

Epping Forest District Transport Task and Finish Group Notes

Date: Tuesday July 6th Time: 10am

Venue: Loughton Council Offices



Present (initials)

- Angela Canham – Epping Forest Community Transport Manager (AC)
- Cllr Chris Pond – County Councillor member for Loughton (Central)(CP)
- Cllr Elizabeth Webster – County Councillor for Waltham Abbey (EW)
- Cllr Janet Whitehouse – Epping & Theydon Bois County Councillor (and District, Epping Hemnall) (JW)
- Cllr Pat Brookes – Residential Parks representative (PB)
- Cllr Penny Smith – Safer and Greener Portfolio Holder (PS)
- Cllr Syd Stavrou – Community Safety and Transport Portfolio Holder (SS)
- John Carr – Chairman of West Essex locality/Essex/Southend LINK (JS)
- Margaret Lawrance – Loughton Voluntary Care (MS)
- Peter Lainson – Disabled Community (PL)
- Wendy Jackson - Senior Transport Liaison Officer (WJ)

Apologies

- Danny Douglas – Transport and Access Officer, RCCE
Epping Forest Youth Council, EFDC
- Gill Willis – Community Development Officer, EFDC
- Mary Young – Principal Transport Planner (Epping Forest)
- Nick Roberts - Passenger Transport Coordination Centre Manager
- Nick Robinson - Loughton Youth Project Manager
- Shelia Jackman – Ongar/Healthcare
- Colin Rowell – LSP admin Support Officer
- Di Butler – Council’s Young Person Officer, EFDC

No.	Item	Action
1.	Introductions	
2.	<p>Acceptance of Notes from previous meeting and matter arising</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ CP visited Theydon Bois and Debden station, confirmed existence of a closed and reasonably level up-side exit at TB, and raised the question of increasing pressure on London Transport to open the access at both stations? Grange Hill Chigwell and Loughton stations also have poor accessibility but are more difficult to convert ➤ PL informed the group Essex Police have a County Wide initiative, working with district and town councils to address the issue of parking on footways. ➤ Parking and ‘A’ frames on walkways are obstructing footpaths. RP to clarify who is responsible for enforcing. 	RP

3.	<p>Quality Taxi Partnerships Thanks to Andrew James, Passenger transport Strategy Officer, ECC for the informative presentation on QTP.</p>  <p>H:\Accessibility Planning Team\Epping</p>	
4.	<p>Taxis in Epping Forest District Thanks to Alison Mitchell, Assistant Director of Legal, EFDC for her interesting presentation.</p>  <p>H:\Accessibility Planning Team\Epping</p>	
	<p>Questions Some questions sent through before the meeting were answered as part of the presentation and are included below.</p> <p>1. <i>By way of introduction, please can you give a brief overview of the role of Epping Forest Council in the provision of taxi services within the district?</i></p> <p>The district council issues licences in respect of Hackney Carriages and Public Hire Vehicles. Hackney Carriages may ply for trade on the street but a private hire vehicle is always pre-booked.</p> <p>Hackney Carriage – Vehicle Licence and Drivers License Private Hire Licences – Vehicle Licence, Drivers and Operators Licence.</p> <p>The Council issues these licences and carries out compliance and enforcement work</p> <p>2. <i>Can you please give an outline of the taxi provision within the district</i></p> <p>a) <i>What is the total number of taxi licences issued?</i></p> <p>Hackney Carriage</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle Licences – 382 • Drivers Licences - 467 <p>Private Hire Vehicles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vehicle Licences – 41 • Drivers Licences - 46 and • Operators Licences - 25 <p>b) <i>What proportions/numbers are Hackney cabs and what proportion/number are private hire?</i></p> <p>91.5% are Hackney Carriage Vehicles and 8.5% are Private Hire Vehicles 90 % are Hackney Carriage Drivers and 10% are private Hire Drivers</p> <p>c) <i>What proportions are DDA compliant (grab rails in contrasting colours, have wheel chair access, Braille markings on signs, switches/handles</i></p>	

clear even for visually impaired)?

14 Wheelchair accessible taxis

d) Are you aware of any areas within the district where taxi do not serve or are reluctant to serve?

e) How are the charges for journeys set?
Charges are set by the taxi company

3. Training - do taxi drivers currently have training on any of the following

* Working with individuals with disabilities

The drivers are shown a DVD called First Time Every Time supplied by GoSkills

* Knowledge tests of the area

There is a knowledge test which is computer based called Diamond. This also tests

Area tested	Questions Asked	Correct
Knowledge of the highway code	5	3
Knowledge of schools	4	1
Knowledge of Council Offices	3	1
Knowledge of Leisure Centres	3	2
Knowledge of Licence Conditions	10	8
Knowledge of Equalities	5	2
Highways Code	8	6
Statutory Provisions	5	2
Highway Signs	10	9


4. In terms of taxi ranks, are there any areas which need improvements such as raised kerbs, shelters or improved signage?

Recently joined the Quality Taxi Partnership with Essex County Council. We are currently looking at these issues and will be consulting with the trade including the recently formed Epping Forest Taxi Association to identify areas.

5. In your view, how do you feel the district council can best influence the quality of taxis services within the district?

