



Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

Andy Lord
TfL Commissioner
(Sent by email)

6 October 2025

Dear Andy,

TfL's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025

The London Assembly Transport Committee has become increasingly concerned over the past few years about the future of the taxi and private hire (PH) sector in London, carrying out several scrutiny investigations. Most recently, in May and June this year we examined Transport for London's (TfL) new *Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan*, published in March 2025.

We are disappointed with the lack of TfL's engagement with the Committee before the publication of this Action Plan. In March 2024, the Committee wrote to the Mayor recommending that:

"TfL should set out an engagement plan for developing the updated Taxi and Private Hire Vision. This should be a participatory process, including engaging with Assembly Members and the London Assembly Transport Committee."¹

The Committee wrote to you in October 2024 requesting an update on TfL's full plan for stakeholder engagement, consultation and production of the Action Plan.² We wrote again to Christina Calderato, Director of Strategy, and Helen Chapman, Director of Licensing and Regulation, in

¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), March 2024

² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Letter to the Commissioner, Transport for London](#), 29 October 2024

December 2024 requesting a copy of the draft Plan for the Committee to engage with.³ Following this, we received an informal briefing from TfL on the new Action Plan just before its publication. However, we are deeply concerned by the lack of TfL's meaningful engagement with the Committee on the Action Plan and believe there is a need for more proactive engagement from TfL going forward.

Our investigation this year drew heavily on the experience of taxi and PH drivers and their representatives. Through this work, we have heard strong criticism of the Action Plan from driver representatives. It was described to us as "a missed opportunity".⁴ We believe that the Action Plan could have been more effective had TfL conducted more meaningful engagement.

Given the negative response from drivers' representatives, and that a key goal of the Action Plan is to make taxi and PH driving an attractive career for current and future drivers,⁵ we would like to see TfL make a concerted effort to address industry concerns and engage with taxi and PH drivers directly to work through how the Action Plan can deliver the changes demanded. We are aware that TfL meets regularly with driver representative groups, and believe this engagement should be used as an opportunity to build trust with drivers and deliver the improvements we call for in this letter.

This engagement should also feed into the delivery of actions within the Plan given many have a broad delivery timescale of 2025/26 – 2029/30.⁶ Christina Calderato, Director of Transport Policy and Strategy at TfL, told the Committee this timescale is because some actions will be multi-stage and require more stakeholder engagement to inform how the next steps will progress.⁷ TfL must ensure that this ongoing engagement is proactive and meaningful.

Recommendation 1: TfL should establish ongoing proactive engagement with the Committee on taxi and private hire in London. This should include annual verbal briefings to the Committee on its progress on delivering the Action Plan and the recommendations set out in this letter.

Recommendation 2: TfL should publish an annual Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan progress report, which should be published on TfL's website and shared with the Committee and taxi and private hire driver representatives.

The advent of app-based operators has irreversibly changed the landscape of taxi and PH, along with a changing approach to road transport policy. We believe that both Transport for London and Government policy have been slow to catch up, leading to a steep decline in numbers of taxi drivers,

³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Letter to the Directors of Strategy and Licensing and Regulation, Transport for London](#), 9 December 2024

⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 2

⁵ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 27 March 2025

⁶ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 27 March 2025

⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 5

and concerning evidence about working practices in the PH sector. Given the sector's importance to integrated transport, including journeys taken by those who may not have other travel options, and all our commitment to road safety, we believe much more should be done. We want to see immediate action in a number of areas, which we feel are missing from the new Action Plan relating to both the PH and taxi sectors.

Private hire

There are over 100,000 PH drivers working in London.⁸ The Committee has heard evidence from PH driver representatives that this volume of drivers is causing extreme competition for fares.⁹ We heard that it is common among PH drivers to work long hours to earn enough money to live on, and heard of some drivers working 16 hours a day.¹⁰ Working shifts as long as this can result in driver fatigue, and we heard that driving under these conditions is dangerous for drivers, members of the public and passengers.¹¹ This also raises serious concerns about safety. We believe TfL need to take more proactive responsibility for conditions in the sector.

TfL has previously called on the Government for a cap on PH vehicles,¹² and the Mayor's Transport Strategy (MTS) states that the Mayor, through TfL, will seek powers to limit the overall number of PH vehicles licensed for use in London.¹³ In March 2024 the Committee called on the Mayor and the Government to impose a cap on PH vehicles in London.¹⁴ We continue to believe that a cap on PH vehicles is necessary to improve working conditions of drivers and increase the safety of passengers and the public. Yet, the Action Plan does not include this ask.

