
Secretariat memorandum

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Agenda item 8
TRS023
Drafted 29.11.11

London TravelWatch's work on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle safety

1 Purpose of report

- 1.1 To brief the Transport Services Committee on the progress of its work on Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle safety.

2 Background

- 2.1 For two years London TravelWatch has been working with TfL to preserve and improve passengers confidence in their safety when taking a Taxi or Private Hire Vehicle (PHV).

At our prompting TfL initiated an internal review and agreed to progress four issues with respect to Taxi safety:

- i) Taxis would have a driver's photo ID badge displayed;
- ii) Taxis would have a better located complaints poster;
- iii) A senior officer would be appointed within the PCO to liaise with the Metropolitan Police Service regarding Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks and produce an annual report to the TfL Board;
- iv) TfL would consult on additional medical checks for drivers.

- 2.2 More recently London TravelWatch has expressed its concern regarding the cessation of enhanced CRB checks for Taxi and PHV drivers. This had been suggested by an Home Office review. The Chair has met Home Office civil servants and we have indicated our preferred way forward.

3 Update

- 3.1 Officers requested that TfL discuss the latest position on these issues, but unfortunately we had not given enough notice to TfL whose relevant officers are unavailable for the Committee date. However, there is a commitment to attend the Committee's next meeting. Officers will endeavour to give members a verbal update on these issues at the meeting.

- 3.2 Our present understanding on the issues above are:

- i) & ii) ID Badge and complaints poster: We understand that a small combined ID badge and complaints poster will be installed in Taxis in front of the Perspex

partition and visible to passengers. The length of time this is taking is due to the need to transfer driver data and develop a secure ID badge.

iii) Appointment of TfL officer: There is an established post in TfL's structure, but recruitment was delayed due to other restructuring within TfL.

iv) Additional medical checks: We have no news on this proposal

Cessation of CRB checks: An amendment to the Protection of Freedoms Bill is to be tabled on 6 December 2011 in the House of Lords.

4 Equalities and inclusion implications

4.1 Taxi and PHV safety and passengers perception of security is a general concern, but will be heightened with respect to vulnerable passengers.

5 Legal powers

5.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider - and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

6 Financial implications

6.1 There are no financial consequences for London TravelWatch.