

**Report of the Service Director
Legal Services to the
General Licensing Regulatory Board
to be held on the 28 October 2020**

ENFORCEMENT UPDATE

1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of this report, is to provide Members with an overview of the work Licensing Officers are currently undertaking to advise and support the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade during the COVID pandemic.

2. Background

Members are minded to note, that Licensing Officers are continuing to proactively work with the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Trade and other Local Authorities to ensure that those who choose to work through this COVID pandemic can do so whilst ensuring to the best of everyone's ability that both customers and drivers remain safe.

3. Current Position

Officers are continuing to work extremely hard in difficult circumstances to help and support drivers and operators whether they have chosen to work or not during the COVID pandemic.

Face Coverings

Members will be aware that following the Prime Ministers announcement on 22 September 2020 it is now a legal requirement for passengers to wear a face covering in taxis and private hire vehicles. There are exemptions and drivers need to be mindful of customers who are exempted from wearing face masks through age, disability or underlying medical issues.

It is also strongly advised and encouraged by officers that all our drivers also wear face coverings.

We advise operators confirm with their customers at the time of booking the expectation for them to wear face masks or provide reasons they would be unable to.

At the request of Officers, the taxi marshal have been monitoring the number of drivers wearing a face masks when working and I am happy to report that since the requirement for passengers to wear masks in a licensed vehicles became enforceable the marshals have subsequently reported that all Hackney Carriage drivers are wearing masks when carrying passengers.

Electric Vehicles

To help Barnsley reduce its carbon emissions, limit the effects of climate change, and improve local air quality, the Council aims to reduce the amount of carbon emitted through travel as part of its Zero 45 programme. The UK Government Road To Zero strategy sets measures to drive the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEV) including an outright ban on the sale of petrol and diesel engine passenger vehicles by 2035. Funding has been made available to Local Authorities through the Office of Low Emission Vehicles (OLEV) to support investment in electric vehicle (EV) charging infrastructure, and Barnsley Council are committed to ensuring that available support is made available in the Borough to ensure residents, businesses and visitors are able to access the benefits of ULEVs and EVs.

Energy Saving Trust (EST) is an independent UK-based organisation focused on promoting action that leads to the reduction of carbon dioxide emissions. They offer a source of free advice and information and they are currently assisting Officers build an evidence base for future work in relation to low-carbon transport in Barnsley.

Officers working with our colleagues in Sustainability & Climate Change and the Energy Saving Trust and are currently engaging with private hire and hackney carriage drivers to gather information as to their thoughts and attitudes towards electric vehicles and their vehicle usage patterns. As part of this work Officers have sent out a survey to all our licensed drivers asking for information in relation to their average daily mileage, distances of their

average fares, most frequent customer journeys, their views in relation to electric vehicles and any obstacles to them purchasing electric vehicles both now and in the future.

As taxis and private hire vehicles predominantly accumulate high mileage through short journeys Officers are working with the Energy Saving Trust (EST) to understand how we can support taxi and private hire drivers to switch to electric vehicles in the future. The responses to the survey will help to inform decisions around the provision of electric vehicle charging infrastructure and is part of ongoing work to improving local air quality and help the Borough transition to a zero carbon future.

Research has shown that the key concerns of drivers around purchasing ULEVs or EVs are perceptions around the limited range of vehicles (sometimes referred to as range anxiety), cost of vehicles and lack of charging infrastructure. The Council can play a key role in ensuring that sufficient infrastructure is in place to overcome concerns about range and availability of chargepoints, and as an owner of significant car-parking assets is well placed to do so.

Our colleagues in Sustainability & Climate Change are also applying for funding from the Defra Air Quality Grant in a joint project with Doncaster Metropolitan Borough Council. If successful the funding will be used to deliver a project to collect real-world data on drivers' vehicle usage. The data will be used to produce a costed business case for the driver to convert to either an EV or ULEV and show how a suitable vehicle could fit within the way they use their current vehicle and compare the total ownership cost between a diesel or petrol engine vehicle and ULEV or EV.

£2.6 million of funding is available at the City Region level for electric vehicle infrastructure and Barnsley will be leading on delivering additional infrastructure throughout the City Region (Sheffield, Doncaster, Rotherham and Barnsley) between now and 2022 to deliver 229 additional chargepoints,

including rapid chargers which will be key to supporting high mileage drivers such as taxi drivers to make the change to low emission vehicles.

4. Proposal

Members are asked to support Officers and encourage licensed drivers to keep themselves and their customers as safe as possible during this current COVID situation and in addition support the work of officers in promoting the use of electric and low emission vehicles.

5. Background Papers

None available

6. Officer Contact

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