



Since the initial meeting of the Petitions Committee we have received replies to enquiries concerning Intended Use Policy and Cross Border hiring from Rhondda Cynon Taf and Newport City Licensing Departments. Intended use is when a council asks an applicant where they intend to use their taxi, if they state that it's predominantly away from that licensing area the council in question would refuse the application.

The two Authorities in question are responsible for the highest number of cars working predominantly in Cardiff

Their replies highlight the urgent need to put a stop to Cross Border hiring.

Rhondda CynonTaf confirmed that they currently operate an Intended Use Policy and that they have recently undertaken a joint exercise with Cardiff County Council Licensing Officers.

The following is an extract from the email received from RCT

*"I can confirm that Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council currently operate an "Intended Use" policy which states that Hackney Carriages licensed with this Authority would be expected to trade primarily within the area of Rhondda Cynon Taf.*

*However, as a result of complaints concerning drivers of RCT licensed vehicles plying for hire in the area of Cardiff, Licensing Enforcement Officers have recently carried out joint enforcement exercises with their Cardiff counterparts.*

*Regarding instances where complaints have been received concerning a specific vehicle, enquiries have been made with the proprietor's insurance provider to bring this matter to their attention."*

As can be seen from the email RCT Council acted on receipt of complaints received so have obviously accepted that there is a problem. Whilst they have informed Insurance Companies of the situation they do not appear to have taken any direct action to suspend or revoke licenses.

Latest information shows that 77 RCT Vehicles were licensed at a Cardiff address. Averaging out the annual cost of a drivers badge and taxi plate at £187 per car based on current RCT charges this results in income of £14,399 paid to RCT from cars registered to Cardiff addresses.

Newport City Council have informed us that they do not operate an Intended Use Policy in any form. This has obviously had a huge part to play in the unbelievable number of Newport cars working predominantly in Cardiff as it has created a free for all.

The following is an extract from the email received from Newport City Council Licensing :

*"Afternoon,*

*Newport City Council does not currently have an 'Intended Use Policy', we view a 'Intended Use Policy' does not work in practice as we have multiple operators who complete work outside the borough, example of this would be airport contracts and school contracts, most of which are not completed in area. We understand that some boroughs have implemented this policy to prevent companies like Uber operating. In theory this could be implemented, in practice this would unfairly penalise and place unfair restrictions on operators.*

*Best Regards,*

*Mr Llyr Roberts*

*Swyddog Trwyddedu/ Licensing Officer*

This response was extremely worrying for a number of reasons: They have not grasped the concept that if a journey were to start or finish inside their Licensing Area that wouldn't infringe any Intended Use Policy. Also of concern is that they have seen fit to actually name Uber and made vague accusations that other authorities have implemented Intended Use Policies to prevent Uber from operating. Surely there is no unfair penalty to any Bona Fide Operator whose business is based in Newport and whose cars operate predominantly within the area.

Maybe there is a clue in the fact that latest figures show 122 Newport Licensed cars registered to Cardiff postal addresses. That figure will significantly grow due to the fact that Newport are currently experiencing a huge amount of applications for licenses, so much so that due to the high demand the next available knowledge test to obtain a Newport license is the end of January 2018.

Using the current figures the income from a drivers badge and plate is £249 per car per annum. A total of £30,378 collected from Newport plated cars registered in Cardiff.

Therefore it can be seen that, as well as being a problem for Cardiff drivers who find their work being eroded by out of town cars, RCT and Newport Councils benefit financially to the detriment of Cardiff.

When adding Merthyr (at last count 15) and Transport for London (at last count 74) to those from RCT and Newport there are 288 "out of town" cars registered to Cardiff addresses. At current rates the cost of a drivers badge and taxi plate in Cardiff is £135. So Cardiff County Council are missing out on £38,880 that they would have collected had the cars been licensed in their home area.

These are figures from just four authorities, and where the license holder actually resides in Cardiff. There are, no doubt, many more drivers that actually live in the area that they are licensed yet travel to Cardiff to work. Equally there are other authorities cars that are frequently seen working in Cardiff, further depressing the earning potential of local drivers in what is already an area with severe vehicle overcapacity.

Other Councils are therefore reaping the financial benefits of licensing cars whilst not having to fund the regulation of the vehicles.

Cardiff on the other hand is losing a substantial sum of money and having to deal with the problems associated with large numbers of out of town cars.

As we stated in our first response we don't want this to be an 'anti-Uber' rant, we welcome the competition another operator brings to the City, it also offers local drivers more choice with another operator BUT there's no disguising the fact that it is Uber that primarily take advantage of the cross-border and sub-contracting loophole in the law. We brought this petition because of the legislation that allows Uber to work in the way they do.

TAXI DRIVERS of CARDIFF