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TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE STATISTICS

Our most recent articles have focused on the very important issue of plying for hire. We now turn to the next important issue of the control of numbers. Before we start it is probably useful to give a comparison over the decades regarding taxis and private hire vehicles in London. The Hindley report in 1939 stated that there were 7,811 licensed Cabs, with ranking accommodation for 7,658 of them. It was estimated in London that approximately 2,000 private hire vehicles were in operation. It is worth noting that the population of London in 1939 was 8.6 Million. Moving on to the 1970 Stamp report it stated there were 12,770 licensed taxi drivers, of which 1,179 were yellow badge (suburban). The number of taxi cabs in service was 8,181 with ranking space for only 2,797 cabs. Private Hire however had grown to an estimated 20,000. The reason for this growth was due to an increased availability in provision of telephone services to the general public. It was estimated that in the 1950s only one in ten households had a telephone; by the 1970s, this figure had improved. Following the creation of TfL by 2005 private hire vehicles, drivers and operators were licensed. Today's figures show a huge growth in private hire, according to TfL's Law Commission response (TPH1080) they state the following licensing figures:-

For Private Hire 65,094 drivers 52,174 vehicles 3,161 operators. For taxis the current figures are as follows approximately 25,000 drivers of which there are 3,331 suburban drivers; the number of cabs licensed is approximately 22,500 with ranking space for just 2,177 across the capital. It is worth noting today's population of London is approximately 8 million - half a million less than in 1939!

QUANTITY CONTROLS

Outside of London licensing authorities may choose to restrict the number of taxis licensed within their area, by virtue of the 1985 Transport Act. However, there is no mechanism within law anywhere in the UK to restrict private hire vehicle licences. In London, there are no quantity restrictions of taxis or PHVs as TfL does not have any express power to do so.

The Law Commission raised this issue within its consultation and we were both shocked and bewildered having read the responses. Insofar as the vast majority feel it is important to control taxi numbers, but not private hire vehicles. Of course it is important to control taxi numbers as there are plenty of examples where this has not occurred. For instance within Dublin, deregulation caused misery and the lowering of



Putting the London Cab back on Point

standards when numbers jumped from 2,800 to 16,000. That is 3,000 more than New York, which is 7 times larger in terms of population. In London, we have seen difficulties with over licensing of the suburban areas. However many complain about the huge numbers of private hire vehicles now operating within the capital but they have failed to make this point in their responses. Looking closely at TfL's response it is concerned when it states the following on page 13, "...TfL has serious concerns regarding some of the provisional proposals and questions which TfL believes would have a significant detrimental impact in London. These include: All proposals that could lead to an increase in out of area PHV's operating within London which TfL does not have the enforcement capacity to control". So it would appear on the one hand that TfL have not asked for quantity controls regarding the licensing of its own PHVs, and are presumably happy to flood the capital with them. However they are concerned with the prospect of the number of out of area PHVs flooding London. How bizarre.

TIME TO WAKE UP AND SMELL THE COFFEE

All forms of transport take people from A to B. However, in terms of door-to-door transport taxis and private hire vehicles are in direct competition, as at any given time there is a finite number of people out of 8.6 million wishing to use either. It is imperative that number controls should apply to both taxis and private hire vehicles to control only taxis and not PHV's could very well see the demise of the taxi trade. Simply put taxi numbers along with rank provision could go down as TfL would be empowered to do so, while at the same time PH could increase further with no control as TfL would have no power to stop it.

It is for this reason that the RMT London Taxi Branch stated in their response that there should be a mechanism in primary legislation that gives the licensing authorities the ability to manage the growth of BOTH taxis and private hire vehicles.

Time to wake up and smell the coffee. If you agree that plying for hire should be defined and number controls applied to both trades please show your support and take the time to enter our text campaign. Thank you.

BE PROACTIVE – NOT REACTIVE

It's your job. It's your future!

Calling ALL Taxi Drivers help us to
"Put the London Cab back on Point"

Text: **4Hire** (along with your name and badge number) to **60777**

(Your details will be treated in confidence)