to the bus station rank.</p> <p>Discussion over starting meter while assisting wheelchair users into the vehicle to be carried over to next meeting. LD is awaiting a response from the Institute of Licensing's solicitor on the issue.</p> <p>BLTF believe there are other local authorities with the same extra charge when more than four passengers are carried. LD has received contact details from MH and is awaiting a response from Brighton & Hove.</p>	<p>NK BLTF</p> <p>MH</p> <p>LD</p> <p>LD</p>

	<p>AW & JY expressed concerns regarding disabled passengers accessing vehicles on the new Train Station rank as the surface is completely flat with no raised kerb. RS has been advised that the layout meets national guidelines, and if the trade feels it is an issue then they would need to produce evidence of the problem so that RS can request that modifications be made. RS also advised that there would be no funds to provide a red/green light system between the Bus Station Rank and Train Station Rank, so Station Road will be the feeder rank and this will be monitored to see how it proceeds when open. RS will be proposing that a salt bin be in place at the new Train Station Rank but cannot guarantee availability, and it is unlikely that someone would be available to grit the area.</p> <p>LD advised that due to the poor weather the works on the Train Station Rank have been delayed. Works will start again when the weather improves, and should take approximately two weeks. This will hopefully coincide with the opening of the feeder rank on Station Road. Officers will monitor the new rank for first few weeks to ensure a smooth transition.</p> <p>MH said that since the drivers are providing a service to the train station, and BFC pay for the use of the rank, then drivers should have use of the toilets. MH to pursue this issue through his contact at South West Trains in Elmbridge. LD to contact Mark Franklin from South West Trains.</p> <p>LD confirmed that the taxi sign at Great Hollands is now fixed. Also at Harmanswater the bay has been remarked and a timeplate will be in place so that the parking restriction can be enforced by civil enforcement officers.</p> <p>LD awaiting response from Legal about having CCTV in vehicles.</p> <p>NK has checked CSC scripting for vehicle licences and it was correct.</p> <p>BLTF to suggest a couple of members to attend Time Square to see how a renewal is done from start to finish in order for the trade to understand the procedures and processes that must be followed.</p>	<p>RS</p> <p>NK</p> <p>MH LD</p> <p>LD</p> <p>BLTF</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>TPI Survey: Progress</p> <p><u>Disability Awareness Training</u> NK has looked into arranging disability awareness training with Broomhead Training, a 3 hour session specifically designed for taxi drivers. Course content includes disability issues, barriers faced by disabled people in today's society, language guidelines, specific duties under section 36 & 37 of Part V (Public Transport) of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, practical tips on folding wheelchairs and how the disability equality approach delivers benefits for all.</p> <p>JY does not feel that this training is necessary and that some training on manual handling would be adequate. LD explained that the survey raised concerns about attitudes and awareness, so the training would address those concerns. JY and AW to consider and discuss and report back at next meeting.</p>	<p>BLTF</p>

