

DRIVERS AND OPERATORS FORUM

WARWICK DISTRICT COUNCIL

TERMS OF REFERENCE

August 2014

1. Purpose

- 1.1 The purpose of the forum is to improve communication between Warwick District Council (WDC), licensed hackney carriage drivers and proprietors, licensed private hire vehicle drivers, proprietors and operators; service users and any other relevant agency which may be identified.
- 1.2 WDC Drivers and Operators Forum (DOF) is not a decision making body, it will be used for consultation on any proposals by either WDC or the hackney carriage/private hire trade. The responsibility for decision making with respect to taxi issues lies with the Council's Regulatory and Licensing Committee or an Officer of the Council to whom a taxi licensing decision making function has been delegated.
- 1.3 The DOF shall enable representatives of the trade to meet regularly with Council representatives to consider hackney carriage and private hire licensing matters and to further the objectives stated in the Council's hackney carriage and private hire licensing policies. This will include:
 - Help to identify and create opportunities for meaningful collaborative working
 - Build a common understanding to create a balance between encouraging the trade business to thrive in WDC whilst ensuring the Council's statutory responsibilities relating to the trade are met.
 - Continuing to have an interest in ensuring the professional perception of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxis by the general public
- 1.4 Individual grievances are not issues for the DOF and should be raised with the Council, through officers, on an individual basis.
- 1.5 The forum will act as a representative body for the whole hackney carriage and private hire trade, thus ensuring consultation with all licence holders to enable the Council to make fully informed decisions.
- 1.6 DOF will only discuss items which have been submitted for inclusion on the agenda. There will not be an 'any other business' agenda item. However, any items raised at the forum and not on the agenda will be carried forward to the next meeting.

2 Membership

- 2.1 The forum is constructed in the following manner:
 - 10 Licensed Drivers and Private Hire Operators
 - 3 members of the Regulatory Section, WDC (Chair)
 - Representative of Warwickshire Police
 - Any other person or representative of a body identified as being beneficial to the forum e.g. Warwickshire County Council Highways, Service User group.

- 2.2 Membership of DOF is open to all WDC licensed hackney carriage and private hire drivers and operators. Nominations for the positions must be in writing and supported by three licensed drivers and or operators references
- 2.3 The Council shall be represented on the forum by members of the Regulatory (Licensing) Team one of whom shall be the Chair of the Forum.
- 2.4 Attendance at the meeting is by membership only. Voting by proxy or sending nominated representatives is not allowed.
- 2.5 Meetings will not proceed unless 50% of the members have confirmed their attendance. Where members cannot attend apologies should be provided to the Regulatory (Licensing) Section at WDC.
- 2.6 Termination of Membership is by written notification to the DOF Chair.
- 2.7 A waiting list of forum nominees is held by Regulatory Services at WDC.
- 2.8 Failing to provide supporting references will result in a DOF representative being asked to leave the forum and replaced with a nominee from the waiting list.
- 2.9 If in the view of three members of the DOF a forum member(s) has abused their right to attend either in respect of their behaviour or comments made, those members will ask the chair to determine if the noted member(s) should forfeit their place on the forum.
- 2.10 The continued membership of the forum depends upon members:
 - continuing to hold a current licence,
 - a good history of co-operation with WDC and licensing conditions

3 Role of Forum Members

- 3.1 To assist in representing the views of the trade as a whole and supporting the interests of all licensed drivers and operators.
- 3.2 To assist with disseminating information back to the trade to ensure that all licence holders are fully informed of latest policy, procedures and progress.
- 3.3 The Forum will have no formal powers of decision, but will act as an information gathering and lobbying body, and shall act in the capacity of key stakeholder to inform delivery of the Council's statutory licensing objectives in relation to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Taxi Trade.

4 DOF Chair

- 4.1 The forum will be chaired by the Regulatory Manager or a nominated deputy.
- 4.2 The chair will ensure that all views are heard and recorded in an accurate manner.

5 Frequency and Venue of Meetings

- 5.1 The forum will meet at least 4 times per financial year (e.g. April to March) and at shorter intervals if deemed necessary by the forum. DOF meetings will be held at the

Council Offices or at alternative venues with appropriate notice and shall, if possible, be arranged to take place at the convenience of the members.

6. Administrative Support

- 6.1 Agenda items for meetings of the forum will be provided to officers no later than one week prior to the scheduled date for the meeting. The agenda will be circulated to members of DOF by the Regulatory (Licensing) team.
- 6.2 Responsibility for writing the minutes of meetings of the forum rests with the council and will be taken by a member of the Regulatory (Licensing) team.
- 6.3 Draft minutes will be made publically available on the Council's website. These will be placed with the approved minutes following the next DOF meeting.

7 Consultation

- 7.1 Forum members may consult with the taxi and/or private hire trade, as necessary, on relevant matters (e.g. proposed amendments to relevant policy or procedures or new legislative or statutory requirements) and make recommendations on those matters.
- 7.2 To this end, the Chair will ensure that sufficient time is allowed between meetings for trade representatives to consult their colleagues.
- 7.3 Consultation may also be necessary with the full trade. DOF will be made aware of these consultations in advance.

8. Transparency

- 8.1 DOF is expected to be open, transparent and accountable. The forum should ensure that all interests have a voice where necessary and that hard to reach groups are engaged and represented.