

Central Bedfordshire
Council
Priory House
Monks Walk
Chicksands,
Shefford SG17 5TQ



please ask for Helen Bell
direct line 0300 300 4040
date 15 September 2011

NOTICE OF MEETING

LICENSING COMMITTEE

Date & Time

Wednesday, 28 September 2011 9.30 a.m.

Venue at

Council Chamber, Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford

Richard Carr
Chief Executive

To: The Chairman and Members of the LICENSING COMMITTEE:

Cllrs L Birt (Chairman), K Janes (Vice-Chairman), R D Berry, D Bowater, I Dalgarno, C C Gomm, Mrs D B Green, I A MacKilligan, J A G Saunders, I Shingler, P F Vickers and N Warren

[Named Substitutes:

Mrs J G Lawrence, Ms C Maudlin, D McVicar, J N Young and A Zerny]

All other Members of the Council - on request

MEMBERS OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND THIS MEETING

AGENDA

1. **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence and notification of substitute members

2. **Chairman's Announcements and Communications**

To receive any announcements from the Chairman and any matters of communication.

3. **Minutes**

To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee held on 8 June 2011 subject to the recording of Councillor R Berry as being recorded as present.

(attached)

4. **Members' Interests**

To receive from Members any declarations and the nature in relation to:-

(a) personal interests in any agenda item

(b) personal and prejudicial interests in any agenda item

5. **Petitions**

To receive petitions in accordance with the scheme of public participation set out in Annex 2 in Part A4 of the Constitution.

6. **Public Participation**

To receive any questions, statements or deputations from members of the public in accordance with the Procedure as set out in Appendix 1 to Part A4 of the Constitution.

7. **Exclusion of the Press and Public**

To consider whether to pass a resolution under section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 to exclude the Press and Public from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that the consideration of the item is likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

Reports

<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Exempt Para.</i>	<i>Page Nos.</i>
8.	Application for a Private Hire (Special Events) Vehicle Licence (Stretched Limousine)	* 1	9 - 22
	To make a decision whether or not to grant a private hire (special events) vehicle licence to Mr M B in view of the age of the vehicle.		
9.	Application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence	* 1	23 - 36
	To make a decision whether or not to grant a private hire vehicle licence to Mr J H in view of the age of the vehicle.		
10.	Re-admittance of Press and Public		
	To consider whether to pass a resolution to re-admit members of the press and public on the grounds that consideration of the remaining items of business are not likely to involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined by Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.		

Reports

<i>Item</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Page Nos.</i>
11.	Hackney Carriages - Review of Policy with regard to Wheelchair accessibility	* 37 - 80
	This report seeks a decision on whether Members wish to change the current policy of requiring all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible.	
12.	Health and Safety (as a Regulator) Service Plan 2011- 2012	* 81 - 86
	This report provides and update on the work carried by the Health and Safety Team for June to September 2011.	

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CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

At a meeting of the **LICENSING COMMITTEE** held in Priory House, Monks Walk, Shefford on Wednesday, 8 June 2011

PRESENT

Cllr L Birt (Chairman)
Cllr K Janes (Vice-Chairman)

Cllrs D Bowater
I Dalgarno
C C Gomm
Mrs D B Green

Cllrs I A MacKilligan
I Shingler
P F Vickers
N Warren

Apology for Absence: Cllr J A G Saunders

Substitute: Cllr Mrs J G Lawrence

Officers in Attendance: Miss H Bell Committee Services Officer
Mrs M James Licensing and Enforcement Officer
Mr G Quint Environmental Health Officer
Mr B Salvatierra Environmental Health Officer
Mr M Woolsey Managing Solicitor

L/11/1 **Minutes**

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 April 2011 be confirmed and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

L/11/2 **Members' Interests**

(a) **Personal Interests:-**

Councillor D Bowater declared an interest in Items 10 & 11. As a family Member is involved with Council policies at the Local Better Regulation Office.

(b) **Personal and Prejudicial Interests:-**

There were none.

L/11/3 **Petitions**

The Chairman announced that no petitions had been referred to this meeting.

L/11/4 **Public Participation**

No applications had been in accordance with the Scheme of Public Participation set out in paragraph 1 of the Scheme of Public Participation set out in annex 1 of Part A4 of the Constitution.

L/11/5 **Exclusion on Press and Public**

RESOLVED

The Committee resolved to exclude the press and public from the remainder of the meeting under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 on the grounds that the consideration of the items of business would involve the disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

L/11/6 **Application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence**

The Committee received and considered the report of the Licensing and Enforcement Officer concerning an application for a Private Hire licence in respect of Mr S S in view of the age of the vehicle.

A copy of the application form and supporting documents were attached as an appendix for Members' information.

The applicant attended the meeting and made representations in support of the application. The Committee were invited to view the vehicle, which was located in the car park.

In accordance with the procedures for hearings held in private, the applicant and Licensing & Enforcement Officer were asked to withdraw whilst the Committee made their decision. The committee's deliberation and visual inspection of the vehicle along with its appearance aided the decision process. Following which all who had withdrawn were recalled to hear the decision.

RESOLVED

That the application for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence for Mr S S be granted subject to the applicant subject to (1) the Applicant being reminded of the responsibilities to comply with the conditions of the Licence and that the Council has the powers under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to revoke the licence at any time (2) that the application be granted subject to (1) above and receipt of service History documents.

L/11/7 **Re-admittance of Press and Public**

RESOLVED

That the Press and public be re-admitted to the remainder of the meeting.

L/11/8 **Duration of Combined Hackney Carriage/Private Hire Driver Licences**

The Committee received and considered a report of the Director of Sustainable Communities seeking a decision on whether Members wish to change the current policy of only permitting annual Hackney Carriage/Private Hire driver licences.

The current conditions attached to Hackney carriage/Private Hire drivers only allow a 12 month licence. Drivers attending a monthly taxi and Private Hire in October 2010 expressed their disappointment that Central Bedfordshire Council did not allow the issue of a three year driver licence and asked that the issue be reconsidered. Following which a consultation period was undertaken with Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Drivers to seek their views on the issue of permitting three year licences.

The report set out in detail the results of the consultation. Attached to the report were copies of letters received from the Trade in favour of permitting two and three year licences.

Members were reminded that Central Bedfordshire does have an information sharing agreement with the Police and that the conditions attached to driver licences require drivers to inform the authority within seven days of any motoring or other criminal conviction or caution which has occurred since the granting of a licence.

During the ensuing discussion, the Committee agreed that a one year licence be granted to new applicants and then after the first year a choice of a one or a three year licence be granted. In addition it was suggested that the financial implications of offering a discount for a three year licence be calculated by Finance. It was furthermore agreed that the scheme be brought into effect once the cost implications had been worked out.

RESOLVED

(1) that the cost of the three year licence be determined in consultation with Finance and that;

(2) the scheme only be brought into effect once the cost implications had been worked out

L/11/9

Health & Safety (as a regulator) Service Plan 2011-2012

The Committee received and considered a report of the Director of Sustainable Communities providing an update on the work carried out by the Health and Safety for April to June 2011.

The report set out details of investigations, notices including 8 improvement notices and 1 prohibition notice that had been served, work undertaken by the Safety Advisory group, Animal Licensing and other work)

RESOLVED

That the work carried out by the Health and Safety Team for the period April to June 2011 be noted.

(Note: The meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m. and concluded at 10.37 a.m.)

Chairman

Dated

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Meeting: Licensing Committee
Date: 28 September 2011
Subject: Hackney Carriages - Review of Policy with regard to Wheelchair accessibility
Report of: Gary Alderson – Director of Sustainable Communities
Summary: This report seeks a decision on whether Members wish to change the current policy of requiring all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible.

