

From: Zeya Ahmed
Sent: 18 October 2010 18:16
To: Lisa Wilkes; Carl Knights
Cc: Phil Bartholomew (4); 'Abdul Hoque (57)'; 'Adrian Parsons (52)'; 'Alan Wood (77)'; 'Chas Rodgers (21)'; 'Derek McKeown (32)'; 'Mark Leighton (15)'; Paul Elliott (5); 'Shakoor Ahmed'
Subject: Mouchel
Attachments: GHCA Submission re Mouchel report.doc

Lisa,

I think you have now read the representation sent by Chas after being checked and approved by me, but I have attached it again just in case. I would like to expand on some points:

1. I, along with Phil Bartholomew attended the initial meeting with the two people from Mouchel. In that meeting, we were told that the survey was to be done over a period of two weeks; the impression given was that two whole weeks' worth of observations would be carried out. What we actually got was three partial days. Such a short period is only of any use to low grade statisticians and political spin doctors, it is not a scientific basis for extrapolating and meaningful results, especially as the taxi trade has fluctuations through the day, week, month and year. On choosing three days that are our busiest in any given week still managed to show that drivers were waiting on the rank for extended periods of time before getting fares, but the final conclusion of the report is that there is no significant unmet demand, but were also not able to recommend a limit to plates because the situation is "borderline". I would like to know how that conclusion was reached. If any results were to be extrapolated from the survey, it would be that the quieter days of the week must be much worse than was observed on the three busiest days and therefore there is no unmet demand at all and in fact there are too many taxis in Gloucester.
2. Reference was made to disabled customers but Mouchel did not consult with any disability forum in Gloucester to get an idea of the local situation regarding proportion of disabled people who use wheelchairs and what other disabilities may need to be considered by the trade, and yet felt able to say that more wheelchair vehicles would be needed.
3. The survey was for unmet demand in taxi provision, but by constantly referring to private hires as taxis as well, managed to confuse anyone they actually questioned and served only to reinforce a fallacy that private hires are taxis and they did not even ask if anyone knew the difference. The survey is only needed to limit taxi plates, not private hire plates and therefore, only general information was required about private hire and more focus should have been on the actual taxi trade and issues surrounding it.

I do not think a remedial report is going to be much good, especially when Mouchel managed to confuse the public so thoroughly about what is and is not a taxi, and therefore did more damage to our trade by reinforcing the rogue operators' contention that they are taxis.

Zeya

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