

Appendix B

Consultation Responses

1.

With regard to the policy, I would like to comment as follows.

Language Test: I consider that this is vital for H/C Drivers as they usually work alone and locally from ranks etc, and I would have thought that this could be incorporated in a spoken/written/reading knowledge test.

Language Test: I consider that this may be helpful to P/H Drivers but, as they are under the control of their operator and usually work out of town, and often to and from remote areas and are all equipped with communication and guidance systems, or radio control, it would not be necessary for the language test to be part of a local knowledge test.

Instead they would need a straight forward Language test After they have been vetted by the operator who has signed to employ them, and should there be any failure in their suitability a penalty be imposed on the operator either financial or points.

With regard to vehicles over five years old: I consider that the Ministry test valid for one year should be sufficient, but with a six monthly visual only and no charge, and with brand new vehicles there should be no test required for the first year, the only test in this first year should be visual and at a reduced fee, (after all, this is the law of the land and should cover all).

I consider there should be more leniency with people who have been prosecuted for drink drive offences, by taking into consideration the margin over the limit and if they have taken a 'drink awareness course' thus reducing their ban,**(did they deliberately commit the offence, or did they take steps to re-educate themselves for the future).**

I consider drug use at the moment is easier to conceal and there is more likelihood that this may be passed on to passengers, so stiffer penalties are needed.

These comments are posted with the best intention an in the general interest of all involved in the trade and the travelling public.

2.

Dear Sirs,

I refer to your recent letter re new licensing policy.. There are just a few comments I would like to make.

Firstly in section 2.8 it states that security & cctv says allowed but in section 16 it states the council has to be notified when such equipment is installed, a fact not included in the first statement.

Secondly in the section for insurance. particularly in the private hire section it makes it clear that the vehicle can only be used for work whilst being driven by a licenced driver. In the past I believe it also stated that the vehicle could any be driven at anytime by a licenced driver. .i.e. even when in social use as the public would not be aware of the difference. Is this still the case and if so I could not find it clearly stated.

Finally it differentiates between private hire and hackney and a need to have the relevent licence. I have both licences. Would it not be possible to introduce a dual licence. I cannot be driving more than one vehicle at a time so now with the introduction of the cost of a three year licence my renewal this year will be well in excess of £400. The cost to the council for both licences's surely is not twice that of a single issue.

As a footnote to the whole thing and not directly under the term of this review I would like to complain about the taxi ranks provided within Tewkesbury town. The concern of these licences is the safety of the public yet particularly in the evenings hackney plated cars can not even get on the rank due to public parking. In the daytime people seem to be getting the message that it might cost them to park there illegal but no such monitoring takes place in the evening. By pestering the parking body on one occasion traffic wardens did patrol the town for one evening. This is not good enough. After an evening of enjoyment the public are not that aware of what vehicle they would be getting into that is parked in a designated hackney licenced pick up spot making them vulnerable to all sorts of risks

Thanks

3.

I have speed read through the new proposed policy and all seems reasonably clear. There are others far more qualified than me to find any issues for debate and discussion.

I have been a registered taxi driver until January of this year. I renewed my license every year for a 12 month period as this arrangement suited my circumstances. Changes this year to require me and any other driver to sign up for a minimum of 3 years is a little short sighted. On top of the extra expense incurred it ignores the fact that many drivers take up the position whilst 'between jobs', and thus want to provide for themselves rather than depend on handouts from the state. To have to invest over £300 before you start earning will act as a disincentive to take up taxi driving as a temporary form of employment. In my case, I was hoping to carry on the work until this summer, ie for a period of 6 months. I still had 12 months to run on my CRB, medical etc, but the new requirements meant I had to renew these and consequently I concluded the extra expenditure was not financially worth it thus causing me to 'hang up my keys' at short notice, thus depriving the town of one more driver willing to meet the needs of its populous.

Talking to others I know I am not alone in these thoughts, and so I suggest you review this aspect of your policy.

I hope you find my views constructive and useful.

4.

Hi

Having read your proposed document I think it is fine. I do not agree with Gloucester City Council for making drivers take re-tests as I think you can over compensate on safety.

What I would say as a driver who attends Alderman Knight School is there need's to be safety issues approached regarding space and parking at this school. I would also say I was of the understanding that all taxi/private hire drivers were meant to stay with the children until the gates opened in the morning and mini buses with children in there would be a PA assisting the driver. This isn't always the case with some taxis dropping children and leaving. Also a driver should know not to cross children from their parked vehicle when another vehicle is reversing as the driver of that vehicle can only look in one mirror at a time.

'Normal' taxis seem to be a law to themselves, some don't wear badges or jackets unless the Council people are there doing checks.

Also on a completely different note getting out of the school is horrendous especially when the lights heading out to the ring road for the motorway sometimes only last for a couple of seconds.

Thanks

5.

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am replying to your recent letters regarding the consultation document for Hackney carriage and Private hire policy that Tewkesbury BC is looking at introducing.

I would like to make certain points about the draft document.

With regard to point 3.6, I have recently had to have a medical examination, and my GP was very unhappy about having to sign one document giving her opinion that I, as the applicant, meets or does not meet the criteria for a Group 2 drivers licence. Her view was that it is not her role to give opinions or judgements about my ability to drive. It is her role to give you, the licensing authority, the information you need to make that decision. I cannot find anywhere that that certificate is required under the rules of the Department for Transport or under the rules/guidelines from the DVLA for Group 2 licences. I believe this should be looked at closely with regard to legal standing of such a certificate. If a medical practitioner will not sign it then surely there is a strong possibility that applicants will be appealing any decisions not to grant a licence.

With regard to point 3.7, I cannot understand why a DRB check is required every time for a renewal of the licence. I appreciate that a check needs to be carried out, as for any jobs or careers where vulnerable people may be involved. However, it seems that taxi and private hire drivers are looked at far more closely than other professionals. Am I not correct in thinking that people such as teachers only have a DRB check when they start a new job at a new local authority? My understanding is that DRB checks do not have a time limit on them.

It appears very unfair to me that drivers have to pay for something such as this on such a regular basis.

With regard to point 3.12, why can't driver and operator licences be issued for the same length of time, particularly in cases of owner/operators. It must make your life and the operators life easier.