

TAXI NEWS

July 2016

Review of Council's Seating Policy for Multi-Purpose Vehicles (MPV's) which carry up to 8 passengers

Consultation for the review of the Council's seating policy for multi purpose vehicles is now closed and a report will be going to the Licensing and Registration Committee on 28 September 2016 on the results of the consultation. The Committee will decide on any future shape or scope of any policy at this meeting. This is a public meeting and will be held in the Council Chambers at the Weeley Council Offices starting at 7pm.

Anyone wishing to address the Committee can do so at the discretion and permission of the Chairman. It is helpful if anyone who wishes to do so can advise us beforehand so that we are able to get that permission before the meeting starts. What you say is entirely up to you of course, but it is helpful all round for the Committee to know who you are and who you represent beforehand. The agenda and report in respect of the review of the Council's MPV seating policy will also be available to view or download from the Committee meetings page and the Licensing page of the Council's web site about 7 days before the date of the meeting which is when agendas are published.

Change in the Licensing Reception Opening Hours

Please note that with effect from 1 August 2016 the licensing reception at Weeley will only be open for all callers as follows:

Tuesdays & Wednesday 9.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

And

Fridays 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Outside these times appointments will be needed, please note that these may not necessarily be able to be made for the same day as you ring or e-mail for an appointment.

Unfortunately we cannot offer you the best service that we can and process applications as quickly as possible and also accommodate unplanned callers outside of the advertised reception opening times. Making an appointment will guarantee the member of staff who you need/want to see is available, that a room is available to see you in if the matter is private and it will also save you time by not having to wait for a member of staff to become available if the reception is busy which it frequently is.

Licensing Office Move in September 2016

The licensing office will be moving from Weeley early to mid September as things stand to the Council Offices, 88-90 Pier Avenue, Clacton on Sea, CO15 1TN. All telephone numbers will remain the same. It is advisable nearer to this time to contact the office on 01255 686565 to confirm if a member of staff is available and which office you will need to attend if you are needing to call into the office personally. We will advise the moving date when it is definitely known. At the moment though this is likely to be sometime early to mid September. While moving, the office will be shut, but we will try and keep any closure or disruption down to the bare minimum time that we can in order for us to be able to move. All computer connections and phone lines will also have to be moved over as well, so there will be a period of time that

we will have no direct communication available to us. We will however try and arrange for phone messages to be taken on our behalf and call back as soon as we possibly can.

Please also be aware that the Council Offices in Pier Avenue are only open to the public between 10am to 4pm Mondays to Fridays. This will mean that when we move into the offices there our reception times will be as follows:

Tuesdays & Wednesday 10.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon

And

Fridays 1.00 p.m. to 4.00 p.m.

Outside these times appointments will be needed, please note that these may not necessarily be able to be made for the same day as you ring or e-mail for an appointment.

Expiring Licences and Documentation

Please can we remind you that all documents must be received by the licensing office before they expire. As a result of expired documentation, licences may be suspended with immediate effect until a valid document is received. This also includes renewals applications. **We have absolutely no wish to take anyone off the road where it is not necessary to do so. Therefore please assist us in this by submitting your paperwork in good time,**

Email of Applications and Documentation

The licensing office can now accept scanned copies of completed application forms, MOTs, Insurances and any supporting documentation. For renewals we will also accept digital photographs if necessary, **providing** they are entirely **clear and legible to read** and can be downloaded easily. Please send these to the general taxi email address: taxi@tendingdc.gov.uk. The only time when scanned or photographed documents **will not** be accepted is for brand new applications for driver, vehicle or operators licences.

On line submission of applications and documents are an easy and convenient way to submit applications and can save you a journey and therefore save you time and money. The only document that will need to be the original is the DBS form (Criminal Records application form).

Timescales to Process Applications

Council policy allows us up to ten working days to produce licences from the date when all documents are correctly received. However we aim to complete all applications as soon as possible and you will be notified when the new licence is ready for collection. **If it is more convenient for you to be notified or contacted by us through e-mail then please let us have your e-mail address to be able to do so.** These details will not be used by anyone or anywhere else, but with most people using smart phones or tablets these days, it may be a much quicker and more convenient way for you to be contacted by us.

Renewals

Vehicle/Driver renewal forms will be sent to the licence holder together with an invoice for the renewal fee, one month prior to the current licence expiry date.