Contact Officer: Margaret James, Licensing Enforcement Officer
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Council

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Supporting and Caring for an ageing population – provision of safe public transport supports independent living.

Financial:

Fees are payable for hackney carriage and private hire licences. The fees being charged represent the cost of the Council producing the licence.

Legal:

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
Town Police Clauses Act 1847.
Equalities Act 2010 – Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.

Risk Management:

Ensuring that hackney carriage and private hire vehicles operating in Central Bedfordshire are safe and properly regulated.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

There are no staffing implications.

Equalities/Human Rights:

The Council has a legal duty to proactively promote race, gender and disability equality and to tackle discrimination experienced by other vulnerable groups. In order to ensure the personal safety of all vulnerable groups wishing to use licensed vehicles, conditions attached to licences ensure that this duty is met.

Community Safety:

Contributes to a safer public transport system and a safer night time economy. The Council has a statutory duty under Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act to do all that it reasonably can to reduce crime and disorder in its area. The provision of sufficient numbers of taxis is a key component of reducing crime and disorder problems linked to the night time economy and licensed premises. In addition, it is essential to ensure that the public, and particularly more vulnerable members of the community, are not left without safe transport options which may lead them to take decisions which put their safety at risk.

Sustainability:

By regulating this service area we can ensure that those businesses that are compliant can be supported and resources can be focused at those business that will not comply.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

that the Committee considers which of the following 2 options it wishes to adopt:

(a) retain the current requirement for all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible and revisit the matter when the Government makes further recommendations.

or

(b) permit a percentage of hackney carriages to be saloon type non-wheelchair accessible vehicles (following the adoption of suitable vehicle conditions) and adopt a fair procedure to ensure that the percentage is met.

Background

1. The Council is the Licensing Authority for hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators and is responsible for providing a licensed service to the community that is safe and accessible.
2. The hackney carriage and private hire trade have a right to expect a fair and reasonable licensing regime.
3. Before a local authority can make a decision on policies and conditions affecting the hackney carriage and private hire trade, they must consider the views of all interested parties.

4. Under the Disability Discrimination Act, it is unlawful for taxi drivers to discriminate against disabled people and they have an obligation to provide a proper service.
5. Disabled people can take civil action under the Disability Discrimination Act against taxi drivers who discriminate against them.
6. In 2003, the Department for Transport announced an intention to set standards for wheelchair accessible taxis and to introduce regulations applying to local authorities that would include the possibility of criminal proceedings against licensed drivers who discriminate. The Department anticipated publishing a consultation on the issue of accessible taxis in 2008 but urged local Authorities who wished to adopt local accessibility policies for taxis not to hold back on any local initiative in anticipation of national regulations straight away.
7. At that time, both the former South Bedfordshire District Council (SBDC.) and the former Mid Bedfordshire District Council (MBDC), followed the Department for Transport's advice and adopted wheelchair accessible policies in order to improve the availability of taxis for disabled people in their areas. This policy was carried forward and included as a hackney carriage policy for Central Bedfordshire.

Current Policy

8. The conditions attached to hackney carriages for Central Bedfordshire, therefore, include a wheelchair accessible policy. Our conditions state that the vehicle must be wheelchair accessible and conform to various licence conditions. Our conditions also state that, hackney carriages currently licensed that are not wheelchair accessible are permitted to be re-licensed up to a maximum of 10 years from the original date of vehicle registration provided they pass the mechanical inspection. Any replacement vehicle will be required to meet all our wheelchair requirements.
9. At the time of writing this report, 225 vehicles are licensed as hackney carriages in Central Bedfordshire. Of these, 27 are not wheelchair accessible and will need to be replaced by wheelchair accessible vehicles when they reach 10 years old. Therefore, 12% of the current hackney carriage fleet are not wheelchair accessible.
10. When the wheelchair policy was adopted by Central Bedfordshire in January 2010, Members were asked to note that many of the trade were unhappy because they felt that only a proportion of the hackney carriage fleet should be wheelchair accessible. Officers informed Members that, if they wished to change the policy, it would first be necessary for a full consultation to be carried out. Members were also asked to note that the Department for Transport were themselves carrying out a consultation on how best to meet the needs of a broad range of disabled people, not just wheelchair users. Members were informed that they would be advised of any conclusions and recommendations made by the Government on the matter and, when received, the trade could be consulted on any government recommendations.

11. The Government has now made new regulations for taxis and private hire vehicles in the form of The Equalities Act 2010. This Act appears to have overtaken the government consultation and only refers to wheelchair accessible vehicles rather than specifying a broad range of vehicles although further recommendations could be received at a future date.
12. In the absence of any Government recommendations, and in view of the fact that the trade were informed that they would be consulted on the matter as soon as possible, Members of the Regulation Committee resolved, on 17 November 2010, that a 12 week consultation be carried out to seek views on how to meet the needs of a broad range of people using hackney carriages, not just wheelchair users, and that the following groups would be consulted:
 - Members of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire trade;
 - Groups serving the disabled in Central Bedfordshire;
 - Members of the travelling public.

The consultation period ended on 31 March 2011.

Consultation

13. All hackney carriage and private hire licence holders, numbering approximately 750, were consulted and asked whether they felt that the current Central Bedfordshire policy for taxis should be changed to permit a proportion of non-wheelchair accessible vehicles.
14. The response from the trade can be summarised as follows:-
 - A petition signed by 71 drivers stating that they wished to retain the current wheelchair accessible policy for all hackney carriages.
 - A petition signed by 9 drivers stating that they wished to change the current policy to permit a proportion of non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriages.
 - 10 individual letters requesting a change to the current policy to permit a proportion of non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriages.
15. A copy of the petition signed by those of the trade in favour of retaining the current wheelchair accessible policy will be at the committee meeting should Members wish to view it. A copy of the covering letter can be found at **Appendix A** for Members information.
16. A copy of the petition signed by those of the trade who wish to change the current policy will be at the committee meeting should Members wish to view it. A copy of the covering letter, together with individual letters from the trade, can be found at **Appendix B** for Members information.

17. As part of the consultation, accessibility of hackney carriage survey questionnaires were sent to representatives on the Central Bedfordshire Council's stakeholders lists for:

- Community Groups – Older People;
- Voluntary Organisations – Charity – Disability;
- Voluntary Organisations – Charity – Age;

Questionnaires were also sent to approximately 50 representatives of sheltered housing units.

The consultation survey could also be also accessed via the internet.

A copy of the letter sent to the various groups, together with a copy of the questionnaire can be found at **Appendix C** for Members information.

18. Unfortunately, the survey did not generate a great deal of interest and only 18 questionnaires were returned.

19. The results for the accessibility survey can be found at **Appendix D**. However, caution must be taken when interpreting these results as they are based on a very small number of responses and therefore may not be true reflection of those whose views were being sought. In many cases if one respondent responded with a different view, this could change the overall result significantly.

20. A written response was received from Mike Newman, Dunstable and District Pensioners Association and is attached at **Appendix E** for Members information.

21. A written response was received from Roy Storey, Chairman of Central Beds Access Group after the consultation period had ended. A copy of his response is attached at **Appendix F** for Members information.

22. A written response was received from a licensed driver after the consultation period had ended. A copy of the response is attached at **Appendix G** for Members information.

23. A written response was received from a member of the public after the consultation period had ended. A copy of this letter and our response is attached at **Appendix H** for Members information.

Main Considerations

24. When the wheelchair accessible policy was introduced, a major factor in the decision was the Government's intention to introduce regulations requiring all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible.

