

# APPENDIX B

## RESPONSE 1:

# FOX CARS

Elite Taxis & Private Hire

Wellesley House. 96 East Street, Sudbury, Suffolk. CO10 2TP

Hello Team,

I have several concerns about the new draft policy which will affect my company directly and there are other bits that seem to be more extreme than necessary. Please find my comments or questions in red.

### 6 VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

6.1.5 Be no more than eight years of age since the date of first registration. IS THIS THE MAX AGE OF A VEHICLE THAT CAN BE LICENSED OR THE MAX AGE OF THE VEHICLE BEFORE IT HAS TO BE TAKEN OFF FLEET?

6.1.11 Any application for a new Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle for 8 passengers must be Wheelchair accessible. THIS IS NOT GOING TO WORK FOR US. WE DO SCHOOL WORK AND AIRPORT WORK IN OUR 8 SEATERS AND A WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE VEHICLES WOULD NOT BE SUITABLE OR COMFORTABLE FOR THE WORK WE DO. AS A PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR WHY SHOULD I BE FORCED BY THE COUNCIL TO BUY A VEHICLE WHICH WILL NOT SUIT MY FLEET?

6.1.13 Vehicles should have no damage affecting the structural safety of the vehicle and must not have been written off for insurance purposes at any time WHAT CLASS OF WRITE OFF? WHAT IF A VEHICLE WAS CLASSED AS NOT FINANCIALLY VIABLE TO REPAIR BY AN INSURANCE COMPANY AND WRITTEN OFF, BUT BOUGHT BACK REPAIRED, CERTIFIED AND RETESTED?

6.8.1 An appliance for extinguishing fires must be carried in such a position as to be readily available for use. Such an appliance must be a minimum of either a 2kg ABC General Purpose Powder or 2 litre AFFF Foam and conform to BSEN 3, showing the appropriate kite-mark and must be securely fixed in a position readily accessible to the driver. Three stickers must be fitted to the vehicle; one on the dashboard facing the front seat passenger and one facing out on each of the rear passenger door

windows (on larger vehicles a sticker must be placed on all rear doors) stating a fire extinguisher is carried, all must be clearly visible to passengers. What is it with the council wanting stuff stuck to dashboards? Some of us take pride in our vehicles and we don't want to be damaging our dash with stickers and signs

6.8.2 All extinguishers must be checked every 12 months, prior to vehicle testing or prior to change of vehicle test. Such a check

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shall be carried out in accordance with the requirements of BS5306 Part 3 and Part 8, by a registered competent company. The date of the test and signatures must be clearly visible on a sticker attached to the extinguisher. The extinguisher must be marked with the vehicle registration number. Are the garages so incompetent that they cannot see if an extinguisher is either out of date or the gauge is not in the green? I can only speak for my company as I don't know what others do, but if we have an extinguisher that is out of date or low on pressure, we go to halfords and buy a new one. If this was referring to office extinguishers, I could understand the checks by a competent company as large extinguishers are refillable or serviceable, generally car ones are just throw away.

6.15.4 Self-adhesive identification signs as approved by the Council, indicating that insurance is invalid unless the vehicle is booked by private hire, must be affixed to the drivers' door and front passenger door panels of the vehicle. These signs should not be tampered with in any way and must be displayed at all times whilst the vehicle has current private hire vehicle plate affixed. This is a waste of money and does not work. If a driver picks up of the side of the road, he obviously does not care about the law. I think most of the time when this would be an issue would be late at night, when the public really don't care what the signs say anyway, they just want to get home. A few secret shoppers and fines for drivers caught breaking this law would be better. Also, clarification on booking procedures with regards people who approach drivers kerbside. If the journey is booked in before the passenger gets in the car is it legal? Can the booking be radioed through to control or must it be by phone?

6.19.4 Testing of the meter will include a run over a measured mile and shall be checked against the Council's table of fares. Where is Babergh's measured mile?

6.22.4 The licensed driver of a wheelchair accessible vehicle must have received suitable and sufficient training to load and convey wheelchair bound passengers. A written record of the training shall be kept by the vehicle proprietor and made available for inspection by an authorised officer of the Licensing Authority upon request. Refresher training shall be undertaken at least once every 36 months, with any new licensed driver undertaking the training prior to their first journey.  
IF ALL NEW 8 SEATERS HAVE TO BE WHEELCHAIR ACCESIBLE DO THEIR DRIVERS STIILL HAVE TO HAVE TRAINING EVEN WHEN NO WHEELCHAIR WORK WILL BE TAKEN.

6.23.1 The front side windows and windscreen of any vehicle shall comply with the current Construction and Use Regulations with regard to the level of tint. Except for stretched limousines (see paragraph 7.3.3 below) the remaining windows may have a minimum VLT of 50%. No self-adhesive material (tinted or clear) shall be affixed to any part of the glass. All vehicles licensed by this Council shall only be fitted with factory

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tinted glass by the vehicle manufacturer. This should be left as is with the option for the vehicle owners to get rear windows professionally tinted at their discretion but with regard to minimum VLT. Why shouldn't I try to make my car look better just because I can't afford to go out and buy a top spec vehicle.

6.27.1 The proprietor of a private hire vehicle or hackney carriage shall not allow the vehicle to be driven and used for hire by any person who does not hold a current private hire vehicle or hackney carriage driver's licence, as appropriate, issued by Mid Suffolk District Council in respect of Mid Suffolk licensed vehicles or Babergh District Council in respect of Babergh licensed vehicles. AS BABERGH AND MIDSUFFOLK COUNCILS HAVE JOINED AND WE ARE NOW HAVING A JOINT POLICY, WHY NOT COMBINE THE LICENSING AND ALLOW ALL OF BABERGH MIDSUFFOLK TO WORK AS ONE. THIS MAY HELP WITH THE CURRENT SHORTAGE OF DRIVERS IN BABERGH

### 6.29 SATELLITE NAVIGATION HACKNEY CARRIAGE

6.29.1 The proprietor of a hackney carriage is required to affix within the carriage a satellite navigation system of a type suitable for UK roads (UK mapping) and this is to be used at all times when the vehicle is hired.

6.29.2 The satellite navigation system must be fitted in such a position that it does not obstruct the drivers view or in such a way as to distract the driver's concentration from the road. Meter to be started before of after the driver has to program his sat nav for each journey?

6.29.3 The proprietor of a hackney carriage is required to keep the satellite navigation system updated with the latest maps at all times.

A sat nav system is a drivers tool of the trade if the driver needs one. it should not be the responsibility of the proprietor to supply and update. To take this away from the driver's expenditure is one step closer to being "employed"

Other than that, Sat nav is getting to be very outdated. The simple to use phone apps such as google maps and waze are much more reliable and useful. To force investment in old fashioned equipment would be a waste of proprietor's money. How many drivers don't have a smart phone ?

9.4.3 Owners of vehicles will be subject to a re-charge fee in respect of vehicles that have to be resubmitted for a second inspection test on the grounds of mechanical/MOT related re-inspections pertaining to the specified requirements for hackney/private hire vehicles.

Garages have historically included a mot certificate once a hackney or PHV test has been done, will this continue? Historically, retests have been free where any work needed has been carried out at the garage doing the test.

9.5.2 The use of hackney carriage stand/rank is kept under review and may be discontinued in individual instances where a particular stand/rank has fallen into disuse. Conversely, the Council will consider the creation of new stands/ranks where there is a perceived need. Everyone who wishes

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the Council to consider the creation of new stands/ranks must write to the Licensing Team, at the address set out at the beginning of this document, giving full details of the proposed location(s), and explaining their reasons in full.

