

## PRIVATE HIRE AND TAXI BOOKING OFFICES

### INTRODUCTION

Taxi businesses are a major source of employment within the district and provide around 1,200 jobs. Approximately two thirds operate from private hire booking offices. Their 24-hour use means they need to be located in areas where they do not disrupt their neighbours. This guidance describes the council's policy and gives advice on submitting planning applications. However it should be noted this leaflet is for guidance purposes only and does not constitute statutory planning policy. Please note there may be other regulations to comply with before operating a taxi or private hire booking office.

### TYPES OF PLANNING APPLICATION

- **Changes of use**

This applies when someone proposes to use a building for an activity different to its current use. For example, you need planning permission to change a butcher's shop into a booking office.

- **Established use**

If your taxi hire office has operated on the same premises continuously for 10 years or more you may have 'established use rights' and therefore not need planning permission. You can apply for a

### UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

#### CHANGES OF USE

**POLICY B11:**

**Proposals to use part of a dwelling as a base for a private hire vehicle will normally be permitted provided that:**

- I. **No more than one vehicle will be operated from the premises;**
- II. **Any radio equipment required is not detrimental to the amenity of adjacent dwellings; and**
- III. **Hirers will not be permitted to call or wait at the premises.**

**POLICY S15:**

**Planning applications for the use of premises for the control and administration of hackney carriages or private hire vehicles will be considered taking into account:**

- I. **The proximity of the site to a town centre, local centre, or major leisure facility;**
- II. **The effect on any premises within the vicinity of the site which are used primarily for residential purposes;**
- III. **The ability of the local highway network to accommodate the additional traffic generated;**
- IV. **The availability of off-street parking provision within close proximity to the site for all vehicles to be operated from the base.**

Certificate of Lawful Use (CLEUD) which is written confirmation from the council that the use of the building is authorised and you are not at risk of enforcement action from the local authority. You need to provide proof of the business operating over a continuous 10-year period to apply for the certificate - this proof could be documents on business rates, company accounts and so on.

- **Extensions and internal and external alterations**

You may want to extend the building or change its appearance. This work may need planning permission. If it is a listed building you may need listed building consent for alterations both to the inside and outside. You should contact Planning Services for specific advice **before** you alter the property.

**EXTENDING OR ALTERING  
BUSINESS PREMISES**

**POLICY B5:**

**Proposals for the extension of business premises will be permitted provided the amenity of occupiers of neighbouring properties, visual amenity and highway safety are safeguarded.**

Extensions should not occupy car parking or access areas or you will be required to provide more parking and a new access. Extensions or alterations that make access for vehicles dangerous will not be permitted.

## **LOCATION OF PRIVATE HIRE AND TAXI BOOKING OFFICES**

### **Acceptable locations**

- **Operating from your home**

If you want to use your home to operate a private hire or taxi booking office, you should contact Planning Services as soon as possible to find out if planning permission is needed. Permission will be needed in most cases and you should ensure your proposal meets council policy.

The use of your home as a taxi booking office will be supported if the traffic, noise and general disturbance does not affect your neighbours or the surrounding area.

Most taxi booking offices need to operate 24-hours a day but this can affect your neighbours, particularly late at night or early in the morning. For this reason, the council will usually only support applications for one taxi from your home and clients will not be allowed to visit you to make appointments.

- **Using other premises (shop, industrial or commercial)**

If your proposed premises are currently used for other business purposes, you should contact Planning Services to check whether planning permission is required for a private hire or taxi booking office. You will need planning permission if you can answer yes to any of the following:

- Will the main activity within the building be a private hire or taxi booking office?
- Will this result in an increase in traffic or people calling?

Taxi operators need to be located close to their customers and the council will usually support proposals for booking offices close to town centres (such as Huddersfield or Batley), smaller local centres (such as Birstall, Holmfirth, or Marsden) or at out-of-town leisure facilities.

For a private hire booking office in former business premises, the council will judge how close it is to the town, local centre or major leisure facility, as well as its proximity to housing. Proposals should include off-street parking for taxis operating from the site as well as ensuring local roads can cope with taxis going to and from the premises. The impact on local residents must be considered because the business will operate 24-hours-a-day.

