

Citizen Participation and Public Petitions Committee

8th Meeting, 2021 (Session 6), Wednesday 1
December 2021

PE1856: Support the taxi trade

Note by the Clerk

Lodged: 24 March 2021

Petitioners Pat Rafferty on behalf of Unite

Petition summary 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;
- reviewing low emission standards and implementation dates

Webpage <https://petitions.parliament.scot/petitions/PE1856>

Introduction

1. The Committee last considered this petition at its meeting on [Wednesday 1 September](#). At that meeting, the Committee agreed to write to the Scottish Government.
2. A summary of past consideration of the petition and responses to information requests are provided for the Committee's consideration.
3. During its consideration of this petition, the Committee received 4 written submissions.

Background

4. The petition highlights the financial challenges faced by taxi drivers and 'loopholes' in the Scottish Government's support schemes. A survey by Unite Scotland is noted which shows that 30% of drivers have been unable to access any financial help from these schemes.
5. The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is noted as having a "devastating effect" on the taxi trade, with Unite members reporting a 90% reduction in income.
6. At its last consideration, the Committee considered written submissions from the [Scottish Government](#) and the petitioner ([PE1856/B](#) and [PE1856/C](#)). It agreed to write to the Scottish Government to raise concerns put forward by the petitioner and highlight the following suggestions put forward by the petitioner –
 - that funding be extended and incentive levels be increased for drivers to upgrade their cabs;
 - greater clarity on exemptions to the Low Emissions Zones (LEZ) and for taxi cabs to be considered exempt from LEZ charges in line with forms of public transport; and
 - Energy Savings Trust to increase the current £10k grant for LPG retrofit by £2,500 in order to meet the costs.
7. In its correspondence, the Committee also requested details about a national stakeholder group, and the timescales associated with establishing it.

Scottish Government submission

8. The Scottish Government's most recent submission focuses on the Low Emission Zones Retrofit Fund. It explains that the fund's aim is to provide financial support to make it more affordable for microbusinesses and sole traders, living and operating within a 20km radius of a LEZ, to upgrade their vehicles.
9. The fund offers a non-repayable grant and offers up to £10,000 per taxi to a minimum of 80% of the total costs. In a [previous submission](#), the petitioner has asked for this to go further, with a suggestion that the grant be increased by £2,500 to help meet costs.
10. The Scottish Government states that, with regards to increasing the grant offering, funding and budget plans have been set for within the current fiscal year and future funding rounds would be subject to the usual spending review process.

11. Responding to the request for greater clarity around LEZ exemptions, the Scottish Government provided a link to national exemptions as set out in the legislation: [The Low Emission Zones \(Emission Standards, Exemptions and Enforcement\) \(Scotland\) Regulations 2021](#). The response stated that transport vehicles must comply with the LEZ standards and that each local authority can set local time-limited exemptions.
12. The Scottish Government said LEZ-compliant taxis are “an important and valued part of the urban transport mix” and that funding is available in the current fiscal year for operators wishing to take up the support on offer.
13. Following correspondence from the Scottish Government, the petitioner’s contact details have been shared with relevant officials to discuss engagement between Transport Scotland and the Taxi sector.

Action

The Committee is invited to consider what action it wishes to take.

Clerk to the Committee

Annexe

The following submissions are circulated in connection with consideration of the petition at this meeting –

- [PE1856/D: Scottish Government submission of 15 October 2021](#)

The Scottish Parliament launched a new website at the end of Session 5.

All written submissions received on the petition before May 2021 can be viewed on the petition on the [archive webpage](#). Written submissions received on the petition after May 2021 can be viewed on its [new webpage](#).