

Recommendations of Licensing Committee for improvement of services for taxi and private hire passengers – November 2017 update

Items 1-16 allowed immediate action, items 17-29 required technical development

No.	Recommendation	Project lead	Commencement date	Proposed completion date	Progress update
1	Include a business unit to emphasise better customer service leads to increased business	JM	01.03.2016	Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business unit included in new driver training day commenced 15.12.2015. Pass rate of drivers at 85%
2	At annual fare review explore fare structure and ensure not discriminating. Equalities impact Assessment to be undertaken.	JM and RB	01.06.2016	01.08.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial EIA undertaken and shows need for survey in to travelling habits • Questions drafted for survey concerning impact of fare • Survey launched for four week consultation to close on 1st July • Consultation closed and results integrated in decision on tariff for 2016-2017 • Tariff review for 2017-2018 now started (June 17) • Driver consultation completed on 25/08/2017 • Results show broad support for a fare reduction.

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3	The council to request Midland Trains carry out an Equalities Impact Assessment and to explore legal options if they fail to do so adequately	KB, pass to RB	01.03.2016	01.08.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kris Beuret has commenced this and is currently chasing. To pass over to WBC. • Now have contact with new manager, Steve Helfet and have emailed to begin conversation on his return from holiday. • Met with Steve Helfet who was very helpful in explaining what LM had done in terms of accessibility. There is an EIA in place for the station although this is general and not focused on taxi provision. • Further discussion planned about general improvements to coincide with other design issues at WJ.
4	Work with the NHS to ensure that plans for redevelopment reflect the needs of disabled users	JM	01.03.2016	01.04.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted planning, hospital and developers to arrange meeting to discuss. Project lead for Watford, Neil Farnsworth assisting. • Have agreed new drop off and pick up at hospital to be discussed between the hospital and DW • Leigh Hutchings to contact hospital to finalise. Leigh aware. • Chased Leigh who was advised that should he get no response within ten days of 4th May to get back to me. No further contact as yet. • Raised with Mike Shaw for the Mayor's attention concerning general parking provision at hospital

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5	Work with Watford General Hospital to check that companies providing licensed vehicles via courtesy line have sufficient accessible vehicles	JM	01.03.2016	01.09.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contacted estates management, Wendy Docherty to discuss contract arrangements and provision. • Alternative provision currently made by allowing other businesses to leave cards in the reception area. • Have left multiple messages for Wendy Docherty to call but again, no response as yet. • Still no response but will visit in person. • 16.02.2017 – further conversation with Leigh Hutchings about the situation here and who to speak with about it. Also raised again with Neil Farnsworth who was at the initial meeting in March 2016 and heard the pledge by Tim to allow the use of the loading bay. • Raised as issue with Mayor after notification that Mayor was speaking to the Trust on the matter of car-parking and access. With Mike Shaw. • July 2017 – Further conversation with Leigh Hutchings who has confirmed Hospital reluctant to allow any kind of drop off/waiting area due to fear of taxis over-ranking or parking for long periods of time. This would be easily resolved by the issue of parking charges for waiting over a fixed time, e.g. 15 mins. Hospital not interested.

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6	Conduct walkaround with BID Chief Executive to consider position of ranks in town centre	JM AS	01.04.2016	01.06.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maria Manion ready to meet but BID formally begins 01.04.2016 • To arrange ASAP • Conducted walkaround on 03.05.2016 • Maria Manion to contact INTU to discuss possibility of taxi and private hire using the INTU car parks for pick up and drop off. • This is part of the planned changes to the high street layout to ensure sufficient disabled parking available once road changes take place. • Is moving ahead according to Andy Smith. • Have concerns that INTU will not allow hackney carriage only a private hire firm – not ideal but beyond control of project. Have strongly suggested hackney carriages be considered as fully wheelchair accessible •
7	To include hackney and PHV customer needs in current parking review. To determine new working protocols taking consideration of agreed locations	AS	01.03.2016	01.03.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Included in parking review. Strategy signed off and involves a 5 year program.

