

Subject: Taxi and Private Hire Services in London

Report to: Transport Committee

Report of: Executive Director of Secretariat

Date: 14 January 2015

This report will be considered in public

1. Summary

- 1.1 This report sets out for the Committee's agreement its report, *Future proof - Taxi and Private Hire Services in London*, as agreed by the Chair under delegated authority.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That the Committee notes the report, *Future proof - Taxi and Private Hire Services in London*, as agreed by the Chair under delegated authority, in consultation with party Group Lead Members.**

3. Background

- 3.1 The Committee agreed at its meeting on 4 June 2014 to carry out an investigation into taxi and private hire services with the following terms of reference:
- To explore the key issues for taxi and private hire passengers in London;
 - To examine how the Mayor, Transport for London (TfL) and the taxi and private hire industries are responding to these issues;
 - To examine the performance of TfL's Taxi and Private Hire unit (TPH); and
 - To make recommendations to the Mayor and TfL on any further actions they could take to improve taxi and private hire services in London.
- 3.2 The Committee held a meeting on taxi and private hire services on 9 July 2014 with the following invited guests:
- John Stewart, Chair, Policy Committee, London TravelWatch;
 - Rachel Griffin, Director, Suzy Lamplugh Trust;
 - Faryal Velmi, Director, Transport for All;
 - Matthew Daus, President, International Association of Transportation Regulators;
 - Mark James, San Francisco Municipal Transportation Agency; and
 - John Dickie, Director of Strategy and Policy, London First.

3.3 The Committee held a second meeting on taxi and private hire services on 2 September 2014, putting questions to the following invited guests:

- Isabel Dedring, Deputy Mayor for Transport;
- Garrett Emmerson, Chief Operating Officer, Surface Transport, TfL;
- Steve McNamara, General Secretary, Licensed Taxi Drivers Association;
- Michael Galvin, Licensed Private Hire Car Association;
- Inspector Julian Collinson, Metropolitan Police Cab Enforcement Unit;
- Martin Low, Transport Commissioner, City of Westminster; and
- Jason White, Programme Manager, London Borough of Croydon.

4. Issues for Consideration

4.1 The Chair agreed the report, in consultation with party Group Lead Members, prior to publication on 16 December 2014, under the authority delegated at the Committee's meeting on 10 December 2014. The agreed report is attached as **Appendix 1** (for Members only) for the Committee to note. It is also available at: www.london.gov.uk/mayor-assembly/london-assembly/publications.

4.2 The report sets out findings and recommendations on taxi and private hire services, as set out below:

Recommendation 1

By May 2015, the Mayor should publish a long term strategy for the development of both taxi and private hire industries. The strategy should clearly set out the Mayor's position on the continued role of taxi and private hire services in London, and actions that will improve passenger and driver safety, guarantee a sufficient number of high quality drivers and vehicles across the city, and ensure that all services meet the highest possible standards for accessibility. The strategy should also set out how TfL will strengthen its enforcement and clamp down on illegal activity, within a clear and transparent governance and decision-making framework.

Recommendation 2

By May 2015, the Mayor should publish a long term strategy for the development of both taxi and private hire industries. The strategy should clearly set out the Mayor's position on the continued role of taxi and private hire services in London, and actions that will improve passenger and driver safety, guarantee a sufficient number of high quality drivers and vehicles across the city, and ensure that all services meet the highest possible standards for accessibility. The strategy should also set out how TfL will strengthen its enforcement and clamp down on illegal activity, within a clear and transparent governance and decision-making framework.

Recommendation 3

By May 2015, TfL should further develop the database that links drivers to vehicle and operator information. TfL should work with app developers to produce a tool that will enable passengers to check the status of their driver, vehicle or operator.

Recommendation 4

By May 2015, TfL should produce a signage strategy for the licensed taxi and private hire industries, including plans to pilot number plate-based fixed signage.

Recommendation 5

By March 2015, The Mayor and TfL should report back to the Assembly on options to incentivise the uptake of cashless payment options, for both the taxi and private hire industries.

Recommendation 6

By May 2015, the Mayor and TfL should set out how they intend to monitor and improve supply and demand, for both taxi and private hire industries, across London. This should include a specific study into potential demand for taxi services in outer London town centre locations.

