

- Vision
 - I am petitioning you this evening about my desire for licensed rickshaws to be brought to the streets Oxford as soon as possible.
 - I believe that the rickshaw industry should be encouraged in Oxford for many reasons:
 - 1. Rickshaws fit perfectly with Oxford's image as a quirky yet dynamic city and they can only add to the vibrancy of its offer to residents and tourists
 - Once established, rickshaws will certainly attract more visitors, as they offer a more sedate and bespoke way to see the city's sites than in a bus or on foot
 - While, for the tourists who don't use the rickshaws they will still be mobile information posts
 - 2. They also fit in with any efforts Oxford is making or would like to make in the future towards encouraging sustainable and non-polluting transport options in the city-centre
 - Even if the numbers of rickshaws remains small, their presence is a visible statement of Oxford's encouragement of eco-friendly enterprise, and we can hopefully spur other individuals and businesses to think the same
 - For example, we were at the Mpower event promoting awareness of climate change, held in the town hall on Saturday
 - 3. This latter point illustrates well the genuine use of rickshaws for Oxford's resident population
 - Rickshaws can help to give Oxford a more integrated transport system. During our trial period over Christmas, we frequently took passengers to taxi ranks from other parts of the city centre.
 - They therefore offer a new avenue of sustainable growth for Oxford's taxi industry, as people use rickshaws for distances over which they would not use a motorised method of transport
- Link – Inevitable/institutional
 - For these and many more reasons, it is a foregone conclusion that other rickshaws will be coming to Oxford in the foreseeable future. I'm not the first - and surely not the last – person to think that rickshaws are perfect for Oxford. It is therefore particularly important to start on a proper footing, so as to ensure that its great benefits are entrenched in the industry from the beginning.
 - Oxford has pioneered new transport ideas in the past (such as Park and Ride) so it would be great to continue this legacy, though the precedent for licensing rickshaws set in Cambridge as of February 2006 shows that Oxford would not be completely going out on a limb
- Responsibility is guiding principle

- By “proper footing” I am talking about my collaboration with the council to establish rickshaws in a responsible manner, as I am already making every effort to do.
- I have brought 5 rickshaws to Oxford, which are brand-new and made to the highest quality specifications (deemed appropriate on the streets of Manhattan, which is surely sufficient for Oxford!), and they are being maintained by Walton Street Cycles, down in Jericho; I am having all riders trained to National Cycle Level 3 (the new CTC test, which is the closest equivalent to a driving test that is relevant to rickshaws); and because we must be prepared for all eventualities, the bikes and riders are insured for up to £2 million of public liability.
- And as I have mentioned, we ran a trial operational period around Christmas, not charging fares as we do not yet have a licence, but just as a way of sounding out the demand for our service and we were universally supported by passengers as well as passers-by.
- Nevertheless, we have complied fully with the advice of your officers in stopping these operations whilst we work with the council towards finding a solution.
- Sum up
 - I have been talking to you because Oxon Carts is preparing for full operational readiness and needs the Council’s support to help bring our services to Oxford’s population in a legitimate way. With the City Council, Oxon Carts would like to make licensed rickshaws a new addition to Oxford’s streetscape.
 - We would now like the council to initiate formal discussions between all the stakeholders in this issue and to instruct the relevant officers to work with us to find a speedy solution.
 - Thank you for giving me the platform to initiate these discussions with you.

Ted Maxwell's petition to the City Council on 22nd January

- What I've already done – situation we're at:
 - Brought 5 rickshaws/pedicabs to Oxford in an effort to bring a fun and eco-friendly way to move people and goods around town
 - Delivery side obviously not require a licence and started with Feller before Christmas, now working with Will Pouget of V&G and Alpha Bar
 - I ran a trial business period over Christmas, not charging fares cos don't have licence, but happy to carry passengers as I knew I was acting in a safe manner and we have public liability insurance up to £2m
 - ...but as taxi licensing officer Phil Pirouet pointed out to me on 5th January that even if asking for donations you require a licence, we have not been operational since then... [though the City Council's legal services team is looking into the exact legal position Re donations over the weekend]
 - ...I am honestly doing my utmost from the beginning to be safe and responsible with this business: high quality bikes, insurance, having riders trained to National Cycle Level 3 (the nearest equivalent to a motor driving licence relevant to rickshaws), to ensure proper road conduct, while we will take up any specific rickshaw training schemes that become available via London
- ...Because I really believe that this is an industry that should be encouraged in Oxford due to its benefits for the community:
 - Non-polluting – there's no need for exhaust fumes in the movement of goods and people in our beautiful city... even if we're only a small number of bikes, our presence is a visible statement of Oxford's intentions towards eco-friendly enterprises and we can hopefully spur other people to think the same;
 - Add to vibrancy of Ox's streets... a pleasant and colourful change to ~~the normal streetscape – definitely a great tourist attraction... and~~ mobile information posts for tourists who don't even use our services
 - Providing real journeys that are enjoyable... faster than car traffic over town-centre routes – can go nearly everywhere that bikes can go that cars can't e.g. Broad St, Rad Sq, Cornmarket after 6pm... important for me that rickshaws are known as a useful service for Ox's population...
- It's important that everyone understands from the very beginning that we're not in competition with the existing hackney carriage taxis
 - It's only an accident of legal history that rickshaws and hackney carriages are licensed together and does not reflect the reality
 - Rather than eating a piece of the taxi industry's cake, we're effectively adding an extra, smaller cake alongside it and are not harming taxi drivers' livelihood: Range limited = main point... not going to be used for longer journeys:
 - – only taking shorter trips that taxis not even like taking (lose place in rank, don't make much money)
 - People use us for journeys that wouldn't even get in a taxi for e.g. going ½ mile down road