There are around 76 Hackney plates issued over the two councils with a combined number of 15 hackney stand places. How many times do we need to tell the council more spaces are needed? We have even seen plans (although totally inadequate) Do we need to start this process from afresh again?

10.2.3 Applicants are required to undertake the BTEC Level 2 course in an Introduction to the Role of a Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver. This training is to be carried out at the applicants expense and a pass certificate presented to the Council prior to acquiring a Private Hire Operators Licence. Have the council not realised how difficult it is to get drivers? now they want to add another expense to getting a license and insist on a prospective driver sitting a btec before they will even be considered for a licence.

meter test certificates and fire extinguisher testing, Btecs and refresher courses, more signs, fitting of saynav equipment, etc, etc, all more expense to drivers and operators, are we going to have a licence fee freeze or drop?

Can we have some clarity about the carriage of pushchairs with children in them? It is a regular occurrence that we get calls "have you got a big vehicle that I can just push my pram into?" It seems to be the norm on the rank to allow this, I personally refuse every time as I don't think it is safe to have a pushchair or pram with a child in unsecured in the back of a vehicle whilst in motion.

Luggage and charges, what is the councils view on charging mutiseater rate (when it comes into force) for less than 4 passengers but with luggage or objects that would clearly not fit in a normal saloon car ?

WEDDING AND FUNERAL VEHICLES are not mentioned, what is the new policy regarding these vehicles?

These are my initial concerns with a quick read through of the draft supplied, there may be more issues to be raised on a more in depth read of the document.

Please email me back with your replies about the concerns raised in this email.

Thank you.

**Fox Cars**  
**Elite Private Hire**

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## RESPONSE 2:

Good afternoon

After receiving the consultation letter today, i have been online and reviewed the documents Can i have clarification... Is Btec level 2 , are you stating you want this to be compulsory?

Does this start once my licence expires Dec2022 or you wanting this done before?

Expense for this course is around an average of £250... is any or the other expenses we pay yearly is being reviewed at a lower cost to help towards the cost of the course?

Does the council have plans to arrange courses?

Tax check on 4th April 2022, can this be sent earlier as you can now send you returns earlier, as mine have already been sent for 2020-21 , or is this a different check?

My thoughts....

I have been driving now for 40 years, and I don't need to be told to have a btec at my age!!!

Is there any other increases you have planned in the cost structure we should be aware off for next year?

Regards

Mr David Blackery

### RESPONSE 3:

# FOX CARS

**Elite Taxis & Private Hire**

**Wellesley House. 96 East Street, Sudbury, Suffolk. CO10 2TP**

Hello Team,

This email has been updated to include some more important points.

Further to my previous email, I want to stress how much I am against the new policy **6.1.11 Any application for a new Hackney Carriage or Private Hire Vehicle for 8 passengers must be Wheelchair accessible.**

To bring this policy into force will mean that should I want to Increase my private hire 8 seater fleet or replace any of the vehicles I will have a very limited number of options for purchase and a far higher expense per vehicle.

As most wheelchair accessible vehicles are Hackney carriages, these vehicles are usually past their useful life when they come onto the secondhand market and very expensive to buy new, with long waiting times for purchase.

If one of our existing 8 seaters was to be involved in an accident and written off, and we needed to replace it, by your new rules this would have to be replaced with a wheelchair accessible vehicle. This would mean that the financial burden put on us by your policy could in effect cripple our company. An insurance company will only ever pay out what they have to. They would be paying out for a used, 8 seater private hire vehicle, probably with high mileage, You would be insisting it's replacement would be an expensive or hard to come by (or both) wheelchair accessible vehicle. Where at the moment we can pick up a suitable vehicle between £8000 - £14000 usually within a few days, we would have to be looking at New vehicles that are £30000 + and still have to wait weeks for delivery. This policy change will bring financial hardship to companies that are put in this position

We do a lot of work for Suffolk County Council on school runs where 8 seaters are requested as part of the contract. To limit our fleet to wheelchair accessible vehicles will have a serious detrimental effect on our business and our ability to service our current and possible future contracts with Suffolk County Council.

We also do 8 seater work to and from airports and for long distance work. Wheelchair accessible vehicle seats are by design far less comfortable than standard 8 seater seats. A 10 or 20 minute ride is one thing but a few hours on a rear facing fold down seat is not something I would want my customers to endure and in fact is not something my customers would put up with.

With this policy change, eventually all 8 seaters in the district would be wheelchair accessible either due to replacement through age or accident or by new additions to the fleet.

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We have built up our companies over years through hard work and the supply of decent and comfortable vehicles for our customers. A service that we would no longer be able to provide due to the restrictive policies of the the council.

Needless to say if we cannot do the contracts or we lose long distance work for our 8 seaters, this will have a knock on effect to how many drivers will be required and the companies income and reputation.

In summary, if this part of the policy is put in to force there would be...

- 1) Unfair control of Private enterprise
- 2) Forced higher expenditure by the council
- 3) Reduced availability for Suffolk County Council or other contracts
- 4) Loss of airport and long distance travel
- 5) Possible loss of jobs for drivers.
- 6) Loss of income to Bmsdc as vehicles would not be replaced.
- 7) Less drivers, and less availability for evenings and weekends.
- 8) Companies closing down due to the financial burden forcibly imposed upon them to be able to carry on their normal business.

Please email me back to discuss any points raised in this email.

Thank you.

**Fox Cars**  
**Elite Private Hire**

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## RESPONSE 4:

Hi Katherine.

The Planning, Development & Highways committee noted the details of the Taxi Policy review. They didn't wish to comment.

Kind regards.

Deputy Town Clerk.

Sudbury Town Council, Town Hall, Sudbury, Suffolk. CO10 1TL.



**Sudbury  
Town of the Year 2019**

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## RESPONSE 5:

To:Licensing Team, Babergh and Mid Suffolk District Councils  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell road  
IPSWICH  
IP12BX

Stephen Golynia  
2 Windmill Hill  
Long Melford  
Suffolk  
CO10 9AD  
1st September 2021

In response to the Draft BMSDC Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Operator, Vehicle & Driver Policy.

I wish to make the following points:

1. This is the 3rd review but we have been unaware of the earlier reviews and their outcome.
2. 2.19.2 Training: I have been driving a taxi in the Sudbury and surrounding area since 1973. I suspect that I am the longest serving driver in the Sudbury area. I have driven daily, both in the UK and Europe, taking all types of clients including many with disabilities and according to Suffolk County Council am extremely qualified to do this and they have merited my work.

I am 65 years old and don't wish to be trained or educated to be a taxi driver.

I had planned to continue to work until I was 70 for various reasons including, but not exclusively, due to the last 18 months of little or no earnings due to Covid.

I don't feel I need to tick a box just because the licensing team wants me to.

38% of taxi drivers, nationally, are over 60 years old and there is a good chance this forced qualification will mean the loss of many drivers prematurely.

Finally, could you advise why have you decided not to enforce number 20 to be wheelchair accessible in the future? This will devalue plates 1 to 20 and will surely mean you will be financially compensating their owners

I look forward to receiving your response

Stephen Golynia

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## RESPONSE 6:

Dear Licensing Team

I have been passed your letter dated 18<sup>th</sup> August, and would like to comment on the Policy Consultation as follows:

Clause 2:19      You refer to training to a BETEC Level 2 'Role of a Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver' course. I would question whether this training includes safeguarding training? I know that previously, Mid Suffolk/Babergh did not include any safeguarding training for new and existing taxi drivers, and this is the ideal opportunity for this to change. *It is essential that taxi drivers have a good understanding and awareness of safeguarding both to protect their customers and to ensure they do not put themselves in a vulnerable situation.*

Clause 5.3      I welcome the intended consultation on mandatory CCTV in licensed vehicles. We deal with incidents where licensed drivers have complaints made against them, and if CCTV were available, this could help resolve the complaint potentially with more accuracy within a faster timeframe.

