

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE TAXI LIAISON GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
MONDAY 2 MARCH 2009

Present:	Councillor S Khan (Chair)		
	Councillors C Greaves	-	WYITA
	K Rhodes	-	WYITA
	G Horsfall	-	Calderdale MBC
	A Parnham	-	Leeds CC
Officers in attendance:	P Mills	-	Bradford MC
	E Eastwood	-	Calderdale MC
	M Stocchero	-	Kirklees MC
	D Broster	-	Leeds CC
	D Hoggarth	-	Metro
	S Heckley	-	Metro
	R Chaplin	-	WYITA

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M Bolt (ITA) and S Akhtar (Bradford).

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no personal or prejudicial interests declared by members at the meeting.

9. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Liaison Group held on 15 September 2008 be approved.

10. SAFETY AND SECURITY UPDATE

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on activities to promote safety and security for taxi drivers and passengers in West Yorkshire.

It was reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had published a report on research into personal security for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers.

The full report was available from the DfT and an Executive Summary was on their website at www.dft.gov.uk. Members noted the DfT's recommendations which were outlined in the submitted report and the two guidance leaflets which were attached at Appendix A and B. It was reported that the onus for acting on the research was placed on Licensing Authorities, the Police and drivers. The DfT was looking for licensing authorities to make policy and deliver strategies to improve safety and security for drivers and members discussed the activities undertaken by each District in respect of this.

It was reported that following a request from the trade, Bradford Council had agreed a policy to allow for advertisements to be displayed on hackney carriages and private hire vehicles with the proviso that any money raised be used to install in-cab CCTV systems. However, despite their request, no applications had been made for advertising. Two companies had, however, installed CCTV under their own initiative.

Members were advised that Calderdale Council had introduced a policy permitting CCTV and driver safety shields to be fitted in licensed vehicles. The Council were unable to fund their introduction and responsibility for their provision lay with the vehicle owner.

With regard to activities in the Leeds district, it was reported that Leeds had agreed to part fund CCTV in hackney carriages and safety shields in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. Members were advised that although there had been some progress a number of drivers were reluctant to install safety shields despite the funding assistance.

Members expressed their concern and frustration that despite the introduction of these initiatives the trade was still reluctant to participate and invest in the schemes offered to assist them in the provision of security systems. Comment was made that there should be a requirement for all hackney carriages and private hire vehicles to be equipped with safety measures and Licensing Authorities should be given the powers to ensure that this was adhered to. It was recognised that the Liaison Group provided a platform for sharing best practice between the districts but there were limitations on what they could do to as it is ultimately down to the Licensing Authorities. It was proposed to develop a response to the DfT on behalf of the Liaison Group highlighting these problems and it was suggested that Licensing Authorities should also send individual feedback.

It was suggested that investigations be made into the possibility of equipping a demonstration vehicle with CCTV, safety screen, high visibility lighting etc, which could then visit each district to promote safety and security for drivers.

It was reported that Kirklees Council was undertaking a review of its taxi marshalling schemes and although this was not yet complete, the Liaison Group welcomed the encouraging initial findings of reduction in crime statistics in Batley. The scheme is funded through the Kirklees Council Safer Stronger Communities Service

A report would be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group which would include Police statistics regarding assaults on drivers, the benefits of security schemes and funding issues, and to explore scope for a further promotional 'push' of current initiatives.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a response to the published Department for Transport research be developed to highlight difficulties in encouraging uptake of safety and security measures
- (c) That a further report on safety and security issues be prepared for the next meeting of the Liaison Group.
- (d) That investigations be made into the possibility of equipping a demonstration vehicle with CCTV, safety screen, high visibility lighting etc, which could then visit each district to promote safety and security .

11. TAXI TOOLKIT AND TAXI SHELTERS PROGRESS REPORT

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive which provided an update on training issues arising out of the Taxi Toolkit management project and the use of bus stops by taxis.

It was noted that the Liaison Group had considered the taxi management toolkit at its meeting held on 15 September 2008. Officers from Leeds City Council had agreed to investigate the potential for issuing driver identification cards to record that training had been received. The badges would require an element of audit control such as a sealed photograph or watermark and it was suggested that a second copy of the badge could be fixed inside wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Members were advised that Leeds City Council had adopted the taxi management toolkit and the training for Leeds drivers was compulsory – existing drivers had to complete their training within 3 years and new applicants within a year. The Liaison Group considered that each Licensing Authority should be encouraged to adopt the policy to ensure that all drivers in West Yorkshire were trained to the same standard. The Chair would write to the Licensing Committees suggesting that each district adopt the training initiative.

In respect of taxi shelters, it had previously been reported that the Department for Transport (DfT) had advised that there was no legal basis to allow for the joint use of bus stops by taxis and buses. Consideration had been given to a proposed pilot scheme in Leeds City Centre where standard bus shelters could be installed and used as taxi only shelters with installation and maintenance costs being met by Leeds City Council. However following discussions with

Leeds City Council it was reported that due to funding issues it would not be possible to proceed with the pilot at the present time.

RESOLVED -

- (a)** That the report be noted.
- (b)** That a letter be sent to each Licensing Authority explaining Leeds City Council's training scheme and requesting that they consider roll-out of the scheme within their respective authority.