

A

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

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
MJ James

14 MAR 2011

Public Protection

Flitwick, 30 March 2011.

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

Dear Madam,

Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing

30 MAR 2011

CB - PRIORY HOUSE

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

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,



(Vinod Kumar Boylla)

Plate No.2226

122

List of drivers with their particulars enclosed

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 Bedfordshire, 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:
Sent: 31 December 2010 15:21
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

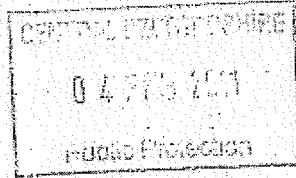
Chris

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

04/01/2011

'Big Bug Limos'

Driver No. 2698



Dear Margaret,

In reference to our conversation on January 17th I write to you asking to keep the forums held at Chicksands at least 4 times a year if possible, as I do find it better speaking to somebody face to face rather than sending emails, as I don't have a computer. Also I've written before about the yearly license making it 3 years which we mentioned in the last forum I attended.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Mark J. Galvin".

Mark J. Galvin