

Cabinet Secretary for Justice
Cabinet Secretary for Transport, Infrastructure and Connectivity

Copy to: Cabinet Secretary for Economy, Fair Work and Culture

ENGAGEMENT WITH THE TAXI SECTOR

I met representatives of Unite the Union on Friday to brief them on plans to announce an increase in funding for business support for the taxi sector from £19 to £57 million and eligibility criteria which would be applied by local authorities as they disburse grants of £1,500 all 38,000 licensed taxi and private hire drivers.

As you would expect they welcomed that, and acknowledged the way they had been engaged meaningfully in the development of this support. They also raised a set of wider issues: voicing concerns about the practical implications of what they perceive to be variations in the way local authorities operate licensing arrangements; and the need to initiate work to look at the case for recalibrating LEZ rollout given the economic and social impacts of the pandemic. It was clear to me that Unite - and I expect other sector representatives - have recognised the importance of taxi drivers to our social and economic fabric, and want to engage with government in a different way.

For my part I am increasingly conscious that the sector connects with a diverse set of policy issues, and while engagement and dialogue is in place, it may not be as integrated as we would wish. We have tackled policy silos successfully in other areas. Notwithstanding my relatively narrow policy interest, I believe there is real merit and potential in developing a more structured and cross-cutting dialogue with the full range sector representatives to deliver holistic and improved co-production of integrated and effective policies. Your policy interest are of course more explicit and direct, and I would welcome your views on whether you wish to pursue that opportunity.

JH

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 18 January 2021 06:59

To: Minister for Business, Fair Work and Skills <MinisterBFWS@gov.scot>

Cc: REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; Rollison R (Richard) <Richard.Rollison@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@transport.gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; REDACTED <REDACTED@gov.scot>; Business Engagement <businessengagement@gov.scot>

Subject: RE: COVID19 Business Support - Support for Taxi Drivers - meeting with Unite on 15 January 2021- briefing

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My summary of the key points discussed on Friday:

- Unite welcomed scale of increase in funding and level of award, while noting the ongoing challenges faced by the sector and a determination to continue to lobby for further support
- Unite raised a set of wider concerns, notably around inconsistent approaches by LAs to licensing and the case for reframing the timetable for LEZ implementation because of COVID impacts (hence copied to REDACTED, REDACTED and REDACTED).

The Minister determined to minute Cabinet Secretaries proposing a more formal and cross-cutting approach to engagement with the sector, and a draft is attached.

[REDACTED]
Strategic Engagement, Coordination and COVID-19 Business Support
Directorate for Economic Development
Scottish Government
3rd Floor, 5 Atlantic Quay
Glasgow, G2 8LU
M - [REDACTED]