

Minutes Advisory Committee on SPSV's

Thursday 23rd February 2023 10.30am

Present:

Chairperson	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. John Murphy, Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury
Special interest or expertise	Mr. James O'Brien
Representing the interests of business	Ms. Ann Campbell
Representing the interests of Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Paul Gregan
Special interest or expertise	Ms. Fiona Brady
Special interest or expertise	Mr. Noel Ebbs,

Apologies:

An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Tom Murphy
Representing the interests of persons with disabilities	Ms. Joan Carthy
Representing the interests of older persons	Ms. Mai Quaid
Representing the interests of consumers	Mr. James Cawley
Representing SPSV and driver interests	Mr. Francis Doheny
Representing the interests of tourism	Mr. Paul Keely
Representing the interests of consumers	Ms. Michelle Reid

In Attendance:

Minister for Transport, Mr. Eamon Ryan TD

Claire Finnegan, Public Transport Regulation Division, Department of Transport

Una McDermott, Public Transport Regulation Division, Department of Transport

NTA Staff in Attendance:

Ms. Jackie Mullen (Secretary), Ms. Roisin Cullinan (Head of Licensing Regulation), Ms. Wendy Thompson (Director of Transport Regulation)

1. Minutes and Matters arising

The minutes of the January meeting were approved without amendment. The Chair welcomed Roisin Cullinan the new Head of Licensing to the meeting and wished her well in her new position.

Minister of Transport and Department officials join the meeting

The Chair welcomed the Minister and his officials to the meeting and the Committee members introduced themselves to the Minister. The Chair noted that the Committee will be focusing on

technology and how it can be optimally utilised to get a true picture of what is happening in the industry on the ground in real time.

The Minister thanked the Chair and the Committee for the opportunity to attend the meeting. He noted that the last meeting he attended was during Covid-19, a difficult time for all. He thanked everybody for keeping the industry going through very difficult times. He said it was now time to unwind the Covid supports and to look forward to the post Covid period to develop and innovate our services. Covid demonstrated the industry's ability to adapt and change.

The Minister thanked the Committee for its advice on Vehicle Licence Transferability, noting that he was in agreement with same. The matter will be brought to the NTA Board in a larger SPSV strategy discussion in the coming months.

He also welcomed the Local Area Hackney pilot which he launched recently, commenting that it is a good example of innovation with a demand led and flexible service for rural communities.

The Pathfinder Programme will implement 35 key local transport projects across the country as part of the Government's National Sustainable Mobility Policy over the next 3 years.

The Bus Connects project will significantly improve bus services in cities across the country.

The Minister stated that support for electric vehicles is a key component of the sustainable mobility policy and he noted the delay in vehicle supply as a significant challenge for the industry.

The establishment of Zevi will support the provision of charging infrastructure in key destination points such as hotels, leisure centres, motor service stations, airports. Individuals will be encouraged to charge at home overnight where they can but it is recognised that this may not be possible for everybody, for example where people do not have driveways to support charging infrastructure. Zevi will be looking at alternative options for charging in these cases.

In relation to electric vehicles and WAVs, the Minister noted that we are starting to see the supply issues unwinding and the market opening up. The Minister asked for the Committee's assistance and advice in relation to the next developments of eWAVs.

He noted that climate emission targets are a huge challenge to the transport sector, particularly the scale and speed of the changes required. The Minister asked for the Committee's support for road space reallocation for all public transport modes. The Department will continue to roll out road space reallocation, parking reallocation and bus priority.

The Committee welcomed the continued access to bus lanes for taxis but highlighted the exclusion of hackneys and limousines.

The Committee expressed concerns regarding the supply of electric vehicles and wheelchair accessible electric vehicles in the market and the lack of charging infrastructure which acts as a disincentive to drivers who may be considering a move to electric vehicles. The industry is a 24 hour a day service which means it is not always possible to charge vehicles overnight. Priority charging for SPSVs should be considered.

The Committee noted that in relation to Transferability there are two distinct areas: transfer of individual plates and the control of company revocation of plates. At present if a company transfers ownership, it cannot transfer its licences.

The Committee agreed that the taxi industry has a very important role in the Connecting Ireland project and the integration of public transport services at local level.

The Committee raised a query in relation to the DAA permit system, whereby some taxis dropping off a fare at the airport have to leave without a fare, requesting that it be examined by the Minister. Also requested was the Ministers engagement with vehicle manufacturers to enhance supply.

The Committee raised a query about the lack of parking and other facilities for local link buses in rural towns.

The Chair thanked the Minister and his officials for their attendance.

Minister and Department of Transport officials leave

2. NTA update

Roisin Cullinan gave the monthly statistical update. It was agreed that the update slides will be circulated to the Committee on the Monday before each meeting. If Committee members have any queries/questions they should send them to the Secretary in advance of the meeting so that they can be addressed in full.

Wendy Thompson informed the Committee that driver renewals are up significantly and the number of driver tests being completed is at the highest level we have ever seen. January saw 200 driver licence application fees being receipted to progress those individuals to AGS vetting for driver licensing.

NTA officials leave

3. Technology / Roof Signs

The Chair gave a brief presentation summarising recent discussions by the Committee on this topic. It was agreed to circulate the presentation to Committee members.

4. AOB

There were no matters raised.

The next meeting of the Committee will take place on Thursday 30th March at 10.30 in the NTA office.

Signed:

Dated: