

11 October, 2013

RE: Age limit for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Mr P Bates
Licensing Manager
Licensing Team
PO Box 1767
Southampton
SO18 9LA

Dear Mr Bates,

It has come to the attention of the Southampton and Region Hoteliers Association that changes are taking place to extend the age policy for all Southampton licensed taxi and private hire vehicles from 7 to 9 years.

As Chairman of the Hotel Association which represents all of the major hotels in Southampton who naturally use taxis on a daily basis and in huge numbers I am disappointed that such a decision has been taken without any apparent input from a major user of such facilities in the City.

The Hotel Association is focused on delivering great service to everyone who visits Southampton and stays in one of our hotels, we are passionate about attracting more people to the City and giving those who do visit a memorable stay. Quite often first impressions count and equally the last impression is what people remember, in both cases the first and last impression may be that of a journey in a taxi or private hire vehicle. It is obvious that by extending the length of service of these vehicles their appearance, and more importantly their safety will deteriorate, is this really what we want to portray to the City's visitors?

I have spoken to some of my Hotelier colleagues within the region and this is what they have said:

A further two years I believe would noticeably show in the condition of interior and exterior of a taxi by the very nature of the usage, the taxi would have had a tough seven years anyway. Therefore the perception, of the taxi firm, and I guess a link to first impressions of Southampton would diminish with the taxi's condition. In terms of safety I am not qualified to comment but if they pass their inspections then the council accepts that they are safe. Mark Sampson General Manager, De Vere New Place.

I have always believed that when we are booking taxis it is the continuation and reflection of the standards that we offer so this change can only be detrimental to that image let alone the first impressions people will

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have of the city. Certainly from here usage peaks with cruise departures so again it could easily be the lasting image of the city! Neil Brailsford General Manager, Mercure Dolphin Hotel.

Given the high mileage of these 7 year+ old cars, you would question their safety on the roads I would have voted for option 1 : ie no change.

Lots of our hotels are not in the city centre and visiting non car driving public are bound to use taxi transport by nature of the distances in this area. So safer and more pristine cars would create a positive and quality focussed image for the City and beyond. Frank Postel General Manager, Potters Heron Hotel.

The Hotel Association will always strive to improve our visitor experience and to create a positive image of the City, we believe the action you are proposing conflicts with that experience; and is a backwards step, we would urge you to reconsider.

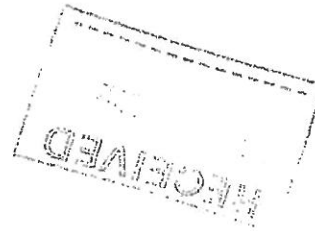
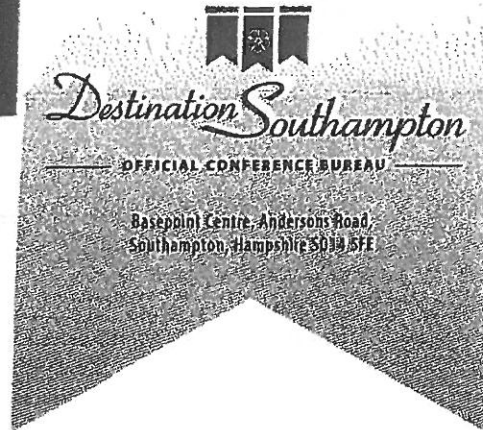
Gavin Elliott
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9th October 2013

Phil Bates
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Southampton City Council
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SO18 9LA



Dear Mr Bates

I am writing to register my concerns with regards to the recent changes with regards to the age limit conditions for taxis and private hire cars operating in Southampton.

Destination Southampton is the cities conference bureau, and we proudly sell the city as a destination for conferences, to event and conference planners across the globe. In recent months we have welcomed new clients to the cities venues including some high profile organisations.

One thing we are always pleased to hear is that the delegates using the private hire and taxi facilities when arriving in the city are generally happy with their experience. I strongly believe this is because the city council and other organisations such as ours, Southampton Hoteliers Association, Tourism South East etc. has influenced the training of the drivers and also that the standard of the vehicles in the city is good.

With the new agreement in place allowing private hire cars and taxis to operate at 9 years old (12 years for accessible vehicle), I and my colleagues are concerned that this will have an impact on the experience visitors have to our city and an impact on the image of the city. I would urge the decision to be re-considered.

I would be happy to hear from you and whilst writing I would like to assure you of our commitment at Destination Southampton to the city and the good work that is being done to encourage business visitors.

Yours sincerely

Managing Director



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twitter.com/cruiseandstay



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Our Ref:
HB/ HLD

Your Ref:

Date:
12 December 2013

Dear Phil

Age Limit for Taxis & Private Hire extended to 9 Years

The Port Director has asked me to write to Southampton City Council in connection with the subject matter.

It has come to our attention that Southampton City Council have extended the age limit of vehicles which can be used as a taxi from the standard 7 years to a new maximum of 9 years old. The age limit has also increased for specially adapted vehicles to 12 years old.

Please be advised the Port has and continues to strive to attract the iconic cruise lines and ships to Southampton. The availability of sufficient numbers of modern and well maintained taxis to serve the passengers of the cruise ships to/from the Port is an inherent need.

In this respect it is felt that the increase in age limit of the taxis will not necessarily promote the right image for Southampton.

Passengers alight from a modern cruise ship to use a 10+ years old taxi, with all associated wear, does not sound good.

Please forward ABP's concerns about this change of taxi age policy to the relevant person in the council.

I am happy to discuss this matter if/when appropriate.

Yours sincerely

Hanif Brora
Head of Port Operations and Safety

cc. Clive Thomas, Deputy Port Manager

