



Mr Azid Sanu
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Date: 11/09/2011

Epping Forest District Council
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Dear Ms Mitchell

I am writing to you in relation to my telephone conversations with Mr Richard Gardiner also of E.F.D.C on 08/09/2011 and 09/09/2011.

Mr Gardiner has informed me that you are aware of these calls and the purpose of them. I will however summarise the key points of the calls.

Mr Gardiner first called to ask about information he had received via Essex Police Service that a protest had been arranged by E.F.T.A members to be held inside the reception area of the Taxi licensing department of E.F.D.C this would have been in the form of a "public sit-in".

Mr Gardiner asked me whether this was true and if so when it was likely to be held. I confirmed that such plans had been made but was unable to give a definite date or time. He went on to ask the reason for the protest and I informed that the issues had not in any way changed since the formation of E.F.T.A or the numerous meetings, conversations and correspondence previously held with the council. These concerns where and remain unresolved as follows;

1. As we all know the road outside Loughton Station is a public highway and the banjo itself is a taxi pick up and drop off point for ALL TAXIS LICENSED BY EFDC. However Sadlers car service continues to use this space exclusively. They actively intimidate and prevent other E.F.D.C Taxis from using the banjo. There is a well-documented history of this practice with the

police and E.F.D.C. We believe the council's taxi licensing department is allowing this practice to go on by doing nothing about the situation. Furthermore we feel that the head of Taxi licensing Mrs Kim Tuckey has leanings in favour of Sadlers car service otherwise this matter would long since have been resolved by her. We have suggested the solution to this situation in the past and I respectfully repeat the suggestion here. There NEEDS to be a Taxi warden in place outside Loughton Station at peak times, this warden would be responsible for holding a rank of drivers in order of arrival (first come first served), keeping an up to date register of incidents. The warden must be SIA licensed with a badge for security operative and door supervision. As for the times when no warden is present there should also be provisions made for effective 24 hour CCTV cameras to be installed and a monitoring of events by the appropriate authority and covert surveillance spot checks by both the taxi licensing department and enforcement department from time to time.

2. The knowledge test should be made more thorough in order to establish potential driver's knowledge of the district (the format of the test is made deliberately easy). All new taxi drivers should be made to have taxi drivers test held by the driving standards agency.
3. Any new vehicle plates should be given under the provision that the vehicle must be a London style taxi or euro cab with wheelchair access, and in the interest of the environment and public safety new vehicles should not be older than three years.
4. As we are all aware the total number of drivers licensed by EFDC is in excess of **448** these are being served by a total number of taxi pick up points of **1**. This is in the form of the three bays painted outside Elite cars office in Epping high street and even here the same situation exists where a car service is monopolising these bays (Elite cars). We have requested time and again for taxi bays to be assigned in various parts of the district a list of potential sites has previously been presented to the licensing department and nothing further has ever been heard on the subject.
5. We are all acutely aware of the hugely varying prices being charged within the district. While some organisations and individuals choose to undercut the competition, others decide that the lack of a fare structure published and enforced by the council is an opportunity to rip off passengers. This situation is as unacceptable now as it has been on all the numerous occasions when we have asked the council taxi licensing department to resolve the situation. The solution is repeated here again in that there should be a fare structure in line with surrounding districts i.e. East Herts council, Brentwood council, Broxbourne council etc. This tariff should be enforced by means of meters installed in all E.F.D.C licensed Taxis. In a recent survey by EFTA we found that **100%** of our members support the council enforcing a fare tariff and would be willing to contribute in the cost of a meter we believe that in addition to our number at least **80%** of all drivers in the district also support this, the vast

majority of EFTA members have already bought meters and adhere to a tariff which they have agreed amongst themselves this tariff aligns itself with the neighbouring districts.

A fare tariff would be fair for all concerned especially those members of the public who most need our services and this would weed out the bandits who hide behind the negligence of EFDC in this matter, while under cutting is a personal choice any business would be free to continue making at least we could stop some of the ridiculous prices being legitimised by the complete lack of a fare tariff.

After hearing all these concerns, Mr Gardiner asked E.F.T.A to postpone any protest action and instead write in to your respected self, he assured me that this would instigate a process ensuring our inclusion in the meeting of councillors due to be held in October. I wish to request that this letter be presented to the councillors in the meeting and EFTA be made aware of the exact date and time of the meeting.

I wish the record at this stage to recognise my appreciation of Mr Gardiner's proactive and swift manner in contacting me, while the licensing office does not appear to be making any significant progress in this regard and it seems to us that all burning issues appear to be swept under the carpet. I am glad that at least now some people in the council recognise that E.F.T.A is a serious organisation and our concerns are valid and important, it saddens me however that it has to come as far as a potential protest in order for us to be heard.

Yours Sincerely

Mr Azid Sanu
Chairman
Epping Forest Taxi Association