

RUGBY BOROUGH COUNCIL

QUESTION PURSUANT TO STANDING ORDER 10

COUNCIL – 20 SEPTEMBER 2023

QUESTION F

Councillor Mrs Robinson to ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor Poole:

“Could the Leader of the Council please provide data on the proportion of taxi drivers operating in Rugby with a local license, compared to those operating through a license with the City of Wolverhampton Council?”

Councillor Poole, Leader of the Council, to reply as follows:

“The Council is a licensing authority for hackneys and private hire. At the moment, the Council has 112 licensed hackney carriages, 59 licensed private hire vehicles, 212 dual licensed taxi drivers (able to drive hackneys or private hire vehicles) and 22 operators (must hold a licence to operate private hire vehicles). However, I am unable to advise on the number of private hire vehicles operating in Rugby licensed by the City of Wolverhampton.

There are two types of taxi. The first is the hackney carriage, which can operate from ranks and can be flagged down, and to do that they must be licensed by the authority they are working in. The second is the private hire vehicle which has to be prebooked, commonly now using an app. While private hire vehicles and their drivers used to be licensed by the authority they mainly work in, the government stopped this in the Deregulation Act 2015. Now any private hire operator can licence their vehicles and drivers in one area and then operate in another, while the local authority whose area they are operating has no control over the numbers, their behaviour or the quality of their vehicles. This was an obvious risk which resulted in letters being sent to the then Secretary of State by the Council, but this practice is now well established, with Wolverhampton being the largest authority issuing private hire licences.

While the Government has indicated it plans to review taxi legislation, some dating back to 1847, no timescale has been set and it is not a priority. Wolverhampton has confirmed they have 89 private hire drivers and 59 private hire vehicles licensed to addresses in Rugby, however, that does not mean they operate in Rugby, as there are no restrictions on where private hire vehicles operate once licensed. We believe that the majority that operate in Rugby licensed by Wolverhampton belong to a single app based operator, but they are not required to advise us of how many of their vehicles operate in our area and as they are likely to operate in more than one area, direct comparison would be difficult.”