Yours faithfully

With kind regards.

Senior Transport Officer - Safeguarding  
Growth, Highways and Infrastructure  
Suffolk County Council  
Constantine House, 5 Constantine Road, Ipswich, Suffolk, IP1 2DH

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## RESPONSE 7:

Good evening,

From the outset I would like to point out that these are my personal remarks and may not represent the views of my current operator or other cab drivers or operators. I drive a Hackney Carriage in and around Sudbury.

As I currently understand it Hackney Carriages must have wheelchair access in order to operate from the rank, and at no additional charge. This is right and proper. In most cases from the rank there is a curb, making the slope of the wheelchair ramp manageable. However, most Hackney Carriages are used for Private Hire where wheelchairs are concerned, where the wheelchairs are pushed up the ramp off a level surface, making the slope quite steep. Speaking from experience 5 of the last 6 wheelchairs, the wheelchair occupant is heavy. We have assistance with one individual, because the individual is 19 stone. I am now currently 64 years old and I am currently finding it increasingly difficult to undertake wheelchairs. Apart from my own experiences wheeling over weight individuals at whatever Incline of ramp is a health and safety risk to the driver.

This leads to my next point. With all the Taxi operatives in Sudbury, there are only a few that are willing to undertake wheelchairs. The proposed wheelchair fare should be able to ring up any taxi operative/company to book a wheelchair accessible vehicle rather than the chosen few. Without naming names, there is one that overcharges for private hire work. (However, this is of two years ago and may not reflect his current procedure). With the increasing size of the wheelchair individuals, it seems to me that we now need specialised vehicles with hydraulic/electric lifts. The down side of this is that the additional cost will have to be addressed somehow, because the cost will be more than the standard fares. This point is debatable as it falls outside remit of the consultation. But there needs to be more wheelchair accessible vehicles on the rank, as well as the Private Hire operatives.

In your rule book it states that there are 10 Taxi spaces in the Town of Sudbury, this is not enough spaces for the number of Hackney Carriages in Sudbury, and they would have to be able to park safely without hindering other road users. Basically you can only park nine vehicles safely in Sudbury.

These are the only points I would like to raise for the consultation.

Kind Regards,

Andrew Fleming.

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## RESPONSE 8:

Dear Sir/Madam,

Your letter 18 August 2021 re: Taxi Policies January 2022 and beyond.

Much of the document doesn't relate to me directly as I am a Self-employed Hackney Carriage Driver – Private Hire, Limousines, Fire Engines !?

The main points I should like to make relate to Section 2.19 Training:

I have been driving for over 40 years including the last 7 years as a Hackney Cab Driver.

I understand the need to raise and maintain standards, however the expectations of this section are onerous.

I am 65 years old, I have a clean driving licence and clean DBS check. I also took the Safeguarding test when asked to do so.

Your proposal ignores the time and financial implications of attaining BTEC Level 2 'An Introduction to the Role of a Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver'.

My online research suggests that there are inconsistencies in approach across many adjacent licencing authorities. Most authorities have their own testing and many require it only for new drivers.

Even Ipswich Borough Council, Section 6.7 of their 'Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licencing Policy' 2019-2022, refers to their own test, for new drivers, and only on renewal in exceptional circumstances.

The BTEC Level 2 Courses I have found vary from 2 Full days to up to 150 hours learning and testing, with costs between £150-£280. In addition I would earn no money during this period.

My Self-employed earnings 2020/21 tax year were £4923, compared with Pre-Covid earnings of £14393 2019/20 tax year, during which time you did not discount my personal licence to reflect my reduction in earnings potential during this time.

There will be drivers who are unwilling or unable to undertake this training and I suggest to you that what you are proposing is like 'Taking a Sledge Hammer to Crack a Walnut'.

I look forward to hearing the outcome of your 'Consultation' and request confirmation of the receipt of my comments

Regards

Stephen King (Licence CD0079)

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## RESPONSE 9:

Having read through the updated Taxi Policy, I have a few questions and comments to make regarding this new proposal.

Section 1.2.3 - Assessing the suitability of an applicant. In this you list 7 key factors, Period of holding a driver's licence, Criminal History, Medical Fitness, Number of endorsed penalty points on the drivers licence, Knowledge of the local area, General Conduct, Right to work?

How are these weighted when deciding on who is suitable or not?

Section 2.18.2 - Knowledge Test. Having been a taxi driver in the Babergh District for nearly 9 years, I never had to take a knowledge test when I first gained my licence. I'd be interested in seeing what the knowledge test comprises of to assess whether or not it is suitable? I hear regularly from some passengers complaints that they are being taken the long way round to certain destinations.

Section 2.19 - Training. - I'm sorry, but I've been doing this job as mentioned above for nearly 9 years. Why do I need training on a job that hasn't changed in the past 9 years. I've checked the prices of these courses and they range from £250-£420. Add into the equation a lost days wage and any travel costs to the training centre. The fact that you're asking drivers in a trade that has been decimated over the past 18 months to pay for this training is scandalous and unfair. I can understand the potential need for someone new in the trade to give them the introduction to how things work, but feel that the council should be subsidising this rather than making them mandatory for everyone. If this is brought in as mandatory you will potentially lose drivers and as there is already a local shortage. A lot of cab drivers do this as a 2nd job to bring in a few extra pounds each week by working weekends. Asking them to fork out £400 for a course is ludicrous.

Section 3.4.2 - If I want to have a drink of water whilst I am driving I will not be seeking permission to do so from any hirer at any time. Driving when dehydrated is as dangerous as someone who has been drinking alcohol as it can effect a persons reaction time and become dangerous. This was documented in a RAC article from February 2020 - From dehydration to Jet Lag: Four everyday things that are almost as bad as drink driving.

Section 5.3.1 - CCTV - Is this solely for cameras operating facing out of the vehicle or for internal cameras? Continuously recording inside a vehicle is unlawful and could have ramifications with GDPR

Section 6 - Is there no longer to be any specifications on vehicle size? There is no mention if LWB WAV's are now allowed as opposed to SWB which we have been previously forced to purchase. SWB WAV's are becoming harder to purchase.

Section 6.1.8 - Electric/hybrid Vehicles - Will the council be subsidising when people require a new car. Currently a Vauxhall Vivaro WAV equivalent to what I have now will cost £34,645. No guarantee that it will be side loading and to have it converted into a proper cab could cost in excess of another £10,000. These vehicles currently only have a range of 140 miles. On a Saturday I regularly do between 230 & 280 miles in a shift. These new vehicles will not be practical. Will the council also put up charging points for local drivers outside their properties. I live on a terraced housed cul-de-sac with no off street parking and putting a charging point outside my home will cause trip hazards and open me up to litigation if someone was to fall an injure themselves and I'm not planning on moving!

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Section 6.16 - Advertising - There is no mention of advertising inside the vehicle. Is this allowed?

Section 6.22.4 - Please see above under Section 2.19

Section 6.29.1 - Sat Navs - Ridiculous to have to use a sat nav for every journey. This is what having local knowledge is supposed to be about. I use Waze for longer journeys which is a free app on my phone and is updated regularly.

Section 6.30.2 - Repetition of Section 3.4.2 - I will drink if I want to.

Section 9.4.2 - Steam Cleaning my engine before it's plate test. Another additional cost, normally around £50. People may be tempted to do it themselves which can then cause damage to their engine. Even done properly it would have the effect of potentially masking any oil leaks or other issues which would not then be picked up by the mechanic.