I would consider that the Quality Taxi Partnership is the best way to influence the quality of the service provided by taxis in the area. This will involve consultation with the new taxi association and other in the trade and we will be looking at ways to give incentives to existing drivers to

	<p>undertake training and the standard of their vehicles.</p> <p><i>6. What do you feel is the biggest challenge to the taxi industry?</i> Equalities issues and the government is discussing standard licensing conditions.</p> <p><i>7. Are there any future plans to increase/restrict the number of taxi permits issued?</i> No.</p> <p>Following the two presentations there were questions and a discussion of taxi provision in the area.</p> <p><i>Can taxi drivers licensed outside the district work within Epping Forest?</i> Hackney Carriages can only sit on taxi ranks and ply for trade within the district where they are licensed. They can accept pre-bookings in any area.</p> <p>Private hire vehicles can work on pre booked journeys. This raises problems with monitoring the quality of service provided.</p> <p><i>What are standards to be DDA compliant?</i> DDA compliant means a person in a wheelchair can be wheeled onto the vehicle. There needs to be more publicity showing these vehicles are available and how to book them. Taxis are not allowed to charge more for journeys in DDA compliant vehicles. Often DDA compliant vehicles are not available on taxi ranks. They need to be pre-booked and therefore are effectively private hire. There is no business at the taxi rank because there are insufficient vehicles available. All agreed with the challenge to increase the number of DDA compliant vehicles.</p> <p><i>Question on the age of vehicle</i> There are arguments for restricting the upper age of a vehicle, though the London style vehicles have a longer life span. EFDC currently inspect vehicles over 5 years old three times a year, and newer vehicles twice a year.</p> <p><i>Discussion about fares</i> The new Epping Forest Taxi Association states as its first objective that it would work for the introduction of a Council set tariff for fares. The EFDC has no policy at present to set the fare tariff.. This will be discussed with the trade with a view to reporting to the members but if this were to be adopted this each car must have a meter added and this will need to be regularly calibrated. The cost of this may be added to the licence fee and could add a cost to the fares</p> <p>It was suggested that set a matrix of charges by distance or give an</p>	
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<p>example of charges between larger settlements eg from Ongar to Epping Town, Epping Town to Harlow, so passengers would have a measure of their charge. A maximum charge can be set by the district but individual companies can choose to charge less.</p> <p><i>Discussion about taxi ranks and infrastructure improvements</i> The QTP partnership has only recently formed. The first stage of consultation is with the trade. London Underground owns much of the land around the stations. There is no taxi rank in Waltham Abbey. Suggestion that the QTP partnership should liaise with the Town Council Partnership. Ditto Loughton.</p> <p><i>An example of a contract for a home to school taxi service was shown. How do you come to a 30% quality to 70% cost ratio?</i> The quality of service was introduced this year. There is a challenge to balance good quality and value for money.</p> <p><i>Do you monitor customer feedback?</i> Few complaints are received by the licensing authority. ECC has come up with a passenger charter which the trade generally supports. There is the practicality of displaying the charter in vehicles.</p> <p> H:\Accessibility Planning Team\Epping</p> <p><i>Do drivers have to have first aid knowledge?</i> No and they do not have to carry a first aid kit.</p> <p><i>Discussion about Taxi Marshals.</i> Taxi Marshals are present in Colchester and Chelmsford late evening/ early morning at the weekend. They are funded through the Crime and Disorder partnership and their role is to ensure there is no queue jumping, no eating when entering the taxi, aid in reducing anti social behaviour, providing assistance or calling emergency services if needed. Street pastors have also been used with success, supplying free condoms or offering drink/drug/rape counselling support. (The scheme is also run in Basildon and funded by the local establishments).</p> <p><i>Please can you guide us through the licensing process?</i> The application is received and they are sent a pack. They have to have a number of checks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Certificate from the GP, including eye tests ◦ Complete an enhanced CRB check ◦ Take knowledge test (they are given guidance before on where to get the information for this multiple choice computerised test, which can be resat) ◦ Watch the DVD issued by GoSkills – First time every time 	<p>QTP partnership work with town council partnerships</p>
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	<p>Any problems are raised with the licensing sub committee and there is a right to appeal against any refusal of a licence to the magistrates court.. By statute a driver needs to have been authorised to drive a motor car for one year. The Council's own licensing policy has extended this time to three years.</p> <p>To follow up, officers go out to inspect quality of service and in response to complaints. Police or court should inform licensing body of any convictions but this does not always happen.. Licences are renewed each year.</p>	
5.	<p>London Underground No London Underground representatives were available to attend the meeting but will answer any questions put forward in writing.</p> <p>RP to work with JW to get a London Underground representative.</p>	RP/JW
5.	<p>Update of Epping Forest Area Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ The on line survey has now closed. ◦ There have been 127 on line responses and at least 150 hard copy responses. ◦ There is concern that areas of Epping Forest have not responded to the survey. ◦ It was explained that the survey feeds into the area review which aims to improve services in target villages failing to meet the minimum service levels. Also ECC cannot put on services which will compete with commercial services. ◦ Request an summary of responses by post code area 	RP
6.	<p>AOB</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Suggestion to include notes from the scrutiny meeting –see link http://www.eppingforestdc.gov.uk/news/2007/london_underground.asp ◦ Suggestion that the meeting was changed to the end of August to allow representatives from the youth council to attend. It was suggested that representatives from the group attend a youth council meeting. Request to also include the Waltham Abbey Youth Council. ◦ Agreed to call bus representatives for next meeting (and continue to try to get London Underground). ◦ The following meeting will focus on social car schemes and community transport 	RP/CP/AC RP
7.	<p>Dates of Next Meeting Wednesday September 15th at 10.00am Epping DC</p>	TBC