## **TEMPORARY PERMISSIONS**

Due to the possible disturbance created by private hire and taxi booking offices the council may grant planning permission for a temporary period of 12-months. This is done so the council can monitor the level of disturbance during the 12-month period. After the end of the 12-months you are

## **RADIO MASTS – RESIDENTIAL**

### **POLICY EP13:**

Where planning permission is required for the erection of a satellite antenna on a dwelling, the application will be considered taking account of:

- I. Any existing antenna on the building;
- II. The size, which should not normally exceed 1.8m in diameter;
- III. The location of the proposed antenna on the building, and the visual effect on occupiers of adjacent land; and
- IV. The extent to which the proposal can be screened from public view.

### **POLICY EP14:**

Proposals for amateur radio masts will be considered taking into account the visual impact and the effect on surrounding buildings and occupiers of adjoining land.

## **RADIO MASTS – BUSINESS**

### **POLICY EP15:**

Where the planning permission or prior notification is required, proposals for the installation of telecommunications equipment within the curtilage of industrial or commercial premises will be considered taking account of:

- I. The scale of the equipment in relation to its surroundings;
- II. The effect on views from public areas and on the amenity of occupiers of adjacent land; and
- III. The existence of similar equipment in the vicinity of the site.

required to reapply for planning permission. If the council accepts the business has not created significant problems during the first 12-months a permanent permission will usually be granted at this time.

## **SATELLITE DISHES AND ANTENNAE**

Satellite dishes or radio antennae may be required and this equipment should be away from the view of nearby residential properties or public areas. If the building is listed or in a conservation area special care is required so the equipment does not effect the traditional character of the building or surrounding area. Please note satellite dishes and radio antennae may require permission from the council before they are erected.

## **SHOP FRONTS, SECURITY SHUTTERS AND SIGNS**

The council promotes high quality shop front design (including security shutters) and signs on all types of development including taxi booking offices. A separate leaflet '*Shop Fronts: Guidelines for Design*' on shop front design, security shutters and advertisements is available from the Council.

## **ACCESS FOR DISABLED PEOPLE**

If your customers can visit your offices you should try to ensure it is accessible to all members of the public. This could mean providing a ramp access. Even if no other alterations are proposed the council will encourage you to enable access for mobility-impaired people. You should think about the following points to make the premises suitable for disabled people:

- The main entrance should be level with no steps; if this is not possible you should consider creating a ramp to the main entrance.
- The gradient of a ramp should be no greater than 1:12, but ideally should be 1:20.
- The entrance door should be wide enough to allow a wheelchair user to pass through.
- If you have a reception desk a low counter area for wheelchair users should be considered.

## **RADIO MASTS – BUSINESS**

### **POLICY EP16:**

**The erection of satellite antennae on business premises will normally be permitted where:**

- I. **The proposal is located so that it would not be visible from public areas; and**
- II. **The proposal would not be visible from any habitable room window of a dwelling which overlooks the site.**

**Unless there are exceptional circumstances the maximum size of such antennae should be 1.8m in diameter.**

### **DISABLED ACCESS**

#### **POLICY BE20:**

**Proposals for a change of use of buildings (other than for use as a private residence), new shop fronts and alterations to shop fronts should incorporate provision for access to the premises via the main entrance for people with disabilities to a standard commensurate with BS5810 (code of practice for access for the disabled to buildings).**

- If you have a waiting area this should not have any fixed furniture.
- If a toilet is provided think about making it a unisex toilet to disabled access standards.

If you cannot make the suggested changes there may be other things you can do to make your taxi office more accessible to disabled people.

Please note the above is advice only and does not necessarily ensure compliance with the terms of the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) (DDA). More information on the DDA can be found at [www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk).

## **OTHER CONSENTS REQUIRED**

Before operating a taxi business you are required to obtain a licence from the councils building control and licensing section. There may be other consents required which are not noted here, please note it is your responsibility to ensure you get all the consents you need and comply with all relevant legal acts before operating your private hire or taxi booking office.

## **USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS**

Development Control:	01484 414746
Development Control Support (applications and fees):	01484 414746
Building Control and Licensing (Private Hire Licensing):	01484 456868

## **USEFUL ADDRESSES**

Planning & Building Control Services	Yorkshire Planning Aid
P.O. Box B93	RTPI
Civic Centre III	8 Woodhouse Square
Huddersfield	Leeds
HD1 2JR	LS3 1AD

## **USEFUL WEB SITES**

[www.planningportal.gov.uk](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk)

[www.kirklees.gov.uk/planning](http://www.kirklees.gov.uk/planning)

[www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

[www.disability.gov.uk](http://www.disability.gov.uk)