

TAXI  
**GLOBE**



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## TFL AND TAXI TRADE CONSULTATION

John Mason has issued a TPH Notice concerning the long established tradition of consulting with the taxi trade about matters affecting licensing, regulation and policy. He says: "Since my appointment in September 2009 I have implemented an 'open door' policy to the taxi trade and have invested a considerable amount of time during my first months in the role of Director in both formal and informal engagement.

Such engagement has included formal meetings and consultation with well established taxi driver trade organisations such as the LTDA, LCDC and Unite, along with the LMCPA, vehicle manufacturers and the taxi radio circuits. In addition I have also spent a considerable amount of time discussing predominately taxi driver specific issues on a less formal basis with newer organisations such as the RMT, internet forum members and individual drivers.

I have welcomed the honest and valued input all areas of the trade have provided me as this has enabled me to fully understand the many issues and concerns of the taxi trade.

"However, this level of personal involvement is not sustainable if I am to lead the Directorate in delivering the changes needed and address the concerns raised. Whilst I would like to assure all organisations we currently formally consult with and meet on a regular basis through existing forums and meetings that this will

continue, my personal formal meetings will remain with the LTDA, LCDC and Unite as well as other key stakeholders such as the LMCPA, vehicle manufacturers, radio circuits etc.

I will endeavour to continue to meet with newer or smaller organisations on a regular, informal basis and they will continue to be invited to participate in formal consultation on trade issues. Whilst there have been calls for 'recognition' from some organisations for the purposes of negotiation and collective bargaining it should be stressed that TfL's relationship with the taxi trade is of an entirely different nature and, as a consequence, recognition is not appropriate, especially in respect of TfL's statutory responsibilities and powers as the licensing authority. There is no employee/employer relationship and no requirement for collective bargaining.

"Consultation, however, is not the same thing as negotiation and TfL has never sought to strike bargains with the taxi trade or with any particular representative trade body. This position remains unchanged, and TfL's approach will be to continue to engage through consultation and dialogue with the trade to ensure that licensing and regulation remains proportionate and contributes to improving standards throughout all aspects of London's taxi services."

## NO WALK OUT AT LTI

A local newspaper in Coventry has reported on a "walk out" at ALTI's Coventry factory where the TX4 is manufactured. The reason for the headlines was cited as being because the Unions had found presses from the factory for sale on a website. However, a spokesperson for LTI Vehicles has told Taxi Globe that in fact there was no "walk out" and that the Union representatives actually held a meeting during their lunch hour. LTI Vehicles has been working closely during the past four months since the Consultation was launched with the Union to facilitate discussions as part of the ongoing programme to return the company to profitability. The economic downturn is amongst the factors which have resulted in less cabs being sold and so LTI announced that they were considering various options and these possibly included some redundancies at the factory. Another avenue being considered is to bring more parts in from China under the joint venture with Geely. Studies were being carried out into the options when it was decided to bring in an agency to assess what impact future plans could have on the lay out and operation of the factory floor at Holyhead Road. However the agency took the action of putting some of the presses on their website as being for sale, although this had not

been authorised by anyone at LTI. LTI managing director Peter Shillcock said West Bromwich-based Fulltex Press Sales had "jumped the gun" without the firm's authority by advertising LTI's presses. The agency has now apologised for making such a mistake.



Peter Shillcock

The newspaper reports that the Unions saw the presses advertised on the web and so held their meeting. This was held in their lunch hour so as not to impact on production time at the factory. LTI are continuing to work closely with the Unions and are committed to involving them fully throughout the Consultation process. All plans remain centred around ensuring that the production of the iconic TX4 remains at Coventry, although parts from the Chinese venture could assist with this. Part of the appeal of the taxi is its iconic status around the world, with its iconic shape recognised by millions. There are challenges ahead but it is the intention of the company and its parent Manganese Bronze to continue building the taxi in Coventry.

## OVERHAUL OF PARKING IN WESTMINSTER

Anyone found illegally parked in central London could now receive a warning note instead of an automatic fine. Up to 20% of offences could be treated with 'soft enforcement' meaning motorists caught parking illegally could avoid a £120 ticket and instead receive a written or verbal warning. Westminster's new £50million parking contract - the biggest in the country - names consulting and business services group Mouchel as the preferred bidder. It is the biggest shake-up of parking enforcement in the city for seven years.

Using the latest technology, parking bosses will be able make decisions based on information about the vehicle - including the type of parking offence committed, the location and any previous tickets issued. The new style 'smart enforcement' will ensure the council is better informed and can work with motorists in parking trouble spots, including reviewing the use of signs and lines in particular problem areas or

working to help motorists understand the rules of the road. This new approach seeks to educate rather than penalise drivers with the goal of getting 99% of motorists to comply with parking rules.

Parking attendants will be given new handheld computers to provide extra guidance as to whether they should issue a ticket to an illegally parked vehicle. For example, the computer may limit the enforcement options available to the warden depending on the location and the particulars of the vehicle.

Parking bosses will use new "heatmap" technology to collect information from wardens on the street which can then be used to identify problem areas or to rapidly deploy staff to different parts of the city.

Four vehicles, two of which will be equipped with automatic number plate recognition technology, will patrol Westminster to act as a visible deterrent.

The vehicles will be linked in real time to the parking service's IT system that holds information on driver permits. Giving parking attendants more of a 'Street Ambassador' role that would see them take on additional duties including offering help and advice to motorists and reporting damaged street signs or graffiti.

Councillor Danny Chalkley, Westminster Council's Cabinet Member for City Management, said: "I understand that parking enforcement isn't popular and no one likes getting a ticket but Westminster is the busiest and most congested borough in London. We have a very challenging job in balancing the competing demands for parking space. We have pioneered new parking policies to make it easier for motorists to park in Westminster in with our firm but fair approach. This new contract will build on these innovations and help keep Westminster moving."