

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs

Minutes

29th May 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. Francis Doheny 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. Christine O'Connor Mr. Der Calnan
The Interests of Consumers	Mr. Adrian Cummins
The Interests of Business	Ms. Ann Campbell
The Interests of An Garda Siochana	Superintendent Tom Murphy
The Interests of Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
The Interests of Persons with Disabilities	Mr. John Fulham

Apologies:

The Interests of Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid
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NTA Representatives in Attendance

Mr. Kevin O'Brien, *Director of Transport Regulation*

Ms. Roisin Cullinan, *Head of Licensing*

Ms. Fiona Brady, *Head of Regulatory Compliance*

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

Department of Transport Representatives in Attendance

Minister Darragh O' Brien

Ms. Clare Finnegan

Ms. Úna McDermott

Mr. Brandon Cogley

Mr. Gordon Ryan

Advisory Committee on SPSVs – 10.30 am.

1. Minutes from meeting held on 25th April 2025

The minutes from the meeting held on the 25th April 2025 were agreed with no amendments.

2. Correspondence Received

The Chair informed the Advisory Committee that he will remain in position as Chair until the end of December 2025, upon the request of the Minister for Transport.

The Advisory Committee on SPSVs agreed on points of discussion for the Minister's visit.

Minister O'Brien, Representatives from DoT and NTA joined the meeting.

3. Minister O'Brien's Visit

The Chair welcomed Minister for Transport, Darragh O'Brien, and his team from the Department of Transport to the meeting.

Minister O'Brien expressed his gratitude to the Advisory Committee for their time and emphasized his commitment to the future of the SPSV industry. He acknowledged the improvements in accessibility and service quality within the SPSV fleet. The Minister is looking forward to working with the Advisory Committee in the future, highlighting the importance of collaboration, stating that stakeholders and customers are crucial in shaping policy decisions. The Minister also noted the high interest in SPSV grants among his constituents.

The Chair discussed the Advisory Committee's report on WAV supply and demand and data collection, circulated to the Department of Transport and National Transport Authority on 25th May. It was noted that the Advisory Committee had been asked to make recommendations on methods of collecting data on SPSV activity, which was a challenging task in terms of resources and lack of data availability. The Chair proposed discussing the future of the Advisory Committee, notably the level of work expected for it.

A member of the committee noted that there should be a better term of reference for what the Advisory Committee is required to do and called for increased communication between the Advisory Committee and NTA Board in the future.

The Minister thanked the Advisory Committee for their work on the report and acknowledged the concerns about the framework within which the Advisory Committee operates.

The Advisory Committee were given an opportunity to pose individual queries and concerns to the Minister.

A member raised a concern regarding new operators completing training to enter the taxi sector online, prior to living in Ireland. It was proposed that to avoid this, NTA provide a local, in person apprenticeship style program to ensure drivers have good local area knowledge, appropriate etiquette and effective command of the English language.

Multiple members expressed concerns regarding taxi ranks, including their location and the decrease and descaling of taxi ranks nationwide.

Traffic was noted as another challenge for taxi drivers and dispatch operators, and a member raised concerns about stalled infrastructure projects, such as ring roads, for this.

Minister O' Brien discussed the Planning and Development Act 2024, which was set into law last year, noting that this will streamline the judicial review process, benefiting future infrastructure projects.

Another member raised concerns about the second hand SPSV market, notably from the UK, Ireland's biggest provider of second-hand WAVs. It was noted that many UK-imported WAV vehicles do not comply with the SPSV WAV standards in Ireland. It was queried if UK converters could provide adaptability proof for their vehicles to ensure they are suitable for the Irish SPSV sector.

WAV grants were discussed, and members queried the possibility of preferential treatment for WAV drivers already providing WAV services to keep them on the road.

Transferability of licenses was discussed.

Insurance was raised as a concern for drivers, with a member stating that many new drivers facing often facing premiums in excess of 10,000 euro. The Minister noted the NTA engagements with the SPSV insurance sector and cited general reductions in claims and increased use of mediation.

Another member asked if the Minister would remain committed to people with disabilities, keeping current WAV requirements and ensuring affordability of the industry. It was noted that work will need to be done to build back faith in SPSV services and public transport options for persons with disabilities.

Minister O'Brien confirmed that he will remain committed to improving services for those with disabilities and noted the Taoiseach's upcoming accessibility forum, which will have a focus on transport.

The shortage of changing places for persons with disabilities requiring additional supports, including on motorways, was discussed.

A member representing local authorities noted the concerns regarding taxi ranks. He noted the increased demand for cycle lanes, bus lanes and pedestrianised zones, which have required careful consideration of road space sharing.

Another member suggested the use of taxi meters, as used in the Netherlands, to maximise data collection for policymaking. He also emphasized that taxi drivers are often the first people that tourists interact with after leaving the airport, and that it is imperative to have a modern fleet and knowledgeable taxi drivers, who can give tourists recommendations on local amenities.

The Chair recalled a presentation given to the Advisory Committee by Independent Living Movement Ireland in 2024. He noted that they had set up their own focus group regarding taxis, highlighting how much of a concern the taxi industry is for people with disabilities.

Minister O'Brien thanked the Advisory Committee for their time, and for the work invested in producing the recommendations piece for the NTA and DoT.

Minister O'Brien and his team left the meeting.

4. NTA Update

NTA gave an overview of the licensing statistics for the previous month.

NTA noted a persisting view that drivers can get new saloon licences by availing of the eSPSV grant. NTA noted that many applicants apply for the eSPSV grant on this understanding, despite NTA information and clarifications on the matter for years. Such applicants then prevent or delay informed applicants from applying. NTA asked the Committee members to correct fellow operators where they spread this misinformation.

The WAV grant was discussed. Draft statistics indicate that following NTA enhancements for WAV25, conversion rates this year are better than last year. As noted since December 2024, the second round of the grant is planned to open in July.

NTA was queried about preferential treatment for drivers already providing WAV services for the WAV grant. This was discussed at previous meetings, where NTA had noted that as SPSV drivers operate privately, NTA doesn't know if an existing WAV owner is as likely to provide the service as a new (grant aided) owner or not. On this basis, the first come first served approach to WAV Grant Scheme applications remains appropriate.

Members queried if support evidence from schools or the Department of Education, confirming that a driver does school runs, could be considered for preferential treatment for WAV drivers. NTA reiterated that verifying such evidence may not be possible.

The Director for Transport Regulation thanked the Advisory Committee on SPSVs for the recommendations report produced on WAV supply and demand.

A member of the Advisory Committee commended the NTA for the latest issue of the [SPSV industry newsletter](#).

NTA Left the meeting

5. AOB

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

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs will take place on 26th June 2025.