

Taxi Operational Performance Seminar – 22 May 2019

Attendees: Transport for London (TfL), Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Cabs Unit, London Taxi Drivers' Association (LTDA), Rail, Maritime and Transport workers' union (RMT), Unite the Union (Unite), London Cab Drivers Club (LCDC).

1. Compliance and Enforcement update:

TfL provided an update on its current review of compliance resources, which included information on CSAS powers, technology and enforcement coverage and capabilities across London.

LCDC raised concerns that compliance officers may be taken away from taxi and private hire (TPH) work due to competing priorities, especially in winter months where, for example, there may be an increase in vehicle collisions/accidents.

TfL confirmed that, under current plans, there will still be a core base of compliance officers to carry out their primary role, in addition to having access to a much wider pool of compliance officers who would be trained to undertake taxi and private hire duties.

LCDC raised that licence fees cannot be used to cover non-TPH functions. TfL confirmed that any changes to compliance resourcing would take this into consideration fully.

LCDC queried whether the review was driven by a need to save costs due to a TPH licensing deficit.

TfL confirmed that the review is not financially driven. It is about establishing how many compliance officers are needed to undertake the work, improve the level of compliance and maintain the enforcement service that it currently offers. However; TfL affirmed that compliance operations must continue to look at being efficient, effective and affordable.

TfL ran through highlights from the quarterly presentation, available [here](#).

Discussion took place regarding Kensington and Chelsea's current consultation on changes to road access around Harrods. TfL encouraged taxi representatives to respond to the consultation directly.

Met police provided an update and raised issues with engine idling, particularly around Euston.

Unite raised a King's College study which showed that more emissions were caused by switching off and turning on engines than engine idling. MPS confirmed that a common sense approach is taken when it comes to engine idling – if a vehicle is idling for a prolonged period action will be taken.

Collision data – LCDC raised that third quarter figures hadn't been provided for 2018, and that by the same time last year the whole year had been published. MPS and TfL agreed to provide an update (**see action**).

NOTE – An email was sent to trade representative on 25/7/19 ahead of publication of 2018 collisions statistics. The statistics provide combined taxi and PHV figures. TfL is in the process of analysing the data and cross referencing it with its licensing system to confirm that the vehicle involved was a taxi or a private hire vehicle. Separate collision data will be published later this year.

2. Licensing Update:

TfL ran through highlights from the quarterly presentation, available [here](#).

Discussion took place on air quality. LCDC queried whether TfL took into consideration data on active taxi drivers and future taxi driver numbers when setting out air quality policies (e.g. recent review of taxi age limits). TfL set out the steps it took in forming policy, including public consultations, associated impact assessments and engagement with trade representatives.

Licensing Telephone Lines

TfL acknowledged that call wait times were still high and that various measures were being taken to decrease call handling times and to make its Interactive Voice Response (IVR) service, i.e. the telephone menus and call options, clearer.

Unite stated that online renewals were low (36 per cent) and that improving the online service would help alleviate pressure on the phone lines. TfL agreed and confirmed that it was looking at ways it could make the online renewal process simpler and easier to navigate.

Knowledge Update

A discussion took place on figures relating to candidates accepted on to the Knowledge of London (KoL) vs. applications received. As set out in its quarterly presentation, new applications are not indicative of the number of KoL applicants as the total number will include incomplete applications and any that are withdrawn due to administrative errors (e.g. renewing drivers applying for a new licence, or PHV driver applicants filling out the wrong application).

TfL is undertaking a wider piece of work to identify and suspend those applications that are no longer active and will include these updated figures in future presentations once completed

Vehicle Licensing Update

TfL acknowledged that call wait times were still high but were falling. Various measures were being taken to decrease call answer times, including an increase in NSL staff.

TfL provided information on its new online vehicle inspection booking tool and confirmed that this would be promoted to licensees over the next few weeks.

LCDC queried whether TfL had in place any measures to meet increased demand during the summer months.

TfL is aware of when vehicle inspection centres are at their busiest and will ensure that there is sufficient capacity to meet demand.

3. Topical Discussion Point:

Taxi Delicensing Scheme

TfL provided an update on the number of delicensing applications received and payments made.

LCDC stated, anecdotally, that garages were facing a shortage of taxis available for hire due to take up of the delicensing scheme.

TfL asked all other trade organisation representatives whether they were aware of this being an issue.

LTDA confirmed that it wasn't receiving calls regarding the availability of rental taxis and that the majority of calls were in relation to the delicensing scheme. LTDA did however state that the availability of taxis could become more of an issue in the future, as more taxi vehicle proprietors delicense their vehicles. RMT were aware of a waiting list at one particular garage.

LCDC raised that there should have been a limit to the number of taxis a proprietor could delicense and instead prioritise owner-drivers. LCDC also raised a view that the delicensing scheme should have taken into consideration the supply and demand of licensed taxis in London.

TfL confirmed that State Aid rules mean there is a cap on the number of vehicles an individual or company can delicense.

LTDA raised that there are large taxi proprietors that are buying ZEC vehicles.

LCDC stated that suburban drivers would be affected the most as a result of the changes to taxi age limits, as they would only be able to rent younger, more expensive taxis.

4. AOB

TfL provided an update on its Vision Zero initiative, including an upcoming consultation on the measures that will be used to introduce a 20 mile per hour speed limits on roads in central London from 2020.

RMT raised that speed bumps wouldn't achieve TfL's aims of zero deaths by 2041 and that an automated system would be a preferable option. TfL asked all trade representatives to respond to the consultation (closed on 10 July).

LCDC asked when the Improving Safety in PHVs consultation results will be published and whether TfL has sourced a contractor for advanced driving tests.

TfL will be publishing the consultation outcomes and proposed next steps in the near future, which includes proposals around an advanced driving test.

Open actions:

Meeting Date	Item Name	Action Details	Due Date
22/05/2019	Collision Data	MPS / TfL to provide an update on publishing 2018 statistics	December 2019