



**OFFICE OF THE TRAFFIC COMMISSIONER  
(WEST OF ENGLAND)**

**LEAD TRAFFIC COMMISSIONER FOR GAMES DELIVERY**

**Post Olympic and Paralympic Games Legacy:  
“Thoughts of a Traffic Commissioner”**

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# 1. Background

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- 1.1 At the end of 2010 the traffic commissioners recognised the need to be involved with key transport and other stakeholders at an early stage in order to support the bus, coach and haulage industry help deliver a successful Olympic and Paralympic Games 2012 ('the Games'). This paper highlights some of the lessons that were learnt during this piece of work which should assist with future challenges, such as the upcoming Commonwealth Games in 2014, as well as inform the general regulatory functions performed by traffic commissioners.

## 2. The Positives

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- 2.1 It was critical that every element of the transport industry took responsibility for their activity in delivering a safe and compliant road transport system for a logistics event on a scale not seen before in peacetime. It was not the sole responsibility of the driver, transport manager, trade association, enforcement body, transport authority or regulator to deliver this, but a collective responsibility. It was therefore essential that an already existing collaborative relationship was further developed with all stakeholders to ensure that the transport activity surrounding the Games remained compliant while faced with the challenges of extraordinary additional demand on an often much altered network.
- 2.2 As a result of the 'can do' approach to collaborative working across the board, I witnessed accessible, efficient and cost effective regulation which is a credit to all involved. Industry recognises and expects effective communication in delivery; I intend that we deliver on those successes by seeking empowerment at a local level.
- 2.3 The synergies which emerged during delivery of the Games have provided a foundation for additional regulatory tools which can now be taken forward from that work and into the future:
- The provision of the database of all Goods and Public Service Vehicle (PSV) Operators in Great Britain to Transport for London (TfL) for targeted messaging. Agreed messages at no cost to TCs.
  - Broader communication networks and media coverage through shared working, ensuring we all spoke with 'one voice'. This brought certainty for operators.
  - Out of hours' delivery Code of Practice to ensure quiet delivery of goods in residential areas due to the embargo of deliveries in Central London between 6am and Midnight. The Code ensured a measured approach as there was never a 'one size fits all' fix. The Code in itself is a Legacy for consideration in future where proposed operating centres receive objections and/or representations.
  - The 'Freight Forum' set up by TfL in 2011 to understand the challenges facing operators and the information they needed to meet the challenges of the Games was an exemplar of collaborative working. I am delighted that TfL has committed to continue with the Freight Forum and I hope it can be mirrored for coach operators in a similar way.
  - Improved sharing of information, experience and knowledge between relevant organisations, giving greater clarity on how each works.

### 3. Information Technology

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3.1 Whilst collaborative working can provide some of the advantages described above, we must also recognise that in this computerised age, it is essential to develop delivery of efficient and low cost services, whilst placing minimal burden on the end user. To do this, IT systems are required. The Games demonstrated that this does not necessarily mean developing a new system every time a need is identified, but more often than not it is about identifying the quick, low-cost wins that exploit the existing systems that are available:

- The need for dedicated electronic lines of communication based on subject areas: e.g. "Subject specific e-mail addresses" to ensure that communications are taking place at a group level rather than on a one-to-one basis.
- Utilisation of existing Self Service operator data for the purposes of direct messaging to operators.
- Working with Trade Associations and TfL to deliver formal messaging and urgent messaging. Taking this to the next level for future activity would ideally lead to the development and maintenance of a specialist contacts database.

3.2 While the above themes run strongly through the legacy work, there are more general working methods that require mentioning. Support, flexibility and collaboration from the people involved are key elements that are evidenced by the following points:

- The experience of the Games confirmed the strength of the TC team. The Operator Licence regime and connected jurisdictions offer value for money with the regulation of 80,894 HGV licences, 9090 bus and coach licences and in excess of 500,000 vocational drivers for approximately £11.5 million pounds per year. TCs have long recognised the potential strengths of portfolio working. It allows us to play to the individual strengths of individual TCs who can lead on a particular policy or delivery area. The real advantage is that we do not need to retain large numbers of policy staff and the support both within the Office of the Traffic Commissioner (OTC), including the Office of the Senior Traffic Commissioner (OSTC) can be kept as lean as possible. The circumstances surrounding preparation for the Games illustrate the flexibility and advantages of these arrangements where I was requested by the Board of TCs to assume the lead in order to address potential risks arising from a lack of capacity in the then Senior Traffic Commissioner's (STC) office. Portfolio working has evolved with OTC and Licensing staff working with and to the Lead TCs, who then report back to TC colleagues. The Games helped expedite that evolution process due to the fast pace, tight deadlines and volume of work involved. The STC has recognised this in issuing new instructions to staff on future working. TCs continue to keep resource allocation, development of working methods and partnership arrangements under review to ensure that we can deliver to the widest audience against our stated objectives using the most efficient means.
- Real collaborative working between TCs and Department for Transport (DfT) lawyers and officials in relation to required legislative amendments. Recognising the practical and legal expertise of TCs.

- The role of the traffic commissioners as regulators of the commercial transport industry was identified to a wider audience, through the Games Transport Board (and predecessors), regional events and media engagement.
- Enhanced awareness of some of the tensions between PSV and Community Transport to help inform behaviour moving forward in London.
- Limousines: Traffic Commissioners brought the potential reputational risk to the Games of unlicensed, un-roadworthy limousines to the table at the Games Transport Board. Taken forward by TfL with the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) and the Metropolitan Police with excellent results.
- Deputy Traffic Commissioners and OTC/Central Licensing Office (CLO) staff demonstrated that they were capable of supporting changes at short notice and committed to helping deliver on the Games.
- CLO and I provided technical support to vehicle manufacturers during design and build phase of specialist vehicles for the Torch Parade to ensure they were capable of being licensed. Future events will ensure detailed enquiries are made as to the nature of the media vehicles at an early stage too.
- Template for future large scale events e.g. Commonwealth Games.

## 4. The Opportunities

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4.1 While there were many positives delivered by the work around the Games, there were some opportunities for improvement identified that would benefit from additional consideration. While I recognise that the majority of those positives came from the combined work of multiple stakeholders, by its very nature it brings with it additional risks which require management:

- Collaborative working requires real clarity around roles and product ownership. Some of the work would therefore have benefited from more structured, frequent meetings especially between OTC and VOSA in order to deliver those clear action points and ownership.
- A risk register was developed for this work; however, earlier development of the document may well have prevented some of the additional points such as the one above.
- Any piece of work that is impacted by legislation, in particular the need to have legislative change requires time invested in order to assess the impact of that legislation. It would have been beneficial for vehicle manufacturers to have had a clearer understanding of the legislative requirements placed upon them in order to give them sufficient lead time to adapt to the changes.

## 5. Conclusion

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- 5.1 One of the key messages before the Games was that it was not just about the event itself, but about the Legacy of the Games. If there is one thing to be taken from the work before and during the Games it is that relationships developed between traffic commissioners and industry stakeholders, both government and trade bodies, should not just be maintained but strengthened. Working together will give a greater likelihood of us delivering the regulatory system that all parties would like to see.