CANNOCK CHASE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HACKNEY CARRIAGE & PRIVATE HIRE LIAISON GROUP

Minutes of Meeting held at 12.30pm on Wednesday 27 July 2016
Civic Centre, Beecroft Road, Cannock, Staffs. 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*

Representative 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**
Jason Shorrocks**
George Simonczyk***
Harry Griffiths*

(*) Present (**) Apology (***) Not present no apology

Welcome & apologies

Cllr Bennett welcomed everybody to the meeting and apologies were accepted.

Minutes of the last meeting

The notes of meeting on Wednesday 9 March 2016, were previously circulated and agreed as an accurate record of that meeting.

Matters arising

Although that this was not strictly a matter arising, Mr Toy said that he was concerned to read Cllr Adamson's comments in the press expressing his disappointment that UBER were not coming to Cannock Chase. Mr Toy said that UBER do not always bring good news for the local trade. This was because UBER have been known to slash fares by 14% and drivers have been known to end up working an 80 hour week to make a living. He said he had a meeting with Cllr Adamson planned for the following day in order to discuss the matter.

Mr Toy was aware that Reading and other councils had refused UBER applications for private hire operators licences.

HCPHLG membership and trade delegation mandate.

In order to ensure representation of no more than 10 members at any one HCPHLG meeting, Mr Toy said that there seemed to be 2 possible options open to the trade. They could either use a "subs bench" approach or simply to see how many members of the trade turn up on the day of the meeting. He said it was very important to them that trade reps attend the pre-meeting if they wished to attend the full meeting.

Cllr Bennett acknowledged this flexible approach but made it clear to the Group that there were to be no more than 10 trade representatives at any one HCPHLG meeting.

Separate private hire drivers licences.

The 4 trade representatives present at the meeting unanimously agreed that this was a bad idea. Mr Toy said that he had been asked to raise the matter by Shabbir Ahmad, the Proprietor of Aero Taxis, but it was not supported by the trade in general.

He acknowledged that some elements of the trade believed that obtaining a dual badge was a barrier to entering the trade as this required some topographical knowledge of the area. This type of knowledge test is not as important for private hire drivers but nevertheless, the trade representatives at the meeting believed that this could be bad for the licensed trade in the longer term.

Mr O'Meara said that he had spoken to Mr Ahmad on this matter and advised him to speak to Mr Toy and ask him to raise the matter at the HCPHLG. Mr O'Meara further advised that although the number of applications for dual badges had dropped in recent months, there seemed to be no obvious reason for this. There has been no change to policy since April 2014. There followed a general discussion about the current knowledge test.

Mr Tranter asked what the Council's current position was on the issue of separate PH driver licences. Mr Shilvock responded by saying that the Council had no plans to issue them.

Hackney carriage/ private hire policy revisions- July 2016

Mr Prosser-Davies advised the group the that policy had been adopted at Full Council on 6 July 2016 and came into effect on 7 July 2016. He took the group step by step through the 3 page policy change document which had been circulated along with the agenda.

Some discussion was had about the wearing of football shirts which will now be permitted but it was agreed that this situation would be monitored.

Other matters were discussed including the penalty matrix, driver training, DBS disclosures and the DBS update service as well as the need for a proper command of the English language.   Mr Shilvock advised that once the driver training proposals were finalised, then the HCPHLG would be advised of the Council's intentions.

Mr Toy stated that there was now nothing controversial within the new amended policy and that in itself was cause for celebration. He said that the policy was consulted upon and agreed with everyone. What the trade had asked for they had been granted.

Cllr Bennett said that that in his view, sensible discussions had achieved sensible results.

Mr Toy did mention that there was still one issue which caused them some concern. This was the issue of darkened glass on licensed vehicles. He believes that the current policy is based on opinion not fact

Mr Prosser Davies responded by saying that there had been no change to the policy and that he had done some research on the matter. It was acknowledged that, whilst there was no evidence that darkened glass contributed to crime, The Police did not routinely recorded the presence of darkened glass.

There was some discussion about the difference between hackney carriages and private hire vehicles as the current privacy glass policy does differentiate between the two. Mr O'Meara said that one of the reasons for allowing privacy glass in PH vehicles was that PH operators have a specific duty to record a great deal of information about the hirer of the PH vehicle whilst HC proprietors does not.

Disability Equality Training Bill 2016/17

Mr Salter made the group aware that the new Bill which is currently making its way thorough Parliament, will make such training mandatory.

Date of next meeting

12.00 Midday on 28 September 2016.
There will be a pre-meeting of the trade at 11.00am on the same day.