

MINUTES

MEETING NAME: Operator Forum

MEETING DATE AND TIME: 11.00 hours Tuesday 27 July 2010

PRESENT: Rob Sexton (RS), Laura Driscoll (LD), Niamh Kelly (NK), Jane Robson (JR), Andy Mason (AM), Dave Park (DP), Dave Hunter (DH), Rob Lawson (RL), Kevin Carter (KC), John Cliffe (JC) and Martin Sheen (MS)

APOLOGIES: John Cole

1.	<p>Are the Council proposing to make private hire vehicles wheelchair accessible?</p> <p>RS said there are no plans for this to happen, LD confirmed that while private hire vehicles can be wheelchair accessible, there are no plans to make this mandatory.</p>	
2.	<p>When are we proposing the next tariff change?</p> <p>RS said there are no plans in place for this to happen at the moment. Most present at the meeting agreed that it would be a bad idea to increase the tariff at this point in time. RS confirmed that hackney carriage fares are determined by a formula which takes into account inflation and the costs of running the vehicle and consultation takes place with the trade and public before implementation</p>	
3.	<p>Additional costs being imposed on drivers by the council</p> <p>JR expressed concerns over the amount of additional costs, i.e. the £50 extra for hackney carriage plates. RS explained that the extra £50 was implemented to pay for the unmet demand survey and this was consulted on and agreed with by the trade.</p> <p>DP commented that licensing fees do not increase in line with the government's charges and taxes and that every year the licensing fees go up.</p> <p>RS confirmed that annual inflation is taken into account in determining licensing fees and comparisons are made with other authority charges. Licensing is required to set charges sufficient to cover the costs of providing the service, which at the moment we are not achieving.</p>	
4.	<p>Police spot checks</p> <p>JR was angry that her vehicles were being stopped by the Police with passengers on board. RS and LD advised that this is an issue that JR would need to raise with the police as the checks are within their remit.</p>	
5.	<p>Why do corporate private hire drivers need a knowledge test?</p> <p>LD and RS are going to look into the possibility of creating a chauffeur</p>	

	<p>badge which would exempt drivers from taking the geographical part of the knowledge test. However the other parts of the knowledge test will still be required.</p>	RS/LD
6.	<p>The implications of the First Aid Course</p> <p>The view was expressed that the first aid course is not appropriate or necessary and should be optional and paid for by the Council. It was mentioned that insurance would not cover drivers to perform first aid.</p> <p>The Committee made the decision for all drivers to do the course every five years so it will remain a condition of the licence. However LD will look into what the course covers to make sure it is relevant and will also raise the issue of insurance liability with the course trainer.</p>	LD
7.	<p>Change to communications with trade</p> <p>It has been proposed that the Council should hold a meeting each quarter with representatives from across the trade. LD confirmed that numbers of attendees would have to be kept to a minimum to ensure they kept to time. No one had any objections. NK to arrange meeting.</p>	NK
8.	<p>AOB</p> <p>RS reminded all those present to respond in writing to his consultation in respect of door signs on private hire vehicles.</p> <p>RS informed everyone that officers have the option to issue fixed penalties to anyone seen smoking in a licensed vehicle, with fines from £60 to £200.</p> <p>JR and DP do not like the procedure for trying to call Licensing. RS reminded everyone that calls have to be logged on the system and we have a target to call back everyone within two working days but in most cases it will be significantly less than that.</p> <p>JR explained that she brought her insurance in on 29 June but had received three suspension letters so she had to provide the documents again. DP complained that he has waited for over an hour to get his documents copied. LD asked that instances such as these be brought to her attention immediately, so she can investigate.</p> <p>RS explained that we are now able to check validity of MOT certificates online, provided we have the 16 digit reference from the V5C log book. RS requested that should owners wish us to do that that they must provide us with a copy of the front sheet of the V5</p> <p>DP wants renewal applications filled out for him so all he has to do is sign, LD advised that many fields are already completed by mail merge from the database but we will see if we can amend any further.</p> <p>DH asked what the policy is on becoming licensed with the PCO. LD confirmed that it appears from the new London legislation that non-PCO operators can operate PCO vehicles. However the vehicle cannot be licensed by BFC and the PCO. RS will check with Legal.</p> <p>DP has requested the reintroduction of the 3-year operator licence. RS did not know why this was removed so will look into it being returned.</p>	<p>LD/ND</p> <p>RS</p> <p>RS</p>