

TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE FORUM MEETING

AGENDA

WEDNESDAY 18 November 2020 – 10:30AM (Microsoft Teams)

ATTENDING

Carol Stefanczuk – Licensing Manager
Claire Humphreys – Licensing Officer
David Ingram – Service Lead – Public Protection
Barry Hussey
Steve Eckton
John Fairey
Marouane El Mamouni
Akeel Khan
Veryon Lyons – Head of Programme (WCC)

Carol welcomed the group to the meeting.

Cabinet Meeting

Carol confirmed that the Cabinet members had agreed to adopt the policy proposals with the deferred dates. She confirmed that an email had been sent to all drivers and operators and a letter has been sent to all those drivers without email.

Barry Hussey informed the meeting that drivers are asking to see the door sign design. Carol explained the process and said that the design has been sent to our communications team to be created, once the design has been finalised and approved, we will be in a position to share the design with the Forum.

Steve Eckton raised the subject of fixing plates to the vehicle and made the point that some vehicle types may have a problem due to differing shapes/angles of bodywork. Carol confirmed that we will review it case by case.

Steve Eckton asked for an email to be sent to all drivers making them aware there is no minimum fare for customers paying by card. Carol confirmed this will be done. The forum discussed different types of payment devices.

John Fairey mentioned that the pandemic has made the school run side of things very quiet due to some school year groups not being in. He shared his concern for his driver's safety with regards to Covid, but said he had a good system in place to keep them as safe as possible. So far so good.

Station Permit Update

David Ingram updated the group on his findings so far with regards to the cost of the station permits, commenting that this needs to be reviewed and it is unfair to charge £814.

David read out to the meeting an email he had received from Adele Richards, South Western Railway.

David Ingram shared his thoughts of the possibility of re-locating the taxi rank to the opposite side of the road, which would mean no fee for the drivers. At the moment this is a possible solution that needs to be looked into further, but it was pointed out by Akeel Khan that we have to be mindful of what would happen to the current taxi rank space. Could Network Rail lease that land to someone else, for example Uber? Carol replied that we would need to make sure we understand the lease. Barry Hussey said that he thought it could only be leased to be used as a taxi rank. Verification needs to be sought.

Steve Eckton mentioned that Southampton Hackney Carriage drivers were historically charged for rank permits, but advised they no longer are. He suggested that Winchester Hackney Carriage drivers are subsidising South Western Railway and requested that this is looked into.

It is understood that Steve Brine MP has written to the Department for Transport. David will investigate this to try and have a 'joined up' approach to supporting the drivers.

It was decided that more discussions on this subject will be needed to ensure we understand all the implications.

Winchester City Centre Regeneration – Veryon Lyons

Veryon Lyons introduced herself and gave the Forum a presentation on the proposals for the regeneration of Winchester City Centre.

Steve Eckton commented that there must be a taxi rank in the City Centre. Akeel Khan said that wheelchair Accessible vehicles must be also taken into consideration.

Veryon agreed and said that Taxis were part of the plans and these comments would be taken into consideration. Veryon also confirmed that future meetings with stakeholders, such as the Taxi and Private Hire Forum, would be held.

Veryon asked the Forum to visit the web page and look at the proposed plans and encouraged them to give comments and get involved. The website is www.winchester.gov.uk/cwr.

Fare Review

Carol mentioned to the Forum that if a fare review is requested from the trade we will produce a report to have this considered by the Licensing and Regulation Committee. She advised the forum to give it some thought and we are here should they wish to discuss this further.

Licensed Vehicle end of Life Age

John Fairey said he was very disappointed that the Cabinet chose to adopt a vehicle end of life age into policy. He said that other Council's had a different policy for Rural Operators. Carol said that the decision had been made, but advised John that if he felt he had good justification, he could put in a case requesting that the L & R Committee depart from policy with regards to his vehicles that undertake only school runs.

Next Meeting

It has been decided that the next meeting will be held early in the New Year.