

**FALKIRK COUNCIL**

**Minute of Meeting of the Taxi and Private Hire Car forum held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 26 April 2018 at 10.00 a.m.**

**Forum Members**

**Present:** Emma Bruce (Bruce Taxis); Alex Fleming (Falkirk Delivers Manager); Charlie Fullerton (Tartan Line Taxis); John Kennedy (Stenhouse Taxis); Sharon Manson (Falkirk Delivers Assistant Manager); Jenny McCartney (Falkirk Area Disability Access Panel); Laura Bruce (Bruce Taxis); John Nicol (Independent Taxi Operator); Gordon Speirs (Fleet Supervisor)

**Convener:** Councillor Laura Murtagh.

**Council Officers**

**Present:** Bryan Douglas (Licensing Co-ordinator); Brian Pirie (Democratic Services Manager).

**Also in Attendance:** Jim Kelly, Member of the Public

**1. Appointment of Convener**

Invitations for nomination for the post of convener were invited.

Councillor Murtagh, following nomination at the meeting, indicated her willingness to serve as convener.

**Decision**

**The forum agreed to the appointment of Councillor Murtagh.**

**2. Appointment of Depute Convener**

Invitations for nomination for the post of depute convener were invited.

No nominations were received.

**Decision**

**The forum did not appoint a depute convener.**

### **3. Apologies**

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Councillor Robert Bissett, and Michael Anderson, Anderson Taxis.

### **4. Minute**

#### **Decision**

**The minute of the meeting of the Taxi and Private Hire Car Forum held on 21 September 2017 was approved.**

### **5. Testing Station Update**

The forum received an update from Gordon Speirs, Fleet Supervisor on the current operation of the testing station. In particular he highlighted changes to the MOT test that were introduced on 20 May 2018. Defects are now categorised differently:-

- Dangerous – Fail
- Major – Fail
- Minor – Pass
- Advisory – Pass
- Pass- Pass

There were also stricter rules introduced for diesel emissions in order to comply with environmental regulations. Guidance had been prepared by the DVLA and was available online.

The group discussed at length the time it could take to book a hackney test. The administration of the booking slots was now run by the Business Support unit of the Council and there had been initial teething troubles. Mr Speirs stated that a wait of 3 weeks for a slot was unnecessary and unacceptable. There was a need of course to plan and manage slots but in the main, slots should be able to be found within the week. It was, he stressed, preferable to book slots far in advance but where this was not possible, slots could be found.

#### **Decision**

**The forum noted the information.**

## **6. Falkirk BID Projects**

The forum received an update, from Sharon Manson, Falkirk Delivers Assistant Manager, on Falkirk BID projects. In particular, Ms Manson stated that funding had been secured for the taxi marshalling and safe base service. At the year end, 124,349 customers had been served by the service. She summarised feedback from the community, highlighting that 71% felt safe in the night in Falkirk. In terms of information gathering, she confirmed that the number of people needing assistance would now be recorded.

### **Decision**

**The forum noted the information.**

## **7. Update on Taxi Licensing Changes**

Bryan Douglas, Licensing Co-ordinator provided an update on changes to taxi licensing. The update focussed on:-

- The introduction of the Knowledge test for private hire car drivers;
- Changes to the administrative processes for Taxi/private hire car operator licence applications; and
- A list on the Council's website providing details of designated wheelchair accessible taxis and private hire cars.

### **Decision**

**The forum noted the information provided.**

## **8. Review of Taxi Tariff Scales and Fares**

Bryan Douglas gave a short summary of a review of taxi tariff scales and fares. These had not been increased since October 2013 although regular reviews had taken place with the Forum since. It was now proposed that a review is carried out annually

There followed discussion on the issues that were impacting on the trade:-

- Increasing fuel costs
- Increasing insurance costs
- Increasing maintenance costs
- Increased capital costs as a result of Council policy that replacement taxis/private hire cars must be no older than 3 years
- An increase in the fares would enable greater investment in technology

The views of the forum were sought in respect of potential increases in the tariff. Following discussion consensus was reached on a 50p increase on the flag fall and an increase in the running mile to be determined, with a suggestion of between 10%-20%.

### **Decision**

**Agreed to the proposed increase.**

## **9. Establishment of Policy Development Panel – Civic Licensing**

Councillor Murtagh advised that she was the Convener of a policy development panel which would look at a wide range of taxi licensing issues affecting the trade and it would report to the Executive. Councillor Murtagh stated that the panel would engage with the trade and users and invited expressions of interest to be made to Bryan Douglas.

### **Decision**

**The forum noted the information.**

## **10. Falkirk Town Centre – Public Realm Works: Temporary Newmarket Street Taxi Rank Relocation**

The forum noted the letter circulated from Jacqueline McArthur, Economic Development Officer, regarding the temporary relocation of the taxi rank in Newmarket Street earlier in the year.

### **Decision**

**The forum noted the information.**

## **11. Any Other Competent Business**

- (1) Parking – Bryan Douglas stated that indiscriminate parking, particularly around schools, was an issue and asked the trade for help in requesting drivers not to park around schools at busy times.
- (2) Meters – Laura Bruce asked why GPS taxi meters were not acceptable in Falkirk.
- (3) Falkirk Stadium events – It was noted that the arrangements for picking up and dropping hires at the stadium at big events was unsatisfactory.

There was a suggestion that the trade should be involved in the event planning. Bryan Douglas advised that a newly established SAG (Safety Advisory Group) oversaw the event planning. For forthcoming events – Little Mix and Will Graham – there were no plans to establish a rank at the stadium. He recognised the benefits, and disadvantages, of having a pick up point at the stadium and undertook to liaise with the trade on this. The Forum requested an input into any future traffic management discussions with John Kennedy acting as a trade representative.

## **12. Date of Next Meeting**

### **Decision**

**It was agreed that the next meeting of the forum would take place before 30 June 2018 with a date and time to be confirmed.**