



Taxi Trade Meeting

The next meeting for the Trade with Officers of the Council will be 11.30am – 12.30pm, on Tuesday 10th March 2009, at Stockton Central Library Lecture Hall, Church Road, Stockton on Tees.

If you have any items you wish to place on the Agenda please notify us in writing by Monday 2nd March 2009.

Notes From Last Meeting

At the Taxi Trade Meeting held on Thursday 4th December 2008 the following items were discussed:

1. Notes of Last Meeting – Agreed

2. Matters Arising

Permits for High Street access are to be available through Highways at Gloucester House – applications to be made and submitted with a £10 fee. Discussion took place on why the trade should have to pay a £10 fee for a permit, they thought it was unfair and they should not have to pay a congestion charge. Trade were informed that this was an administration charge for the processing and production of the permit. Trade also asked why it only applied to Hackney Carriage vehicles and not Private Hire vehicles?

3. Use of Bus Lanes

Consideration is being given for evenings but not during the day. Discussion took place regarding the opening of the high street from both ends and not just one way. The rank is at the south end and there is less demand to go south.

Trade asked if it was possible to turn the rank around. Explained that this has been looked at but there are still some concerns:

- Sharp right turn
- Pedestrians would be walking against traffic to get to head of rank
- At busy periods passengers would be on the main road

An item could go to the Officer Traffic Group and joint feed back could be given. Mr Khazir to attend the next Officer Traffic Group.

It was also noted that not all ranks are being used – top end of High Street, ranks are rarely used.

4. Scrutiny Review/Policy Update

Scrutiny review to be carried out by Regeneration and Transport Committee which will be around February/March time. Members of the Trade will be given the opportunity to comment and the report will then go to Cabinet.

Policy Review is currently out to consultation, closing date for comments is 12th December. Officers are not in a position to change anything, this must go through Committee.

An interim report is going to Committee on 9th December to seek some changes.

All views on the policy should be made in writing, and these will be fed back to the Committee.

General discussion took place regarding the policy and trade asked if the policy could be deferred. Informed again that any comments, including request for deferral should be put in writing. Anybody making comments on the policy will be invited to the meeting to state their case.

Further discussions took place regarding certificate to be issued when out of the country for three months – this is to be clarified.

5. Any Other Business

Berwick/Newcastle Case – plates outside of areas, officers have looked closely at the outcome. Applications are to be changed and further questions asked. Trade informed that Stockton can not insist on other authorities to do anything. Officers will ask/collate what other authorities are doing and an article will be placed in a future edition of the Trade Times.

Cross Border Hiring

We have received complaints from members of the public and the trade in general that Stockton licensed Operators are using vehicles that are Private Hire vehicles licensed outside the district for picking up pre-booked fares from within the district.

This is clearly an illegal activity. This issue has been through the courts on a number of occasions by various Licensing Authorities up and down the country, so there would appear to be no dispute. Where any company is found doing this and evidence is available they will be prosecuted in line with the Council's Enforcement Policy.

The driver may be prosecuted for being an unlicensed Private Hire Driver, and the proprietor of the vehicle may be prosecuted for permitting the use of an unlicensed Private Hire vehicle. Following on from this the Operator may also face action for the use of the unlicensed driver and the unlicensed vehicle.

Important Notice Office Closure - 19th March 2009

The Trading Standards & Licensing Office at 16 Church Road, Stockton will be closed for business on Thursday 19th March 2009 for staff training. We apologise for any inconvenience this may cause. Normal hours will resume on Friday 20th March 2009.

Out Of Town Hackney Carriages

For sometime we have been trying to persuade those Operators that do use out of town Hackney Carriage vehicles as Private Hire vehicles in Stockton to replace them with vehicles and drivers licensed with this Authority. In some cases this has worked and a decrease has been seen. Where it has not changed dramatically further more formal action is planned for the near future.

We have become aware of two drivers that had licenses to drive with this Authority revoked, and they have been to other Authorities and been granted Hackney Carriage Drivers Licences. They continue to drive in this Authority's area. We have been in contact with the relevant Licensing Authorities to inform them of their previous revocations.

This is a cause for concern and where we see evidence of Private Hire Companies in this area using those drivers we will make them aware of our concerns. If they choose to take no action in relation to this then their fitness to hold a Operator licence must be questioned. Such matters may be referred to the Licensing Committee for them to consider appropriate action against the individuals or companies concerned.

Anybody wanting to discuss any issues with an Officer please contact 01642 524802.

Statistics On Enforcement Actions

Below is graph showing details of Enforcement Actions taken by Licensing Staff during the period April 2008 until December 2008.

April 2008 Until December 2008

