

Mr John Banfield
Inquiry Director
Competition Commission
Victoria House
Southampton Row
London WC1 B 4AD

Dear Mr Banfield

BAA Airports Inquiry and Heathrow Taxis

The HTTP agreement referred to by BAA in its recent statement to the Competition Commission (24.8.07) was drafted and brought to BAA's attention by HALT and no other trade organisation. The HTTP document as seen by BAA is not a mutually binding taxi trade agreement formalised and approved by executive committees of the LCDC, TGW Union and LTDA. The agreement is solely the work of HALT and is founded on the false premise that credit card processor JoumeyPay should be granted a contractual right to represent Heathrow taxi drivers in financial negotiations with BAA Heathrow. The wording of the agreement fails to take into account that elected executives of London's democratically controlled taxi trade organisations cannot delegate their decision making powers or show favour to an independent business enterprise such as JoumeyPay Ltd.

The BAA statement mentions the survey of drivers' views on HALT conducted by BAA in 2003. The information issued by BAA as part of the survey, was deliberately worded to convince drivers that BAA would continue with compulsory funding for HALT irrespective of drivers' wishes. In our view the BAA survey was little more than a one-sided shambles. It ignored a main principle of accepted industrial relations practice which lays down that when the views of a large work force are sought, any survey requires a minimum participation level of between 20 and 25%. The feeble participation level of below 0.5 % achieved by the BAA survey was totally inadequate as a means of gauging drivers' opinions and views. Unfortunately, despite the survey's obvious inadequacies, the CAA chose to rely on the results of the 2003 survey when it published its decisions and conclusions in 2004.

BAA refuses to recognise that HALT is at its core a voluntary taxi trade organisation. By making payments to HALT a condition of entry to the Heathrow Taxi System, BAA strays outside its limited powers to control London taxis granted under the Airports Act 1986. By recognising unelected HALT representatives in substitution for elected executives of the society, BAA overrides the effects of legal democratic processes embodied in HALT's registered rules. Above all, by enforcing the HALT levy rule BAA removes from individual Heathrow taxi drivers the ultimate democratic sanction of dissociating themselves from the society.

I thank for your interest in this matter and you may publish this letter as appropriate on the internet.

Yours sincerely

Stanley J Marut MSc MA CMILT
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