Recommendation 7

By May 2015, the Mayor and TfL should set out plans to ensure that all Underground stations located on the 24-hour Tube network have a taxi rank in place by the launch of the programme in September 2015, and suburban Underground and National Rail stations have a rank by May 2016. TfL should also prioritise rank provision in outer London town centre locations with unmet demand. Rank locations should be included on TfL journey planning tools and TfL should explore options for increasing the visibility of ranks through distinctive signage. The Mayor and TfL should also set out clear guidance for event planners to ensure that taxi and private hire provision is explicitly contained in transport planning for major events and attractions.

Recommendation 8

By May 2015, the Mayor and TfL should satisfy this Committee that the entry requirements into each market are fit for purpose. This should include providing evidence that there are no artificial barriers to entry, that the requirements are relevant to the specific demands of each industry and that they ensure protection for passengers, drivers, and other road users.

Recommendation 9

The Mayor and TfL should ensure that disabled taxi and private hire passengers' needs are met by taking steps to incentivise the provision of wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles (for example, through reduced vehicle licensing fees) with a view to reaching 25 per cent wheelchair accessibility across the private hire fleet by 2018. By May 2015, TfL should also introduce requirements for all taxi and private hire drivers and operators to undertake mandatory disability awareness training as part of the licensing process. TfL should also enforce a zero-tolerance approach to drivers and operators across both industries who illegally refuse to carry disabled passengers, and increase the visibility of its complaints process so that disabled passengers can name and shame providers who break the law. Drivers and operators who are found to not comply with these regulations should face suspension of their licences.

Recommendation 10

By March 2015, the Metropolitan Police should improve the information it collects on cab-related crime, to ensure greater understanding of whether offences are committed by licensed taxis, private hire vehicles and Pedicabs, and by licensed or unlicensed drivers/vehicles.

Recommendation 11

By May 2015, The Mayor and TfL should provide the Committee with a definitive assessment of the resources currently devoted to enforcement, setting out costed plans to increase these where necessary and address funding gaps. This should include options to increase licence fees to ensure adequate enforcement resources are available.

Recommendation 12

By March 2015, The Mayor and TfL and the Metropolitan Police should set out specific steps that will be taken to improve the efficiency and visibility of non-covert night-time operations.

Recommendation 13

The Mayor and TfL should immediately clarify the policy on destination bookings and reinstate the requirement for private hire drivers and operators to record a destination at time of booking.

Recommendation 14

By March 2015, The Mayor and TfL should conduct a full review of the policy on 'satellite offices', identifying and securing the enforcement resources required to regulate these effectively, including plans to clamp down on unlicensed 'marshals'. Any further satellite office applications should be suspended until this has been achieved.

Recommendation 15

By May 2015, the Mayor and TfL should enable greater joined-up working on enforcement, including working with the private hire trade and boroughs to develop a cohesive, pan-London policy on picking up/setting down arrangements.

Recommendation 16

The Government should act upon the findings of the Law Commission Review and propose legislation that introduces stiffer penalties for touting, and greater enforcement powers for borough and police officers, including higher fines and vehicle seizure powers.

Recommendation 17

By May 2015, The Mayor's office, TfL and the trades should develop and publish a Memorandum of Understanding which clearly sets out terms of reference and defines the respective roles, responsibilities and expectations of each party. This should include specific service level agreements.

Recommendation 18

By March 2015, TfL should revise its driver engagement activity to ensure that it is as widely representative as possible, and improve the transparency of taxi and private hire policy and decision making processes by routinely publishing the minutes of meetings with the trades. TfL should also provide and publish a detailed breakdown of annual licence fee spending.

Recommendation 19

By March 2015, the Mayor and TfL should set out how it will increase the visibility and accessibility of its complaints process, and improve systems for passengers to give feedback and make complaints about both taxi and private hire services. Complaints data should be reported to the TfL Board on a quarterly basis.

4.3 The report falls within the terms of reference for the investigation.

5. Legal Implications

5.1 The Committee has the power to do what is recommended in this report.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications to the GLA arising from this report.

List of appendices to this report:

Appendix 1 – *Future proof - Taxi and Private Hire Services in London*

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

List of Background Papers: None

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