Steve Hale

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## RESPONSE 10:

### Driver Policy

- 1) BTEC Level 2 for existing drivers. Drivers have been leaving the industry across the country during the pandemic, there is now a national shortage of taxi/private hire drivers! Introducing a policy whereby a driver with multiple years in the business is mandated to take time out to “learn the basics” for a job they have been doing will drive more of the experienced drivers out. Yes, we agree, there should be a need for “new” drivers to take the course prior to obtaining their license, but for drivers with over 5(?) years’ experience, “Grandfather” rights should be granted.
- 2) Refresher training for the above - is it online or classroom? Why the need? What will have changed within the three years? Can you tell me who runs a course as we can’t find one!
- 3) HMRC Tax Check. What is this?
- 4) 3.1.2 If a fixed fare is agreed prior to hiring why the need to drive on the shortest route? The quickest route may be greater in distance but save additional costs. E.g. the shortest route to Heathrow airport goes through the centre of London.

### Vehicle Policy

- 5) No description of what a wheelchair vehicle should be (side or rear loading, wheelchair facing forwards or backwards etc).
- 6) 6.1.5 implies that the maximum age of the vehicle is eight years, not that the vehicle can only be initially licensed by the council if it is younger than eight.
- 7) Brand new 7 seat Peugeot 5008 could be only 1.2l so would be excluded by 6.1.7, engine size alone should not be a restrictive policy.
- 8) New LEVC “London Cab” only has a range of 80 miles on electric (it has a petrol engine which tops up the battery). 6.1.8 would seem to discount this “purpose-built” hackney vehicle!
- 9) Why the need for an 8 seat private hire to be a wheelchair vehicle. This would imply seating configuration in the rear to be conference style rather than forward facing.
- 10) 6.1.13 – Is this all types of insurance write-off? Category N?
- 11) Fire extinguishers –
  - a. Non-compulsory in many other districts (TfL does not have them in taxi or PHV)
  - b. Please tell me where to stow a 2KG powder extinguisher where it is readily accessible to the driver but not in their way!
  - c. It is cheaper to buy a new extinguisher every year than get it tested!
  - d. Does the mandatory driver training cover fire extinguisher use?
- 12) 6.9 First Aid Kits again not required for TfL, drivers testing etc.
- 13) 6.15.1 Why the need for the roof sign to have company name/phone number?
- 14) 6.15.4 Does the limousine still need to display the identification sign? This would then defeat the object of not having any vehicle markings.
- 15) 6.15.5 Please let us know how we would operate a “Taxi-Bus” without displaying the word “Taxi”
- 16) Our company name includes the word “cab” so how can we display our Logo, name or website?
- 17) 6.16 Too small, a sheet of A4 is 623 sq. cms. So just 2/3 of a sheet either side of the vehicle and nothing at the back.
- 18) Receipts how can we show what tariff code is shown on the meter if there is not one installed in the vehicle?
- 19) Does a hackney driver really need to use a sat-nav even after they have passed the knowledge test? Or to go from the rank to Waldingfield Road? Does the sat nav need to be set to shortest route? Do we start the meter before or after setting the sat-nav?

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- 20) 9.1.4 At what age should the vehicle have a MOT certificate? If brand new and straight from the manufacturers does it still require one? TfL rules state "All taxis and private hire vehicles more than 12 months from date of manufacture are required to pass two MoT tests as a condition of continued annual licensing."
- 21) 9.2.4 Meter test certificate annually?
- 22) 9.4.2 Steam clean the engine and chassis?

### Operator Policy

- 23) 11.2 Policy for "virtual numbers" whereby the number called is diverted automatically to VOIP or mobile
- 24) 11.2 Should this include "Text Message" and mobile phone Message apps ?
- 25) 11.2 If the mobile the call is diverted to is predominately in district but occasionally goes outside of district is it not allowed to take a booking?
- 26) 11.2 Cloud based booking and dispatch systems?
- 27) 11.10 See point 16)
- 28) Outsourcing of booking and dispatch functions, does this need to be done within the district?

Stuart Armstrong

## RESPONSE 11:

Babergh District Council  
Licensing Team  
Endeavour House  
8 Russell Road  
Ipswich  
Suffolk  
IP1 2BX

Dear Team

### **Draft BMSDC – Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Operator, Vehicle & Driver Policy**

You have recently sent notifications to operators and drivers about the above policy, inviting us to visit your website link to download the document and make comments on the contents therein.

I find it unfair that yet again the press were informed of this important matter before you had contacted the operators and drivers like myself. Are we not the very people and organisations you expect to go along with your plans? If you want our support and co-operation please do not treat us like an after-thought.

The length of the document is extensive and for many would have been overwhelming to go through. We have had less than a month to read, digest and compose a response. If you have had a lack of replies I would imagine it is not because people agree with the document but more likely they do not know where to begin or are apathetic to the situation because they feel you will go ahead with your plans regardless of what they say.

Throughout the draft there seems to be extra cost burdens placed on operators and drivers alike. The district and in particular Sudbury is already oversubscribed with licenced vehicles and drivers all chasing what little work is currently available. We have all suffered in the last 18 months with lockdowns and stay at home orders with very little opportunity to earn a reasonable income. Whilst I am lucky enough to be an employed driver I feel for the operators and many drivers that are self-employed that must be struggling to pay their bills and are now faced with the prospect of having to pay out more money for the privilege of trying to earn a living. Perhaps the committee would like to spend a few days or so as a driver or operator to see actually how difficult it is?

The sections of the draft I wish to make comments on are as follows:

### **2.1 Disclosure and Barring Service Check**

2.1.3 The current check lasts for a period of 3 years. Will this change to the update service or annual checks be bought in for all existing licenced drivers when renewing or just for new applicants? This is an added cost for an already low earning profession. If the check is valid for 3 years and Suffolk County Council are happy for Safeguarding purposes for drivers and passenger assistants to only have a 3 yearly check why does Babergh feel the need to have this done annually?

### **2.2 – 2.14**

Will these clauses apply to existing licence holders?

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If say an existing licence holder is found guilty of driving under the influence does this mean their taxi driver licence will be revoked and that they will not be able to reapply and be relicensed until after the minimum period mentioned?

## 2.18 Knowledge Test

If you are only allowed 5 attempts to pass the knowledge test and will then have to wait 12 months before trying again do you perhaps the test is too difficult and not wholly fit for purpose? Is there an allowance for people that struggle to read and write? Colleagues that have taken the test have said some of the local area questions bore no relevance to our local area and reading further in to the document if you expect sat navs to be installed in all hackney carriages and used for every single journey what would be the point of continuing with a local area knowledge test?

## 2.19 Training

What are you hoping to achieve by forcing existing licenced drivers in to training? Have you not, by granting their licences already deemed them capable of carrying out that role?

Many drivers, like myself, have been licenced with you for many years and you are asking them to take a course that is an 'Introduction to the Role of a Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver'. I feel like you are saying 'we don't think you can do your job'. Like many others I have not been able to earn my full wage and the extra funds required to take the course is something I simply do not have. You would then damage my earning potential further by removing my licence which would in whole affect the general public as there would be fewer licenced drivers available.

Other licencing districts are not enforcing this requirement and yet again this seems to be an extra cost burden.

Whilst attending training courses I would not able to earn the money needed to fund the course and also not be available to serve the public. The cost of these courses seem to vary depending on providers and what relevant qualifications would the course tutors hold? Would they be licenced drivers themselves or just somebody reading from a book trying to tell me how to do my job?

Perhaps an introductory course would be useful for new applicants or those drivers that have several substantiated complaints against them or have had their licences revoked.

If this BTEC is bought in as a mandatory requirement I would seriously consider my position as a licenced driver and most likely take the decision to not renew my licence.

I don't believe customers will be bothered whether you hold a BTEC qualification or not. They just want to be driven to their chosen destination.

