

**NOTICE OF MOTION****LABOUR & CO-OPERATIVE GROUP****REFORM OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE OPERATION**

“For the past year, at the request of the government, the Law Commission has been consulting on changes to legislation governing taxi and private hire vehicle operation. The government’s stated principals for the review are based on de-regulation and the imposition of national standards.

Following thousands of submissions from taxi drivers, private hire operators, unions, local licensing authorities, disability groups and other stakeholders as to the effect that such de-regulation would have, the Law Commission has published an interim statement proposing that for Hackney Carriages local authorities would retain their powers to regulate numbers and exercise some quality control.

However, concern remains as to the effect on the city’s local Private Hire trade from the government’s preference that only national standards will apply particularly in respect of;

- Removing border restrictions
- No requirement for a local ‘knowledge’ test
- No mandatory requirement for disability awareness training
- A ‘light-touch’ approach to accessibility issues
- The loss of any locally agreed price structure and consumer protection

Should these proposals be enacted, local companies and drivers will face fierce competition from larger companies, possibly from London, who could flood the city with cabs offering cut-price deals and drive the local trade out of the market. Such de-regulation of the Private Hire trade could then also affect the Hackney trade leading to a general loss of local identity and service standards.

Further concerns relating to public safety with respect to enforcement have not been dealt with by the Law Commission. They have not explained how a car licensed in one part of the country but working in another will be managed.

Our City with over 1000 licensed vehicles is already struggling to cope with enough rank spaces. Major concerns regarding the number of vehicles which might come to Brighton affecting the already high co2 emissions is also of great concern.

Furthermore concerns relate to the service provision for wheelchair users who call for Private Hire Services. Currently under local authority control this provision is met by the Council working with local stakeholders. If this control is removed in favour of national standards this provision could disappear.

Therefore this council,

- Welcomes the interim proposals from the Law Commission relating to Hackney Carriages that will allow this council to continue with its policy of managed growth and quality control.
- Expresses grave concern as to the potential effects of the de-regulation of the Private Hire trade with particular concern to Public Safety, a possible increase in Co2 levels, service provision to wheelchair users and further concerns that local operators and drivers could be driven out of the market.
- Requests that the Chief Executive conveys these specific concerns in relation to the local Private Hire trade as set out in this motion to the relevant government minister and to the Law Commission.”

Proposed by: Cllr Lepper

Seconded by: Cllr Robins

Supported by: Cllrs Fitch, Hamilton, Carden, Farrow, Marsh, Pissaridou, Gilbey, Lepper, Morgan, Meadows and Wilson.