

Minutes of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs Meeting
Video conference, Thursday, 28th October 2021

Present:

Chairperson	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. John Murphy, Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury, Mr. Francis Doheny Mr. Kevin Finn
An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Tom Murphy
Consumers	Ms. Michelle Reid
Special interest or expertise	Mr. James O'Brien, Ms. Fiona Brady, Mr. Noel Ebbs

Apologies:

Representing local authorities	Ms. Mary Henchy
Consumers	Mr. James Cawley
Representing interests of persons with disabilities	Ms. Joan Carthy
Representing the interests of business	Ms. Ann Campbell
Representing the interests of older persons	Mr. Peter Fleming
Representing the interests of tourism	Mr. Al Ryan
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Martin Plummer

NTA Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Wendy Thompson, Director of Transport Regulation, Ms. Jackie Mullen (Secretary)

Others in Attendance:

N/A

1. Minutes and Matters Arising.

The minutes of the meeting held on 30th September were approved with no amendment. The issue of licence transfer / change in control will be covered by the agenda.

2. NTA Update.

Wendy Thompson presented the monthly licencing statistics up to the end of September. In relation to the eSPSV grant this has been very successful to date. It must be noted that not all applications convert into final grant approvals. The Department of Transport has confirmed that there will a grant scheme for 2022 but no further details have been issued yet.

3. Licence transfer / change in control.

The consultant's report on transferability has been slightly delayed due to annual leave, but it will issue shortly and will be circulated to the Committee.

4. COVID – 19.

Wendy Thompson confirmed that public transport is now permitted up to 100% capacity, however it is currently running at approximately 60% capacity as many people seem to be avoiding public transport due to Covid-19 concerns.

Consensus that the current increase in Covid-19 cases is putting many drivers off returning to work or working during peak demand hours.

The Committee agreed that while later pub opening times and nightclub reopening is to be welcomed in terms of increased demand, many drivers have concerns regarding Covid-19 protocols such as mask wearing and social distancing at taxi ranks. Drivers are exercising caution and many prefer not to work late hours due to health concerns related to the spread of Covid-19.

Drivers are finding that there is enough business on street in the city centre and are turning off the apps. The early morning numbers are down due to a lack of office workers who instead are now working from home.

An issue was raised concerning the capacity to serve the tourist market if as is expected the numbers return to pre-Covid levels next summer. The Committee agreed that there will have to be a collaborative effort with other modes of public transport such as buses to service the anticipated demand from tourism next year.

The Committee also noted that with current supply and demand issues, it could be a difficult Christmas period this year in terms of aligning supply and demand.

Drivers need to work at peak demand times and more information should be put out to encourage drivers back to work.

5. Access to WAVs for passengers at Dublin Airport.

The Committee raised a query regarding the access to WAV's at Dublin Airport. It was suggested that perhaps a lane be reserved to facilitate WAV's who may need to come out of the queue out of sequence to respond to a customer need for an accessible vehicle. This is an issue for the Dublin Airport Authority (DAA) who manage taxi lanes at the Airport.

Wendy Thompson stated that all new permits issued are for wheelchair accessible vehicles only. The issue will also be raised with NTA compliance manager to see if there are any specific issues that could be addressed by the compliance team.

6. Advisory Committee 2021 Work plan.

- **Roof signs**

The Committee suggested looking at how other jurisdictions deal with the issue of licence numbers on roof signs. A query was raised regarding the necessity of having the number displayed on the roof sign when it is already displayed on the doors of the vehicle. It was noted that it was better for visibility purposes for customers to have the number displayed on the roof sign. The Committee agreed that a smaller more streamlined roof sign would be preferable.

- **Local Area Hackney**

The Committee thanked the NTA for the excellent presentation given to them on this issue. The presentation has now been circulated to all members. The Committee agreed that it is a difficult market to service even with incentives it is still proving difficult for drivers to earn a living due to low levels of demand particularly for longer distance journeys. The local link service is filling a gap by providing a very useful service in these areas.

7. AOB.

In relation to the fare review, Wendy Thompson informed the committee that consultants have been appointed and the process has commenced.

Date of next meeting – 25th November 2021

Signed: _____ Dated: _____