

NWTP Response to Sub Regional Plan

The North West Taxi Proprietors are disappointed at the level of spend by DRD for the taxi industry in the Draft Sub-Regional Transportation Plan 2015. We believe that the department does not prioritise taxis properly or give them credit for the part they play in the overall integrated transport system.

When we look at the amount of spend in other areas:

- Bus replacement - £128.1 million
- Concessionary fare scheme (Buses) - £102.3 million
- Fuel duty for buses - £48.2 million
- Improved bus services – £45.6 million
- Cycle measures - £2.8 million
- Walk measures – £29.8 million
- Bus facilities (Bus stops) - £3.3 million
- Bus stations - £10.5 million
- Park & Ride - £5.3 million
- TPPD - £4.8 million
- Rail schemes - £5.0 million

According to RTS the proposed spend on the taxi industry is 0.2 million to be spent on 15 taxi ranks.

Considering that the taxi industry carries a comparable amount of passengers as the buses and significantly more than the trains (Consumer Council Report), we think it is scandalous that the Draft Sub-Regional Transport Plan has trivialised the taxi industry's contribution to transport in this region.

The taxi industry has grown considerably over the last two years with the introduction of taxi plating. The taxi industry, according to your figures, was carrying slightly less than the buses. We believe that now the taxi industry is carrying comparable numbers to the buses if not more. The taxi industry gives greater coverage. We understand and accept the task that you are doing in developing an integrated transport system that delivers across the region but we do not believe that the taxi industry has been given proper priority within the plan.

We believe that you should revisit the SRTP after reading the Draft Taxi Bill and work with the DOE to assist in creating significant change both for the industry and for the general public.

The NWTP welcomes the initiative in the Draft Sub-Regional Transportation Plan to put taxi ranks in the main hubs across the North. We would like the local taxi industry consulted on the location of these ranks. We also believe that the SRTP should go much further on this issue given that the Draft Taxi Bill will introduce Operator licensing for all taxi offices. We believe that existing taxi offices should get ranking space for two or three vehicles outside their office to allow them to trade.

The NWTP believe that the Concessionary fare scheme should be extended to the taxi industry. The Draft Taxi Bill will insist that all taxis are metered and can print receipts on demand. We believe that with new technologies an accountable mechanism could be developed that would allow the department to extend the scheme to the taxi industry.

The taxi draft taxi bill has indicated that there will be an increase in the number of Accessible vehicles. We believe that government policy on inclusion would be taken forward much faster if financial incentive was given to taxi drivers who purchased accessible vehicles. There is a considerable bus replacement budget that will help deal with issues of DDA for them, why shouldn't taxi drivers dealing with the same issue be assisted?

We would also like to see the voucher schemes expanded in order to allow the taxi industry to play a much greater role in the delivery of demand responsive transport. The taxi industry covers more of the region than the buses and for longer periods with many areas being serviced 24 hours a day -7 days a week. We believe that great opportunity exists in this area for the taxi industry.

The NWTP are disappointed that DRD tendered the Door 2 Door transport scheme and selected a bus company to deliver it instead of working with the taxi industry in their respective areas. The taxi industry because of fragmentation would find it difficult to apply and deliver a tender on a six county basis. DRD should revise the tendering process and facilitate the taxi industry at local level where possible.

On the issue of Taxi bus and shared taxi schemes we still need to tease out the detail of the Draft Taxi Bill with the DOE before exploring how these will develop.

On the issue of planned spend by the DRD we believe that there is no balance of spend between buses and taxis even though we play a major role in the integrated transport system. We would like the department to review taxi issues after reading the DOE Draft Taxi Bill and look seriously at the role an enhanced taxi industry that is better regulated should play in the overall integrated transport system. We would like to see the taxi industry receive greater priority from your department and more recognition for the role we play in the integrated transport system.

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