

The LPHCA spends a great deal of time and money lobbying Politicians. It is a very necessary function that started in the mid 70's when we started the process of convincing Government to regulate Private Hire in London.

More recently we have been dealing with the Greater London Authority (The GLA) and of course The Mayor's Office. One of the sensible decisions we advocated prior to licensing was a Pan London regulator (The PCO) which has one local political master rather than 32 or so London Boroughs.



This has proven to be a very wise decision as whilst we had to meet and brief a lot of new Politicians we have one set to convince locally at The GLA with regard to Private Hire Licensing.

Those briefings have paid dividends as The LPHCA secured congestion charge exemption, something that would have been virtually impossible without The GLA.

It is now very rewarding to see the London Assembly and The Mayor working collectively and positively for our industry and passengers.

Below are questions that were presented to The Mayor in July. We like the questions and we like the answers and it highlights why we need to keep in touch with The GLA Politicians and The Mayor's Office.

Safe Access to Licensed Minicabs

Valerie Shawcross



How can TfL facilitate safe access to licensed minicabs for users of clubs and late night facilities along red routes and 24hour bus lanes – where minicab drivers feel in danger of being ticketed while waiting to collect passengers who have ordered their services?

The Mayor

TfL is considering whether private hire vehicles should be able to pick up and set down passengers on red routes, reflecting the role in business for such services in the transport strategy and their importance to Londoners.

Considerations include any impact in terms of effective enforcement, congestion levels and compliance with other motorists who would see what appeared to be ordinary cars stopping on red routes.

Work is progressing to quantify these effects and ensure that any exemptions would not prevent the effective operation of red routes. I have made clear to TfL that I expect them to find a way to do this if it is at all humanly possible.



Valerie Shawcross

Thank you, Mayor. In fact it would actually solve the problem. There are just one or two sensitive locations where minicabs have had trouble picking up and dropping off, and it is a particular issue when it is late at night and there are people who have been concerned about homophobic attacks et cetera.

The taxi licensing scheme for minicabs has been a great success, a real step forward, and it just would be helpful to have full facilitation for people to use these things at night. If TfL cannot find a way of making a pick up and set down on red routes work for minicabs, would you ask TfL to try and work up particular local schemes in those very local areas where we have problems, for example, I do not want to encourage touting, but it would be possible to have a marshalled minicab pick up point for Friday night and Saturday night where there are clubs with particular difficulties.

The Mayor

It is all the problems that would come with ranking from those local schemes that has put the spur under TfL to look for general dispensation for minicabs in red routes across the field. It is going to be easier than the problems we get with ranking on specific sites, like Lambeth Council is looking at Clapham High Street.



So we are going to try and get a general dispensation, we will fall back to local ones if it does not work, but I get lobbied relentlessly by minicab drivers on this point.

Valerie Shawcross

I think we have to put some positive incentives to minicab drivers, having gone through the registration scheme. I think it would help reinforce what is a successful safety scheme.

John Biggs



A very simple question, a bit of an old chestnut really; now that minicabs, private hire vehicles, are easily identifiable because they have plates on them, are we moving towards a position where we can reconsider whether they should be able to use bus lanes?

The Mayor

Providing we do not need any legislation, I would need to check back on whether we do, that clearly is something that will come fairly close after the red route decision. I have to say, I do not think they are terribly noticeable at the moment, unless you know what you are looking for, and the worry is always other cars following them in and then getting fined. That one is under review.