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## PEDICABS IN THE WEST END

### by Martin Low, Director of Transportation, Westminster City Council

**M**y main concern about pedicabs, or rickshaws as they are sometimes known, is that they are not licensed or registered, so they have very rapidly descended on our streets in huge numbers and there is little we can do about it. It is clear many of the riders are putting road users at risk by all too frequent examples of a total disregard for safety.

Pedicabs do not fall under Public Carriage Office (PCO) control. The DVLA does not register pedicabs as a form of motor vehicle, so there is no vehicle registration number to use when a council wants to take enforcement action by issuing penalty charge notices when pedicab riders contravene parking and moving traffic controls. But we have lobbied hard for the powers to fix this. Westminster City Council and Transport for London (TfL) are promoting provisions in the London Local Authorities and Transport for London (No. 2) Bill to give TfL authority to allow some enforcement action aligned to some form of licensing or registration system for pedicabs.

Ultimately, the idea would be that as a result of this Bill becoming an Act, the PCO would introduce a licensing or registration scheme and the City Council could then enforce against contraventions of moving or parking controls. A well-run, regulated pedicab industry should improve safety as long as the Department for Transport has ensured that the pedicabs are safely constructed. That is something that I have drawn to Robert Devereux's attention as Permanent Secretary of the Department of Transport. The electric-assisted pedicabs, which flooded the West End at the end of last year, certainly posed serious problems. These enabled the riders to take up to six passengers and travel longer

distances at up to 20mph. This poses obvious risks to passengers and road users.

Along with the Metropolitan Police and PCO we took firm action, which temporarily eradicated that problem. The police, assisted by the City Council, are continuing operations. Three pedicab riders were arrested by the police on Saturday 22 February and the pedicabs have been seized as evidence for highway offences. But this process is costly and time consuming, so in the absence of legislation this stick approach also needs a carrot to work.

Along with pedicab operators who do want to operate a safe, and well-run regulated industry I have drafted a Voluntary Code of Conduct for operators and riders. As a reward for abiding to this code I am currently looking at creating pedicab bays for responsible operators in the West End. This would be a precursor to legislation, and means we would be able to implement this quickly once it is finally enshrined in law.

The long term solution is either a total ban on pedicabs or a licensing and enforcement regime, which will enable the Council and Transport for London to stop the problem of rogue operators getting onto our streets in the first place. In the meantime I hope that by working closely with responsible operators and the police we can ensure a visit to the West End is both fun and safe for our 200 million annual visitors.

These proposals are aimed at making our roads safer and should reassure taxi drivers. I do not believe you have anything to fear as certainly in my mind, it is clear pedicabs cannot, and should not, offer the same type of service as a black cab.

## MARSHALLED TAXI RANKS

**A**t the time of writing this article on 24th February 2009, TfL has confirmed to Taxi Globe that no final decision has yet been made with regard to who has won the tender to supply marshalls for the marshalled ranks in Cranbourn Street, Kingston, Bromley and Beckenham. As TfL are stakeholders in the Mayor's Safer Travel at Night initiative, the marshalled ranks now in operation were established to help ensure a supply of taxis late at night and to ensure it was a safe environment for waiting passengers at the ranks. The ranks have proved successful and so the tender went out to find a single supplier as the preferred option for provision of the marshalls for these ranks.

Under EC requirements, a tender was sent out inviting tenders for a three year contract to supply the ranks with marshalls. This is because the value of the contract was over £125,000 and all public tenders above specific contract values must be published in the Supplement to the Official Journal of the European Union (S series, Official Journal S or OJ S) and published throughout the EU. The journal is published every day on the website, in a total of 23 languages. If successful,

there is a possibility that the contract could be extended to run for 5 years.

Those invited to tender for the contract included London's taxi radio circuits who were informed by the PCO in writing. The requirements sent out in the official document describe what the work entails. Along with many other tenders which come under the EC requirements, the tender was placed on a website called europa.eu and those interested in tendering were able to complete an eform application. TfL used an eTendering system in this procurement exercise. The contract was advertised on TED (Tenders Electronic Daily), the public procurement database of the European Union which anyone can access. It could also be accessed via the TfL website.

A spokesperson for the PCO said: "The tender process is almost complete but is not quite there at this moment in time. Once the process has been completed, a PCO Notice will be issued to confirm the arrangements that are being made."

Drivers who have any queries about the scheme can contact Darren Crowson at the PCO on 0207126 1872.

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