We asked Helen Chapman, Director of Licensing, Regulation and Charging at TfL, about this and we were told that TfL does not believe that a cap is necessary.¹⁵ Instead, we heard TfL is calling for an end to cross-border hiring¹⁶, stating that this is a more urgent issue and that "the risk is that you get the powers to cap and the loophole with cross border hiring is not addressed".¹⁷

⁸ TfL, [Licensing information](#)

⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, p. 11

¹⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, p. 2, pp. 7-8 and p.16

¹¹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, pp. 7-8

¹² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles](#), 23 January 2024

¹³ Mayor of London, [The Mayor's Transport Strategy](#), March 2018

¹⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), March 2024

¹⁵ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, pp. 18-21

¹⁶ Cross border hiring is where taxis or private hire vehicles that are licensed by one licensing authority work wholly or predominantly in another licensing authority area. This practice is permitted under current legislation.

¹⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 19

The Committee agrees that cross-border hiring is a serious issue, and we have previously written to the Government to call for a stop to this practice.¹⁸ However, both these issues require urgent attention, and TfL should call for both simultaneously. Given the impact a PH vehicle cap would have on driver welfare and safety we believe TfL must reinstate its support for this.

Recommendation 3: TfL should lobby the Government for legislative powers to establish a private hire vehicle cap.

As drivers work longer hours to make up their pay, this can lead to driver fatigue and raises questions around road safety. Increased data sharing by operators as part of their licensing agreements with TfL would enable TfL to monitor the business practices of operators. It would also provide TfL with a better picture of how long drivers are working, how much they are being paid and where they are operating. This would help TfL to ensure that the PH industry is supporting the MTS targets in terms of safety and congestion. Helen Chapman told us that a legislative change is required in order for TfL to collect this type of data.¹⁹ Action 7 in TfL's Action Plan calls on the Government to make legislative changes to allow TfL to mandate data sharing as part of its licensing agreements.²⁰ The Committee will also be writing to the Government to recommend this change to legislation, however, TfL's approach to this matter feels somewhat like passing the buck, and given the importance of these issues to drivers and the public, we believe TfL could be actively exploring what is within its power when relicensing PH operators. To improve transparency, we also believe TfL should publish a PH operator's licensing conditions as soon as it has issued their licence.

Recommendation 4: To improve the transparency and robustness of its relicensing, TfL should:

- **explore conditions, including data sharing, for monitoring the business practices of operators.**
- **engage with the Committee and organisations representing drivers regarding licensing conditions before issuing licences to private hire operators.**
- **publish the licensing conditions immediately once a licence has been issued.**

As an example of where we believe TfL should use its licensing powers more proactively to ensure driver welfare and road safety is considered, we heard evidence on the impact of algorithmic job allocation through mobile phones. Many app-based PH operators currently use technology that requires drivers to read messages and touch their phones whilst driving. Uber's 'Trip Radar' technology allows "drivers using Uber a chance to see and select requests happening nearby" and that "While driving, Trip Radar requests will appear like offer cards".²¹ We heard that Trip Radar is

¹⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), 15 March 2024, p. 3

¹⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 6

²⁰ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), March 2025, p. 34

²¹ Uber, [More choices over trips with Trip Radar](#), 21 July 2022

dangerous because drivers must touch their phones and focus their attention on a message to read what has been sent or they risk losing work.²² This raises serious safety concerns.

It is illegal to hold or use a phone while driving.²³ It is concerning that this technology appears to be pressuring drivers into committing an offence. Helen Chapman told us that touching a phone whilst driving “is not something that we regulate for specifically” but that TfL does issue “weekly comms to drivers” on the law around mobile phone offences.²⁴ This approach puts the burden onto drivers, rather than tackling the root cause of the issue – unsafe operator systems. It also directly contradicts two of the ambitions in TfL’s Action Plan, attracting drivers and ensuring safety.²⁵ We believe that TfL’s hands-off approach to regulating PH operators is having a serious impact on road safety, passenger safety, and driver working conditions. TfL must be more proactive in taking steps to resolve issues related to large app-based operator systems, such as Trip Radar.

Recommendation 5: By the end of 2025, TfL should make it a condition of licensing that operators do not use technologies that require drivers to read messages or touch their phones whilst they are driving.

Taxi

The taxi industry in London is in decline. In 2013-14, there were 22,810 taxis licensed to operate on London’s roads, but this fell by 35 per cent over the ten years to 2023-24.²⁶ The Taxi and PH Action Plan demonstrates clearly how the taxis can provide safe options for travel, and black cab is one of London’s most accessible forms of transport, and so the decline has a disproportionate impact on Disabled Londoners. Given this context we are concerned TfL is not taking this decline seriously enough.