- ...during Christmas trial run, we were even taking a few people to taxi ranks...integrated transport system for Oxford
- Basically, because I think that a new rickshaw industry would be a great thing for Oxford and I need the City Council to help this to happen:
 - Sadly we all have to make do with inadequate 19th-century legislation that requires some kind of hackney carriage licence, but we can still make this happen.
 - Initially, we ask that the number of hackney carriage licenses be increased to accommodate our 5 rickshaws, as it is within the council's prerogative to do so.
 - With regard to making the hackney carriage licensing scheme work for rickshaws in Oxford, we recommend that the City Council bears in mind the example of Cambridge, where they have already worked out a scheme
 - ...whilst you as a body may not want to exactly mimic their example, it does at least demonstrate one possible solution.

Legal & Democratic Services

Direct Line: 01865 252230

Fax: 01865 252694

E-mail: wreed@oxford.gov.uk

Mr. Rupert Cope 11 February 2005
 Head of Taxi/PHV Branch Our ref: WR/RD/752/3
 Department for Transport Your ref:
 3/12 Great Minster House
 76 Marsham Street
 London
 SW1P 4 DR

Dear Mr Cope

Hackney Carriage Services – Unmet Demand

Your letter of 16th June 2004 has now been considered by the Council's Licensing Committee. This letter of reply contains the outcome of the Council's review of its policy of quantity control over the issue of hackney carriage vehicle licences. I have copied the letter to the Chief Executive, Oxfordshire County Council because it is that authority which is responsible for drawing up Local Transport Plans.

The Council's Licensing Committee has decided that the Council's policy of quantity control on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences should be maintained. It considers that the Council is best placed to determine local transport needs and that those needs must be determined in the context of the (long standing and consistent) traffic and transport policies in Oxford. The City Council has maintained quantity control over the numbers of hackney carriage licences it issues for well over thirty years. However, it commissions regular surveys, conducted by independent specialist consultants, into whether there is, at the time of the survey, unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages in Oxford. Where the survey has found that there is unmet demand, the Council has issued additional licences so that supply equates with demand. In addition, both in connection with the survey and at other times, the Council has reviewed the amount and location of taxi stands. The Council has both full-time and part-time taxi stands, in the City centre and elsewhere.

In terms of quality control, the Council has driven up the quality of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, and their drivers, so that the Council believes the quality and safety of the services provided by taxis and private hire vehicles in Oxford is among that of the leading local authorities. All Oxford's hackney carriages are wheelchair accessible. The Council is not complacent however, and continually reviews quality control, by enforcement and by other means.

There are 106 Oxford City licensed hackney carriages. There are over 300 Oxford City licensed private hire vehicles.

Oxford has traffic and transport policies of long-standing and of significance. In the early 1970s the Council rejected new road building as a means to solve Oxford's traffic problems. New road building was felt, in summary, to have unpalatable environmental consequences. The Council adopted its Balanced Transport Policy in 1973. This has metamorphosed into the Oxford Transport Strategy in recent years. Both the Policy and the Strategy have the same core aim, namely to provide, by "carrot" and by "stick" a balanced transport provisions for buses, cyclists, taxis, pedestrians and the private car. The "carrot" is, among other things, the provision of large edge of City park and ride car parks. The "stick" is the control of non-residential parking. The "carrot" also involves the provision of bus lanes on Oxford's radial roads in which only buses, taxis and cyclists are allowed to travel. Buses and taxis are allowed into areas and through certain control points that are prohibited to private cars. Control over the quantity of vehicles in Oxford is therefore of paramount importance to the City Council. Abandonment of quantity control of hackney carriages would, in the Council's view, exacerbate Oxford's traffic problems to no apparent benefit (given that the regular surveys into unmet demand do not indicate a need for there to be a marked increase in hackney carriage licences to meet demand).

The Council, and the County Council, is concerned about air pollution in the City centre. The County Council is concerned about the effect on air pollution if there was a large additional number of hackney carriages. The City Council's Environmental Health Officers feel that derestriction would have a negative impact on local air quality. It is perhaps worth mentioning in this context that we are looking to introduce a low emission zone in the City centre as a means to address poor air quality.

The Licensing Committee has asked Officers to arrange for a survey to be conducted into whether there is currently unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages. The most recent survey resulted in the issuing of an extra seven licences in 2003. In commissioning the survey we will be mindful of the helpful questions contained in Appendix C to your letter. We will also of course be mindful of latent demand and of the demands that will result from the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003.

Lastly, you ask that the Council's conclusions in respect of the request in your letter be made public. We will do this by placing this letter on our web site.

Yours sincerely

Contact: William Reed

Democratic Services Manager