

PRESTON TAXI TRADES LIAISON MEETING 15 August 2018

Present:

Riaz Qadeer – RMT Preston Taxi Drivers Branch

Daren Ireland – RMT North West

Mike Thorpe – Licensing Manager, Preston City Council

Sonya Wheeler - Senior Licensing Technician, Preston City Council

Minutes from Last Meeting

The minutes from the liaison meeting held on 13 June 2018 were agreed as a correct record.

Enforcement – General

SW reported on enforcement activity undertaken since the last meeting and requested that the following advice be circulated to the trade:

- Vehicle Proprietors/Drivers to regular check that ramps in good working order;
- Drivers to be fully aware of relevant byelaws, policies, licence conditions and code of conduct detailed in the Policy (red book).
- Spare copies of the Policy (red book) available from the Town Hall reception.

Driver Renewal Applications

MRT reported that the Council would be amending their procedures for driver renewal applications by requiring licensed drivers to make appointments at least **12 weeks** before the licence is due to expire. He explained that licensed drivers would continue to receive renewal reminder letters but these would be dispatched approximately 14 weeks prior to expiry dates. This amendment will allow the Council to receive details of criminal record checks before it renews licences. **Driver licences will, therefore, no longer be renewed if criminal record check details have not been shared with the Council.**

Alternatively, licensed drivers could register for the DBS Update Service which costs £13 every year. This provides drivers with access to their record and, with permission of the driver, allows others, such as the Council at your appointment, to view the record. Drivers can register using a recent DBS certificate number (less than 30 days old) at <https://www.gov.uk/dbs-update-service>.

Taxi Ranks

DI confirmed he had written to Lancashire County Council Highways for their support on proposals for new taxi ranks at:

- Market Street – 24 hour rank
- Theatre Street – loading bays to become evening ranks
- Christian Road – rank with provision to turn right at its junction with Fishergate
- Chapel Street – 5 space rank

- Fishergate – loading bays opposite Café Nero to become evening ranks

DI also advised that he had asked Lancashire County Council Highways to review the signage at the Church Street ranks. **MRT** explained that Preston City Council has powers to create taxi ranks but the consent of the Highway Authority (Lancashire County Council) would be required. It is also likely that in each case the Highway Authority will have to prohibit parking or waiting by other vehicles by means of a Traffic Regulation Order. He was also under the impression that taxi ranks must be marked out in yellow and signage erected.

Highway Resurfacing Works

MRT referred to the on-going carriageway resurfacing works on Lord Street, Lancaster Road and Jacson Street and their impact on the trade. **RQ** confirmed that these works and in particular not being able to left onto Lancaster Road from Earl Street was increasing time and distance for many journeys. **MRT** advised that a short on-line survey is available at www.lancashire.gov.uk/roadsurvey.

Parking Enforcement

MRT reported that he had asked the Police to consider taking appropriate action to reduce the road safety issues in the city centre caused by private motor vehicles parked on taxi ranks but he had still not received a reply prior to the meeting. However, he was aware that the City Centre Neighbourhood Policing Team had written to Lancashire County Council Highways regarding road safety concerns in Butler Street and with private vehicles parking in taxi ranks on Church Street. The trade representatives welcomed this recognition by the police of this problem in Church Street and their willingness to be involved in any future meeting with Lancashire County Council Highways.

DI confirmed he had written to the Leader of Lancashire County Council on 22 June 2018 enclosing evidence of private vehicles parked on city centre taxi ranks and offering to meet with appropriate persons to secure a resolution to this long standing issue. He reported that he had copied the letter to Mark Hendrick MP for Preston who had himself written to the Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council in support of a multi-agency meeting. **MRT** asked that a representative from the Council's Licensing Service team be invited to attend such a meeting. **DI** reported that he received a response from the Interim Chief Executive of Lancashire County Council on 30 July 2018 informing him that the Head of Highways at Lancashire County Council would be contacting him to arrange a multi-agency meeting. No contact had so far been made so **DI** agreed to try and make contact himself.

Vehicle Licences

MRT reported that he would not support a proposal to increase the duration of vehicle licences from 6 months to 12 months due to inefficiencies it would cause within his team, particularly if vehicle proprietors were to continue having vehicles examined and tested every 6 months. He added that he would consider a 12 month licence period with an annual examination and

test but this would have to be introduced alongside an age limit policy in order to maintain vehicle standards.

Driver Safety

MRT circulated a sample sticker aimed to raise awareness to passengers that verbal and physical abuse towards drivers will not be tolerated.

Enforcement – Vehicle Inspections

SW reported that between June and July 2018 the Council inspected:-

- 2 hackney carriages – 2 stop notices.
- 12 private hire vehicles – 2 stop notice and 8 vehicle defect notices.

Enforcement – Penalty Points

SW reported that between June and July 2018 seven penalty point notices were issued in respect of:

- 1 hackney carriage driver for breach of byelaws
- 5 private hire drivers for undeclared criminal and motoring offences
- hackney carriage drivers for undeclared motoring offences
- 1 private hire driver for breach of condition

Taxi and Miscellaneous Committee

At its August meeting the Committee decided to take no action in respect of a private hire driver who had reported an offence.

Date of Next Meeting

Wednesday 10 October 2018 in Room C at the Town Hall commencing at 2pm.