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## GREEN AND YELLOW BADGE IDENTIFIER SCHEME OPTIONS

Last month, TfL's Taxi and Private Office told the taxi trade that they had several changes in mind for the coming year. One of these proposals currently being investigated is a "Green Badge identifier" which could be displayed in taxis where the driver holds an All London licence. John Mason said: "TfL is committed to providing passengers with additional information regarding drivers and work will continue to identify the most suitable forms of identification throughout the year along with further investigation to determine the best form of displaying fare information in taxis."

#### OPTIONS EXPLORED BY TFL

Currently TfL is exploring the options which are available to introduce an identifier which will denote whether the cab driver is a yellow or green badge. TfL believe that a clearly visible badge identifier would show the areas in which a driver can ply for hire. The initial proposal was for a "Green Badge identifier" as it was thought that this could be implemented quickly and efficiently at minimum cost. But once the news of the proposal was given to the trade, TfL received numerous responses from the trade. In general, the trade believes that just a Green Badge identifier would not be sufficient and that a Yellow Badge identifier is also needed. It is unclear how big a problem there is of Yellow Badge drivers working outside of their own area, whether this is in Green Badge territory in central London or whether they are plying for hire in suburban sectors for which they are not licensed.

So it is back to the drawing board for those involved in the scheme

to introduce the identifiers at TfL. They are now looking at different solutions and hope to find an appropriate way forward in view of the trade's response. This will need to address the requirements for All London drivers and for Suburban drivers. Detailed designs have not yet been worked out as TfL are continuing to assess the options available to determine the most appropriate and cost-effective way of achieving this objective. John Mason said: "One of the suggestions that seems to be popular with the taxi trade is to have the green and yellow disks that contain the badge number and, in the case of suburban drivers, also contain the sector numbers for which the driver is entitled to ply for hire. Whichever solution is decided on will need to be easily transferable between taxis."

#### BENEFIT FOR THE TRADE

There has been a lot of discussion within the trade about yellow badge drivers working outside of their licensed area and this is one of the reasons for the identifier. It would be a further reassurance for the travelling public and also the identifiers would benefit the trade in that it would help make compliance activity to be more effective which TfL hopes will free the resources for other enforcement tasks such as the vital activity of preventing touts and illegal minicabs. John concluded by saying: "Concern has been expressed from several drivers that implementing a form of badge identifiers will cause conflict and, being mindful of this, any initiative implemented will be done so with clear guidelines that drivers are entitled to be outside their own area providing they are not plying for hire."

## COMMENT ON MAYOR'S DRAFT AIR QUALITY STRATEGY

In March 2010, The Mayor published 'Clearing the air', his draft Air Quality Strategy, for public consultation. It contains proposals in several policy areas for improving air quality in London, and builds on the initial 'Assembly and Functional Bodies' draft published in October 2010.

The consultation document, along with related material, is available to download at <http://london.gov.uk/priorities/environment/vision-strategy/air-quality>. The proposals in the draft strategy are for consultation, and views are being sought from the public and from bodies concerned with the range of policy areas affected.

The consultation is open until 21 June 2010. London's taxi trade stakeholders are invited to respond to these proposals, and submit any evidence relevant to these issues. Account will be taken of the views and evidence when decisions are made regarding the proposals to be included in the final version of the Strategy, to be published in late 2010. Details of how to respond and forms for

response, to be completed online or printed for submission by post, are available on the GLA web site at the same address.

John Mason, Director, Taxis and Private Hire said: "As individuals and organisations involved in or concerned with the taxi and private hire trades, you are also invited to send us your comments and any other proposals that could contribute to reducing harmful emissions from taxis and private hire vehicles in London. We would like to receive your comments by 14 June 2010, to allow us to collate responses for the discussions going forward. Any earlier responses will be helpful."

Responses should be emailed to [TPH.Consultation@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:TPH.Consultation@tfl.gov.uk) or sent by post to

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## 22 ILLEGAL MINICAB DRIVERS ARRESTED

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) Cab Enforcement Unit (CEU), part of the Transport for London (TfL) funded Safer Transport Command (STC), made 22 arrests during a series of overnight covert operations between Friday 2 and Monday 5 April 2010. Plain clothes officers from CEU caught touts red handed while acquiring valuable intelligence in known hotspot locations including the West End, Haymarket and Mayfair. Both overt and covert cab enforcement operations are carried out on a regular basis in line with existing intelligence on touting behaviour. During the operations roadside and compliance checks are made and officers carry out operations and conduct checks on all minicabs within the confines of the operation area.

The Unit also co-operates with clubs to crack down on touts who operate in these areas and works closely with TfL's Taxi & Private Hire compliance and licensing teams. Steve Burton, Director of

Community Safety Enforcement and Policing, said: "Touts not only undermine the legitimate taxi and private hire trade but can also pose a serious threat to Londoners who use them. These positive results show that we continue to clamp down on illegal cab drivers and touts should be reminded that the Safer Transport Command is out there and will use all the necessary tactics to catch them."

Chief Superintendent Royle, Safer Transport Command said: "We are working together with our policing partners to keep London moving safely by driving down crime and the fear of crime even further. This excellent result impacted upon illegal cabs and touts operating in the area and sent out a clear message that their presence will not be tolerated. The safety of the public is paramount and I would advise everyone not to get into any vehicle that they have not booked and always use a licensed taxi or book a minicab through a reputable licensed company."