

CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE LIAISON GROUP

Minutes of meeting held at 11.00 on Tuesday 17 February 2015

Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, WS11 1BG

Members of the Liaison Group (Councillors)

Cllr Carl Bennett, Portfolio Leader for the Environment (Group Chair)*

Cllr Maureen Freeman, Vice Chair of Cannock Chase Council, (Group Vice Chair)*

Members of the Liaison Group (Officers)

Steve Shilvock CCDC**

David Prosser-Davies CCDC*

Sean O'Meara CCDC*

Jason Salter CCDC*

Elected representatives of the Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Trade

Terrance Hurley*

Steven Toy*

Kendal Tranter*

Martin Hammond*

Steven Holroyd *

Omar Ali (Observer)*

Samantha Payne**

Victor Simonczyk**

Patricia Taylor**

(*) Present (**) Apology

The group were advised that Mr Harry Griffiths had recently resigned from the Liaison Group.

Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the meeting of 5 November 2015 were agreed.

Matters arising

It was agreed that the matters arising would be dealt with on the agenda.

DVSA Driving Tests for new applicants- feedback.

Mr Prosser-Davies advised that the Cannock DVSA Test Centre would be closing and moving to Featherstone although it was not thought that this would adversely affect our involvement with them. He also confirmed that the Council wanted to ensure that all prospective HC/PH drivers should demonstrate a reasonable standard of driving before being licensed. Mr Toy agreed that this was reasonable to expect.

Mr Prosser-Davies also advised that although timescales for taking DVSA Taxi tests are generally perceived to be an issue, we were now aware of one driver who took the test within 24 hours of booking.

Disclosure & Barring Service for new applicants- Feedback.

Mr Prosser-Davies informed the group that 20 new drivers had gone through the new process and although there were a few teething troubles, the new system is generally providing disclosure certificates more quickly than before.

Three year licence uptake.

Mr Prosser-Davies said that we had licensed 21 new drivers since the new policy requirement and of those 4 had chosen a 3 year licence (19%). Of 249 existing drivers, 107 had chosen a 3 year licence (42%).

There was a brief discussion on the proposed Deregulation Bill and the possible future requirement for the LA's to provide a 3 year drivers licence as standard.

Wheelchair Accessibility –Task & Finish Group Interim report.

Mr O'Meara gave a verbal interim report to the group.

- The group had met 3 times to discuss accessibility issues. Group members had been set tasks and reported back with their conclusions.
- Many LA's (mostly the larger ones) have an approved list of WAV's but there are no smaller vehicles on that list.
- Less able people don't always like larger vehicles to travel in. A mixed fleet is preferred.
- The Peugeot Partner is a multi purpose vehicle which takes a wheelchair and passengers generally like them.
- There is a fear that an increase in WAV's as % across the District may reduce number of HCV's in general.
- Once a move to WAV's is made then there is no going back because of cost.
- It is thought that if we consider requiring WAV's as % of a larger fleet, that this may give an advantage to larger companies.
- Side loading of vehicles is acceptable but may cause problems in loading the wheelchair. Rear loading better but may cause problems if in a road traffic collision.
- There was a proposal to extend policy requirement to allow the initial purchase date from 5 years to 6 perhaps for WAV's. But question over whether the Peugeot Partner (or similar) is actually a saloon vehicle?
- M1 certification of vehicles doesn't mean a great deal.
- It was reported that CCDC's WAV fleet is about 10% which is national average (excluding 100% WAV areas). This has been so for several years.
- There is a need to train drivers and there is a need to refresh training for drivers.

- Discussion around HCV fares and trade agree they are acceptable and fair.

A full written report of the findings will be provided to the HCPHLG at the next meeting in May 2015.

BTec Qualification-Update

Mr O'Meara advised the group that the Council had been in preliminary discussions with Stoke-on-Trent College about the provision of the qualification for new drivers.

The College confirmed that this was possible and agreed to forward a proposal to us. This had not been received by 17 February. Currently there is funding available for the course but it is not known how long this will last. It might cost up to £500 to take the qualification if it is not provided free of charge.

Mr Toy raised concerns that that if the course cannot be provided free of charge, then they may be a prohibitive cost to entering the trade.

The issue of refresher courses for existing drivers was also discussed and the group agreed that this was a good idea for all drivers to receive refresher training, in particular on Wheelchair access.

Cllr Bennett informed the group that Staffordshire Police wanted to attend one of the HCPHLG meetings to raise consciousness amongst the Trade on the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). It was agreed that Mr O'Meara speak to the Police and arrange a meeting. **(Action SOM)**.

1st Aid Kits in Licensed Vehicles.

Mr Simonczyk had asked for this item to be put on the agenda but had offered his apologies due to illness. Cllr Bennett therefore asked that the matter be deferred until the next meeting. Members agreed.

St John 1st aid courses were also mentioned and will be looked into at the same time.

The role of the Trade in determining licensing policy

Cllr Bennett re-iterated that the Trade members were instrumental in helping to inform policy and policy changes and that the work of the Task & Finish Group demonstrated this.

The meeting finished at 12.10hrs and the members of the group were invited to have a look at Martin Hammonds Peugeot Partner vehicle.

Date of next meeting: Wednesday 6 May 2015 at 11.00am at the Civic Centre, Bee croft Road, Cannock.