	<p><u>Publicity re Safe Taxi Use</u> RS will be reporting to Committee to seek a view on having signage on the sides of private hire vehicles stating 'Advance Bookings Only' or 'No Booking - No Ride'. There would need to be a consultation exercise before any final decision is made. JY said that some Private Hire Companies were flouting the inappropriate use of the word "Taxi" and "Advance Bookings" and even though a small percentage they should be brought to book. NK to check with A1 and JJM wording on door signs.</p> <p>LD to draft a mini-leaflet on the safe use of taxis by next meeting.</p> <p>NK to contact Clare Sharp re using Community TV to promote the hackney carriage trade and the opening of the new Train Station Rank.</p> <p><u>Guide to Accessible Taxis</u> LD has produced letter re guide to accessible taxis to send out to operators and hackney owners to gauge whether interested in their contact details being included in guide. Passed copy to AW and JY for comments. Letter to be sent out by end of January.</p> <p>When all vehicles are wheelchair accessible, by end June, NK will arrange for press release to promote this.</p>	<p>RS</p> <p>NK</p> <p>LD</p> <p>NK</p> <p>LD</p> <p>NK</p>
<p>4.</p>	<p>Complaints Protocol</p> <p>JY was not happy with the way a complaint against him was dealt with. JY requested that LD retract a letter sent to him, and LD explained that this would not be done. JY is not satisfied and will take this matter further. RS advised JY to write to him to raise his concerns.</p> <p>JY and AW stated that unless all complaints in future were put in writing and copies of the complaint letter sent to the driver, then they would advise their members to ignore the letters. RS said that if the BLTF would only consider complaints made in writing, then all communication from the BLTF and complaints would therefore also have to be put in writing in future, but that writing includes email. Officers will continue to contact drivers where a complaint has been made to invite the driver to either respond in writing or come in to discuss.</p>	
<p>5.</p>	<p>Any other business</p> <p>AW & JY enquired re progression of the bus gate issue and reiterated that if they were given a trial period of access through the bus gate between 7.30 - 9.30 and for two hours during evening peak times this would provide a faster and cheaper service and therefore benefit both drivers and customers. RS advised that he had put forward a report to the next DMT meeting in 2 or 3 weeks, and advised the trade to provide evidence to substantiate their claims. RS suggested that drivers promote their services on a collective basis and provide a number of vehicles as a taxi-bus service that would gain access to the bus gate. AW & JY disagreed and said it would not be possible and would not be beneficial for the trade.</p>	

	<p>RS advised that a letter was sent out to all operators and hackney vehicle owners regarding the age of vehicle condition which refers to exceptional condition and abnormally low mileage. The consultation closes on 15 January 2010, and a report will go to Committee in February.</p> <p>The advert for the new vehicle and operator fees went in the local paper on 17 December and consultation closes today. Hackney vehicle fee is proposed to rise by approx £6-£8 per year.</p>	
6.	Date of Next Meeting	
	11.00 hours Thursday 18 February 2010	



REPORT TO LICENSING & SAFETY COMMITTEE

REPORT OF BLTF

SUBJECT : TAXI LIMITATION

DATE ; 13.01.2010

Dear members,

Since the last committee meeting in early October 09 when you decided to implement a limiting policy on hackney carriage licenses within the Borough of Bracknell, we are pleased to inform you that although this policy is still in its infancy it has had a stabilizing effect on the trade.

In the subsequent meeting we attended with Licensing Officers and Steve Loudoun, we were delighted to hear Mr Loudoun announce that he was now fully in support of the new limiting policy, and would be committed to helping the trade in any way he could through the difficult times ahead.

One area that has been identified within the TPI survey for improvement is in the wheelchair sector. The BLTF has been aware of some problems in this area and intend to work with licensing officers to improve the service we deliver to our wheelchair bound customers and optimize maximum market potential.

Although the TPI survey produced a very technical panoramic view of the taxi trade within the Borough, it clearly concluded that one of the major factors for people not to use taxis was cost. We are therefore very pleased to inform the committee that after consulting the membership the BLTF GMB members have requested **NO** increase in the metered fare for 2010.

It is the BLTF's intention this year to work closely with the council / licensing officers to address all the recommendations set out in the TPI report. We felt that overall the residents of Bracknell and paying public were pleased with the level of service currently being delivered by the hackney carriage trade but we believe there is always room for improvement.

We hope the committee has now had a chance to examine the TPI report in greater detail and understand how important the limiting policy will be to maintain the exiting high quality taxi fleet that the residents of Bracknell and visitors alike enjoy. The committee will be aware that most of the hackney carriage trade is generated within the town centre. This is consistent with most other towns and cities. The problems facing the trade within Bracknell started long before the recession and we would like the committee to note that even if the country came out of recession at some point this year it is likely not to have a great impact on the trade. Hackney carriages thrive in vibrant towns and cities, and we feel until the completion of the regeneration that this is unlikely to be the case in Bracknell. The TPI stated in its report that Bracknell Forest Borough had more than an adequate number of taxis to meet the demand for the next 3 years. We therefore request that the committee vote to keep the limiting policy in place.

John Yexley BLTF Chairman
Andrew Watson BLTF Secretary