

Dear Mr Haswell,

Firstly please let me apologise for the lateness of my response to your letter dated 17/02/2009 regarding the Hackney Carriage Waiting List.

Firstly the problem with the business isn't a downturn in trade, primarily the problem is greedy plate owners that are charging over inflated prices to either rent a plate or to drive a licensed Hackney Carriage, currently I am renting a plate and it costs £230 per week. Five years ago a similar plate would have cost £120 per week, so in 5 years, business has not doubled but with the outlay that Taxi Drivers have due to fuel prices, insurance costs, licensing costs and inflated plate rental costs as you can see it would prove to be increasing difficult to make a living. To drive a licensed vehicle, day shift drivers and night shift drivers combined are paying approximately £400 per week and this doesn't always include insurance costs.

Thirdly, with regards the new Hackney Carriage Plates that are being released, I was talking to a gentleman last week who will very shortly be entitled to one of the new Hackney Carriage Plates and when questioned what he was going to do with the plate once he had received it, his reply was I only have a couple of years to go before I retire, so I am going to sell it instantly, I should be able to get around £30,000. At this point as you can imagine, being considerably further down the Hackney Carriage waiting list, it's safe to say that I was outraged that someone could do such a thing, so in my personal opinion, that the whole Hackney Carriage waiting list should be re thought, for example.

Anyone that is no longer involved with the trade should not be left on the list.

Anyone that is close to retirement age, i.e. 5 years or less, should be moved down the list and also

If they are given a Hackney Plate, they should be prevented from selling that plate within a set time frame, e.g. 5 years

If this was done, it would prevent older drivers approaching pensionable age to rethink their situation.

The main problem with the waiting list is that you have drivers who applied to put themselves down on the waiting list a number of years ago and have left the business due to the costs that they have incurred for plate rents or driving licensed vehicles and have gone into other lines of employment, but have never bothered to removed themselves from the waiting list or to notify the council that they are no longer taxi drivers, if a check was done on a regular basis to see if said drivers are still in the business or not, then those who are obviously should be kept on the list, but those who no longer consider taxi driving as a form of employment should be removed from the waiting list, giving people who are still in the business, more of a chance to get their own plate.

Regards