Notification of accidents

It is a legal requirement of your vehicle licence that any damage or accident to a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle within **72 hours** of the damage or accident occurring or as soon as reasonably practical. If the damage or accident is minor, a licensing officer will check that the vehicle is safe and still of a suitable appearance to be used as a hired vehicle. On occasion, this may mean that your vehicle will have to be taken to the Council's Northbourne Road garage for this check to be carried out. **We have no wish to take anyone off the road if it is not necessary to do so, but we must ensure that passenger safety and comfort is maintained**

Taxi Rank Inspections

You may have been greeted by our Enforcement Officers on the taxi ranks during a taxi rank inspection. **A personal thank you to those that have been inspected and we are pleased to say that the vehicles and drivers we have inspected have passed with the correct documentation on display such as no smoking signs, fare charts and driver badges as well as the vehicles being kept in a good condition inside and outside.**

No Smoking Door Signs

As you will be aware, it is an offence not to display "No Smoking" signs within a taxi. Please note that the licensing office only has a limited number of these signs that we can give out. By rights, it is your responsibility as a business under the Health Act 2006 to purchase and display these. Vehicles used for business use such as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicles are regarded under the law as 'smoke free premises' in exactly the same way as an office or pub or shop would be. Failure to display signs may result in a fixed penalty fine being issued.

Parking Outside Schools

It has been noticed that vehicles including taxis are parking outside schools within the zig zag areas. I'm sure you don't need reminding, but it is illegal to park on zig zags and ask that you please park in sensible locations when picking customers up. Parking attendants and Police do regularly patrol these school areas and if you get caught parking illegally then you are very likely to receive a fixed penalty ticket.

London Tower Bridge

For those drivers that use the London Tower Bridge or drive around that area, it is worth noting that from October, the Tower Bridge will be closing for three months. Tower Bridge Road will be shut to vehicles from 1 October while repair and maintenance work take place, so please allow yourself extra time for your journey.

Proposals on new London Congestion Charges

You may have already seen this in the press or in the media generally, but if not you may want to be aware of it, particularly those companies or drivers that may regularly take passengers into London. You may also want to respond to the public consultation with the London Mayor's office and we have included the e-mail link details for this consultation below.

On the 5 July 2016 the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, launched plans for the toughest crackdown on the most polluting vehicles by any major city around the world. A £10 charge for the most polluting vehicles and an extended Ultra-Low Emission Zone will be part of a major public consultation also launched on the 5 July. The public have until Friday 29th July 2016 to feed back on the first round of the consultation, further more detailed consultation will take place later this year and some measures could be implemented as early as 2017.

Key proposals include:

- Implementing a £10 Emissions Surcharge (dubbed the 'T-charge') on the most polluting vehicles entering central London from 2017. The charge would apply to all vehicles with pre-Euro 4 emission standards (broadly speaking those registered before 2005) and will cost an extra £10 per day on top of the existing Congestion Charge.
- Introducing the central London Ultra-Low Emission Zone one year earlier in 2019
- Extending the Ultra-Low Emission Zone ('ULEZ') beyond central London from 2020: for motorcycles, cars and vans, to the North and South Circular; and for lorries, buses and coaches London-wide
- Developing a detailed proposal for a national diesel scrappage scheme for Government to implement
- Bringing forward the requirement for all double-deck buses to be ULEZ-

compliant in central London from 2020 to 2019

- Implementing clean bus corridors - tackling the worst pollution hotspots by delivering cleaner buses on the dirtiest routes

The Emissions Surcharge in 2017, followed by an expanded ULEZ in 2020, would be the toughest crackdown on the most polluting vehicles by any major city around the world.

This is the first stage of the Mayor's Clean Air consultation with later stages focusing on more detailed assessment around the £10 Emissions Surcharge ('T-Charge') and ULEZ. The next stage is due in the autumn. To view the consultation visit:

www.london.gov.uk/cleanair

The Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) is an area within which all cars, motorcycles, vans, minibuses, buses, coaches and heavy goods vehicles (HGVs) will need to meet exhaust emission standards (ULEZ standards) or pay a daily charge to travel of £12.50 a day for cars/vans/motorcycles and £100 for coaches/HGVs/buses. These figures were set by the previous Mayor in 2015. The ULEZ will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week within the same area as the current Congestion Charging Zone (CCZ), and comes into force in 2020. The consultation proposes bringing forward the central London ULEZ to 2019 and extending the zone to the North and South Circular in 2020.

It is understood that there are also firm proposals for car free days to be enforced in Greenwich along with restrictions for polluting vehicles and a compulsory ban on vehicles waiting with their engines idling and that these proposals will be extended to 4 or 5 other London Boroughs possibly before the proposed 2019/2020 changes.

For all current London congestion charge zone details including for taxi and private hire vehicles visit the Transport for London website typing in the link shown below:

<https://www.tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/ultra-low-emission-zone>

LICENSING TEAM CONTACT DETAILS

Contact details for the Licensing Team are:

E-Mail - licensingsection@tendringdc.gov.uk
Or

E-Mail - taxi@tendringdc.gov.uk

Phone - 01255 686565

Fax - 01255-686343

Licensing Reception Opening Times (Weeley)

Mondays - Appointments Only

Tuesdays - 9am to 12 noon

Wednesdays - 9am to 12 noon

Thursdays - Appointments Only

Fridays - 1pm to 4pm

Thank you for your time in reading this newsletter and we hope that the information it contains will be helpful. In the meantime please keep safe and drive safe.