25. The Government have not yet introduced regulations requiring all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible. It has also become clear that not all wheelchair accessible vehicles are suitable for the travelling public and many semi-ambulant travellers find difficulty in using some of the larger wheelchair accessible vehicles. The Government has now acknowledged that local Councils are best placed to decide on the composition of their hackney carriage fleet.
26. Members are asked to note that the wheelchair policy only applies to hackney carriages and not private hire vehicles. Whilst it is possible for the travelling public with similar disabilities (i.e. semi ambulant, not requiring to travel in a wheelchair) to use private hire vehicles, (which in the main are saloon type), our wheelchair accessible policy only covers hackney carriages, which the Committee are reminded are allowed to pick up their passengers at a hackney carriage rank or be hailed or flagged down in the street.

Possible Options

27. • Option One – To retain the current requirement for all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible.
- Option Two – To permit a percentage of hackney carriages to be saloon type non-wheelchair accessible vehicles (following the adoption of suitable vehicle conditions)

Option One

28. If Members are minded to retain the current requirement for all hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible, the matter could be revisited, and a further consultation carried out, when the Government produces legislation on the minimum requirements for the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Option Two

29. If Members are minded to allow a percentage of hackney carriages to be saloon type vehicles before any legislation has been issued, and in the absence of any recommendation from the Government, Officers would recommend that we do not increase the current percentage of 12% of saloon vehicles be permitted to be licensed as hackney carriages.
30. It would be necessary to maintain this balance by adopting a procedure based upon the numerical difference between wheelchair accessible taxis and non-wheelchair accessible saloon type vehicles.
31. In view of the fact that non-wheelchair accessible vehicles already make up 12% of the current number of hackney carriages, no immediate changes to the hackney carriage fleet would need to be made.

32. The total number of hackney carriages would need to be assessed annually, at the beginning of each year and, if necessary, applications invited to ensure that 12% of the fleet was made up of non-wheelchair saloon type vehicles.
33. Those proprietors who already licence a non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriage would be permitted to re-licence their vehicle until it is 10 years old from the date of first registration in line with our current conditions.
34. If, for reasons of age or any other reason, a non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriage is not re-licensed, applications will be invited to ensure that the 12% of the fleet is made of non-wheelchair accessible saloon type vehicles.
35. Officers would recommend that a random selection procedure in the form of a ballot be adopted to ensure fairness and that the precise number of saloon type vehicles be determined by the Head of Service, Public Protection based upon the numerical difference between wheelchair accessible taxis and non-wheelchair accessible saloon type taxis at the commencement of the ballot procedure.
36. If Members are minded to adopt such a ballot procedure, officers recommend that the procedure incorporate the following general principles:-
 - That the Council will invite expressions of interest in obtaining licences for a limited number of non-wheelchair accessible hackney carriage licences and that these to be received by a specified date;
 - That the opportunity to submit an expression of interest would be open to all;
 - Each person entering the ballot would have an equal chance of success;
 - The ballot draw to select the successful applicants shall be held in public;
 - The successful applicants must complete the relevant application processes and fully satisfy all suitability requirements for the grant, renewal or transfer (as applicable) of the hackney carriage licence within a period of 6 weeks from the date of the ballot draw;
 - Any person failing to complete application processes within the 6 week time limit would lose their chance to license a non-wheelchair accessible taxis and the opportunity would pass to another person whose name would have been drawn as a reserve;
 - Those individuals selected as reserves would not be given any priority in any similar ballot that might be held at a further date;

Appendices:

Appendix A – (Copy of a covering letter from the trade from those in favour of retaining
The current wheelchair accessible policy)

Appendix B - (Copy of a covering letter and copies of individual letters from the trade
from those in favour of changing the wheelchair accessible policy.

Appendix C – (Copy of questionnaire together with covering letter)

Appendix D – (Results of the accessibility survey)

Appendix E – (Response from Dunstable and District Pensioners Association)

Appendix F – (Response from Central Beds Access Group)

Appendix G - (Response from trade)

Appendix H - (Response from member of the public)

Background Papers:

None

Location of papers:

Watling House, Dunstable

Margaret James
Taxi Licensing
Central Bedfordshire council
High Street North
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF

Mr Enamur Rahman
15 Bell Alley
Leighton Buzzard
Beds
LU7 1DG

Date: 25.03.2011

Dear, Margaret James.

This letter is in relation to the recent proposal made by the licensing authority in relation to the licensing of private and hackney carriage vehicles. It is understood by us that there is on going consideration being made to allow drivers of private hire vehicles to be allowed to carry a hackney carriage license.

We as hackney carriage drivers are very concerned about this and believe that it will have a negative effect on the trade which in the current financial climate is proving to be very difficult.

Drivers have expressed many concerns about this, which we would like to discuss with the council before any decision has been made. In particular many drivers have raised the following issues:

- All hackney carriage vehicles are currently required by the council to be purpose built taxis which carry a M1 certified certificate. The purchase values of these vehicles are far greater than a normal passenger vehicle, as well as the general maintenance and running costs. Many drivers have invested a lot of money into these vehicles to meet the council requirements. Some have taken out loans or financed for these vehicles. With the change in policy we as drivers believe that it is unfair that we have had made this huge investment, when in the short future it may no longer be required. This will also reduce the value and demand of the hackney vehicles putting us at further loss.
- With the current financial situation of the country, the general trade is very slow and quite. Together with the rise of fuel prices, drivers are struggling make a wage. Taxi ranks are over populated with taxis making it difficult to find a space. In particular town's locals are complaining that there are too many taxis. By granting this proposal it will allow more vehicles to use the ranks which are already in a struggling situation.
- We and many customers believe that these purpose built taxis carry advantages over a normal vehicle. Customers on wheelchairs can easily board the taxi without have to come out of the wheelchair. Elderly customers who have back problems or difficulty moving can access more easily due to the high roof and side step. In general the ease of access makes these vehicles more practical in an environment where it is busy with a lot of traffic.
- Could licensing authority consider bringing back the three years license, as this would be more cost affective at these time.

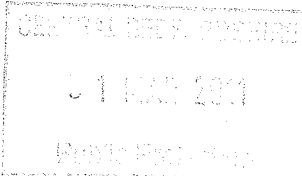
We understand that the law has recently changed regarding licensing of taxis, however we ask the council to look at this situation from a fair point of view. We ask the council consider in particular the impact this will have on the trade and drivers.

Enclosed with this letter is a list of names, contacts signatures of all who are objecting this proposal. We would be grateful if the council will contact us to discuss this matter further.

Your Sincerely,

Rec'd 29/3/11
M James

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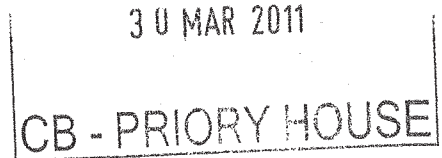


Flitwick, 30 March 2011.

Ms Margaret James
Licensing & Enforcement Officer (Public Protection)
Central Bedfordshire Council

Dear Madam,

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing



Reference your consultation document GEN.MEJ of December 2010 addressed to All Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Operators/Proprietors/Drivers soliciting their views on various matters. We, the Licence Holders operating from Flitwick Railway Station, state as follows:

We are of the firm opinion that the current Central Bedfordshire policy for taxis needs urgent change to permit a proportion of non-wheelchair accessible vehicles. The reason being the cost involved in change over in the current financial meltdown environments and its affordability by the licence holders. Consequently, there may not be increasing demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles for some time to come. In our practical experience we have come across people who do not always find their journey in a wheelchair accessible vehicles always comfortable. They would prefer to travel in a vehicle which meets the needs of a broad range of disabled people using hackney carriages and/or private hire cars.

