

TfL / Senior Taxi Trade Meeting Discussion minutes

Meeting date: 4 December 2018

Agenda

1. Vision Zero and safety
2. Business Plan
3. Tooley Street
4. Bank Junction/Tottenham Court Road
5. Bus Lane access updates: Greenwich, Corporation of London bus gates, Theobalds Road
6. Camden and Southampton Row
7. Decommissioning scheme / ZEC fund
8. Lisson Grove
9. Meeting notes
10. Promoting the Knowledge of London
11. AOB

Meeting attendees

(SM) Steve McNamara – LTDA
(JK) Jim Kelly – Unite
(GD) Grant Davis – LCDC
(AN) Andy Nicholls – RMT
(MB) Mike Brown – TfL
(GP) Gareth Powell – TfL
(HC) Helen Chapman – TfL
(DM) Dan Maskell – TfL (Notes)

1. Vision Zero and safety

MB said safety was his top priority and the Vision Zero approach, as outlined in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, applied to the entire transport system. The boroughs have provided different perspectives and some partnership work between schools and the police have had a powerful impact.

GP said we are working on the basis that everything is preventable. A flagship element of the scheme will be a 20mph speed limit on the TLRN. Fatalities have reduced this year but unfortunately those seriously injured haven't.

SM confirmed he attended the Vision Zero event and is supportive of the approach. He believes the standard of driving is declining and attributed this to people driving erratically because they are frustrated by slow traffic speeds. SM said more needs to be done to understand why women cyclists are disproportionately involved in fatal collisions.

GP said we are looking at all road users and pedestrians, in a root cause analysis approach.

2. Business Plan

MB confirmed it would be published soon. It covers the next five years and TfL is facing three significant challenges. Firstly, passenger numbers are not growing as we have seen previously. Secondly, we no longer have a £700m annual grant from central government. We are the only public transport body in the western world not to receive a subsidy. Thirdly, we have less revenue as a result of delays to the Crossrail project. TfL is facing its toughest time since it was formed.

GD asked whether the fares freeze is contributing to the revenue shortfall. MB confirmed that lower fares are actually keeping demand high, bucking the trend seen on national rail services.

GD suggested that an increase in app-based private hire services had reduced bus and Tube ridership. MB said the numbers involved do not bear this out – 5 million people travel on the Tube each day.

3. Tooley Street

GP confirmed the consultation follows two years' worth of National Rail works and explained the consultation process. He noted the high number of responses received to date and encouraged taxi trade reps and their members to respond. The consultation closes on 8 January. SM expressed significant frustration on behalf of the taxi trade and taxi passengers saying that the consultation goes against the Mayor's taxi and private hire action plan.

MB expressed sympathy for the views expressed by the taxi trade, including arguments on accessibility. He reassured trade reps that all consultation responses will be carefully considered before a decision is made. He acknowledged that TfL could have done a better job in engaging with the trade pre-consultation and confirmed steps had been taken to ensure this would be improved.

JK asked how long after 8 January a decision would be made. GP confirmed it would be several weeks, in order to consider all the responses carefully.

MB said he was conscious a rank had also been removed from the area several years ago and that TfL would explore options for a new rank.

4. Bank Junction / Tottenham Court Road

GD asked whether TfL had supported the exclusion of taxis from Bank Junction.

MB stated that TfL has a clear statutory role to evaluate whether the scheme, that is owned by the City of London (CoL) and is on CoL roads, had affected neighbouring roads. TfL's evaluation concluded that there had not been any impact. MB also stated that he had written to the CoL expressing the taxi trade's concern about the proposed changes to the junction.

SM said there would be a further CoL consultation in January that would consider proposals to give various vehicles (including taxis) access to the junction. He asked whether TfL would respond to the consultation and raise the taxi trade's concerns.

GP said if there was a consultation, TfL would respond.

AN asked who writes the consultations and does TfL fund any of the schemes?

On Tottenham Court Road, GP said this was a borough-led scheme. The boroughs have their own mechanisms for consultation and decision making. Even if TfL has provided funding for a scheme, TfL cannot determine the outcome. The boroughs have statutory documents that set out how they will deliver elements of the Mayor's Transport Strategy. Caveats cannot be attached to funding.

GD said schemes that exclude taxis are making their job incredibly difficult. He also stated that taxis were held up as a fully accessible form of transport during the 2012 Games.

GP said that boroughs must consider all elements of a scheme, including accessibility, and may need to conduct an integrated impact assessment.

SM stated there was a new transport lead at Camden and MB committed to writing to set out the taxi trade's concerns.

GP said TfL would need to evaluate the impact, on the bus network, of providing taxis will access at certain locations.

ACTION: TfL to write to new transport lead at Camden Council.

ACTION: Taxi trade reps to provide TfL with details of their concerns on Camden schemes.

ACTION: TfL to evaluate impact on bus network of providing taxis access at Southampton Row / Tottenham Court Road.

5. Bus lane access

GP stated there was a new Director of Transport at Greenwich and TfL would engage with them on the long-standing request for access to the northbound bus lane on the approach to the Blackwall Tunnel.

