

Meeting of the Advisory Committee on SPSVs

30th July 2026, 10.30 am.

NTA Office, Haymarket House, Smithfield, Dublin.

Present:

Chairperson	Ms. Catherine Flanagan
<i>Representing</i>	
Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests	Mr. Alan Cooley Mr. Anthony Kelly Mr. Francis Doheny
Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters	Ms. Christine O'Connor Mr. Der Calnan Mr. Harpreet Singh
The Interests of Business	Mr. Paul Nolan
The Interests of Consumers	Mr. Adrian Cummins
The Interests of Local Authorities	Mr. Brendan O'Brien
The Interests of Persons with Disabilities	Mr. John Fulham [virtually via Teams]
The Interests of Tourism	Ms. Karen Ronan

Apologies:

An Garda Síochána	Superintendent Seán O'Reardon
The Interests of Older Persons	Ms. Mai Quaid
Small Public Service Vehicle and Driver Interests	Mr. Shajedul Chowdhury
Special Interest or Expertise in Matters Relating to the Functions of the Authority, the Advisory Committee or Related Matters	Mr. Alan Fox

NTA Representatives in Attendance

Ms. Jen Moran, *Secretary to the Advisory Committee on SPSVs*

1. Confirm attendees and note apologies

Chair noted apologies and clarified if there were any conflicts of interest; none were raised.

2. Introduction of new Committee Member Karen Ronan

New Member Karen Ronan, representing the interests of tourism introduced herself. Chair requested the Committee each introduce themselves to the new Member.

3. Approval of minutes of April meeting

The minutes for April were confirmed. Update provided on May minutes; to be provided at the end of the week.

4. Matters arising:

• Office of the Data Protection Commission – invitation

Obligations and duties of a data controller were briefly discussed; how the taxi driver would be the data controller when they are who retain the footage. Chair mentioned her recent correspondence to Data Protection Commission, inviting them to attend a meeting and when their answer is expected.

• CCPC follow-up – correspondence

Chair discussed the presentation from the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC) outlining again the points raised by the Committee. Chair confirmed no further contact received from them. Chair enquired with Member whether they had since been in contact with him. He confirmed they requested to meet with him again where they made some suggestions and told him they learned lessons from the feedback and impact of the report. Chair highlighted that CCPC made observations but their purpose is to investigate and report not to enact and enforce. Chair told the Committee correspondence was sent to CCPC, thanking them for attending and asking them to get in touch regarding any future engagement.

• NTA programme of work – short discussion

Chair discussed how impressive she found the level of detail in the strategy presented by the NTA and highlighted how recommendations from the Advisory Committee constituted a large part of it. A Member expressed interest in seeing the Dispatch Operator's report. It was confirmed that there is no update currently on when that will be available.

The Chair discussed the recent report published by the Licenced Vintners Association, which represents Dublin publicans; she highlighted the fact the report was commissioned and independently conducted. A Member stated that it was unfair how the focus of criticism was on the taxi industry when many other consumer related elements struggled during that extremely busy three-day period in Dublin. The Chair

added that the report was included for discussion at the Committee as it's an additional piece of research carried out regarding the taxi industry.

5. Member request: Suitability inspection issue

Member discussed how his car is off the road since mid-June and that he'll be facing late fees as a result when he attends his renewal. Member explained how the NTA's response back to him was that drivers are sent a reminder to renew three months before (this was not a possibility for him as the crash occurred in March) and that he will have to pay the late fees occurred. He thinks there should be an exception for a case like this. Member does not think the information line helps with such cases and highlighted how difficult it is to get a supervisor when requested. Member pointed out how the insurance of the other person involved in the crash should cover all expenses which would include the late renewal fees; confirmed by another Member as this is what occurred in a similar case they had. Chair raised an action to ask the NTA about issues such as this and if there's any recourse for drivers.