We are fully in favour of changing the condition of not allowing issue of three year driver licences. There should be a choice of one, two or three years. The amount of bureaucracy involved is the same.

Advertising on Hackney Carriages

We concur with Council's resolution of allowing suitable advertisements which general public do not object. Our trade should also be part of a set up to prepare guidance on acceptable advertisements.

Taxi & Private Hire Forums

We note the lack of interest and attendance in the above forums. Before we embark upon the idea of web site, it is better to find out the reasons thereof. Exchange of views in person is much better than looking at a laptop screen.

Equalities Act 2010

Looking at the response in respect of Taxi & Private Hire Forums, it is high time that Operators/Proprietors/Drivers are made aware of the vital requirement of the Equalities Act provisions in regard to needed assistance to wheelchair users. The drivers need to be aware that it is advisable and lawful to treat a disabled person more favourably than a non-disabled person in order to address their

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special needs. Central Bedfordshire Council should undertake steps to create and enhance awareness amongst Taxi & Private Hire trade in this respect.

We agree with the proposal of exemption for those drivers who themselves suffer disability.

As a result of restructuring of the Licensing Section, it will be a good idea of constantly relaying a repeated message on your telephone system regarding availability of staff for personal callers in this regard so that people get used to it. Proprietors etc. at their end should display the changed schedule for their drivers information.

Yours faithfully

(Vijay Kumar Doylla)

Plate No.2226

123 COVENTRY ROAD
BEDFORD, MK40 4EN

List of drivers with their particulars enclosed

23 MAR 2011
Post Room

To

Central Bedfordshire

Lucy

DUNSTABLE

Dear Sir or madam.

Please refer to your letter dated December 2010 taking views from general public and all elderly people and also disabled people not using wheel chair. Strongly asking for car. they said they cannot get in or sit in new style E7 the disabled wheel chair access.

there for in my view it is better to have a mixed fleet rather than all having wheel chair access vehicle.

thank you.

Yours

Margaret James

To: zafar83@hotmail.co.uk
Subject: RE: License taxi department

Dear Mr Rakhman

I acknowledge receipt of your e-mail on 31 March 2011 and note your comments for which I thank you. Your comments will be taken into account when the matter is discussed at Regulation Licensing Committee later in the year.

I shall, of course, contact you again to let you know the date of the meeting but, in the meantime, if you have any further comments or queries please do not hesitate to let me know.

Yours sincerely

Margaret James
Licensing Enforcement Officer (Public Protection) dd 0300 300 5400

-----Original Message-----
From: Zafar [mailto:]
Sent: 29 March 2011 21:56
To: Licensing Enquiries
Subject: License taxi department

Abdul Rakhman
6 Beaumont road
Luton
Lu3 ant
07868664866

Plate number 2156

Margret James

I am writing to regarding my views on a mix fleet of taxis for central beds. I have worked in central beds since 1996 as a hackney carriage driver I also hold a p/h/v operators licence .

I strongly believe there is more than a appropriate number of disable access vehicles in the area.I receive a large number of complaints from the local community on the difficulty they have accessing these vehicles and the discomfort . I am willing to apply for a saloon vehicle licence as I believe this is a more practical choice.

I would like to add current saloon vehicles should have the option to be replaced for another saloon vehicle . This will maintain a good standard of fleet as well as newer cars have safer ncap ratings.

I would be happy to discuss my views further if necessary could you please confirm receipt of this email.

Many Thanks

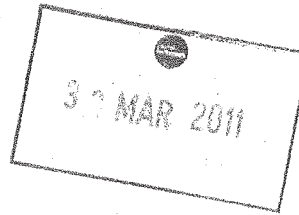
Abdul rakhman

Sent from my iPhone

This email has been scanned by the MessageLabs Email Security System.
For more information please visit <http://www.messagelabs.com/email>

Mr M G Akram
14 Blenheim Crescent
Luton, Beds
LU3 1HA

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Office
Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF



24/03/2011

Dear Sir or Madam:

Further to your letter dated December 2010 which reflect on changes to Hackney Carriage and private hire regulations in relation to the wheelchair policy I would like to address a few points:

- I would say that at the moment we have a fleet of cars where there a good mix of black cabs, euro cabs along with saloon cars which can cater for wheelchairs users and disabled people along with elderly people.
- In my experience through work most customers prefer to travel in saloon cars as they provide a much higher comfort level for customers especially when travel is over a long distance.
- The number of wheelchair users customers in our customer base is low.

I believe that the current fleet of cars available are sufficient in numbers to help and cater for a diverse range of people in relation to the Equalities Act 2010.

Many Thanks

M G Akram

Via e-mail

Mr M Saleem

3 St Winifreds

Luton

Beds.

LU3 1QT

31ST March 2011

Dear

Badge Number: 2368

I have been a licenced Mid-Beds driver a number of years, about two years ago I began to drive a E7 taxi. In those two years I have no had no more than four wheel accessed jobs and all of them where through the company I work for none of the ranks or station. Within those two years I had numerous complaints from customers about them having issues of accessing my vehicle. I was regularly had people not wanting to use my vehicle and where opting for cars that were on the rank. So in the end I have disposed of that E7 taxi and now have a saloon car but the issue I now have I can't use the rank as its only can be licenced as a private hire. How can we overcome this situation e.g. I want to licence my saloon car has a hackney carriage. I hope you can look in to this for me.

Kind Regards

Mr M Saleem

Britannia Cabs

Station Road

Harlington

Beds.

LU5 6LD

30TH March 211

Dear Sir/Madam

With reference to your letter dated December 2010, there are a number of issues we would like to bring to your attention.

Regards to vehicles, a lot of the cliental within the area we operate are of age. They find these "disabled access vehicles" very difficult to get in and out of, especially if they have mobility issue as many do. Customers are regularly complaining that these type of vehicles are uncomfortable to travel in(even new ones). People are frequently requesting we send them a standard saloon car rather than the disables access vehicles. We have had many occasions where people are refusing to get in to these vehicles and will rather wait for a saloon car or mpv. Since the introduction of these vehicles many driver have not transported a wheelchair bound passenger as there has been no demand for their service. Whilst we agree there should be availability "disabled access vehicles" at the same time the customer should have a choice of vehicles available to them .

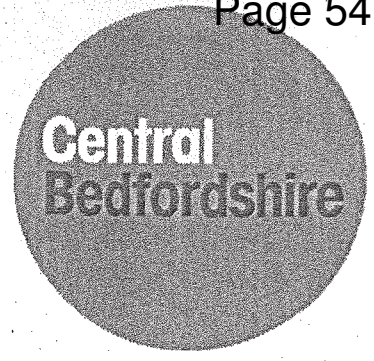
We suggest one of the following twopolicy's.

1. Any new badge holder after 1st April 2011 must only be to licence "disabled access vehicles.
2. All drivers currently licenced must have a choice of which vehicles they want re- licence. (Subject to your age restrictions)

The above are only suggestion but I hope you will consider them, when making your final decision. I am sure us the trade can work together and come out with a solution that will benefit all party's involved. Please don't hesitate to contact us, if you have any questions.

Kind Regards

Britannia Cabs



Faruq Ahmed
22 Brunel Road
Luton - Beds
LU4 - CRX
Badge Number 2296
25th March 2011

FAO - Hackney Carriage & Private Hire offices
CBC - Watling house
High St North - Dunstable - Beds

NF/LIC
9 March 2011

To whom it may concern

I'm writing in regard of the changes of regulation towards Hackney Carriage and Private Hire

I have no prejudice against wheelchair users but I believe we have enough vehicles to cater for them. I respect all rules and regulations towards wheelchair users.