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	known to be important for elderly and disabled passengers				
8	To continue dialogue with parking enforcement to allow for grace period of 10 minutes when dropping off or picking up especially at locations known to be important for elderly and disabled passengers	JM JB	01.04.2016	01.04.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial email sent to Parking Services • Manager to discuss • Follow up email sent and response received explaining that there could be no change to current enforcement but that CEOs were advised to act reasonably. To continue to discuss.
9	Planning and highways officers to attend quarterly driver drop in	JM, AS	01.07.2016	Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next drop in session scheduled for July. Officers will be invited to attend. • July drop in cancelled. • Next drop in scheduled for 10th August

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	sessions and to actively seek new parking and ranking opportunities in developments				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Next to be scheduled for Oct 2017 • Awaiting next scheduled date
10	Engage with community leaders to help promote equalities especially in relation to discriminatory interpretation of religion	JM	01.03.2016	01.9.2016 Outstanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work with Kathryn Robson • Late – Still to do • July 2017 - Kathryn advised that this is best done with Councillors assistance. • Propose that this is continued as stand-alone work after formal closure of project
11	Carry out further mystery shopping survey	JM RB	01.09.2016	01.09.2017 Recommend to carry forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tender in 16/17 for 2017 delivery. Growth bid to be submitted. • Not submitted by 02/17 • To be undertaken separately
12	Conduct regular programme of plying for	JM	01.03.2016	31.03.2017 Recommend to carry	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operation scheduled for 24th March 2016 • Agree number of operations/annum. • Next plying op scheduled for June 2016

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	hire/disability awareness testing using trained investigators to allow for formal enforcement where necessary			forward. .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Both operations successful in terms of detecting or proving no offence. Next op scheduled for 9th September 2016 Ongoing – action taken against drivers who discriminated (but no refusals) Drivers invited to take part in future operations. Enforcement remains one of the most critical aspects of this on-going work. Without good enforcement, training is much less effective
13	Offer free training and advice to customer groups to help them to enforce their rights where the council cannot take legal action	JM	01.03.2016	31.03.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Disability Watford asked to provide list of centres, groups to approach to provide training to. ALO to support delivery of training. No details yet received from any of the user groups asked. Very poor take up. Have been invited to and taken part in other meetings with partners such as Herts Co-Production Board, Herts People First Transport Group and these have in turn led to very good contacts being made and relationships built upon which a lot of future improvement will rely.
14	Review new driver training	JM	01.06.2016	01.12.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training reviewed and refreshed. Training proposed to be switched to two day course to improve impact of DA section from April 2018 (end of current training contract with Fire

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					Service)
15	Refresh disability and equality awareness training for operators and make attendance a compulsory requirement prior to licence or re-licence	JM	01.08.2016	01.01.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training written and ready to present. Awaiting confirmation of powers to make changes to licensing conditions. Legal advice being sought on contentious issues • Legal advice being prepared by Jason McKenzie. • Conditions can be changed and approved by AG. Need to consult on any changes. • Advice sought from specialist barrister to determine scope of new conditions. Awaiting response • Barrister's response gave useful advice. Further questions arising and now awaiting response on these further questions • 19/6 New conditions now drafted for operators and awaiting date to begin consultation • Consultation of conditions was conducted between 11 August and 22nd September. • Report to licensing committee in November
16	Prepare guidance for customer including disabled people on best use of taxis and what to	JM	01.03.2016	01.07.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance drafted and complete. Sent to Comms for opinion and design on 18.04.2106 • Design finalised and ready to print. • Changed significantly following consultation with Herts Co-production board. To be re-designed by comms and then ready

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	expect and what cannot be provided				<p>to print.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Available to download from our website from 31 July 2017 in conjunction with newly published accessibility list for wheelchair accessible vehicles.
17	WBC to work with the trade and HCC to publicise and support contract applications	JM	01.05.2016	31.03.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> HHC preparing to update framework imminently. Awaiting go ahead of dates to publicise to trade Have checked in with HCC and no change yet. Adrian Hardy advised by email Adrian Hardy now left and replaced by Trudie German. No change to procurement no planned until 2018 at earliest. Disappointing. Procurement now changing and I have asked to be kept informed as to when drivers will be able to submit tenders for work which I understand should be very soon. Recent meeting in South Oxhey attended by many local drivers after we sent text message notification. Much closer working relationship with HCC passenger transport unit since Vijooy's arrival New contracts for Jan 2018 being sent for tender. Many more drivers, including independent hackney carriage drivers are now signed up to apply.