## 2.22 Tax Checks on Licence Applications and Renewals

For what purpose is a tax check required and which type of tax check are you expecting to be done? I am an employed driver and my tax position is a matter between myself, my employer and HMRC. Whilst I submit a tax return I do not see this is any of your concern. My tax position bares no relevance to my ability to drive a taxi or private hire vehicle.

## 3.1 General Conduct

3.1.2 It is not always possible to proceed to a particular destination by the shortest route especially when there are road closures and traffic delays. Also this implies that if a customer requests we take a different route to their destination that is not the shortest that we would not be allowed to do this.

# APPENDIX B

## 3.2 Driver Dress Code

This is very ambiguous. What one person considers to be clean and respectable is not necessarily the same as another person. How far does this stretch? Will bushy beards and visible tattoos be deemed as not acceptable as some people do not like them?

## 4.1 Assistance Dogs

If a driver were to be allergic to or have a fear of dogs would they be allowed to refuse to carry an assistance dog?

## 4.2 Wheelchair Passengers

4.2.1 e. How much mobility assistance is deemed as reasonable? Some passengers may just need an arm to steady them but surely I cannot be expected to physically transfer a passenger out of their wheelchair on to a vehicle seat if that is how they wish to travel? My own mother-in-law is wheelchair bound and much prefers to use an ordinary vehicle seat rather than stay in her chair. I know from experience that she can do very little to help move herself and her weight would cause the fittest of drivers a problem. Whilst I do not wish to be discriminatory I have to put my health and safety first.

## PART 2: VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE

This section of the policy appears to be more aimed towards an operator or vehicle owner rather than a driver so I will briefly summarise my thoughts.

I personally do not believe electric vehicles is the correct way to save the planet as it has been shown their manufacture is less green than a standard vehicle. They are more expensive and more difficult to maintain and do not offer the flexibility that petrol and diesel engines do. Charging will take longer than simply filling up meaning more downtime and less availability for passengers. There are insufficient charging points available in town and again given the lack of income for drivers and operators it is not a financially viable option to switch to these types of vehicles.

Removing the requirement for plates 21+ to be wheelchair accessible is unfair on plates 1-20. Will you be compensating plate holders 1-20 for devaluing their businesses and will plates 21+ if no longer wheelchair accessible be made to pay the higher licence fee. If it was the other way around and wheelchair accessible vehicles were charged a higher licence fee this would be seen to be disability discrimination.

Will there be a cap on licenced vehicles as there is more vehicles than work available.

I am confused as to why rear doors in a minibus do not count in the number of required doors for that vehicle. These vehicles will have been approved by higher authorities than Babergh as safe and fit for purpose. Why are your requirements more than what has already been approved for use?

A 2kg/litre fire extinguisher is the same size as that which is required in a bus. Where in a car would you safely position one that does not impede on the passenger or driver space but is readily available for use?

Whilst a first aid kit should be carried, as a driver I surely should not be expected to administer first aid to a passenger. I have no medical training to be able to do this safely. Surely there should be a policy on this?

Why does it matter about the position of stickers on the vehicles? Surely if they do not contain false information or give a false impression of the vehicle type and are not impeding the visibility of the driver and the passenger and are not covering licence plates it should not matter on their positioning.

## APPENDIX B

The section on size of lettering seems unnecessary. Bigger lettering helps people with poor eyesight.

Who would be responsible for training me if I were to be a driver of a wheelchair accessible vehicle and who would bear the burden of the cost of training?

Sat Navs can be as much of a distraction as they are an assistance. Why should we be forced in to using one if we already know the route to the passengers' destination? Purchase, installation and updates are again another cost being forced upon operators and drivers.

I have no comments to make on the sections relating to limousines and fire engines.

My role within my employment is dual. I am mainly based in the office assisting with bookings and dispatching as well as all aspects of administration associated with the business. Your requirements for record keeping are excessive. Why does it matter who took the booking and who dispatched it and why is important to record the time at which a driver was allocated to the booking. This is unnecessary data recording for the sake of it and will not work in practice. Other member of our office team who are not drivers have no contact with passengers other than a conversation on the phone when they book their journey. Why would these members need to hold a DBS certificate?

If licenced drivers leave the profession because of these increased costs and hoop jumping exercises the council members of the public will be left with a diminished service and the council will ultimately suffer a drop in revenue too. Is this really what you are after?

During the pandemic what assistance did you offer to drivers and operators? Did you consider an extension to their licence period to help with their financial difficulties they must have suffered or any emotional support for those finding it difficult to cope with the uncertain situation we all found ourselves in?

You happily take our money from us in licence fees and now you are looking at proposals that will relieve us of more of our earnings. Will you be transparent and let us know where are licence fees go and what we actually get for our money?

Regards  
Teresa Chandler CD0052  
18 Meeting Field  
Long Melford  
Sudbury  
Suffolk  
CO10 9AD

# APPENDIX B

## RESPONSE 12:

BMSDC Hackney and private hire policy review.

Suzanne Warnack – Licence number CD0163

Dear Team,

I am writing to you regarding the recent Vehicle and Driver policy consultation.

First of all, I am quite disappointed that yet again the press seems to get the information before actual operators and drivers do. We are the people who these things affects yet it seems to go into a newspaper before we receive any information about what is happening. Also, you have given us less than 1 month to go through a 38-page document to which is not really a fair amount of time given the importance on our jobs etc.

2.1.3

With regards to the DBS system, we are currently checked every 3 years at a cost to ourselves. You now want the update system or every year at a cost to us. So, this involves increasing costs to us 3-fold. Why is this now needed especially seeing as our earnings have been considerably less over the last nearly 2 years.

2.18

With regards to the Knowledge test, if you are stating that someone may have 5 attempts to pass in the first instance does this not indicate that this test is maybe not suitable for purpose. Speaking to people in the past who have had to do this test say there was little in it that bared resemblance to the job they would be required to do and some questions were nothing to do with our specific area and were never likely to get right. Many people who have approached the company I work for with an interest to becoming a driver have changed their minds when they hear about the knowledge test.

2.19

With regards to BTEC courses, I would strongly disagree to having to do this after I have already had a licence for several years (why should an existing driver have to have an introduction to the role when they already know what their role is and carry it out to the standards expected). I have no desire to go back to a college etc especially at another cost to myself (which with recent earnings is not something I have spare). As already stated, the earnings for a driver have been dramatically reduced during the last couple of years and having to attend the course would not only be a cost to us but we would also lose another couple of days earnings at the same time.

I can agree that maybe in the future for new applicants only that this may be something that could prove useful or for those who have maybe had complaints against them, their license suspended or revoked for some reason. Seeing as other councils across the country are not insisting on this course, it clearly is not a nationwide regulation. If this was a future requirement, I would consider not renewing my license at that time, which talking to many other drivers in the area have all indicated the same feelings and ending up with no experienced drivers instead of all new ones is not helpful to the industry or any industry in most cases.

2.22.1

With regards to tax checks, what does this actually mean? I am an employed person and all my taxes are calculated and paid through my wages. I cannot see what the council needs to know about this. For self-employed people who do their own taxes again why does the council need to know what the details are.

3.2.1

With regards to the dress code, this has always been stated to be of a smart appearance but quite a few of the drivers in our area wear very casual items such as football shirts, slogan T. Shirts etc and I have seen some drivers in quite dirty jeans etc. The company I work for have shirt, ties, logo jumpers and coats for uniforms and those of us who are combined office and driver staff still go out in smart clothes.