6. Member request: Recent report on levels of exam failure of new SPSV applicants

Member discussed 'private service providers' pre-test options offering intensive exam preparation that are available for drivers and how helpful it would be for those struggling to pass. He highlighted how the failure rate featured in the recent report is wasting the time of the inspectors at the test centre. He thinks the pass rate should be lowered to 70% as a lot of people are just missing the current one set at 75%; another member observed we should not be seeking to lower standards. He discussed how people sitting the test are from a group with diverse education backgrounds and that he thinks a high standard of English is needed to sit the exam. He suggested reducing the retest fee considering it's the same amount as the first time fee. Member discussed other skill building required from drivers; in particular general courtesy. How local five star hotels complain about an unprofessional manner from local drivers e.g: do not help with bags when greeting passengers.

Chair pointed out that a Member had mentioned their company has a pre-test on their portal to improve a driver's chance of passing, how it is up to the driver to partake or not. Member discussed how the failure stats should be a concern for NTA and worth enquiring into the detail behind that and the reasons for the failure rate. Another Member brought up the accessibility perspective of this; people with English as a Second Language as well as additional needs. She highlighted how in order to request additional help for a test, you are required to ring the centre in advance. She suggested some people with additional needs would possibly sit a regular test to avoid the extra effort. She then discussed how worthwhile it would be for drivers to work on developing a luxury standard for consumers. Chair discussed a recent initiative where drivers were invited to tourist attractions in their free time to look at them from a tourist/consumer lens, an incentive to increase knowledge.

Chair raised an action to enquire with the NTA about the failure rate; what their reaction is to it and to request further data e.g: top reasons for failing.

Chair raised the question as to what would be the main reason for failing; the questions themselves or a specific demographic sitting the test. Member highlighted how those who study and prepare for the test are able to pass and questions how serious others sitting it are about passing. Recent revisions of the test were discussed; how if you fail one module you only have to resit that particular one. It was agreed that the information will be requested first before analysing further.

7. Programme of meetings August-November 2026

Chair discussed possible attendance from DPC at a future meeting, dependant on response received.

The NTA confirmed correspondence from the Department of Transport regarding the Minister attending a meeting in the summer but the dates were not suitable for him. No further correspondence about this received since.

Attendance from the NTA in August to be requested in order to clarify queries about the failure rate in tests and the gap that exists for drivers in accidents etc.

Member suggested a need for a Vice Chairperson so meetings can go ahead as scheduled; referred to two cancellations this year. Chair told the Committee standing orders are to be discussed with the Department and she will refer back about that suggestion.

Chair brought up the request made by the Taxis for Ireland Coalition to attend a future meeting; how the Committee agreed for this to be deferred until the Dispatch Operator's report from the NTA is available.

8. AOB

Member suggested discussing the revised EV grant amounts available, how there will be no further offers in 2026 and so drivers whose Final Operation Date is this year cannot partake. Chair enquired about the lifespan of the vehicles currently; a Member pointed out the recent extensions offered to 2015 vehicles and how 2016 will not be included. Chair agreed grants offered at the same time their Change Of Vehicle is due would be an incentive for them. Member stated budget constraints were quoted as the reason for the drop in funding and thinks there's been a lack of communication from the NTA clarifying this.

Member pointed out how a target for an EV fleet has never been mentioned by the NTA. Chair highlighted how there's an inevitable life cycle as the fleet will start aging out and grants cannot be offered in perpetuity.

Chair discussed upcoming budget season; how the Minister has various priorities such as doubling rail lines and the Metrolink, as a result there has been less allocated to the grants for drivers.

Member queried the strategy for EVs, that the depth of model for provision of WAVs is not there currently. Another Member pointed out that from looking at the strategy provided, the NTA appear to be focusing more on WAV rather than EV.

Member discussed the case of a driver who felt they had been unfairly fined by a new Compliance officer; the issue of having no appeals process when even Clamping has one, and how drivers are excluded from applying for grants for two years if they have received a fine. Another Member agreed there should be an appeals process, pointing out that Dublin City Council also has one in place. Chair highlighted a significant drop in Compliance inspections based on the figures supplied by the NTA. Member mentioned other Compliance issues not being addressed such as illegal operators at the airport and rogue DOs working out of hotels. Member pointed out the broader issue of Compliance checks being reduced to such a large extent; should the NTA be asked about this. Suggested that the NTA should provide a presentation on this with more in-depth data included e.g: county by county. Chair raised an action to request a separate attendance from the NTA to discuss Compliance figures in more detail.

Meeting concluded at 12.30pm.

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 27th August at the NTA offices.