As there is a mixture of vehicles I believe we can cater for the wheelchair customers & also I believe that wheelchair users are extremely low.

Most customers that I have spoken to prefer using saloon cars rather than

black cabs.

I'm hoping that any changes should be on halt and consider all the different customers.

Many Thanks

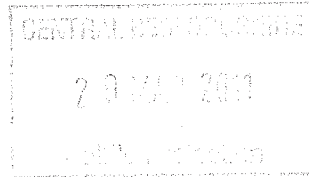
Faruq Ahmed

F

e your
o account
later in the

e meeting but
se do not

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Office
Central Bedfordshire Council
Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF



Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing to you regarding changes to Hackney carriage and private hire regulations.

I respect all related rules and regulations for wheelchair access vehicles. According to my knowledge, I believe we have a big enough fleet of wheelchair access vehicles, to cater for wheelchair users.

The ratio of customers that are wheel chair users are extremely low. As for wheelchair user customers, there is a mix fleet of vehicles, hence posing no difficulties for wheel chair users to access a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

I strongly believe that we should keep a mix fleet of cars which include, black cabs, euro cabs and saloon cars. Most customers prefer to travel in saloon cars over euro cabs and black cabs

Thank you

MR AG Butt

4 Connaught Road
Luton Beds.

H/c Plate 2150

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Office
Central Bedfordshire Council
Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF

34 Lincoln Road
Luton
Bedfordshire
LU4 8HD

Dear Sir/ Madam,

I am writing in response to a letter I received, regarding changes to Hackney carriage and private hire regulations, and asking for my consultation and views.

As a hackney carriage driver in Central Beds, I respect all related rules and regulations for wheelchair access vehicles. According to my knowledge, I believe we have a big enough fleet of wheelchair access vehicles, to cater for wheel chair users.

In all my experience as a hackney carriage driver, I have yet to come across a wheelchair access customer, hence the ratio of customers that are wheel chair users are extremely low. As for wheelchair user customers, there is a mix fleet of vehicles, hence posing no difficulties for wheel chair users to access a wheelchair accessible vehicle.

I strongly believe that we should keep a mix fleet of cars which include, black cabs, euro cabs and saloon cars. Most customers prefer to travel in saloon cars over euro cabs and black cabs. As these are smaller and more comfortable for non wheelchair users.

I hope my opinion and views will be taken into consideration.

Thank you

ain

Hackney carriage plate: 2216

Redd 21/3/11

To. Central Bedfordshire Council
High Street North
Dunstable
Beds
LU6 1LF

Date 15th December 2010

CONSULTATION

Dear Margaret

With reply to your letter dated December 2010.

1 WHEELCHAIR POLICY

We at Connection Chauffeur Services Ltd, Feel that there are sufficient vehicles Already available to the disabled people of Central Bedford shire, there is dial a ride service, Ambulance service for the hospital. Plus a number of taxi's and some private hire vehicles. If the council make this compulsory are the council going to help fund the cost of replacing these vehicles.

2 LICENCES

As with most of the current conditions these adopted by this council are with this old mid beds conditions and not on the side of the old south beds, As for the deletion of the three year licence this was done only to increase Revenue at a Cost to the trade and put funds in the council bank account, This should be reinstated with immediate effect at a low cost

3 ADVERTISING ON ALL VEHICALS

We feel that a total ban on all advertising on taxi's and private hire vehicles Advertising on taxi's make it looks unsightly and can cause a lot of complaints from the general public

4 FORUMS

I feel that these should be on a Quarter basis with a set agenda that is draw up from points that has risen from complaints or changes made by the council And state that a set number need to attend to carry out this meeting

5. Equalities act 2010

This act is an open can of worms as always you can only satisfy a certain number of disabled, certain people use this legislation about discrimination, and relate to their own disability and will complain every time.

You will find that all taxi's and private hire drivers alike will always ensure that assistance is given to these people and will always help with wheelchairs.

I have watched this with interest as myself I am disabled and find at times it is difficult to get in some vehicles,

6 Personal Callers

Have spoken to a number of drivers we feel that the change and the restructuring amounts to a loss of the personal attention to us in the trade And a cut back to the licensing department at Dunstable it is time for us at this end on the council to make our feeling known as the old mid beds councillors are calling the tune and everything is done at chick sands.

Yours sincerely

Howard R Killick

For Connections Chauffeur Services Ltd

Margaret James

To: Chris SAPSFORD

Subject: RE: Consultation Paper - Your Ref GEN.MEJ

Many thanks for your views Chris

Margaret James
Licensing and Enforcement Officer (Public Protection)
0300 300 5400
x 75400

From: Chris SAPSFORD [mailto:chris.sapsford@ntlworld.com]

Sent: 31 December 2010 15:26

To: Margaret James

Subject: Consultation Paper - Your Ref GEN.MEJ

Hi Margaret

Received Dales license in the post thank you.

Regard Taxi / PH Licensing Consolation paper recently circulated. Although new to the business, my views are as follows.

Regard monthly forums. I agree some sort of web forum sounds really useful. I am not surprised the monthly meetings are poorly attended.

Duration of licenses. I agree twelve months does seem a very short duration in the scheme of things. Three years being a more practical duration and will no doubt cut down a great deal of administration by the council.

Wheelchair access. I would anticipate any government review would strongly endorse equipping the majority of taxi/PH for wheelchair access.

My only thoughts are in line with what I believe some within the trade are suggesting with regard VAT relief, to encourage the adoption of these conversions.

I have ordered wheelchair access for our new vehicle at a great cost, which is still subject of VAT in its entirety!

I do not think access should be mandatory, but some other encouragement should be given (i.e. VAT relief).

The lack of wheelchair access will of course limit that vehicle owner (or companies) customer base, to the benefit of those who have had the work carried out!

Regards

Chris

This email has been scanned by the MessageLabs Email Security System.
For more information please visit <http://www.messagelabs.com/email>

04/01/2011

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**Central
Bedfordshire**

Your ref:

Our ref: GEN.MEJ

Date: January 2011

Dear Sir or Madam

Wheelchair Accessible Hackney Carriages

There are two types of licensed vehicles available to members of the public, private hire vehicles and hackney carriages (taxis).

Private hire vehicles can only be booked in advance through a private hire operator. Private hire vehicles can be saloon, hatchback, or any other suitable vehicle capable of carrying up to 8 passengers.

Hackney Carriages (taxis) can wait on a rank or be hailed in the street as well as being able to be booked in advance through an Operator. Central Bedfordshire Council has a policy that all hackney carriages should be wheelchair accessible. Those vehicles currently licensed as hackney carriages that are not wheelchair accessible are permitted to be re-licensed up to a maximum of 10 years from the original date of vehicle registration but any replacement vehicle will be required to be wheelchair accessible. We currently licence 246 hackney carriages of which 209 are wheelchair accessible.

This authority is currently assessing how best to meet the needs of a broad range of disabled people using hackney carriages, not just wheelchair users and we would like your views to be taken into account. We are carrying out a 12 week consultation with members of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, groups serving the disabled in Central Bedfordshire and members of the travelling public.

I should be grateful, therefore, if you could complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it to me by 31 March 2011. Please feel free to photocopy the form or request further copies if required. Alternatively, you can access the questionnaire on line from the Council's Web site at www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk.