## APPENDIX B

### 6.1.1

With regards to electric vehicles, unfortunately this would be a difficult move for this kind of industry. If you need to fill up with fuel it can be a 5-minute job, if you need to park up at a charging point this could be a matter of missing several fares because of the time difference is having to charge a vehicle. Unfortunately, with the costs of new batteries being in and around £10,000 (that I know of) to replace as well as difficulties in towing and pushing electric vehicles (when things 'may' go wrong) hopefully the government will see these issues before it gets too late.

### 6.1.5 6.1.6 6.1.15

With regards the vehicles we have in the company I work for they are all Mercedes and are very well maintained. The industry is not really making enough money to justify the purchase of newer cars all the time. In regards to having to have twice yearly MOTs this seems excessive seeing as they are not required by law for any other vehicle and having a friend in the motor trade who recently had a Sudbury taxi only a few years old in his garage recently which was in poor condition and the driver was warned that his tyres were showing the cords through the rubber. The driver said he would not address the situation as he felt there was nothing wrong with them. If your vehicle is maintained well then this should not be an issue. Our company also has a PCV fleet and if they are over a certain age, they do not require 2 tests a year and these vehicles carry many passengers so do not see the need for cars to have this.

### 6.8

With regards to a 2kg fire extinguisher being required where is this supposed to go. The company I work for has buses have that have 2kg ones the cars have only had 1kg / 1lt ones which have always been sufficient to pass the yearly taxi MOT test. The testers have never marked a fire extinguisher to say they have been checked either.

### 6.14.1

With regards to the plate being visible at the rear of the car. Why can't the plates not be attached to the inside of the rear window if they are still visible. As you have previously requested plates to be fixed to the outside of vehicles this involves drilling holes into our vehicles bodywork which in turn will de-value the car because of bodywork damage. The plates used to be supplied with suction cups for rear window installation so I cannot see what the problem is if they are visible that way.

### 6.15.1

With regards to signage, why does a hackney carriage need to have an illuminated roof sign. In London (or big cities and towns) where people are wanting to hail down a taxi from the side of the road at night maybe so. We are a rural area that doesn't have that kind of business. If people book a taxi at night the car is going specifically for them and if not maybe on the rank so it is obvious, they are for hire.

### 6.15.4

I have never seen a private hire vehicle with this information on so when has this ever been needed before? Obviously, a private hire vehicle should not be parked anywhere near a taxi rank so it has never arisen in the company I work for.

### 6.16

With regards to signage on vehicles you state that private hire vehicles can only have the logo etc on the rear doors of the car. We routinely swap our signage from front to back to prevent fading on the paintwork so as prevent devaluation of our vehicles. Is it also really necessary to be that stern with the size of lettering and numbers being able to be used on signage?

## APPENDIX B

### 6.22.4

With regards to training of carrying wheelchair passengers, who is authorised to give training. I remember a customer telling me a few years ago that with another company her wheelchair bound husband had booked a taxi with a ramp on the side to take him to a hospital appointment. When the driver pushed him into the vehicle his head hit the roof and was cut quite badly. I personally do not drive vehicles that can carry a wheelchair as I only drive a saloon or hatchback car but that instance is a worry. The vehicles the company I work for that can carry wheelchair users are fitted with lifts so you do not have to push passengers up a gradient ramp.

### 6.26

With regards to inspections, recently there was an inspection from a council employee at the rank in Sudbury. The person was wearing a badge that stated their role as in the food sector. Is this person trained and knowledgeable in our industry to do such checks?

### 6.29

With regards to satellite navigation, since when should all vehicles be fitted with this and used on every journey. The drivers I work with all have good knowledge of their local areas and do not need such items and none of our vehicles have these fitted. Some drivers may have their own sat navs but very rarely use them and if they do this would be for the most minimal jobs. Our drivers have access to maps if they need to check something or have access to office staff who could advise them. This requirement is not something I agree with at all and again would incur another substantial cost with no real advantages.

### 8.1

I have never been asked to drive a fire engine so not sure why this is relevant to a hackney or private hire driver.

### 9.2.2

With regards to applications not being limited, this has caused problems in our Sudbury area with so many vehicles now being licensed. To the point where it just seems you keep licensing people and vehicles to have more income.

### 9.5

With regards to the taxi ranks, in Sudbury there is a total of 8 spaces and yes, I am fully aware that is more than others get but at the same time the number of available spaces is nowhere enough for the number of vehicles you have licensed. Where are people supposed to park to ply for business, and because you very often drive round to the rank on Sudbury's one way system there is no space you have to drive by again and again waiting for a space. This is considered bad for the environment not to mention wasting fuel and yet again incurring more costs while not earning. I would suggest maybe halting any more licenses being granted as there is just too many now with a combination of hackney and private hire together.

### 10.2.21

With regards to applicants not being limited, as mentioned before please stop licensing more and more, we have struggled to get drivers because they do not want to the knowledge test and it's just becoming harder to make enough money to make it a viable living.

### 11.1

With regards to the details of bookings made, we do not have an electronic booking system therefore we handwrite all bookings that are pre-booked in advance and on the date. Any jobs taken from the rank are noted by the driver in their logs. Why do you need to know dates and times of when the booking was requested? Why do you need to know at what time the driver was given the job? Why do you need to know who took the booking? Why do you need to know the name of the person who gave the job to the driver? This all seems like waste of time overkill. We work in a very busy office if we had to keep making all these notes, we would miss more phone calls the drivers would have to write more down which means they have to be stationary instead of driving to the next location. All our handwritten bookings are kept for several years in accordance with regulations so cannot see why we need to record anything else.

## APPENDIX B

11.8

With regards to charging on a private hire vehicle some of our private have meters and customers accept that the meter price will be what they pay.

11.15

With regards to dispatch and office staff needing a DBS, why? These staff do not come in to contact with passengers other than phone calls so why should that be a need for a DBS, it's just more cost to the company or to an individual again.

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All in all, most of what the 'council wants' just incurs more cost to the driver or operator without any reimbursement in earnings. In the last couples of years with the pandemic greatly affecting our kind of business, we have earned next to nothing in this industry which you have offered no help towards. I am very disappointed that you have still wanted the full amount of money required for a personal licence and vehicle license. Was there really not the ability to provide a discount of some kind to help us in that situation. In this case I would ask for a transparency of what our fees are used for. Where does this money go? Also in that instance why is a licence for a saloon/hatchback car so much more than a wheelchair accessible car. If it were the other way round it would be classed discrimination so, why are we not paying the same amount for any vehicle, if anything it should be the larger vehicles with 8 seats be charged more than the smaller cars with 4 seats as they have the capability of charging more for more passengers. Just because a vehicle is classed as accessible does not make them easy to get into. We have several customers that like the use of a 'normal' car rather than having to climb into a vehicle.

The company I work for has been in this business since 1952 (69 years) and nothing has ever been more difficult or unnecessary than all this so-called red tape that just seems a waste of time and money.

I hope this information and any other replies you may receive are read, noted and carefully considered.

Kind regards

Suzanne Warnack

# APPENDIX B

## RESPONSE 13:

14<sup>th</sup>September 2021  
Babergh District Council  
Licensing Team  
Endeavour House8 Windmill Hill  
8 Russell RoadLong Melford  
IpswichSudbury  
SuffolkSuffolk  
IP1 2BXCO10 9AD

Dear Team

### **Draft BMSDC –Hackney Carriage, Private Hire Operator, Vehicle & Driver Policy**

You have recently sent notifications to operators and drivers about the above policy, inviting us to visit your website link to download the document and make comments on the contents therein.

Firstly, we would like to register our disappointment that you released details of this and the previous fare increases to the press before sending the correspondence to the operators and drivers. We are the ones these policies effect the most so surely we should be contacted before finding it by chance in a local paper.

It is a lengthy document and the amount of time given to go through it properly was hardly sufficient given many of us were preparing for the new school term and changes to school contracts etc.

