

APPENDIX 4

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TDC Licensing

22 March 2016

Dear Mr Harvey,

Review of TDC seating policy for MPVs

I am pleased there is an opportunity to change the policy on the above. The current policy has the effect of discriminating against TDC licensed vehicles for ECC school and college contracts *in our own district*.

I am one of only five taxi contractors in Clacton qualified to be on the ECC Passenger Transport Framework (who can bid for contracts) out of 130 across Essex.

There is a disincentive for other local firms to join the Framework because of the high standards that the TDC applies to local taxis and private hire cars: standards that are undercut by vehicles licensed outside our district.

Here is an example, at Frobisher Primary School. A Citroen C4 Grand Picasso licensed by TDC for 4 passengers does an ECC contract for 4 children, while a C4 Grand Picasso licensed for 6 passengers by Uttlesford DC does an ECC contract for 6 children. In effect, local firms were prevented from bidding on this second contract - and were discriminated against in their own district!

The irony is that a contract done in the poorest area of Essex is outsourced to vehicles licensed in the wealthiest part - and that the TDC allows what it considers to be sub-standard vehicles to operate in our district.

Uttlesford vehicles are licensed to poach!

There is no good reason why the TDC, having set their minimum standards, should allow these standards to be undermined by outsiders. If the TDC were to legally discriminate at all, it should be in favour of locally licensed vehicles - not against them!

Your letter about Basildon changing their regulations does not give Basildon's reasoning for doing so, but it is likely that their aim, at least in part, was to help level the playing field against aggressive Uttlesford poaching.

My suggestion therefore, is that unless the TDC implements its minimum standards on ALL vehicles working in the Tendring District - wherever they are licensed - then it should ease its requirements in order to give locally licensed vehicles a chance to compete against these licensed poachers.

And that means following Basildon's lead.

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Personally, I don't believe that 6 large adults hiring a cab to an airport should be squashed into a small car. On the other hand, why discriminate only against our local cabs?

Frequently, two adults and three small children walk up to our taxi ranks and are turned down by all the taxis on the rank: all being licensed for 4. The family usually looks very perplexed by this. And non-white people look a bit suspicious. Ultimately, either somebody phones or radios for a larger taxi, and after 15 minutes a monster vehicle arrives, or they have to hire two taxis.

I recommend easing the restrictions for MPVs – to help our own licensed taxis – and to help small families.

Kind regards,

Chris Thomas