

LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

Multi-Agency Vehicle Inspection Operation 15th October 2015

Report of Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members of the outcomes of recent multi-agency vehicle inspection operation

The report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is requested to note the report.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members may be aware that on the 15th and 16th September licensing officers carried out a multi-agency vehicle inspection operation with officers from the Lancashire Constabulary and officers from the Vehicle and Operators Services Agency (VOSA).
- 1.2 The inspections took place in the car park at the back of Salt Ayre Leisure Centre. All hackney carriage and private hire proprietors were required to present their vehicle for inspection in accordance with s68 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 which prescribes that:-

Any authorised officer of the council in question or any constable shall have power at all reasonable times to inspect and test, for the purpose of ascertaining its fitness, any hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licensed by a district council.
- 1.3 Members may be aware that the recent High Court case of R v Lancaster City Council ex parte Wilcock determined that fitness of a vehicle for the purpose of sections 68 has a very broad meaning and incorporates such things as signage and cleanliness. It does not confine itself to mechanical fitness as was challenged during that case.
- 1.4 Also present at the inspections was an officer of the Lancashire Constabulary who carried out driver licence checks on both days. On the 16th September an officer from VOSA was present and he carried out some further checks on vehicles over and above the visual checks carried out by licensing officers and he assisted licensing officers as and when required.
- 1.5 During the 2 days 259 vehicles were inspected. The inspections were carried out with the minimum of waiting for drivers due to the hard work of officers present on the day.

- 1.6 Of the 259 vehicles inspected 32 defect notices were issued. Seven of those were issued in relation to hackney carriage vehicles and 25 in relation to private hire vehicles. In addition 7 vehicles were suspended with immediate effect. Two of the vehicles were hackney carriage vehicles and the other five were private hire vehicles.
- 1.7 The defects were issued in relation to lack of warning signage, missing items e.g. first aid kits, bulbs not working and tatty bodywork etc. Most of the defects were put right during the 2 day inspection period and subsequently cleared.
- 1.8 The suspensions were issued in relation to one expired plate being on display, faulty shock absorbers and tyres etc. Again, most of the issues were resolved on the day and the vehicles were returned to have the suspension lifted. The drivers had been notified by the officer from VOSA that if the vehicle was put right and returned for him to further inspect he would remove the stop notice issued by himself and save the need for the vehicle to have to go back for a full MOT which would ordinarily be the case a at a road side stop.
- 1.9 All proprietors that did not present their vehicle during the 2 days have been contacted and alternative arrangements have been made to carry out the inspections.

Conclusion

- 2.0 It is the responsibility of the licensing authority to ensure that all vehicles licensed by us are safe and comfortable. Inspections such as this are carried out throughout the country by all licensing authorities and help to give confidence to members of the public in relation to the safety of the taxis they travel in. Those proprietors who maintain their vehicles to a high standard usually welcome exercises such as this, and the figures set out in the report in relation to faults and defects would indicate that the exercise was a resounding success.
- 2.1 Members are recommended to note the report and in doing so the licensing manager would request that Members acknowledge the hard work of enforcement officers throughout the 2 days.

<p>CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing) Inspecting vehicles to ensure that high standards are maintained is in the interest of public safety.</p>	
<p>FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS There are no financial implication, as the inspections were carried out by officers in the course of their normal duties.</p>	
<p>LEGAL IMPLICATIONS The Council is responsible for ensuring that the legislation in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing is enforced.</p>	
<p>BACKGROUND PAPERS None</p>	<p>Contact Officer: Wendy Peck Telephone: 01524 582317 E-mail: wpeck@lancaster.gov.uk Ref: WP</p>