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To: [Democratic Services](#)
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To the chairman of committee
Wokingham Borough Council
Dear sir or madam

I would like to point out some important points on behalf of Wokingham taxi drivers association. As we have raised our concerns about the online hailing companies especially Uber and Ola taking over more than 70% of our business without a local license.

All the drivers are struggling to keep the bread on the table for themselves and their families. But there is no one who can give us support.

Instead public protection partnership has recently dictated many new changes in their licensing criteria, which have made it almost impossible to keep our businesses running.

Most importantly, the recent, out of proportion, increase in licensing fees, which we never saw in history. And all of this was proposed, got approved and implemented in such a secrecy that not even a single driver, private hire or hackney, got news of it, until a couple of drivers received their license renewal invitations by post.

Let me remind you here, that taxi and licensing is non profitable department and without presenting an audit report this increase can not be justified.

Manchester city council has to decrease their licensing fees from around 155 pounds to 38 pound when challenged by the taxi Association to take the matter to court. But matter was sorted in a out of court agreement and an external audit was agreed.

The very reason, for which public protection partnership was formed, was to save money. But this is causing extra burden on local resources. So we demand to revert back to single council operation. And commence an external audit, to find out whether there should be an increase in the fees or it should be decreased.

The second point is the decrease in the licensed vehicles age from 15 years to 10 years. Again on this point the trade view point is completely ignored or not even passed on to the respective committee. After the commencement of recent works in town centre, the much needed extra taxi rank in Denmark Street could be easily sorted, atleast some arrangements could be made for temporary taxi rank over the weekend nights.

But law abiding drivers are stuck on the only rank in broad Street for hours without job. Even this rank is closed/decommissioned , without providing any alternate, from time to time. As it would be the case over this weekend. Which encourages a very few drivers to make their own ranks all around the town.

Drivers and trade is never consulted on these issues. Rather against the council's bylaws there should be a yearly review with the trade involvement, to seek the taxi fares alterations. But it was completely ignored in last 5 years. we never increased our fares for nearly a decade. Wokingham drivers demand to increase that inline with neighbouring councils and the inflation rate on national level.

This all has put us all to the wall and we do not want to take any action which is regretted in the future by any party and demand for the involvement of trade view point in decision making process and transparency in the process. Which is a norm in any democratic society.

We all expect some positive outcome in near future and the reversal of the recent unfair policy imposed by Wokingham Borough Council.
Kind regards

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