

WEST YORKSHIRE INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY/DISTRICT COUNCILS

**AT A MEETING OF THE TAXI LIAISON GROUP
HELD AT WELLINGTON HOUSE ON
MONDAY 7 SEPTEMBER 2009**

Present: Councillor S Khan (Chair)

Councillors C Greaves	-	WYITA
K Rhodes	-	WYITA
P Wadsworth	-	WYITA
R Thornber	-	Calderdale MBC
C Iredale	-	Kirklees MC
D Blackburn	-	Leeds CC

Officers in attendance:	M Hamer	-	Bradford MC
	A Pickerill	-	Calderdale MC
	M Stocchero	-	Kirklees MC
	M Deplacido	-	Leeds CC
	P Taylor	-	Wakefield MDC
	J English	-	Metro
	S Heckley	-	Metro
	R Chaplin	-	WYITA

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors A Hawkesworth (ITA), M Walker (ITA) and D Dagger (Wakefield MDC) and Mr D Broster (Leeds CC).

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED - That the minutes of the meeting of the Liaison Group held on 2 March 2009 be approved.

4. 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.

Members had previously been advised of the publication of the Department for Transport's (DfT) report on research into personal security for taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) drivers. It was suggested that a response could be developed on behalf of the Liaison Group to highlight difficulties in encouraging the uptake of safety and security measures. The Liaison Group discussed the availability of Police statistics regarding assaults on taxi drivers. Officers agreed to commission their local Crime and Disorder Partnerships to provide information which could be shared with the Taxi Liaison Group.

It was reported that Bradford Council had approved the introduction of a one day training programme for all new licence applicants which included safety and security aspects. The new licences would be valid for three years. The specification for taxi and private hire vehicles had also been reviewed and with effect from 12 October 2009 it would be compulsory for drivers to display notices on safety and security and the complaints procedure.

Members were advised that Calderdale Council did not have any funding available to assist in the introduction of in-cab CCTV or driver safety screens. However the success of driver participation in Train to Gain/Skills for Life initiatives was reported with over 300 licensed drivers applying for the qualification. Future funding of the scheme was uncertain and it was requested that the DfT be made aware of the Group's concerns.

It was noted that Wakefield MDC were developing a knowledge test for drivers which would cover safety and security issues.

It was reported that Kirklees Council had completed a review of its taxi marshalling schemes and the scheme had recently been extended to include new Nightlife Marshals covering areas in Huddersfield and Batley.

The Liaison Group noted that Leeds City Council had maintained a list of licensees who had taken advantage of their part funded scheme for security measures (CCTV in hackney carriages and safety shields in hackney carriages and private hire vehicles). A questionnaire was to be sent to participating drivers to assess the effectiveness of the initiative. Members were advised that Leeds City Council supported the benefits of taxi marshalling schemes and they ran a scheme for a month over each Christmas period. It was reported that Leeds City Council had investigated the provision of a demonstration vehicle to showcase approved safety equipment. It was noted that Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds supported, in principle, the joint procurement of a vehicle but this would be subject to available funding. Further information would be circulated to members.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report be noted.
- (b) That a letter be sent to the West Yorkshire Licensing Authorities regarding a joint response to the DfT Research.

- (c) That information regarding crime data be requested through each District's Crime and Disorder Partnership.
- (d) That a letter be sent to the DfT regarding the future funding of training initiatives.
- (e) That further information regarding the joint funding of a demonstration vehicle be circulated to members.

5. LEEDS CITY CENTRE ISSUES

The Liaison Group considered a report of the Passenger Transport Executive advising members of issues and actions to address congestion problems in Leeds City Centre. It was reported that there was an ongoing problem within Leeds City Centre with regard to traffic congestion caused by queuing Hackney Carriages. This was impacting on access by other vehicular traffic and the operation of local bus services.

Members considered proposals to alleviate the problems which were outlined in the submitted report. It was noted that obstruction by Hackney Carriages on the highway was a moving traffic offence and the Liaison Group noted the recent police enforcement in Leeds City Centre arranged by Metro to alleviate the problems. Consideration was also being given to the possibility of using some bus stops at night time after the last bus service had departed. It was reported that a similar pilot scheme was proving successful in the Westgate area of Wakefield.

The Liaison Group noted the proposals for the New Generation Transport (NGT) system which included the provision of a loop around the city centre. The NGT project team would consider the implications of the scheme on existing and planned taxi and bus facilities and would liaise with the taxi trade once more detailed designs were available.

It was noted that there was an opportunity to address integration of taxis in West Yorkshire through the preparation of Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3). Work was due to commence on the development of LTP3 and it was agreed that the taxi related aspects of the Plan would be discussed at future meetings of the Liaison Group.

RESOLVED -

- (a) That the report and actions to address issues in Leeds City Centre be noted.
- (b) That a further report be prepared following the evaluation of the overall impact of the proposed improvements.
- (c) That the Liaison group would provide input into the development of the next Local Transport Plan at future meetings.