ACTION: GP to write to new Director of Transport at Greenwich.

ACTION: MB to raise bus lane access at next borough visit.

SM raised whether taxis could be allowed to turn into Great Tower Street from Byward Street in the CoL, via a bus gate. He stated this would be used by a minimal number of vehicles.

GP said this would be a CoL decision and TfL would need to explore the impact on buses. More vehicles passing through the gate would lead to more enforcement issues.

SM said taxis were very recognisable and this could be enforced using ANPR cameras.

ACTION: GP to write to CoL after evaluating whether providing taxis will access would disrupt buses.

6. Camden / Southampton Row

This was covered under Tottenham Court Road discussion and action.

7. Decommissioning scheme / ZEC fund

JK asked how much of the £40m decommissioning scheme had been spent and how many drivers had taken advantage of it.

GP stated that, as of 23 November, 172 delicensing payments had been made at a cost of £435,600. TfL is hopeful that 1,000 ZEC taxis will be licensed by Christmas.

JK suggested that the decommissioning scheme should be revisited to make it more attractive to drivers.

SM stated that taxis drivers have so far invested £50m in cleaning up the capital's air.

GP said the delicensing fund must work harder and faster to meet a challenging target of 9,000 ZEC taxis. TfL is working to make the scheme more attractive and is close to having a number of proposals to discuss with the trade. There is also a second vehicle, the Nissan Dynamo, which we hope to license soon.

MB said he would arrange a visit to the Dynamo manufacturing facility to show support and urge them to bring the vehicle to market as soon as possible.

SM said the 9,000 ZEC taxi figure came from the trade and there are a number of reasons that uptake has been slow: the only vehicle available was a year late; it costs £10,000 more than expected; the trade expected a range of vehicles and slow roll out of rapid charge points (RCP). There are no RCPs in Camden or CoL and slower-rate charging infrastructure in the outer London boroughs has been really disappointing. Concerns were also raised about a planned £1,000 price increase by LEVC alongside a withdrawal of 3 years free servicing.

MB said all the points raised were valid. He had raised RCPs at a recent London Councils' Environment Committee and TfL and the Mayor have been very clear on what they need from the boroughs.

GP said the focus needs to be reducing emissions. The delicensing fund will be adjusted to target the most polluting vehicles.

JK said radical changes were needed, not tinkering.

SM voiced concern about the ability of LEVC to meet the demand from the taxi trade.

ACTION: TfL to get an update from LEVC on current and projected manufacturing rates.

GD asked whether TfL would revisit PHVs having extra time to meet the ZEC requirement.

HC clarified that different mechanisms were being used, as PHVs had to meet ULEZ requirements from April 2019 (taxis are exempt). The ULEZ operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

8. Lisson Grove

SM express concern about criminality at the location, taxi drivers being targeted and lack of police action. The LTDA is advising drivers not to take fares to the location.

GD gave details of a member whose new ZEC taxi had been badly damaged.

GP said TfL was concerned about driver safety. MB said he would raise at the next meeting he had with MPS Commissioner.

AN expressed concern about complaints levelled at drivers who refused a fare to Lisson Grove.

HC confirmed complaints about fare refusals to this specific location would be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

ACTION: GP to write to MPS Commissioner

9. Meeting notes

SM suggested discussion minutes. GD stated it would be useful to confirm who said what and when.

MB said a set of notes, reflecting the dialogue of this meeting would be produced, circulated to attendees and agreed.

10. Promoting the Knowledge of London (KoL)

GD expressed concern about the number of KoL applicants.

SM said, further to discussion in February, he knew TfL had been in discussion with Ofqual. He recognises the KoL would need to be revamped and new modules added. He said the trade would be supportive of this but maintaining standards was critical.

HC provided details of steps that have been taken to promote the KoL, including the publication of a prospectus document. She also mentioned the positive campaign by London Taxi PR.

MB noted the disappointing reaction of some members of the trade when attempts were made to promote the KoL on Twitter.

SM suggested targeting PHV drivers who might be interested in undertaking the KoL.

11. AOB

GD asked about the proposed driving test for PHV drivers.

HC said the outcome of the PHV Safety consultation, which included this proposal, will be announced soon. It hadn't been a requirement before because when PHVs were first licensed (from 2003) there were fewer regulations to encourage more people to enter the licensing process. A concerted effort has been made over the last 4 or 5 years to professionalise the industry and increase safety.

GD asked why MB had met Dara Khosrowshahi and not the taxi trade.

MB made clear he had only ever missed one taxi trade meeting and Gareth chaired that. He met Dara to discuss an announcement about greener vehicles and improving air quality – key priorities for both TfL and the Mayor.

SM asked about a statutory definition of 'plying for hire' and highlighted differing legal opinions of whether showing a vehicle on an app constituted this.

GP said legislative changes were needed from government and this could come out of the work of the Task and Finish Group. HC said that a government response is anticipated soon and we need to consider this.

Ends