

Dear Members

As you may be aware there have been media reports this week on taxi licensing that have given the impression that South Cambs is very lax in the way it gives out licences to taxi drivers.

This follows a Freedom of information request to all authorities in the East for information on the number of taxi licences granted over recent years by either a Licensing Hearings Panel or Magistrates Court.

The media articles made specific mention of those with serious convictions, including murderers and violent or sexual offenders, being allowed by ourselves to drive taxis. There is absolutely no truth in these claims.

I want to reassure all members that our policies in South Cambs are very robust and in line with national guidelines. Officers in the Licensing team, as well as all members of the Licensing Hearings Panel, are fully aware that the sole licensing objective is the protection of the public.

Officers and members undertake regular training.

Applicants have to make a detailed statement about any past offences, and are also subjected to an enhanced DBS (this used to be called CRB) check which will show any previous convictions/cautions or warnings irrespective of how old they may be.

It can happen that an applicant has committed offences in the past, but they will only be granted a licence if they are deemed to be a "fit and proper person". If there is any doubt the case will go to a Hearings Panel drawn from members of the Licensing Committee.

Should any applicant be refused a licence they have the right of appeal to the Magistrates' Court. I believe our robustness of decision making is reflected in the fact that we have only lost one appeal in the Magistrates Court over the last 2 yrs.

Should you wish to look at our current policy on convictions it is available via the following link :-

<https://www.scambs.gov.uk/taxi-licences>

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Myles Bebbington in Environmental Health and Licensing

Yours Faithfully

Cllr Riley

Licensing Committee Chairman