Central Bedfordshire Council
Watling House
High Street North, Dunstable
LU6 1LF

Telephone 0300 300 8000
Email customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

If you have any queries with this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Margaret James

Licensing Enforcement Officer (Public Protection)

Direct telephone 0300 300 5400

Email Margaret.james@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Please reply to:

Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF



Accessibility of hackney carriages survey



Central Bedfordshire Council is assessing how best to meet the needs of disabled people using hackney carriages. We will be seeking the views of the hackney carriage and private hire trade, groups serving disabled people in Central Bedfordshire and members of the travelling public.

We would be grateful if you could take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire and return it to the address at the end of the form by 31st March 2011.

Alternatively you can complete this questionnaire online at: www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk/surveys/hackneycarriages/survey.htm

- Q1 Have you used a Central Bedfordshire hackney carriage (taxi)? Yes
 No - go to Q4
- Q2 How many single journeys do you use a hackney carriage for per week?
 None 1 2 3 4-6 6+
- Q3 When you use a hackney carriage for your travel, do you: (Please tick all that apply)
 Book in advance through an operator
 From a taxi rank
 Hailed in the street
- Q4 Are you a wheelchair user? Yes No - go to Q6
- Q5 Are you permanently confined to a wheelchair? Yes No
- Q6 Do you have difficulty walking Yes No
- Q7 Do you have a sight impairment? Yes No
- Q8 Do you have a hearing impairment? Yes No
- Q9 Do you need to be accompanied when you travel in a taxi? Yes No

Questions 9 to 12 are for wheelchair users only

Q10 Can you transfer from your wheelchair to a car seat by yourself? Yes No

Q11 Do you require a swivel seat to access a vehicle? Yes No

Q12 Do you need help to get into a vehicle? Yes No

Q13 What type of taxi would best meet your needs? (Please tick all that apply)

- Fully accessible vehicle Hatchback car 8 seater carrier
 Saloon Car Other

Pease specify other

Q14 Do you have any comments on how Central Bedfordshire taxi's could better meet your needs?

About you

The following information will help us when considering your opinions and to make sure that we're getting the views of all members of the community. The answers will not be used to identify any individual.

Q15 Are you: Male Female

Q16 What is your age? (Please pick one)

- Under 16 yrs 16-19 yrs 20-29 yrs 30-44 yrs
 45-59 yrs 60-64 yrs 65-74 yrs 75+

Q17 Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

Under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 a person is considered to have a disability if he/she has a physical or mental impairment which has a sustained and long-term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal day to day activities

Yes

No

Q18 If you answered 'Yes' to the last question, please state which of the following best describes your disability.

Physical

Mental

Sensory

Learning

Other

Please specify other

Q19 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

Asian or Asian British

Black or Black British

Chinese

Mixed

White British

Other Ethnic group (please specify)

Please specify other

Q20 What is your home postcode?

Thank you for your views.

Please return your completed questionnaire by 31st March 2011 to:

Margaret James
Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable, Beds
LU6 1LF

Data Protection Act 1998

Please note that your personal details supplied on this form will be held and/or computerised by Central Bedfordshire Council for the purpose of the survey around accessibility of hackney carriages. The information collected may be disclosed to officers and members of the Council and its' partners involved in this consultation. Summarised information from the forms may be published, but no individual details will be disclosed under these circumstances. Your personal details will be safeguarded and will not be divulged to any other individuals or organisations for any other purposes.

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Total responses to survey - 21

Valid percentages are based on the number of people that have responded to the question with a valid answer.

D

Q1 Have you used a Central Bedfordshire hackney carriage (taxi)?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	9	43
No	12	57
Total	21	100

Q2 How many single journeys do you use a hackney carriage for per week?

	Count	Valid %
None	1	13
1	3	38
2	3	38
4-6	1	13
Total	8	100

Q3 When you use a hackney carriage for your travel, do you: (Please tick all that apply)

	Count	%
Book in advance through an operator	7	33
From a taxi rank	1	5
Hailed in the street	1	5

Q4 Are you a wheelchair user?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	3	14
No	18	86
Total	21	100

Q5 Are you permanently confined to a wheelchair?

	Count	Valid %
No	2	100
Total	2	100

Q6 Do you have difficulty walking

	Count	Valid %
Yes	14	70
No	6	30
Total	20	100

Q7 Do you have a sight impairment?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	6	32
No	13	68
Total	19	100

Q8 Do you have a hearing impairment?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	2	11
No	17	89
Total	19	100

Q9 Do you need to be accompanied when you travel in a taxi?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	2	10
No	18	90
Total	20	100

Q10 Can you transfer from your wheelchair to a car seat by yourself?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	1	50
No	1	50
Total	2	100

Q11 Do you require a swivel seat to access a vehicle?

	Count	Valid %
No	2	100
Total	2	100

Q12 Do you need help to get into a vehicle?

	Count	Valid %
No	2	100
Total	2	100

Q13 What type of taxi would best meet your needs? (Please tick all that apply)

	Count	%
Saloon Car	11	52
Hatchback car	9	43
Fully accessible vehicle	6	29
8 seater carrier	4	19

Q14 Do you have any comments on how Central Bedfordshire taxi's could better meet your needs?

Only in the description as above. More help from the driver as regards getting in and out of the vehicle even if it is just opening the door for you and helping with getting shopping in and out of a taxi. This I am sorry to say is quite rare.

If I needed to use taxis, I would not be able to afford them. I have to rely on my friends with cars and Dial-a-Ride. I may not be able to afford that when they declare the forthcoming fares.

I have a mobility scooter and a blue badge

I only use a taxi once a month

Disability aware. Reliability. Help.

I personally do not use taxis - like most of us here - I cannot afford to use them. There are others here who have to have help to get to hospitals etc and who do use taxis. Most of us use 'helping hands' when going to the hospital but they only take us there. We have to make other arrangements to get home.

No, our driver is always on time and is very professional at his job.

Q15 Are you

	Count	Valid %
Female	12	60
Male	8	40
Total	20	100

Q16 What is your age?

	Count	Valid %
20-29 yrs	1	5
30-44 yrs	1	5
45-59 yrs	4	20
60-64 yrs	1	5
65-74 yrs	6	30
75+	7	35
Total	20	100

Q17 Do you consider yourself to be disabled?

	Count	Valid %
Yes	15	79
No	4	21
Total	19	100

Q18 If you answered 'Yes' to the last question, please state which of the following best describes your disability.

	Count	%
Physical	11	73
Learning	3	20
Sensory	2	13

Q19 To which of these groups do you consider you belong?

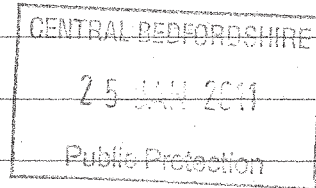
	Count	%
White British	18	95
Mixed	1	5
Total	19	100

Respondents home towns (based on postcode data provided)

	Count	Valid %
Dunstable	6	33
Houghton Regis	4	22
Barton-le-Clay	2	11
Caddington	2	11
Linslade	2	11
Beeston	1	6
Leighton Buzzard	1	6
Total	18	100

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Margaret James
Licensing Enforcement Officer (Public Protection)
Watling House
Dunstable LU6 1LF.



Dear Margaret

Many thanks for giving us the chance to comment on your questionnaire regarding accessibility of hackney carriages survey. I myself am not disabled one or two of our members are and I know at least one person out of your area has great difficulty with the use of taxis and pre booked vehicles. In fact, within Luton the majority of private hire and taxis are not particularly interested in ferrying disabled passengers.

