

AGENDA ITEM NO: 10

WEST YORKSHIRE PASSENGER TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/ DISTRICT COUNCILS

AT A MEETING OF THE TAXI LIAISON GROUP HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON MONDAY 12 SEPTEMBER 2005

Present:	Councillor	P Wadsworth (Chair)		
	Councillors	M Bower	-	WYPTA
		S Khan	-	WYPTA
		K Rhodes	-	WYPTA
		R Taylor	-	Calderdale MBC
		D Sheard	-	Kirklees MC
		C Nash	-	Leeds CC

Officers in Attendance:

P Mills	-	Bradford MDC
C Hemingway	-	Calderdale MC
D Holliday	-	Kirklees MC
M Johnson	-	Leeds CC
P Roberts	-	Metro
R Chaplin	-	WYPTA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from R Gillam, Wakefield MDC.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

Further to minute 9, Hackney Carriage and PHV Operation Within the A629 Wakefield Road Bus Lanes in Huddersfield, a verbal update was given by Mr Holliday of Kirklees Council. It was noted that the taxi trade had reported that the new arrangements were working satisfactorily but the bus operators and Metro had raised concerns regarding the potential safety implications and it would be necessary to monitor and review the scheme on a regular basis. The Liaison Group requested that a progress report be prepared for a future meeting of the Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That a report on the A629 Wakefield Road Bus Lanes scheme be prepared for a future meeting of the Liaison Group.
- (b) That the minutes of the meeting of the Liaison Group held on 28 February 2005 be approved.

4. TAXIS AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES IN THE SECOND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on the approach to taxis and private hire vehicles (PHV) identified in the second Local Transport Plan (LTP).

Members had previously discussed the issues affecting taxis that should be considered in the LTP2. The general approach being proposed in the provisional LTP was reported in support of the general principle of further integrating taxis and PHVs into the overall transport system. It was agreed that the proposed approach in the provisional LTP generally met the issues that had been set out by the Group. It was noted that there would be benefit in considering the use of subsidised taxi fares, for the elderly or disabled for example, as a means of improving accessibility.

The Liaison Group discussed the draft Best Practice Guidance for local taxi and PHV Licensing Authorities which had been produced by the Department for Transport. Members' views would be taken into consideration when the West Yorkshire LTP Partnership responded to the document which was required by 28 October 2005. In particular, it was agreed that the Best Practice Guidance did not adequately address safety and security.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the views of the Group be considered during the preparation of taxi and PHV licensing policy to be included in the final LTP.
- (c) That the views of the Group be considered when setting out a West Yorkshire LTP Partnership response to DfT on the draft Best Practice Guidance.

5. TAXI AND PHV LICENSING POLICIES

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive on progress by the District Councils in preparing responses to the request from the Department for Transport (DfT) that all taxi licensing authorities review local policies restricting the number of taxi licences.

Members were provided with an extract from the provisional Local Transport Plan which outlined the position in each of the Districts with regard to their policies on setting licence quantity limits.

The members agreed that any new licences should be limited to accessible vehicles but that these need not necessarily be limited to wheelchair accessible vehicles. It was agreed that there was a key role for driver training in improving accessibility for different groups of passengers.

RESOLVED - That the report be noted.

6. TAXI SAFETY AND SECURITY

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive, which had been prepared in consultation with members of the West Yorkshire Taxi Licensing Officers Group, on improving taxi safety by the provision of CCTV cameras in cabs.

With regard to the provision of CCTV in cabs, members noted the success of a trial scheme which had been operating in Batley, Dewsbury and Huddersfield. This had involved a static system that allowed the driver to take recorded images to the Police or District CCTV Control Centre following an incident. Members noted the efforts of Mr Holliday of Kirklees MC in developing this initiative.

The Group discussed the safety benefits for passengers by making private hire vehicles more easily recognised. This involved sticking a reflective sign on the vehicle's doors with the company's name so that the public could easily identify them. It was noted that this practice would assist in increasing public safety.

Members noted the merits of in-cab CCTV. Members acknowledged the increased risk of violence as raised in the letter attached to the report from Kirklees Race Equality Council and agreed that CCTV could reduce the potential violence and abuse against drivers. However, it was generally agreed that there needed to be increased responsibility taken by drivers and operators in terms of their monitoring of incidents and their commitment to funding safety equipment.

The Liaison Group recognised that the bulk purchase of cameras would be able to significantly reduce costs, and the principle of joint funding by the trade should be adopted. The value of a consistent approach across West Yorkshire was noted, and officers were requested to undertake further work and report back to the Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That the Group approves further work into safety and security issues in general and, in particular, the development of a possible scheme for funding, delivery and management of CCTV units in Hackney Carriages across West Yorkshire.