

TAXIS PROMOTING BIRMINGHAM AND THE WEST MIDLANDS

The TX4 London black cab is being used as a billboard by Advantage West Midlands, a development agency for the region. They have paid for a fleet of the vehicles stationed at Birmingham International Airport to be emblazoned with messages welcoming travellers to the area.

Carol Caveney, Acting Head of Marketing at Advantage West Midlands, said the cabs are ideal for promoting the region because they are located at the airport and are an internationally recognised symbol of both the UK and the West Midlands. She said: “We are delivering a campaign of activity designed to promote the West Midlands region across Europe. Most of the advertising in the airport was taken so we looked at outdoor media. We felt that taxi advertising was a really good alternative and it was helpful that they are good PR and very picture worthy.”

As a bit of extra exposure, Advantage WM will use the cabs to transport guests at their promotional events in Birmingham and throughout the county. Carol added: “It’s a really nice media opportunity and a perfect fit for what we want to achieve.”

As well as the black cabs in Birmingham, local taxis in Paris and Gothenburg have adverts promoting the area as a conveniently-located business centre.



John Edwards, Chief Executive of Advantage West Midlands and Carol Caveney, Acting Head of Marketing for Advantage West Midlands

NEW STATUE FOR PARLIAMENT SQUARE

A statue of Nelson Mandela will be unveiled in Parliament Square on 29 August. The prominent position of the nine foot bronze statue, facing the Houses of Parliament, will honour Nelson Mandela as one of the greatest fighters for freedom in the 20th century. It will also be a permanent statement of London’s abhorrence of Apartheid and every other form of racism.

The unveiling will evoke a remark of Nelson Mandela himself in his autobiography, ‘A Long Walk To Freedom: The Autobiography of Nelson Mandela’) which he probably never thought he would see realised. ‘Oliver (Tambo) and I saw the sights of the city that had once commanded nearly two-thirds of the globe. Westminster Abbey, Big Ben, the Houses of Parliament. When I gloried in the beauty of these buildings, I was ambivalent about what they represented. When we saw the statue of General Smuts near Westminster Abbey, Oliver and I joked that perhaps someday there would be a statue of us in its stead.’

The unveiling ceremony will be attended by the Mayor of London Ken Livingstone and members of the Mandela Statue Fund, including actor and director Sir Richard Attenborough and Wendy Woods, widow of anti-apartheid campaigner Donald Woods, who conceived the idea of placing a statue of Mandela in central London. The Mayor said: ‘Nelson Mandela symbolises everything noble in the human spirit. He stood firm against one of the most ghastly forms of racism ever devised through decades of isolation and imprisonment. I hope that in honouring Nelson Mandela in this way Londoners today can make clear their commitment to uproot every form of racism from this planet.’

Ian Walters began the clay bust in 2001 when he travelled to Mandela’s home in South Africa, where the statesman sat for him for a total of nine hours. Walters completed the clay model of the statue just before his death and chose Nigel Boonham to supervise the completion of the statue, which is currently being cast in bronze at a foundry.

REVERSE DECLINE IN TRAFFIC POLICE SAYS ASSEMBLY

The London Assembly says that the growing number of injuries caused by “hit and run” collisions and the increased number of uninsured drivers on London’s roads means the Metropolitan Police need to put more cash into traffic policing. Assembly Members backed a motion, moved by Jenny Jones AM, calling for more resources for traffic policing. Jenny Jones said: “This is a clear message to the Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police that Londoners are not happy with lawless state of London’s roads. If traffic policing is not made a priority then we end up with people dying on our roads who shouldn’t be and people suffering horrendous injuries on our roads who shouldn’t be. For example, we need more action by the police to end the cowardly crime of hit-and-run driving in London. It is terrible that people are being left for dead by drivers who believe they are beyond the law. The sad reality is that the drivers’ failure to stop is part of a well established pattern of behaviour in London.”

The motion states: “This Assembly notes the decline in both the total number of traffic police over the last two decades and the proportion of police resources devoted to the Traffic Operational Command Unit since 2000. We place on record our concern over the growth in the proportion of London road injuries arising from road collisions involving a “failure

to stop”, and the large number of uninsured drivers in London, which has a serious adverse impact on legitimate drivers and other road users. We consider that denying criminals the use of the road is one of the most cost effective forms of policing in London.

“This Assembly therefore calls on the Metropolitan Police Commissioner to allocate more of the Metropolitan Police’s resources to traffic policing, including enforcement against vehicles entering cycle lanes and cycle stop areas at junctions to improve safety, and make the use of Automatic Number Plate Recognition machines in London a priority.”

In 1980 the Metropolitan Police had 1063 Traffic Officers; the current number is 690 officers. An estimated 1 in 8 drivers on London’s roads are uninsured – this includes illegal minicab drivers. Jenny Jones, a Green Party member of the London Assembly highlights the link between the historic decline in traffic police enforcement in London and the growth in the numbers of illegal drivers.

Jenny Jones says: “I’m angry: angry that there are still people dying on our roads who shouldn’t be; angry that there are still people suffering horrendous injuries from our roads who shouldn’t be.”