

Briefing for the Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

Petition Number: PE1856

Main Petitioner: Pat Rafferty on behalf of Unite

Subject: Support the taxi trade

Calling on the Scottish Parliament to urge the Scottish Government to protect the future of the taxi trade by providing financial support to taxi drivers, setting up a national stakeholder group with trade union driver representatives, and reviewing low emission standards and implementation dates.

Background

Scottish and UK Government support for Scottish taxi drivers: The Scottish Government [announced on 18 January 2021](#) that it would provide grants of £1,500 to Scottish taxi and private hire drivers, who were licensed for the period 9 October 2020 to at least 31 January 2021. Taxi drivers can also claim up to £500 for the installation of COVID-19 mitigation measures in their vehicles through the [Covid-19 Public Transport Retrofit Fund](#). Taxi drivers may also be eligible for support from the UK Government's [Self-Employment Income Support Scheme](#).

Taxi stakeholder group: There is no Scottish Government backed national taxi industry stakeholder group at present.

Low Emission Zones (LEZs): There are plans to introduce LEZs in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Dundee, and Aberdeen. Transport Scotland [announced on 26 August 2020](#) that the introduction of these Low Emission Zones (LEZs) would be delayed until the period February to May 2022.

A LEZ would:

1. Restrict the driving of vehicles within an LEZ to those that meet the specified emissions standards or are exempted from the LEZ restrictions
2. Where anyone drives a vehicle within an LEZ that is neither exempt nor meets the required emissions standard, to pay a penalty charge

The emissions standards that will apply within LEZs are yet to be set. However, it is anticipated that diesel taxis will need to be powered by a Euro 6

engine to meet the requirements. Euro 6 engines have been fitted as standard to diesel powered taxis built since 2015. Diesel taxis built before 2015 are likely to have engines that will not meet LEZ requirements.

Following the establishment of an LEZ, an initial grace period of between one and four years will apply. During the grace period no enforcement action will be taken against the drivers of vehicles which do not meet the required emissions standards. Local authorities also have the power to make time limited exemptions from LEZ requirements for different types of vehicle. The Scottish Government is funding a [Low Emission Zone Retrofit Fund](#), managed by the Energy Saving Trust. The Fund will provide grants to eligible taxi micro-businesses of up to 80% of the cost of retrofitting taxis, that do not currently meet LEZ emissions standards, with emissions abatement technology.

Scottish Government Action

As highlighted above, the Scottish Government has provided some specific coronavirus related financial support for taxi drivers, delayed the introduction of LEZs and is supporting the retrofit of emissions abatement measures to vehicles which do not currently meet LEZ emissions requirements.

Scottish Parliament Action

The Scottish Parliament has not undertaken any significant consideration of the matters raised in this petition.

Alan Rehfisch
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March 2021

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