

## TAXIS HELP PROMOTE CATS PROTECTION CHARITY

Feline welfare charity Cats Protection is running a nationwide taxi advertising campaign with Cabvert Media during 2008. Fluffy, cute kittens chasing string on the sides of taxis have been seen in cities across the UK, including London, during the past year and the campaign is now extended to run throughout 2008.

Debbie Holt, Cats Protection's Design Services Manager, said: "Taxi advertising provides us with an innovative and cost-effective addition to our outdoor advertising activities. People spend large amounts of their time out and about, so targeting some of the UK's busiest city centres with a moving advertisement will help us to reach as many people as possible. Unlike buses or trains, these taxis are not restricted to designated routes, helping us to extend our message even further."



## BUSINESSES CAMPAIGN FOR TRAFFIC FREE OXFORD STREET



Bond Street, Oxford Street and Regent Street businesses want the candidates in the Mayoral Elections to recognise the importance of London's world famous shopping destination. Existing and planned business and public agency investment to the West End amounts to nearly £1 billion over the next five years. West End businesses are demanding the focus and economic policy necessary from all Mayoral candidates to ensure its continued success.

9 out of 10 visitors to the capital shop in the West End. Its attraction to residents, workers, visitors and tourists provides a huge economic and social boost in the heart of London. To maintain its predominance on the international stage, the West End needs constant innovation, significant investment, effective management and continual promotion. The businesses want candidates to "Champion the West End" acknowledging the vital importance of the West End to London's economy and wellbeing and give it the priority it deserves. For taxi drivers one of the suggestions being put forward will not be so welcome; the businesses want have a traffic free Oxford Street by 2012, in time for the Olympics. They say that the huge amount of traffic on Oxford Street causes congestion, inconvenience to pedestrians and pollution. Only 7% use buses to move around the West End yet 40 bus routes service the West End with up to 220 buses an hour running through Oxford Street at peak times. Ideally they would want Oxford Street to be a destination for shoppers, and want to see half the traffic removed from Oxford Street by 2010 and a traffic-free street by 2012. The New West End Company which represents the businesses say that last year's traffic free day was a great success and they would like to see more of them. For the taxi trade this day was less successful as they tried to supply

shoppers wanting a taxi with a service. The business want to see a dedicated tram or similar transit system along the length of Oxford Street in time for the 2012 London Olympics.

Richard Dickinson, Chief Executive Officer of New West End Company, said: "We need to understand how much of a grip the Mayoral candidates have on the economic importance of the West End, which attracts 200 million visitors spending £5.5bn a year. If the West End is to thrive, the future Mayor needs to support our plans to get traffic off the streets by 2012 creating a world-class destination for our visitors, rather than a thoroughfare choked with vehicles. The East End of Oxford Street requires Mayoral focus and action to make a comprehensive revitalisation of this area an economic and planning priority."

## CASHLESS PARKING IN WESTMINSTER

Westminster Council's cashless parking scheme has extended, so motorists parking on Westminster's streets will be able to pay by credit card or mobile phone where ever they are in the borough. The council has been installing its chip and pin machines and pay-by-phone provision in the very heart of central Westminster, (Victoria Street, Millbank, Horseferry Road, St James' Park) and north Westminster (Harrow Road, Bayswater Road, Marylebone Road, Warwick Avenue, Maida Vale and Prince Albert Road). Coin meters will remain in these areas until later in the year, when the remaining parking meters will be removed.

New figures reveal that more than 200,000 motorists have now signed up to the system. In the last three months an average of 1,200 drivers registered every week with the cashless initiative either online or at the roadside. Cashless parking gives motorists a coin-free way of paying and they are also able to top-up their parking allowance on the move without returning to their vehicles, helping them to avoid unnecessary fines.

Cabinet Member for Economic Development and Transport, Councillor Danny Chalkley, said: "This is an important milestone which takes us one step closer to cashless parking. The move to a convenient cashless system is the way forward for street parking and I'm pleased to give motorists the opportunity to use the service where ever they are in Westminster, for the very first time."

The council aims to no longer accept coins on street anywhere in Westminster by December 2008. Cashless parking is already available in Covent Garden, Soho, Mayfair, St James, Marylebone, Bayswater, Fitzrovia, and the area north of Harrow Road.

## TRADEX ACQUIRE WESTMINSTER INSURANCE

Tradex and Westminster have dominance in the public and private market. Following the announcement by Tradex Insurance Co. Ltd that they have acquired the business of Westminster Motor Insurance Association Ltd they will have a lead position in the black cab business. Swiss Re, the Tradex Quota Share partners, will continue to provide support for this venture. Stephen Endean, CEO of Tradex, said: "We are delighted to welcome the experience and dedication of the Westminster team on board. Together, we will now control in excess of £100M in commercial motor, motor trade and liability business. Also our thanks go to Swiss Re for their involvement in bringing us together and continued support."