You gave our Association a talk on the subject some months ago, which proved Central Bedfordshire system far surpassed Luton and still does, I am told. With the help of a local newspaper we, a journalist and I, phoned around all the cab companies in Luton asking what assistance their drivers would give to help a disabled passenger. The answer was not many wanted to know about disabled passengers, mainly, it appeared was due to the training of drivers to handle the disabled and getting your outlay allowance back again. It may well be that some form of adjustment would be allowed to be charged for transporting disabled passengers. This however, is something of a two edged sword, asking for a disabled person to pay more for a fare and yet one of the persons ^{receiving} ~~receiving~~ a high cost of living. But some form of repayment to those prepared to be trained to handle the disabled ~~should~~ be allowed.

Your questionnaire is asking the relevant questions and it will be interesting to know what the final results are. The ones to be ~~added~~ ^{arrived} ~~at~~ ^{at} might be 1) Assistance to the passenger from front door to cab. 2) Getting the passenger

2

secured by the seat belt, 3) Putting the wheel chair securely in the cab 4) Getting wheel chair out of the taxi. 5) Getting the passenger into the wheel chair 6) On the way home, the taxi driver will assist the passenger to their front door.

A point one could make here is that in quite a few cases, the area the passenger wants is covered by certain parking regulations, in which case the passenger can find themselves quite a distance from where they wish to be. I have often wondered if a disabled passenger cab, might have extra markings on it stating it could be used for disabled passengers. Perhaps a red lamp alongside the taxi sign that would only be used for a disabled wheel chair user? i.e. the red lamp would only be on when the wheel chair fare paying customer was being assisted from the cab. After all allowance is made for the off loading of freight in these areas, so why not allow the disabled fare payer the same favour?

It would be of greater assistance to the wheel chair bound if the issue of the folding type only was issued for their use. It would take much less room in the cab and would seem common sense to me. Folding wheel chairs would be handled much easier by the cab driver.

The cab driver of a disabled access cab will continue to need training as they do now. How to get the person from their home into the cab. How you help get the passenger from the wheel chair into the cab and fasten the seat belts, secure the wheel chair after folding. Training in folding and locking the wheel chair in the cab and vice versa ^{versa} on the return home.

The foregoing are some of the assistance requirements for the wheel chair bound, there are, no doubt, others and it is very satisfactory that you have raised the questionnaire the

My problem I see is that the ultimate result will cause a cost ^{rise} in a modified disabled hackney cab, of a considerable amount as Health & Safety will be required to vouch for the safety of the disabled person in getting to the cab, being safely seated in the cab, safe stowage of the wheel chair in the cab and removing the wheel chair and passenger in a safe manner at the end of journey. Modification of the cab and the training of the drivers, the training of the cab drivers will be very important and I suspect expensive. All this adds up to an added expense to meet the requirements of some of the disabled who will need to raise the cost of fares for the disabled. This will be the crux of the matter. The cab company owner will wish to get their training fees back and this will result in a higher fare for the disabled user of the cab. The disabled person is the least able to pay more for such a basic service. This problem will be the one that will have to be overcome. Perhaps one method that might be applied is that the bus pass might envelope the disabled person's wish to travel.

I write this on behalf of disabled members of the Donstable and District Association of Senior Citizens and as a member of the Social Services Working Group LINK Bedfordshire.

Yours sincerely,

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Margaret James

From: Central Beds Access Group [roy.accessgroupmb@btinternet.com]
Sent: 03 July 2011 17:50
To: Margaret James
Subject: Re: Consultation

Dear Margaret

As promised the matter was discussed at the Central Beds Access Group meeting held on the 14th June.
Our decision is copied to you.

Margaret James had contacted the Group regarding accessible taxi issues and Roy had sat in at a meeting, (July 2006) when MBDC had agreed a policy that any 7 year old vehicle had to be replaced with an accessible vehicle. This had since been altered to 10 years and taxi owners were now complaining about this policy. It was felt that the agreed policy should be adhered to in line with most other Councils in Britain. There was concern about the effect of a change of policy and felt many things could be done to mitigate this e.g. a percentage of accessible vehicles could be required.

It was considered that taxi owners had been given enough time to deal with the requirements and there were plenty of suitable vehicles on the market. It was also pointed out that an impact assessment would be required before any changes could be made to current policy.

The Group supported the current policy in force

Yours sincerely,

Roy Storey

Chairman

Central Beds Access Group

----- Original Message -----

From: "Margaret James" <Margaret.James@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk>
To: <roy.accessgroupmb@btinternet.com>
Sent: Friday, July 01, 2011 4:03 PM
Subject: Consultation

Good afternoon Roy

Once again, please accept my apologies for not being able to attend the group meeting on 14 June.

I have attached a copy of the letter previously sent to various groups regarding our consultation. I should be grateful for your views on the matter to enable me to include them in my report to Committee. (Your written views are requested because the questionnaire is no longer on our website) Many thanks in advance.

Kind Regards

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Margaret James

From: Glyn Constant [glyngina@yahoo.com]
Sent: 21 July 2011 12:32
To: Margaret James
Subject: taxi/private hire consultation

Dear Mrs James

Your letter of 1st June (Ref ENF.MEJ) asked for feedback on a couple of matters.

a) The use of Bedford Transport Depot for vehicle inspections.

In the 5 years that I have been operating I have had my vehicles tested at 3 different locations

I) The Luton transport depot. Lead time for a test was anything from 2 to 4 weeks and the downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was in excess of 3 hours.

II) ASG Motors of Biggleswade. Very efficient garage who were strict but fair. Lead time for a test was 2 to 5 days and the downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was 1 hour.

III) Bedford Transport Depot. Efficient, strict but fair. Tests on Central Beds vehicles are only carried out on Wednesdays but lead time is 1 to 3 weeks. Downtime for a vehicle, including traveling time, was up to 2 hours..

In order of personal preference's they would be: ASG, Bedford & Luton

b) New driver requirements.

From my own experience the DSA driver assessment or driver competency test is a total nonsense. My son, who has 20 years of accident free driving, took this test in Winchester a few months ago and failed on several issues - the majority of which were concerned with the use of mirrors. After this failure I telephoned the DSA to seek clarification on the test. Their answer - that it is a full practical driving test, identical to that given to a first time driver who has just learned to drive, with a few additional manoeuvres applicable to taxi's. 3 weeks later, my son booked an hour's tuition with a driving instructor and former examiner in Stevenage who took him around the favoured routes and gave him tips on passing. These included moving all mirrors so he would have to turn his head to see them. The following day he passed his second test without any problems.

I would be very surprised if any driver, no matter how experienced or competent, could pass this test.

Although too late to have my views on the issue of Wheelchair accessibility/ Hackneys taken into account I would still like to record them.

Three years ago I was quite keen to expand my operation to include 2 Hackneys but was put off when I discovered that; a) Mid Beds had a policy of 100% wheelchair accessibility for Hackneys and b) a further policy of insisting that there be no extra charge for this service. Having spoken to London taxi drivers I found they were allowed to turn the meter on before extending the wheelchair ramps and loading the passenger, and turning it off after unloading the passenger and stowing the ramps. From personal experience of picking up from a Nursing home in Biggleswade

08/08/2011

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**Mrs M Bartlett
1 Tavistock Avenue
Ampthill
Bedford
MK45 2RN**

Your ref:
Our ref: CON.MEJ
Date: 2 September 2011

Dear Mrs Bartlett

I refer to your letter, dated 5 August 2011, in which you put forward your views on the licensing of wheelchair accessible hackney carriages.

I thank you for the interest you have shown in this matter and would assure you that your views will be taken into consideration when the matter is discussed by the Licensing Committee.

