

LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Plates 16th October 2014

Report of Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members of the outcomes of the recent enquiries made by the Licensing Manager in relation to putting date stickers on hackney carriage and private hire plates

The report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members may recall that at the recent Forum meeting, a hackney carriage proprietor asked whether date stickers could be applied to hackney carriage and private hire vehicle plates upon renewal instead of new plates having to be issued each time.
- 1.2 The reasons stated by those proprietors present was that the current plates are too expensive and removing the plates from the vehicles to replace with new plates causes the existing drilled holes to get bigger. Proprietors also raised concerns as they stated that the current plates are made from some sort of plastic and are not recycled.
- 1.3 One member of the trade stated that he had informed the licensing manager that Salford Council use a sticker system and the trade asked that the Licensing Lanager look into this. The Licensing Manager has previously looked into this system and reported back to the trade in a Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Newsletter issued in January 2013. A copy of the Newsletter is attached at Appendix 1 to this report. However, she agreed to revisit this and to report back to this Committee in October.
- 1.4 The current plates are recycled although we do rely on proprietors returning the old plates to us. They are collected periodically from us by the suppliers and they are taken to a company where they are stripped back and cleaned off. They are then re-used again as vehicle plates.
- 1.5 Licensing officers discussed the sticker system with officers from Salford. Salford currently have problems with this system as they claim that stickers are prone to come off in car washes etc.
- 1.6 Further, as one of the issues raised by the proprietors was that removing the plates to replace them causes damage to the vehicles, members should be aware that

using the same methods as Salford, this problem would not be resolved. The plates have to be removed from the vehicles so that officers can clean off the old sticker and residue before applying the new sticker. This would mean that proprietors could spend some time off of the road whilst the plates are being prepared.

- 1.7 In officers' opinion the current system of removing the plates and replacing them with new ones is not an issue as the same holes are used each time to re fix the plates. In any case, plastic brackets can be supplied which the plates then clip on to. Currently the new plates are available instantly so that the vehicle does not have to spend time off of the road.
- 1.8 A further concern of the trade was the cost of replacing the plates. Currently the cost of a new plate is £6.20. Most proprietors need two plates a year which equates to a cost of £12.40. This is the direct cost of the plate from the supplier and no extra cost is added by the Council. The actual weekly cost to the proprietor is less than 24p. Members at this time should be reminded that public safety is the main concern in relation to the regulation of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers.
- 1.9 If officers had to spend time making date stickers, cleaning old stickers and residue off plates and adding the new stickers, the cost would have to be passed on to the trade. There would also be the cost of the actual stickers and new printing equipment would have to be purchased to facilitate the printing of the stickers. The approximate cost of the printer would be £300 - £500 and there would then be the additional cost of the actual stickers, cleaning fluids and specialised ribbons for the printer. Officers are also concerned that stickers can be tampered with and/or replicated.
- 1.10 There is a very good system in place at the moment in relation to the administration of vehicle licences and the issuing of plates and licensing officers cannot find any evidence which would indicate that changing the system would be of any great benefit to anyone.
- 1.11 All other Lancashire Licensing Authorities currently use the same or very similar systems to ours.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 Members are asked to note the report.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

(including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

The contents of this report does not have the potential to cause negative impact or discriminate against different groups in the community based on age, disability, gender, race/ethnicity, religion or religious belief (faith), sexual orientation, or rural isolation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising from this report.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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