

**WRITTEN QUESTION TO THE MINISTER FOR TRANSPORT AND TECHNICAL SERVICES
BY CONNÉTABLE S.A. CROWCROFT OF ST. HELIER
ANSWER TO BE TABLED ON TUESDAY 19th JANUARY 2010**

Question

Would the Minister explain what practical and legal difficulties would have to be overcome in order to allow private hire cabs to provide transport for members of the public waiting at a taxi rank on those occasions when there are no taxis available to service the rank?

Answer

The Motor Traffic (Taxi-Cabs – General) (Jersey) Order 2002 already provides for restricted taxicabs (private hire cabs) to pick up passengers at a taxi rank established at the Airport, Albert Pier or Elizabeth Harbour if no controlled taxicab (rank taxi) is standing on the taxi rank. If a restricted taxicab picks up a passenger at or in the vicinity of a taxi rank contrary to Article 3(1) of the Order or provision 18 of the Code of Conduct for taxicab licence holders and drivers, such action is a breach of the taxicab’s public service vehicle licence and renders the licence liable to be revoked or suspended in accordance with Article 10(1)(b) of the Motor Traffic (Jersey) Law 1935. Amending Article 3(2) of the Order by removing the words “established at the Airport, Albert Pier or Elizabeth Harbour” and similarly amending the Code of Conduct, would appear, at first, to overcome the main legal difficulties.

However, under the Law, it is my duty to ensure, as far as practicable, that there is an adequate, efficient and reasonably priced taxicab service available throughout Jersey at all times. There is a likelihood, as evidenced at the Airport, that amending the Order as outlined would lead to some restricted taxicabs lurking in the vicinity of ranks rather than responding to house calls or other work required of their company, thus reducing the service to others. Restricted taxicab fares are not controlled so the public using these taxicabs from ranks would probably incur higher charges. It is also questionable how often and when these occasions arise especially when it can be the case that several controlled taxis will be approaching the rank to cater for those waiting. So following this option may not improve the overall service to the public.

It is the case, of course, that any controlled or restricted taxicab available for hire can be hailed on street. Rather than pursuing one particular option, we should be looking at all options including providing further late night ranks near popular venues, staggering pub and club closing times to spread the load on taxicabs and encouraging the public coming out of pubs and clubs to ‘phone or text for a taxicab or start heading homewards, hailing a taxicab on street rather than gathering at ranks. We should also provide greater certainty of fares. These and other measures will be considered and promoted when I review the taxicab industry as part of the Sustainable Transport Policy, to achieve a more efficient and integrated taxicab industry and ensure a good service into the future for the public.