

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of Meeting of the Taxi and Private Hire Car forum held in the Municipal Buildings, Falkirk on Thursday 28 June 2018 at 09.30 a.m.

Forum Members

Present: Councillors Robert Bissett and Laura Murtagh, Emma Bruce (Bruce Taxis); Laura Bruce (Bruce Taxis); John Kennedy (Stenhouse Taxis); Jenny McCartney (Falkirk Area Disability Access Panel); Derek Martin, Grange Taxis; Alan McFadzean, McFadzean Taxis; PC Trenchard and PC Hutchison, Police Scotland.

Convener: Councillor Laura Murtagh.

Council Officers

Present: Bryan Douglas (Licensing Co-ordinator).

1. Welcome and introductions

2. Apologies

Apologies were intimated on behalf of Lennox Ainslie, George McBlain, Fourways Taxis; Alex Fleming and Sharon Manson, Falkirk Delivers, Jim Kelly and Gordon Speirs, Fleet Supervisor.

3. Minute

Decision

The minute of the meeting of the Taxi and Private Hire Car Forum held on 24 April 2018 was approved.

4. Matters arising

GPS meters

Bryan Douglas explained that at the last meeting Laura Bruce raised the issue regarding the taxi meters currently permitted in Falkirk and the possibility of introducing a different type of meter, one that uses Global Positioning Systems (GPS) to measure fares in taxis/ phcs.

Bryan Douglas advised that he had undertaken some initial research and his understanding of such meters was that this type of technology used an office based central despatch system linked to a mobile data terminal in the car using GPS. His understanding was that this was similar to a sat nav terminal but also included a taximeter function.

Bryan Douglas said that there was specific legislation that covered taximeters: - "The Measuring instruments (taximeters) Regulations 2006", which may preclude the use of such GPS systems to calculate fares. He said he would speak to other licensing authorities and update the Forum at the next meeting

The forum noted the information.

5. Testing Station Update

Bryan Douglas explained that due to staffing issues, Gordon Speirs, fleet supervisor was unable to attend the meeting. He had however provided an update for the Forum.

The Testing station continues to be busy. The recent changes to the testing scheme has not produced any dramatic change to the number of vehicles failing their test. The standard of the vehicle presented remains on the whole good. The testing station now have another two testers who have been passed by DVSA. This will assist in providing cover for training etc. All testers are required to annually undertake training and this will be completed before the end of the year.

Decision

The forum noted the information.

6. Review of Taxi Tariff Scales & Fares

Bryan Douglas confirmed that following on from the last Forum meeting, a report suggesting an increase in the taxi tariff was prepared and duly considered by the Council's Executive. The report was circulated as part of the agenda for today.

The proposed increases were agreed by the Members and an advertisement outlining the proposed changes were placed in the Falkirk Herald and Bo'ness Journal on the 21st and 22nd June. Comments could now be made by anyone for a period of 1 month from 21st June. The Council's taxi tariff webpage had details of the proposed changes and offered the opportunity for comment. There was also a dedicated consultation hub on the Council's website that displays current consultations and the taxi tariff was placed on there too.

Councillor Murtagh confirmed she introduced the report at the meeting of the Executive and recommended the increases. She was mindful of the passage of time since the last increase and had taken careful consideration of all representations. The Elected Members agreed that the suggested increases were fair and they were agreed unanimously.

Decision

The forum noted the update.

7. Policy Development Panel

Bryan Douglas referred to the recently established Policy Development Panel and advised that the Panel were considering the current taxi medical policy.

The Council's current policy requires all applicants for taxi/private hire car drivers' licences be required to meet the DVLA Group 2 Regulations Standard for vocational drivers. The policy also specifies that drivers reaching the age of 46, 51, 56, 61 and each year thereafter, undergo a similar examination when their licences fall for renewal to determine their fitness.

In recent years, the national trend and best practice guidance has recommended that taxi/private hire car drivers' meet the DVLA Group 2 Regulations Standards.

The PDP discussed the importance of public safety and the options to ensure the correct level of medical standard was met for taxi and private hire car drivers. The frequency of medicals and the benefits/costs of applicants undergoing the medical at their own GPs was also discussed. Further officer enquiry will be undertaken in terms of local GP's undertaking such medicals.

Decision

The forum noted the information provided.

8. Little Mix Concert at the Falkirk Stadium – temporary taxi rank

Bryan Douglas referred to previous discussions regarding drop off and pick up arrangements for taxis whenever there is a pop concert at the Falkirk Stadium and the possibility for the Forum to have a representative involved in planning for such events. At the last meeting Forum member John Kennedy put himself forward to be involved.

A Safety Advisory Group meeting was subsequently arranged to consider the Little Mix concert at the Stadium and John was invited to attend for the Traffic Management aspect. The meeting considered drop off/ pick-ups for concert go-ers and the possibility of a temporary taxi rank at the South Stand area

All details will be finalised in a Traffic Management Plan prior to the event and Bryan Douglas resolved to inform the Forum trade representative at this point.

The forum noted the information provided.

9. Any Other Competent Business

1. **Asset Register** - Bryan Douglas advised that Sharon and Alex from Falkirk Delivers would be starting a piece of work alongside the Scottish Business Resilience Centre to encourage local and Town Centre businesses to sign up to an Asset register offering services they would be willing to supply should an unpredicted major event occur in the area. This could range from a major fire similar to what Glasgow has just seen at the Art School or a gas explosion, pandemic flu, a terrorist attack or severe weather conditions such as the Beast from the East. Alex and Sharon have asked that any expressions of interest from taxi companies be conveyed to them.
2. **Falkirk town centre dedicated WAV drop off bay** – Jennie McCartney asked if a dedicated drop off space for Wheelchair Accessible taxis could be created at Baxter’s Wynd. Bryan Douglas said he would refer the request to the Roads Authority for consideration and report back in due course.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Decision

It was agreed that the next meeting of the forum would take place before in the autumn with a date and time to be confirmed.