

Received via email on 5th August 2021:

I would like to raise a point regarding taxi ranks. On a Friday and Saturday night the only designated rank is the one round by the old Halfords, there is not enough room for all the taxis the fore st rank needs to be re opened as it is being used anyway with cars everywhere. We are trying to earn a living out there with not enough rank space for the amount of taxis.

Thanks

To: craig oxford

Subject: [External] Lrp consultation

Dear Mr Oxford

Thank you for email in response to the consultation on the draft Licensing Record Points Scheme.

We can understand the trade's frustration regarding the ongoing closure of the rank and you are not the only East Herts Dual Driver to contact us about this matter. Unfortunately the re-opening of the Fore Street rank is out of our hands as it was a decision taken by Hertfordshire County Council.

We have regularly asked for the matter to be reconsidered but at this time we do not know if or when the rank will be re-opening. We will forward your enquiry on to them but would urgent members of the trade to contact HCC Highways directly with any questions or comments about the rank. This can be done by calling 0300 123 4047 or emailing CSCHighways@hertfordshire.gov.uk or by using the contact form on this webpage: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/about-the-council/contact-us/contact-highways.aspx>

In the meantime if you have any specific comments regarding the Licensing Record Points Scheme then please put them in writing to us by midnight on 10th September 2021.

Regards



Oliver Rawlings
Service Manager –
Licensing & Enforcement
East Herts District Council
01992 531629
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Received via email on 2nd September 2021:

Dear licensing Officer I am writing to you regarding the changes in the Hackney Carriage points system. I myself have no concerns as over the last thirty years I have no points on my license. But what is concerning a lot of drivers is the out of area cars based in ware and transport for London doing likewise . As the first paragraph of the letter you sent out to all licensed drivers stated . East Herts oversee the Hackney Carriage and private hire trade within the boundaries of East Herts . So who oversees the Broxbourne and transport for London vehicles working within the boundaries of East Herts ? If the said points system is put in place as a safeguarding measure what safeguarding is put in place for out of area vehicles working within the boundaries of East Herts ? . Could you please forward this on for consideration as we as drivers think this problem need urgently addressing kind regards

To: 'Julie.marson.mp@XXXXX.uk'

Subject: RE: [External] From Julie Marson MP (Case Ref: JM2255)

Dear Mrs Marson

Thank you for your email. Mr XXXXX's correspondence to you makes reference to the fact that hackney carriage and private hire licensing is a locally managed regime. This has resulted from legislation dating back to 1847, which pre-dates the internal combustion engine, and is no longer fit for purpose. Each licensing authority has the ability to decide its own standards and testing which results in different standards when crossing borders from one LA to the another or into London for example. East Herts prides its self on the high standards of its drivers and vehicles.

For a number of years licensing authorities, the licensed trade, the LGA, etc. has been asking Government for updated legislation that is fit for purpose. Without this the disparity between standards will continue.

Mr XXXXX references out of area cars working in East Herts but in most circumstances these are not committing an offence. A pre-booked vehicle can work anywhere in the country and legislation allows operators to subcontract to any other operator meaning that vehicles from other areas can legally work outside of the area where they are licensed. The court decision in relation to Uber means that vehicles can work for app based operators in areas where they are not licensed. With the majority of the out of area vehicles working within East Herts doing so lawfully it makes the job of catching those that might be breaking the law even more difficult.

The Herts & Beds Licensing Group has been working towards uniform standards for a number of years but as I am sure you can appreciate this is difficult to achieve across 10 LA's although some progress has been made. They are also working on sharing authorisations so that vehicles and drivers from other areas can be inspected by local officers.

In July of 2021 the DfT issued its 'Statutory taxi and private hire vehicle standards' which all licensing authorities are expected to give consideration and implement. The title of this document is

misleading as it is not supported by any new legislation so is therefore not statutory and deals with drivers and operators and not just vehicles. Whilst this was a welcome step in the right direction it is still left to licensing authorities to implement the standards in the way they see fit.

As an example the standards deal with 'language proficiency', a drivers ability to understand English, and paragraph 6.15 states: *A licensing authority's test of a driver's proficiency should cover both oral and written English language skills to achieve the objectives stated above.* In East Herts we have introduced an objective test of spoken and written English, some LA's only test spoken English and others seek to rely on the ability of applicants to complete other tests and training as proof of English proficiency. All of these standards are different meaning someone we would not licence could go to a neighbouring authority, gain a licence and then legally work back in our area.

As an MP we, and our licensed trade, would appreciate your support in pushing new national taxi legislation forward with Central Government to resolve the issues raised by Mr XXXXX which cannot be fully addressed without it.

I have spoken to Oliver Rawlings, the Service Manager – Licensing & Enforcement, and he was sorry to hear that Mr XXXXX feels that this office is turning a blind eye. If Mr XXXXX would like to contact Mr Rawlings directly then he would be happy to discuss the issues raised with him:
oliver.rawlings@eastherts.gov.uk.

As a final comment the current consultation on the proposed changes to the East Herts Taxi private Hire Points Scheme has been extend by two weeks to ensure that our licensed trade have adequate time to comment as it will directly impact them. As with all changes to policy public consultation is undertaken and all responses are given due consideration by officers and Members before any decision is reached.

Kind regards



Gina Winn
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