In the mean time, I would assure you that the current conditions requiring vehicles to be wheelchair accessible only apply to hackney carriages. This Authority also licences 250 private hire vehicles. These vehicles do not have to be wheelchair accessible and are available for hire through a private hire operator.

Yours sincerely

Margaret James
Licensing Enforcement Officer
Direct telephone 0300 300 5400
Email Margaret.james@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

Please reply to:
Watling House
High Street North
Dunstable
Bedfordshire
LU6 1LF

Central Bedfordshire Council
Priory House, Monks Walk
Chicksands, Shefford
Bedfordshire SG17 5TQ

Telephone 0300 300 8000
Email customer.services@centralbedfordshire.gov.uk
www.centralbedfordshire.gov.uk

FAO Mrs. M. James.

RECEIVED 1 Tavistock Avenue
Amphill
Bedford
MK45 2RN
Tel: 01525 403534
HIGHWAYS
and TRANSPORTS 2011

want to
understand the
law.

Clare

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing concerning the possibility that the tesci's that run from Flitwick may have to all go over to the large car's instead of having a mixed fleet. Personally I use A1 Tescis almost every day, in order to visit my husband who is a resident in a 'care home', and they are the only means of me getting there. I am a senior lady with bad Arthritis and find getting in and out of the large car's very uncomfortable. I am sure I am not alone with this problem. Please think very carefully before you make your decision.

Yours sincerely

Meeting: Licensing Committee
Date: 28 September 2011
Subject: Health and Safety (as a Regulator) Service Plan 2011-2012
Report of: Gary Alderson – Director of Sustainable Communities
Summary: This report provides and update on the work carried by the Health and Safety Team for June to September 2011.

Contact Officer: Jo Borthwick, Service Manager Public Protection
Public/Exempt: Public
Wards Affected: All
Function of: Executive

CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Council Priorities:

Supporting and caring for an ageing population - The Council is the enforcing body for health and safety in care homes where Council interventions improves the health and safety of both staff and elderly residents

Educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people - The Council, as part of its inspection and intervention programme, educates and where necessary, takes enforcement action, to secure the health and safety and welfare of children at work, children attending nurseries, and children visiting businesses with parents (Garden Centres, Supermarkets etc)

Managing growth effectively - Implementing the Better Regulation Agenda will reduce administrative and regulatory burdens on local business thereby helping economic growth.

Promoting healthier lifestyles and creating safer communities - The Councils health and safety programme which includes intelligence led interventions, accident investigations, topic-based promotional work and providing advice and education to businesses helps create safer communities

The health and safety programme also contributes to developing healthier lifestyles for those working in Central Bedfordshire by seeking to reduce the instances and root causes physical and mental ill health arising in the work place.

Financial:

All expenditure will be met within existing budgets. Budget allocation figures as detailed in the service plan.

Legal:

There is a mandatory requirement placed on the Council by the Health and Safety Executive to produce Enforcement Service Plans which are approved by members. The service plan details health and safety enforcement functions carried out by the council under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 and associated regulations.

Risk Management:

Failure to properly manage and operate the enforcement services could result in central government agencies intervening to assume responsibility for the function.

Staffing (including Trades Unions):

None

Equalities/Human Rights:

The Service undertakes regular equality monitoring to check that local businesses are aware of the service and able to access information and guidance. Information is translated where necessary and training is delivered in other languages when appropriate. It also works with schools, child care settings, care homes and luncheon clubs to promote the well-being of vulnerable groups. The Service has an important role to play in helping to prevent disability and tackling health inequality caused by unsafe working practices.

There are no direct implications for human rights. The application of legislation may have human rights implications in instances where premises are closed down or prosecutions are brought.

Community Safety:

The Service Plan details how the Council will discharge its responsibility to enforce health and safety law within Central Bedfordshire. The implementation of the service plan will work to minimise criminal contraventions of the legislation which is intended to ensure workers and public safety.

Sustainability:

Regulation of Health and Safety at businesses in Central Bedfordshire is focused where the greatest risks are found and the service looks to support compliance to ensure best use of resources and the best outcomes for the whole community.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

that the Regulation committee endorses the Health and Safety Quarterly Report for June to September 2011.

Background

1. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is a body, appointed by the Secretary of State, whose primary function is to make arrangements to secure the health, safety and welfare of people at work, and of the public in their dealings with commercial undertakings. The HSE are also responsible for proposing new laws and standards; conducting research and providing information and advice; and developing policy on fundamental and strategic health and safety issues. The HSE has specific powers to monitor and audit the activity of Local Authorities enforcing health and safety legislation to ensure relevant guidance is being followed.
2. Section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974 requires Local Authorities to make adequate arrangements:
 - for the enforcement of health and safety in premises under the Authorities enforcement remit;
 - to perform the legal duties imposed on them;
 - to undertake any other function conferred on them by relevant statutory provisions; and
 - to set out its commitment, priorities and planned interventions.The arrangements for carrying out these tasks in Central Bedfordshire are detailed in the Health and Safety (as a Regulator) Service Plan 2011 -2012 as set out in Appendix A.
3. Specifically Public Protection seeks to meet Section 18 requirements for member engagement by ensuring the committee are kept informed of progress against the annual plan and the work of the team.

Appendices: Appendix A – Health and Safety Quarterly report September 2011

Background Papers: Health and Safety (as a regulator) Plan 2011-12

Location of papers: Priory House, Chicksands

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Health and Safety Quarterly Report for September 2011

This report provides an update on the work carried by the Health and Safety Team for June to September 2011. It is not an exhaustive list but identifies some key activities.

Investigations

70 accidents have been reported to the team over this period all of which have required consideration. Incidents involving a box falling from height onto someone's head, a fork lift truck injury and a fall from height where someone broke their ankle have all been investigated.

The investigation into the firework display in Leighton Buzzard where 18 people were injured continues as does the case involving a fall from a high top circus tent at Woburn.

Concerns raised by councillors and residents about health and safety and noise in relation to a Motocross Event held in Potton required intervention.

Notices (8 improvement notices served)

Improvement Notices served for dangerous electrics, trips and falls hazards, falls from height asbestos and problems with workplace transport

Further new registrations issued for tattooists, body piercers and acupuncturists.

Safety Advisory Group

The group continues to be very busy the July meeting saw representatives of seven different events which are to take place in Central Bedfordshire. The group which comprises officers from across Central Bedfordshire Council and other relevant agencies such as the Police and Fire Service. All parties have an interest in ensuring that events are run safely and with minimal disruption to others and the meetings provide an opportunity for them to talk to organisers about the events, raise any concerns and offer advice to the organisers.

A meeting involving ward and parish councillors and external agencies such as the police etc. over the major highway event proposed to coincide with the Olympics called "Godiva Awakes".

Other work

Officers have been carrying out inspections and revisits where necessary.

Policies and Procedures

We have drafted an Inspection Plan for Moto a company based in Central Bedfordshire for who we act as Primary Authority for other Local Authorities to follow nationally. This will be posted on the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) website

The H&S team are drafting a procedure on how they will deal with all accident notifications. This has been considered in line with the team's limited resources available to investigate all accident reports received. The team will adopt the same approach made by the Health and Safety Executive. The completion of the procedure will be completed once the new database for Public Protection has been launched and in line with planned changes to the accident reporting system (ICC).

Animal Licensing

Currently working in partnership with Lincoln University about providing a zoo seminar for other Local Authorities

Carried out three zoo & H&S inspections. Numerous breaches of zoo and safety law including dangerous electrics were discovered. Matters are being resolved after agreement from business to make the necessary changes with support from the team.

Inspections carried out three riding establishment at two problems were found but rectified.

For further details please contact Jo Borthwick on 0300 300 6170