

**NOTES OF A MEETING OF THE
TAXI LICENSING WORKING GROUP
HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, NELSON
ON 17TH JANUARY 2017**

PRESENT -

Councillors

*M. Arshad
D. Clegg
J. Cooney*

Trade Representatives

*M. Ilyas - Hackney Carriage
M. Akram - Cavalier
S. Shah - Superline
T. Hussain - Alpine
S. Ahmed - Private Hire Taxi Association
C. Oakes - Hackney Carriage Drivers Association*

Officers in attendance

*Neil Watson
Imtiaz Ahmed
Sarah Waterworth*

*Planning, Building Control and Licensing Services Manager
Taxi Enforcement Officer
Committee Administrator*



Neil Watson explained that the purpose of the working group was to discuss concerns raised by the council and trade, and how they could be resolved.

The Council's main concern was the failure rate of vehicles when spot checked. It was reported that at spot check carried out on Wednesday 21st September 2016, 85% of vehicles failed on mechanical faults.

Neil Watson reported that a further spot check had taken place at the beginning of January, 2017 and there had been an improvement on the number of vehicles failing, but the figure was still quite high.

Public safety was paramount to the council and these figures were still unacceptable.

The taxi trades concerns were the penalty point scheme, vehicle standards and how the policy operated and the frequency of spot checks.

Councillor Cooney said he felt that there were some inconsistencies in the way that penalty points were applied and he felt that it was unfair on the trade as the members on the Taxi Licensing Committee were not consistent when making decisions. He felt that a new policy should be introduced with officers having delegated powers to issue penalty points.

A short discussion took place regarding penalty points and how they were awarded. It was mentioned that there was little in the policy regarding points being awarded for mechanical faults and standards. It was suggested that more onus should be put on the driver than the operator to check the vehicles and that penalty points for operators should be abolished. It was also suggested that if vehicles failed a spot check the plate should be suspended for 14 working days, if the vehicle failed a second time then a 28 working day suspension would apply instead of penalty points being awarded, although some members of the group did not agree with this and felt that it should be the operators responsibility to ensure the vehicles were up to standard.

The question was asked as to why private hire and hackney carriage vehicles had to have a taxi test at the garages. Could the vehicles not just have a VOSA MOT and the taxi licensing department check for the other items on the taxi test e.g. stickers, fire extinguisher, minor scratches, no smoking signs.

Mr Oakes and Mr Ilyas asked if a separate meeting could be arranged with Lancashire County Councils Highways Department to review the hackney carriage ranks in Pendle. Neil Watson said he would look into arranging a meeting.

It was agreed that:-

- (1) Terms of reference for the working group along with the current penalty point's scheme and how it's works be emailed to the group.
- (2) That the Trade is to set out what they want with regards penalty points.
- (3) That Neil Watson be requested to look at how the penalty points are administered and a report be brought back to the next meeting of the Working Group.