

# LICENSING COMMITTEE

## Vehicle Operation - May 2023

Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> June 2023

### Report of Licensing Officer

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the committee of the outcome from the recent unannounced checks carried out jointly with Licensing Enforcement Officers and DVSA on Licensed Hackney Carriages and Private Hire vehicles operating in Lancaster and Morecambe.

**This report is public.**

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The Committee is asked to note the outcome of the operation.

##### 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The undertaking of vehicle compliance and safety checks on licenced Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles is conducted from time to time, usually as a joint initiative with other agencies. The purpose of the checks is to determine whether the vehicle complies with the Councils standards for licensed vehicles and to assess road worthiness.

1.2 For the checks conducted on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2023 it was decided that no notice period would be given and therefore all vehicle inspections were carried out unannounced.

##### 2.0 Purpose and extent of the vehicle checks

2.1 The operation was conducted in partnership with DVSA. The drivers of the vehicles were instructed on the day by Private Hire Operators, the Licensing Admin Team and Police Officers to attend the inspections carried out on the rear carpark of Morecambe Town Hall. Initially we planned to host the vehicle operation at Salt Ayre in Lancaster which is a central location. However, Salt Ayre have become busier since the previous vehicle operation was conducted and therefore our operation may have caused issues with customer parking.

**Photographs of the layout of the Vehicle Operation at Morecambe Town Hall can be seen at Appendix 1 of the report.**

- 2.2 The Licensing Officers carried out checks to assess compliance with the appropriate Council standards for licensed vehicles whilst the DVSA inspectors focussed on the mechanical roadworthiness of vehicles.
- 2.3 All vehicles that were either not operating on the day or due to time constraint could not attend are to be followed up and subject to inspection in the coming weeks.

### **3.0 Summary outcome**

- 3.1 Summary of the main outcome from the operation.

#### **Summary inspection results**

- 83 individual vehicle inspections were carried out
- 30 Hackney Carriages and 53 Private Hire Vehicles checked
- Licensing staff issued 11 defect notices & 3 suspension notices
- DVSA issued 3 prohibition notices.

The majority of defects issued were in relation to the poor condition of door signs, expired fire extinguishers and damage to vehicle body work. A handful of vehicles were suspended due to more serious defects including illegal tyres. DVSA issued 3 x prohibition notices due to tyres being below the legal limit and an indicator not working.

At the time of writing this report of the 11 defect notices issued, only 3 defects are outstanding, and all suspensions have been lifted.

### **4.0 Feedback**

- 4.1 Licensing Officers have received feedback from the DVSA Officer in attendance during the multiagency vehicle operation. **The feedback from the DVSA Officer can be located at Appendix 2 of the report.**
- 4.2 Licensing Officers requested feedback from a handful of licensed drivers in attendance on the day of the Vehicle Operation. **The feedback received from the licensed drivers can be located at Appendix 3 of the report.**

### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 Licensing Officers and DVSA felt that by conducting the operation without prior notice to the trade provides more realistic results and contrary to what may be expected, significant complaints were not received from licensed drivers or operators at the time of the operation or in the days that followed. It was felt that had notice been given, the more serious defects such as illegal tyres, would not have been found.

- 4.2 It has been recognised by Officers that the next Vehicle Operation that is planned needs to be in a Central location to increase the number of inspections that are carried out on the day.
- 4.3 In addition to the vehicle operation that has been carried out, Licensing Officers are planning to carry out an operation for Private Hire Operators. This will involve Operators attending Morecambe Town Hall and presenting their operator records as required by their licence conditions. Officers will take this opportunity to provide supporting documents and advice/guidance to Operators that will assist them in being compliant. The outcome of the Operator Operation will be presented to Members within the Annual report in April 2024.

<p><b>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT</b>  (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)</p> <p>None</p>	
<p><b>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS</b>  Financial Services have been consulted and there are no financial implications.</p>	
<p><b>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS</b>  Any person aggrieved by a condition attached to a licence has the right of appeal to the Magistrates Court.</p>	
<p><b>BACKGROUND PAPERS</b>  None</p>	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Miss Sarah Jones  <b>Telephone:</b> 01524 582766  <b>E-mail:</b> sljones@lancaster.gov.uk  <b>Ref:</b> SLJ/VehicleOp</p>