

APPENDIX ONE

From: AGW WOODWARD [agw.woodward@btinternet.com]
Sent: 28 September 2011 09:37
To: CRAMER Jill; ALISON Julian
Subject: Re: Unmet demand survey

Hi Jill

My impression of the 2009/10 decision by councillors regarding to survey or not to survey, was that Oxford City Council resolved (with all party support), to adopt a long term committment to survey driven regulation for the following reasons:

1) In order to assist in the reduction of pollution and vehicle useage within the city centre (evidence at that time stressed that each cab produces around 202 gms/ Km of CO2).

2) Each additional ten hackney carriage plate licenses issued would increase the CO2 footprint of the hackney carriage trade by 9.5%, this would appear to observers as a rather stange move when we consider the extremely successful efforts of the local authority to reduce the number of buses within the city centre, strange only then to open the floodgates to possibly hundreds of additional cabs, Local Authorities who have deregulated include Sheffield who after deregulation moved from 300 plates to 830 an increase in CO2 of around 177% , once plate numbers are increased its a policy of no return where plates cannot be taken back unless an offence has been committed & then only when an unmet demand survey has been undertaken again, Even though Sheffield council resolved to go back to regulation they have found it virtually impossible to reduce the number of plates.

3) Reading borough council, who had originally deregulated, found that the move subsequently resulted in mass overcrowding of rank space & were forced to provide additonal space for hackney carriage ranks, a lease agreement had to then be entered into in order to provide private land for additional ranking space after it was realised that the rail station rank had a 100% shortfall in facilities for cabs waiting to ply for hire.

4) The decision by Oxford City Council in 2009/10 to move to regular unmet demand surveys was as a result of Colta persuading its membership to reduce the CO2 footprint of Oxford's Hackney Carriage fleet, this has been carried out in accordance to the conditions that were set out by councillors, ie. particulate trap exhaust systems on pre 2003 hackney carriages with further initiatives over the next few years, as a part of that 'agreement' Colta's memebership agreed to a scheme wherebye the cost of future surveys would be taken as a surcharge on annual hackney carriage plate license fees, that scheme has already commenced, such iniative has the full support of HM governments 'best practice guidance'.

During 2010/11 the trade has seen a downturn in taxi usage of around 40%, such loss of business has not witnessed since the 1980's, in fact, many within the trade who were operating in those days are of the opinion that the scale of this downturn has surpassed all previously known records.

We only have to visit the city's taxi ranks to witness the often ninety to 120 minute wait by taxi drivers for the next job, and visit the petrol forcourts to witness the unsustainable cost of filling a taxi fuel tank for £80+, in a cab which returns an average of just 23 miles per gallon or 26 pence per every mile, the use of purpose built taxis was as a result of agreement to retain numerical control of hackney carriages back in 1989.

Anyone who who owns a private car must have realised a vast increase in the cost of insurance for their private vehicle, the cost to a hackney carriage proprietor in Oxford has increase since 2009 by an average of 70%, some paying in excess of £2000 per year.

There is a perception within the hackney carriage trade, that the city councils decision in 2009/10 to hold regular unmet demand surveys (for which plate 'levies' have already been introduced), would allow proprietors to make positive, sound business decisions to invest in newer or brand new purpose built vehicles costing them up to £34,000 (around £800 per month in repayments), those proprietors with pre 2003 cabs, have invested in particulate trap exhaust systems costing up to £1600.

It is difficult to understand how a decison by Oxford City Council (an all party resolution) just three years ago, could possibly be reconsidered and or overturned following such intense investment by the trade in support with the agreements made at that time & also at a time when the trade is facing meltdown.

AlanWoodward

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