Our comments as an operator to points within the draft document are as follows:

We note from page 1 of the document that the requirement for plates 21+ to be wheelchair accessible vehicles will be removed. This will devalue plates 1 –20. If plates 21 + chose not to renew as wheelchair accessible vehicles will these licences then be charged at the same rate as plates 1 –20? How will the council be recompensing plate holders 1 –20 for the devaluation of their business?

### **PART 1: HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER POLICY**

#### **2.1 Disclosure and Barring Service Check**

2.1.3 The current check lasts for a period of 3 years. Will this change to the update service or annual checks be bought in for all existing licenced drivers when renewing or just for new applicants? This is an added cost for an already low earning profession.

#### **2.2 –2.14**

Will these clauses apply to existing licence holders?

If say an existing licence holder is found guilty of driving under the influence does this mean their taxi driver licence will be revoked and that they will not be able to reapply and be relicensed until after the minimum period mentioned?

# APPENDIX B

## **2.18 Knowledge Test**

What allowance will be made for applicants who struggle to read and write? They may be more than capable of being a taxi driver but would be held back by their struggle to understand the written questions posed to them.

## **2.19 Training**

What is to be gained by forcing existing licenced drivers in to training? Surely by granting their licences you have already deemed them capable of carrying out that role.

Many drivers within the district have been licenced with you for many years and you are asking them to take a course that is an 'Introduction to the Role of a Professional Taxi and Private Hire Driver'. For the majority of them this will equate to you saying 'we don't think you can do your job'. We foresee many of them deciding to not renew their licences because of this and this will lead to a shortage of experienced drivers throughout the district. Many of our licenced drivers also hold a PCV licence and already have to undertake additional CPC training. They will gain nothing by taking yet another course that probably covers a similar basis to their CPC training. Other licencing districts are not enforcing this requirement and yet again this seems to be an extra cost burden.

Whilst drivers are attending training courses they are not able to earn the money needed to fund the course and they are also then not available to serve the public. The cost of these courses seem to vary depending on providers and what relevant qualifications would the course tutors hold? Would they be licenced drivers themselves or just somebody reading from a book trying to tell an experienced licenced driver how to do their job?

Perhaps an introductory course would be useful for new applicants or those drivers that have several substantiated complaints against them or have had their licences revoked.

## **2.22 Tax Checks on Licence Applications and Renewals**

For what purpose is a tax check required and which type of tax check are you expecting to be done? The tax position of operators and drivers is a matter between the individual/company and HMRC. The tax and financial standing of a driver should be of no concern of the council. You are not employing any of us and you are not responsible for paying our tax, national insurance, class 2 & 4 contributions etc.

As an operator we will not be sharing these details with you.

## **3.1 General Conduct**

3.1.2 It is not always possible to proceed to a particular destination by the shortest route especially when there are road closures and traffic delays. This also implies that if a customer requests we take a different route to their destination that is not the shortest that we would not be allowed to do this.

# APPENDIX B

## **3.2 Driver Dress Code**

All of our drivers are always clean, tidy and respectable with the majority wearing a collar and tie. Unfortunately your wording to this term is ambiguous as everyone has a different idea of what is clean, respectable and befitting. Setting details of expected dress code e.g collared shirt, trousers etc would be better. We are aware that some drivers find it acceptable to wear football shirts or sloganed t-shirts with dirty jeans or beach shorts or jogging bottoms.

## **3.6 Lost Property**

Please define what is a reasonable period. Some operators might consider a reasonable period to be a day or so and others might consider a reasonable period to be 3 months. Also is there a uniform procedure for dealing with lost property after the reasonable period?

## **4.2 Wheelchair Passengers**

Should a wheelchair passenger wish to transfer from their wheelchair to a vehicle seat it is unfair to expect the driver to help them perform that transfer. Personal manual handling should not be undertaken unless there has been proper training and who would be liable should an injury occur to either the passenger or driver?

The current government guidance whilst the world is still suffering from Covid-19 is to keep your distance. Please explain how a driver is supposed to give mobility assistance whilst keeping their distance.

## **4.3 Medical Exemptions**

Exemption from lifting wheelchair passengers. Presumably this does not mean that the driver is expected to physically lift up the passenger.

## **PART 2: VEHICLE SPECIFICATIONS AND CONDITIONS OF LICENCE**

### **5.3 CCTV**

5.3.2 CCTV should not be mandatory. Whilst it may be useful in some circumstances installing CCTV in all vehicles is another cost burden on the operator and would surely raise some privacy issues for customers.

## **6 Vehicle Specifications and Conditions of Licence**

### **6.1 General**

To assist the move to electric/hybrid type vehicles will there be charging points fitted on the rank or strategic points around the district to enable the drivers to charge their vehicles without impacting on the service that they can provide? At the moment a driver can pop to a filling station and purchase fuel in a reasonably short space of time. Having to charge vehicles will take considerably longer and could lead to a shortage of available vehicles while they are being charged and may hamper drivers being able to accommodate longer journeys.

## APPENDIX B

6.1.12 As mentioned previously removing the requirement for plates 21+ to be wheelchair accessible will devalue plates 1-20. As a holder of plates between 1-20 we have always found it unfair that plates 21+ were charged at a vastly lesser rate and there was no cap on the amount of these plates issued.

Going forward there is not enough work in the district for so many licenced hackney carriages nor the appropriate space for them to ply for hire. Will there be a cap on the number of new hackney plates issued especially with the wheelchair element being removed.

### **6.3 Doors**

6.3.1 Why are rear doors not included in the minimum number of doors. If a minibus would pass PCV regulations with the same amount of doors, why is Babergh's requirements so much more demanding. The vehicles have already been deemed safe and fit for purpose when manufactured. Why does Babergh think this is not the case?

### **6.8 Fire Extinguishers**

6.8.1 A 2kg/2litre fire extinguisher is fairly large and is generally the size required for a PCV. Where would you suggest the extinguisher be fixed in a position readily accessible to the driver so that it is ready to use without impeding the minimum space that you deem is required for the passengers? Surely the position of the extinguisher should be away from passengers as they could fiddle with the equipment during their journey causing injury to themselves and or the driver?

6.8.2 Can a fire extinguisher check not be part of the annual taxi test? Annual checking by yet another party is again another cost burden on the operator. We are not suggesting safety should be compromised or ignored but extra costs in one area may mean cutting corners in others for some operators.

### **6.11 Luggage**

8 seater minibus type vehicles do not generally come with boot/luggage spaces. Where would you recommend that luggage be stowed?

### **6.14 Licence Plates and Stickers**

6.14.2 As long as the licence plate is displayed on the rear of the vehicle why should it matter whether it is inside or out.

As long as it does not impede the rear view of the driver and is clearly visible to the public outside surely being positioned inside the vehicle is safer. The plate will remain clean and readable, will not fall off the vehicle whilst in motion and is less likely to be stolen. Affixing it to the inside of the rear window also means no damage to the exterior of the vehicle, which is a requirement at 6.12.

### **6.15 Signage**

6.15.1 The need for the roof sign to be illuminated is another unnecessary extra cost and possible burden on the electrical system of the vehicle.

6.15.4 Are magnetic door signs considered to be self-adhesive and will the council be supplying the exact wording that is to be displayed on these signs?

# APPENDIX B

## 6.16 Advertising

6.16.5 Why must the lettering be confined to the rear of the vehicle if it is a minibus/transit or people carrier? A minibus is a different type of vehicle to a people carrier. As these types of vehicles are commonly used on school runs being able to display your name on the front of the vehicle helps staff and students at schools easily identify the vehicle they require.

