

**Minutes of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs Meeting**  
*Video conference, Thursday, 24 June 2021*

**Present:**

Chairperson	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. Kevin Finn, Mr. John Murphy, Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury, Mr. Francis Doheny
Representing local authorities	Ms. Mary Henchy
Representing the interests of business	Ms. Ann Campbell
Representing the interests of older persons	Mr. Peter Fleming
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Noel Ebbs, Mr. James O'Brien, Ms. Fiona Brady
An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Tom Murphy
Consumers	Ms. Michelle Reid

**Apologies:**

Representing interests of persons with disabilities	Ms. Joan Carthy
Representing the interests of tourism	Mr. Al Ryan
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Martin Plummer
Consumers	Mr. James Cawley

**NTA Staff in Attendance:**

Ms. Wendy Thompson, Director of Transport Regulation (item 7), NTA, Ms Patricia Craven, Head of Taxi Regulation (item 7), Mr. Edward Rhys Thomas Transport Planner (item 8) & Ms. Jackie Mullen (Secretary)

**Others in Attendance:**

N/A

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**1. Minutes and matters arising.**

Minutes of 27<sup>th</sup> May 2021 approved with no amendment. There were no matters arising.

**2. Advisory Committee 2021 Work plan – Transferability**

The Chair agreed to circulate 2 documents, summarising the views of the Committee in relation to transferability for individual licences and for company licences. He asked members to provide feedback on both documents by Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July.

**3. eSPSVs**

A separate meeting was held on the 8<sup>th</sup> June to discuss sustainable mobility challenges and opportunities in urban and rural Ireland. Some of the concerns raised were the lack of charging points, maintenance of charging points, accessibility, provision of infrastructure and the costs to drivers. The Chair agreed to circulate a short note on electrification and decarbonisation of the industry.

**4. Covid-19**

The Chair acknowledged the continuing supports to the industry during the Covid-19 crisis.

The Committee raised its concerns at the recent street violence and threats and damage to taxi drivers and their vehicles. Agreed that where criminal damage occurs, drivers should follow up with An Garda Síochána and seek compensation through the courts, and assurance given that all such complaints will be followed up and investigated by the Gardai.

#### **5. Non-licensed drivers and the use of private vehicles**

A concern was raised regarding non licenced drivers and the use of private vehicles. This is an ongoing problem for the industry. The Chair advised that details of such alleged activities should be sent to Superintendent Tom Murphy (as the representative of An Garda Síochána on the Committee) and to the NTA, who will work together to investigate the matter.

#### **6. Convictions – Granting / Revocation of SPSV Driver Licences.**

A discussion took place around criminal convictions and the granting / revocation of SPSV driver licences. The 2013 Taxi Regulation Act lists a number of offences which can lead to the revocation of a driver licence by an Authorised Officer. Drivers can appeal the revocation. Such appeals can take 12-18 months during which time the individual is entitled to retain their licence pending the outcome of the appeal. Drivers who have been convicted of a serious offence will have their licence revoked and are not entitled to an appeal. The NTA database will have the most up to date details.

#### **7. NTA Update including draft Small Public Service Vehicle (Emergency Measures COVID-19) Regulations 2021 – NTA.**

Wendy Thompson and Patricia Craven joined the meeting. A query was raised in relation to taxi conversion certificates. As a consequence of Brexit there is an issue with Taxi conversion certificates issued before 31/12/2020 as these are UK certificates and not EU certificates and they cannot be converted. Wendy Thompson stated that the legislation was outside the remit of the NTA, who have a technical advisor looking into the matter. The numbers affected are very low. The NTA will update the Committee on the matter.

Ms. Craven presented the monthly statistical update.

Ms. Thompson informed the Committee that a pilot traffic free streets project had commenced on the 11<sup>th</sup> June in the Parliament St/Capel St environs and would run for 6 weeks.

The Cork City Council Regaining Cork City project across 17 streets was proving to be very successful with local businesses reporting an increase in trade.

The Bus Connects H spine Howth – Dublin City will launch on the 27<sup>th</sup> June.

The Heuston Masterplan 2030 is at a very early stage with no imminent changes being implemented.

Ms. Thompson updated the Committee on public consultations:

Inactive Vehicle Licence Extension (from 12 to 24 months) closing date 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021

2022 Fees Waiver closing date 9<sup>th</sup> July 2021

A third consultation on the Fines Schedule is due to commence at the end of July.

A query was raised regarding the introduction of a Demerits and Commendations system. Ms. Thompson stated that this had not been enacted yet and was unlikely to be in the near future due to cost and technology issues. Patricia Craven agreed to send some further information to Mr. O'Brien on the Demerits system.

A query was raised in relation to the introduction of a red/green/amber system similar to that used by the Bus/HGV industry in relation to compliance with road safety. The Chair stated that while this system sounds good in principle it can have its downsides and would need detailed and careful consideration if the Committee was to provide any advice.

Ms. Thompson informed the Committee in relation to NCT refunds, this is being carried out on a direct payment basis. Motor tax refunds are being carried out on a rebate basis and an administrator is being procured.

In response to recent media reporting on the delays in processing WAV grants, Ms. Thompson informed the Committee that at a minimum grants were being processed within 8 days, the average processing time is 16 days with an outlier of 33 days.

Edward Rhys Thomas joined the meeting

#### **8. Connecting Ireland**

NTA gave a presentation on Rural Mobility Plan – Connecting Ireland which is included in the Programme for Government.

Wendy Thompson, Patricia Craven and Edward Rhys Thomas left the meeting

#### **7. AOB.**

There were no items raised under AOB

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 29<sup>th</sup> July 2021 (via video conference)

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Dated: \_\_\_\_\_