We heard from taxi drivers that some of their greatest concerns are access to London’s roads, modernising the Knowledge and the increasing cost of buying and operating a taxi.²⁷ These are not new issues. In March 2024 we wrote to the Mayor recommending he look at steps to increase competition in the approved London taxi market.²⁸ We also recommended that the Mayor and TfL should further explore making the Knowledge more modular and should set out steps to encourage and support more women and people from a diverse range of backgrounds to enrol in the Knowledge.²⁹ We continue to believe action on these issues would help reverse the decline of taxis in

²² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London’s Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 1](#), 15 May 2025, p. 13

²³ Department for Transport, [Using a phone, sat van or other device while driving](#)

²⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London’s Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 17

²⁵ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), March 2025, p. 19

²⁶ There were 14,800 licensed taxis in 2023/24; TfL, [Licensing information](#)

²⁷ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London’s Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 1 (access to London’s roads), pp. 6-7 (modernising the Knowledge), p.2 (costs)

²⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), March 2024

²⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Letter to Mayor](#), March 2024

London, and would request regular progress updates on TfL's work to address these issues, in line with Recommendation 1 in this letter.

TfL told us that it sees taxis as a "really important part of London's transport mix" and that its Action Plan is setting out a "long term commitment and vision" for taxis to be a thriving trade.³⁰ We welcome TfL's statement in its Action Plan that it will take steps to halt the decline of London's taxi trade.³¹ The Committee wants to see transparency in the specific targets TfL has to address the declining number of taxis in London.

Recommendation 6: TfL should set a specific target to increase the number of taxi drivers in London.

The Committee has heard that the cost of purchasing and operating London's iconic black cab is a key barrier to entry for those wanting to join the industry. We heard that in December 2017, the price of a black cab was £47,000³² but that now, the cheapest taxi available costs £70,000.³³ We heard to finance it, the cost is around £100,000 with current interest rates.³⁴

TfL's Action Plan states TfL will continue to call on the Government to continue the plug-in taxi grant and remove VAT from the purchase of taxis as options for financial support for taxi drivers.³⁵ However, the Committee notes that the value of the plug-in taxi grant has continually decreased and the Government has made it clear it does not intend to remove VAT from taxis.^{36 37} The Committee therefore believes that TfL must start considering other forms of financial support for taxi drivers, on the cost of purchasing and financing vehicles, that can be brought in quickly and provide long-term reassurance to those wanting to become a taxi driver.

The Committee asked TfL if they are considering any alternative measures to financially support taxi drivers. In response, TfL told us about its de-licensing scheme that is no longer running, and that it continues to lobby Government for the plug-in taxi grant and wheelchair accessible VAT

³⁰ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 21

³¹ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), March 2025, p. 22

³² London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 2

³³ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 12

³⁴ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 12

³⁵ TfL, [Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), March 2025

³⁶ Department for Transport [1,000 jobs created at new £325 million factory for electric taxis](#), 22 March 2017; Department for Transport, [£120 million to roll-out more electric vans, taxis and motorbikes](#), 25 February 2025

³⁷ Minister for Roads and Local Transport, [Response to Letter on Taxis and PHVs](#), 19 April 2024, p. 2

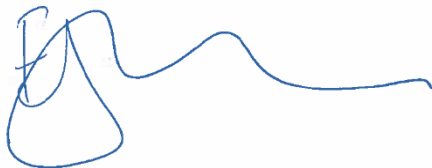
exemptions.³⁸ It is clear that TfL is not exploring alternative options to support taxi drivers with the cost of vehicles.

We heard that the Mayor's Green Finance Fund could be used to solve the problem faced by taxi drivers in terms of the upfront cost of the taxi.³⁹ Future rounds of the Mayor's Green Finance Fund will be subject to the availability of funds.⁴⁰ But, we believe this funding stream should be explored further.

Recommendation 7: TfL should bring forward proposals for new financial support mechanisms for the taxi trade, beyond the plug-in taxi grant and VAT exemption. This should include exploring using the Mayor's Green Finance Fund.

I would be grateful if you could respond to this letter by 17 November 2025. Please send your responses to Hannah Barlow, Principal Committee Manager, hannah.barlow@london.gov.uk and Eleanor Haigh, Senior Policy Adviser, eleanor.haigh@london.gov.uk.

Yours,



Elly Baker AM
Chair of the Transport Committee

³⁸ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025](#), 17 June 2025, p. 30

³⁹ London Assembly Transport Committee, [Transport for London's Taxi and Private Hire Action Plan 2025 – Panel 2](#), 15 May 2025, p. 13

⁴⁰ GLA, [Green Finance Fund FAQs](#), 'When is the deadline for applications?'