## 6.22 Disability Access

6.22.4 Who should supply the initial training and refresher training to load and convey wheelchair bound passengers? Does the council have a list of approved trainers and who would bear the burden of cost for training?

## 6.29 Satellite Navigation

6.29.1 Why must a 'Sat Nav' be fixed within a hackney carriage and be used on every single journey. Drivers will have regular customers and will know the route to take for those regular journeys. It will often take longer to set the route for a very local short journey than it will to actually drive and complete the journey.

What is the point of having a knowledge test for potential drivers that requires them to know their local area if you are then insisting that they use a sat nav for every single journey? Will the local area knowledge requirement be removed from the initial test?

These devices can be a distraction to the driver and again this seems to be another unnecessary cost burden.

## 9 VEHICLE LICENCES: APPLICATION PROCEDURES –(HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES)

### 9.4 VEHICLE TESTING

9.4.5 Whilst this may be a courtesy service how would we be able to submit a declaration/renewal application if we have not been sent the relevant forms?

### 9.5 Taxi Ranks

The document shows that there are only 10 rank spaces available in Babergh and all of them are in Sudbury. As there are so few spaces why have the council issued in excess of 20 hackney carriage plates? Where are all of these vehicles supposed to go to ply for trade?

## PART 3: PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR POLICY

### 10. GENERAL INFORMATION

#### 10.1 General Information.

10.1.3 as per 9.4.5 How would we be able to submit the relevant forms in a timely manner if we have not been sent them?

10.1.6 as per 2.22 For what purpose is a tax check required and which type of tax check are you expecting to be done? The tax position of operators and drivers is a matter between the individual/company and HMRC. The tax and financial standing of a driver should be of no concern of the council. You are not employing any of us and you are not responsible for paying our tax, national insurance, class 2 & 4 contributions etc.

As an operator we will not be sharing these details with you.

# APPENDIX B

10.2.7 If the council refuses a licence application for what purpose would you keep the fee paid by the applicant? You would not accept going in to a shop and handing over money to buy goods and then the shop refuses to pass over the goods to you and also will not refund you the money you have paid to them.

10.2.10 as per 10.2.7 not refunding part of the fee appears unjust.

## **10.4 PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE OPERATORS' ANNUAL DECLARATION PROCEDURE**

10.4.1 as per 9.4.5 and 10.1.3

### **11 CONDITIONS OF PRIVATE HIRE OPERATOR LICENCE**

#### **11.1 Record Keeping**

##### **11.1.1**

(iii) why is it necessary to keep a record of how the booking was made?

(vi) why is it necessary to keep a record of the time the driver was allocated to the booking?

(xi) why is it necessary to keep a record of the name of the individual that responded to the request and what is actually meant by this?

(xii) why is it necessary to keep a record of the name of the individual that dispatched the vehicle.

#### **11.15 Booking and Dispatch Staff**

Why must booking and dispatch staff have a basic DBS check? They are office based staff and generally have no personal contact with passengers to be conveyed. This seems to be overkill and yet another unnecessary cost burden.

The industry has suffered greatly since the pandemic began in March 2020. Stay at home orders limited the earning potential of every single person and this draft policy seems to be making operators and drivers cash cows for the council in some sort of box ticking exercise. We are all suffering and some of the proposals contained within this draft policy are likely to make already struggling operators and drivers decide not to renew their licences and new applicants are likely to be put off by all the costs and training required. This will lead to a shortage of experienced licence drivers thus leaving the public without a valuable means of transport. In all honesty joe public are not likely to care whether their driver has a BTEch qualification. They will just want to get to their destination in a timely safe manner. A college certificate is not going to provide this. Throughout the draft policy you repeatedly say about keeping records, being open for inspection etc, will this work both ways? Will the council be open and transparent with how are licence fees are spent?

As an operator we simply cannot agree to this draft policy in its current format and the majority of our staff are unhappy with the training and tax check elements.

Kind regards

Christopher Golyria

Felix Taxis OP0009

## APPENDIX B

### RESPONSE 14:

#### **BMDSC Hackney carriage AND Private hire operator vehicle and driver policy**

Response from Christopher Golynia (license number CD0075)

To The licensing team,

I would like to ask why are you trying to instigate these changes to our lives and livelihood. We have already had changes come about because Mid Suffolk and Babergh wanted to merge. That in its self has caused us problems i.e., you now don't occupy premises in your own region. Introducing the knowledge test which we already have shortage of people wanting to take this on as a job has caused more problems as people simply did not want to take on this test. The council just seem to want to create hurdles when all they want to do is have a job and earn a living. I have been a professional driver since I was 17 years old and I am now in my 60's, I love what I am doing but it just now means that all these proposed changes are spoiling my remaining working years. I also have a PCV licence and there doesn't seem to be so many hurdles for that industry.

I have no interest in going back to school to do a BTEC in an introduction to the profession when I have been taxi driving as many years as I have. Can any trainer possibly teach me anything about the job I have done for more years than they probably have.

Maybe you should be considering ways to encourage not discourage more people to come into this profession. There is a shortage of drivers for taxis, buses and coaches and nobody seems that interested in coming forward. Maybe some assistance would be helpful for all of us who have tried to endure the last couple of years. We have had no help regarding the fees you charge even when we have been earning virtually nothing.

So many of the changes just seem another way to spend more money without the return in earning or even having less earnings because of time being spent in classrooms or having to purchase things that are not necessary. I do not see why I need to spend money on courses that will almost certainly have no benefit to me or my colleagues. If the course became compulsory, I feel I would then not renew my licence which would make me feel like I am being forced out of my job that I have had since the 1970's.

In my role as a driver, I wear a shirt and tie and smart trousers every day maybe looking at the dress code of others should be taken notice of as some appearances are just not acceptable. Going into the future of having to use electric vehicles I just cannot comprehend how that would work with a job like mine but that is a future worry.

As mentioned, I have a PCV licence and coaches and buses do not need 2 MOTs a year if over a certain age so why does a taxi that takes far less passengers? Why do I need to drill holes in my vehicle, to attached plates when they are perfectly visible from the rear windows? Until recently I cannot remember the last time someone inspected vehicles on the rank but this happened recently to my colleagues and was a little confused as to why the person doing it had a food safety badge on. What did they know about taxis? Why do I need a Sat Nav I have never used one ever, and seeing as I have been a professional driver all my working life and never needed one, I cannot see why I would now? If needed I can map read but my knowledge of the local area and beyond is very comprehensive. I have travelled all over the country since I was 17 and never had the need for a Sat Nav before and I do not see the need now. In the section regarding applicants not being limited maybe it should be because as far as I can see there just seems to be more and more plates Hackney or private hire popping up with no increased demand and people are just sitting on the rank for too long without work. I sometimes work in the office taking bookings and cannot see why all the information you think you need is required. All our jobs are recorded by hand in diaries and daily sheets, its unnecessary for us to record times and dates of when they were booked etc.

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The taxi ranks are not really fit for purpose as there are too many cars licensed for the spaces available which means many of us have nowhere to go when the rank is full. This can result in driving around or parking somewhere where we cannot pick up work unless we have booking come in by phone.

As well as a driver I am also the named operator of our company and I feel that some of these changes are just more expense on top of expense for no real benefit to us. The BTEC course has been discussed amongst the employees and no one has any desire to go to college for this, which means I could potentially lose all my current experienced staff which would obviously not be helpful to our business.

As previously stated, I have been in this business since I was 17, joining my family firm once I had acquired a driving license. I have been doing this job ever since, all these years building a well know excellent reputation for our firm with my family. It just seems that the council are not bothered by helping companies or drivers like us to remain the backbone of these services. I now worry for my future role in this business and for our companies and I am hoping to take on board all the responses you may have received.

Regards

Christopher Golyria.  
(CD0075)