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18	WBC to work with HCC to simplify and make the contract process more applicant friendly	JM HH	01.09.2016	01.09.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Framework is a set process. However, may be possible to assist drivers in completing applications • This is now opened up and drivers who have registered will receive contract notifications in January 2018
19	Retain a mixed fleet but work towards a far higher proportion of purpose built HC and PHV with an aspirational target and clear timescale of 50% within three years. Conduct an audit of current wheelchair accessible vehicle provision. Update progress	AY	01.07.2016	01.07.2019 Recommend to carry forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration of some options informally discussed with AY • To become Vehicle Licensing Project in own right.

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20	Publicise the advantages of such vehicles and specialist features such as swivel seats, grab handles.	AY	01.07.2016	01.07.2019 Recommend to carry forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to date • To be included in Vehicle Licensing Project
21	Increase specification for saloon vehicles to include lower sill height, swivel seats and minimum rear space	AY	01.07.2016	01.07.2019 Recommend to carry forward	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No action to date • To be included in Vehicle Licensing Project
22	Include Braille overlays to go inside the vehicle to provide plate details	JM/LH	01.04.2016	01.09.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email sent to DW to ask for assistance in design of cards. • Blank cards delivered to DW for them to test Braille machine. 22.04.2016 • Successful test. Have ordered Braille tape machine to test further options • Machine ordered and trials to begin • Machine ready to use. Planned to be in use by September

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					update <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Now in use since October 2016.
23	Stipulate improved security systems to include CCTV at ranks and in vehicles. Work with trade to identify bulk purchasing options	JM/AY policy change	01.07.2016	01.07.2019 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified local supplier (Watford based) who can provide CCTV in line with recommendations of the ICO • To seek funding to complement driver CSE training and to see if this can go some way to part funding camera for those who attended training and support attempts to report suspicious activity • Project going ahead pending interest from drivers. Funded by JAG and PCC. Supported by Herts police hate crime division. Very promising. • First batch of cameras installed in 23 Hackney Carriages. Project FareSafe now going ahead on schedule. • Final batch of 5 installed 20 June 2017. • 30th Camera installed 16th August 2017 • Project to run for one year
24	Revisit the vehicle licensing conditions to consider introduction of better vehicle	AY	01.07.2016	01.07.2019 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on door signage to committee in March 2017. • Review of current conditions for signs only. Needs to be integrated into general review and Vehicle Licence Project

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	identification				
25	Investigate the cost and requirement for the use of talking meters by tariff review of June 2017	JM	01.06.2016	01.06.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prices of single UK manufacturer obtained. To consult with trade at start of 2016 tariff review • Funding allocated to trial three talking meters between 2016 and 2017 • Contact from Chris Marsh who has built a test meter but now seems to have vanished. • Have had contact following Chris Marsh successfully moving house. To arrange a date to test system. Funding still in place to purchase 3 units • Still awaiting contact from Chris Marsh (sole UK supplier!) who has been chased multiple times and not got back to me. • No further contact. Consider this to be unlikely to come to anything given the limited availability of these units. • Another consideration for Vehicle Licence Project
26	Set up a whistle-blowing scheme distinct from formal complaint scheme	JM	01.04.2016	01.09.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website suitability confirmed. Draft form designed. • Completed

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27	Revisit the formal complaints scheme to make it more user friendly	JM	01.04.2016	01.09.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To undertake through website. • Completed
28	Use the whistle-blowing scheme to identify problems and introduce testing against those found to be discriminating	JM	01.04.2016	01.07.2017 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This is already in our general processes as part of standard enforcement.
29	Explore introduction of 'Gold Driver' awards	JM	01.04.2016	01.07.2016 Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emailed Chair of Hackney Carriage Association who is happy to work on such a scheme. • Spoken to comms to plan scheme. Seeking sponsorship from trade bodies for prizes. • WO to support as they do Best Bar None? • Pubwatch have agreed to provide monthly prizes for customers in prize draw. • Similar being designed in Birmingham. To contact them and see what is happening.

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					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can progress outside of project.