

TAXI FORUM

Notes of Meeting held on 11th September 2019

Present (Taxi Trade): Arsham Ditta, Arjinder Singh Rakkar, Bill Armstrong, Pete Stock, Paul Bates, Makhmood Hussain, Harry Jones, Paresh Thaker, Ian Crowe, David Williams, Colin Jones, Tony Blews, Trish Thorpe, Asim Ozden, Ben Sackey, Babar Nasim, Shabir Khan, Ghulam Raza, Naeem Ditta Ul-Haq, Khalid Latif

(SBC Officers): Julie Wallace, Katie McKinney, Bryony Williams, Leo Parkes, Robert Simpson

	ACTION
<p><u>PART A</u></p> <p>1) Welcome and Introductions</p> <p>Introductions were made.</p> <p>2) Fees and Charges</p> <p>RJS ran through the presentation over the fees and charges that was put together by the Chief Accountant at SBC.</p> <p>In brief, the fees for the three income streams (drivers, vehicles and operators) will change. Driver licence applications and renewals will increase in price, vehicle applications and renewals will decrease in price, and operator costs will also decrease.</p> <p>These changes will warrant a Cabinet report in order for the members to approve the variations in fees.</p> <p>RJS suggested that fees and charges will be a standing item on the Agenda going forward, in the autumn time (September) in order for the trade to give feedback and their views on the fees and charges.</p> <p>HJ questioned the monitoring forms that were done by the Licensing Team in order to get to the new figures. The process for this was explained.</p> <p>Transformation was discussed as a way to keep costs down. Different application processes were discussed, for example, the self-scan applications they have at other local authorities and implementing more digital processes to save costs.</p> <p>If SBC reduces costs, this will have a knock on effect to the trade.</p> <p>The changes will be introduced in the new financial year April 2020; these will be need to be advertised in due course.</p> <p>A question was raised by SK regarding other local authorities; a discussion was had regarding this.</p>	

		ACTION
	<p>3) Daily Vehicle Checks</p> <p>The Licensing Team reiterated that operators and drivers are responsible for ensuring the vehicles are free from damage and the vehicles are to be swept for lost property after every journey, where possible. We also need reports of damage, etc. to investigate properly. The trade self-policing was deliberated; if the trade want to do this and it works, this is welcomed; however complaints to SBC are encouraged if drivers do not heed warnings from other drivers.</p> <p>A discussion was started about subcontracting. Questions and concerns were discussed regarding Star Private Hire, regarding no SBC licensed vehicles on the road currently.</p> <p>WAVs were discussed as it appears to the trade that there are certain drivers with WAVs that are not doing wheelchair jobs. These drivers/vehicles need calling in to demonstrate they can use wheelchair ramps, etc., safely.</p> <p>RJS reiterated to the group that we now have to provide details about vehicles to DEFRA as part of the Clean Air Regulations. The air quality in Stafford is currently meeting the national standard.</p> <p>An issue with private cars parking on the taxi rank at Casa was raised. It was explained to the group that the County Council are responsible for enforcing parking on double yellow lines, however it is the Police and SBC that can enforce on taxi ranks. JDW to contact Lee Barnard ref this issue.</p> <p>Other potential ranks were discussed, such as outside Nishads, or Bridge Street, however it was explained that the Police won't allow a rank on Bridge Street. Also, a parking order is potentially going to be introduced by the Casa rank in front of the Odeon.</p> <p>4) Station Permits</p> <p>JDW reiterated to the group that SBC are not responsible for the permits, this is the responsibility of Cmac Group. Difficulties at the station at the moment include there either being too many taxis or not enough. Issues with the permits currently regarding additional drivers on the permits. SK stated that he had heard they were reducing the number of permits from 55 to 50 – not sure if this is happening, SBC not aware. JDW and KM stated that they have regular meetings with Cmac and we cross check the permit lists to ensure they are up to date and correct. There was a suggestion that a representative from Cmac is to be invited to a future taxi forum.</p>	<p>JDW</p>

		ACTION
	<p>5) 5-8 Seater Fares</p> <p>JDW stated that an email had been received regarding fares for larger vehicles. This was discussed.</p> <p>Fare increases will need to be applied for in writing from the trade themselves. These need to be fair across the board.</p> <p>6) Assistance Dogs and WAVs</p> <p>Medical exemptions need to be displayed. JDW gave out an information sheet on the types of assistance dogs as there are differences in what the harnesses look like, etc. This is to ensure the trade know what to look for, and understand that it is against Policy to refuse such assistance dogs.</p> <p>7) CCTV Demo</p> <p>JDW stated that she had had to cancel the company that was going to attend the Forum for the CCTV due to low numbers attending the last few forums. CCTV Policy was discussed in brief; dashcams are not accepted – if the trade wish to purchase a CCTV system for their vehicle, this needs to be a fit for purpose taxi CCTV system and the specification will need to be supplied to the Licensing Team for approval before installation.</p> <p>8) Forums- discussion re frequency</p> <p>It was agreed that potentially the Forums are to be changed to 3 times a year rather than quarterly. This will be reviewed after the February Forum.</p> <p><u>PART B Open Forum</u></p> <p>Cleanliness of vehicles was reiterated. Reports of overcharging from drivers – reminder that mystery shoppers can be used at any time, also self-policing had further discussion.</p>	
	<p>Date and Time of Next Meeting</p> <p>11 December 2019, 12pm– Craddock Room, SBC</p>	
	<p>HC drivers to have more of a presence in Stone going forward</p>	(ongoing)
	<p>JDW to contact Lee Barnard re parking issues</p>	JDW