

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs Minutes

27th February 2025, 10.30 am.
NTA Office, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin.

Present:

Chairperson	Mr. Cornelius O'Donohue
<i>Representing</i>	
Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests	Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury Mr. John Murphy, Mr. Alan Cooley
Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters.	Mr. Harpreet Singh Mr. James O'Brien Ms. Aisling Dunne
The Interests of Consumers	Mr. Adrian Cummins
The Interests of Business	Ms. Ann Campbell
An Garda Siochana	Superintendent Tom Murphy
The Interests of Persons with Disabilities	Mr. John Fulham
Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien

Apologies:

The Interests of Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid
The interests of Tourism	Mr. Paul Keely
Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests	Mr. Francis Doheny

NTA Representatives in Attendance

Ms. Roisin Cullinan, *Head of Licensing*. (partial attendance)

Mr. Jakub Szynal, *Secretary to the Advisory Committee on SPSVs*

1. Minutes of meeting held on 23rd January 2025 and actions arising

The minutes from the January meeting were agreed with no amendments.

The Chair noted that the focus of today's meeting will be to review submissions made towards the advices for DoT and NTA, and begin finalising the content of the report.

The Advisory Committee discussed taxi drivers with Novice (N) plates. It was queried if there is any data available on taxi drivers with N plates.

It was also queried if statistically, collisions are more prone to happen during that two-year period. As any recommendation by the Advisory Committee should be fact based, it is imperative to know the basis for the N plates to assess if taxi services with N plates are a road safety concern. This will need to be confirmed with the Road Safety Authority. The discussion point was ongoing when the NTA representative joined the meeting. When queried on the matter, NTA noted it had not been raised in the previous two years.

It was highlighted that many experienced drivers may come to Ireland from outside the European Union and may need to acquire an Irish driving license, which would oblige them to display N plated on their taxis.

2. NTA Update

The Maximum Permissible Age of Vehicles public consultation was discussed. As mentioned at the previous meeting, the new programme for government called for the extension of the maximum permissible age for vehicles, a review of the area knowledge test and review of the local area hackney approach. The closing date for the Maximum Permissible Age of Vehicles public consultation is **Wednesday March 12th, 2025**. The Chair advised all members of the Advisory Committee to make their independent submissions.

The Advisory Committee queried the Government's motivations for extending the maximum permissible age of vehicles, noting that the matter had been consistently confirmed as closed by NTA in 2024, and the challenges that will come with this possible extension now.

The WAV and eSPSV grants were discussed, re-emphasising the popularity of the WAV grant which was at full capacity within minutes of launch. By comparison, the circulated NTA eSPSV Grant Scheme report showed a large % of the eSPSV grant applications are received within the first week of launch, with the remainder being spread over the rest of the year. It was noted that the eSPSV Grant Scheme has historically been in a position to continue to take applications until the scheme end date (November), due to a mix of higher funding and lower interest when compared with the WAV Grant Scheme.

The yearly capacity of the WAV conversions was discussed. It was noted that ascertaining the capacity of WAV conversion facilities would help give the government more realistic expectations for the capacity of the WAV grant. **NTA took an action to provide this estimated number.**

It was queried if the WAV grant could be offered on a 'more-need' basis, rather than an open competition. NTA noted that the grant is an open competition in the interest of fairness and transparency, recognising that all applicants apply for different circumstances and should have an equal opportunity to do so. The system is assessed and regularly updated where enhancement opportunities are identified, as was seen from the significant changes made this year by NTA.

Conversion rates were discussed, noting that in 2024 only around 1/3 of WAV Grant Scheme applications completed the process. This result was in line with previous grant years. NTA noted that the conversion rate may be higher this year as a result of the enhancements to the Scheme that NTA has made and the good availability of vehicles and parts.

The Advisory Committee noted that an increased availability of grants would support drivers that are currently renting to purchase their own vehicle.

3. Supply/Demand Advices

The Advisory Committee on SPSVs discussed the advices requested by the Department of Transport and National Transport Authority. During the last meeting, the Chair had requested of all members to submit their thoughts and ideas regarding this to the secretary mailbox. The submissions were compiled and served as the framework for this discussion.

AOB

The Chair had asked if there was any other business, there was none.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday, 27th March 2025.