

To: LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
01 FEBRUARY 2024

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**HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE TRADE MEETING UPDATE**  
**Service Lead - Public Protection**

**1 Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 To summarise the work of the Taxi Trade Group since the last Licensing and Safety Committee meeting, inform Members about any matters raised and where appropriate agree a way forward on queries raised at the meeting.

**2 Recommendations**

**That the Committee:**

- 2.1 **NOTES** the content of the report and the positive ongoing dialogue between the trade and the Council.

**3 Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The Group has been set up to provide an opportunity for the Taxi Trade, Members and Officers to meet to discuss a range of topics of common interest, to provide a forum to resolve issues and foster closer working relationships, to undertake informal consultation and then report back to the Licensing and Safety Committee with any recommendations for alterations to the existing or proposed licences, policies, tariffs and fees etc.
- 3.2 It has previously been agreed that we will hold two scheduled meetings a year. One in January to discuss, amongst other things, the outcome of the annual fees and charges statutory consultation and to hold initial discussions about any changes to the tariff scheme to be consulted on and if appropriate implemented later during that year. The second meeting, which will usually be held in October would include a discussion on the fees and charges pertaining to the trade before the formal consultation process is started and to provide feedback on the tariff consultation. Ad hoc meetings can be arranged to discuss any matters of concern or interest during the year. The Chairman has raised the possibility of holding additional meetings throughout the year.

**4 Alternative Options Considered**

- 4.1 None - the meetings are seen as a good opportunity to engage in meaningful dialogue with the trade in an attempt to reach agreement on a wide number manner of topics affecting them.

**5 Supporting Information**

- 5.1 Since the Licensing and Safety Committee meeting on the 19 October 2023 one liaison meeting has been held. This meeting took place on the 16 January 2024.
- 5.2 The main focus of this meeting was to:
- Report back on the outcome of the statutory fees and charges consultation relating to the 2024/25 fees;

- to inform the trade about changes to the way Disability and Barring Service (DBS) checks would be undertaken once a contract had been signed with a provider to undertake this work.

5.3 There were two members of the trade in attendance at this meeting. A summary of the comments received on the agenda items is set out below.

#### *Fees and Charges 2024/25*

- 5.4 Officers reported that one response to the consultation was received during the statutory consultation period. The response was submitted by the Chairman of the Bracknell Hackney Taxi Driver Association and was signed by 44 Members of the local trade.
- 5.5 The Group discussed the submission and noted that the trade would like to see the fees for 2024/2025 frozen. The trade had also raised concerns about costs associated with age of vehicle inspections, the cost of drivers' licences and Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) fees.
- 5.6 The outcome of the consultation and the responses to the comments made are the subject of another item on this agenda.
- 5.7 The trade did not raise any other matters relating to the proposed fees at the meeting.

#### *Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) Checks*

- 5.8 Officers reported that the Public Protection Partnership (PPP) was in the process of signing up to an online service operated by TaxiPlus to process future DBS checks. In addition to being cheaper for the trade it would also save time for officers as they would no longer have to do the processing themselves.
- 5.9 Officers were also in the process of putting together a new suite of licensing application forms which should help to streamline the service and be easier for the trade to complete. Information about these forms and the revised DBS procedures would be circulated to the trade as soon as all the work had been completed. Officers were also looking at the presentation of information on the website in order to make the process easier for the trade to follow.
- 5.10 The following matters were raised in addition to the items on the agenda:
- It was reported that the trade continued to experience difficulties with unauthorised vehicles parking on the taxi rank at Waitrose. It was noted that the Civil Enforcement Officers (CEOs) had visited the site 1619 times (an average of 4,5 visits per day) over the previous calendar year and had issued 23 fixed penalty notices. The trade was encouraged to draw up a log in order to target enforcement activity.
  - The Chairman queried if the trade had any comments to make about the location and distribution of ranks throughout the Borough. It was agreed that the trade would come back to a future meeting with any suggestions about this issue.

- The Vice – Chairman of the Licensing and Safety Committee who was chairing the meeting noted the Council’s focus on addressing the climate emergency and he queried if there were ways in which the Council could support the trade to ‘go greener’. While discussing whether discounted fees would make electric or hybrid vehicles more attractive to the trade, the trade commented that the issue was the cost of purchasing these vehicles and also the range they could achieve. They would however speak to colleagues to see if they had any suggestions, and a further discussion would take place at the next meeting.

5.11 It was hoped that Members, the trade and officers would continue to build on the good relationships being developed at these meetings. The next meeting would take place on the 14 October 2024. This meeting would focus on the statutory fee consultation for 2025/26, looking at ways to support the trade to ‘go greener’ and if a business case was submitted any changes proposed to the tariffs.

### **Consultation and Other Considerations**

#### Legal Advice

6.1 None

#### Financial Advice

6.2 None

#### Other Consultation Responses

6.3 Not applicable

#### Equalities Impact Assessment

6.4 Not applicable

#### Strategic Risk Management Issues

6.5 Not applicable

#### Climate Change Implications

This report is to note only and will therefore not in itself have any impact on CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Discussions are however ongoing with the trade at these meetings to establish if there are ways in which the Council can support them to ‘Go Greener’.

The recently approved Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy includes a requirement that for any vehicle renewing in 2027/28 – the vehicle must be compliant with Euro 5 emissions standards. For any vehicle renewing in 2029/30 – the vehicle must be compliant with Euro 6 emissions standards. Where vehicles do not meet the relevant emissions criteria, the proprietor may have the vehicle adapted/ modified to meet the standard and provide evidence of this; or replace the vehicle with one that meets the emission standard.

#### Contact for further information

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