

LICENSING REGULATORY COMMITTEE

The Availability of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles 7th January 2016

Report of Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To enable Members to consider the responses to the recent consultation about the perceived problem in relation to the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

The report is public

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to consider the responses to the consultation about the perceived problem in relation to the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles and to determine how to proceed.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 At its meeting on the 3rd September, the Committee considered the report attached at Appendix 1 to this report, and resolved that a consultation should commence with the hackney carriage and private hire trade and stakeholders on potential solutions to the perceived problems relating to the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- 1.2 A copy of the consultation letter which was sent to all stakeholders is attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.3 In addition, before its meeting on the 15th October 2015, the Committee met with representatives of private hire operators to discuss the issue.
- 1.4 Copies of the responses to the consultation are attached at Appendix 3 to this report. There were 22 responses but in officers' opinion the responses are not conclusive and although most of them do acknowledge that there is a problem in relation to the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, there is no consensus as to any sort of workable solution.
- 1.5 Members will note that one of the responses, (*page 42*) suggests that two additional hackney carriage plates for wheelchair accessible vehicles could be allocated to each of the three large operators in the district. These operators would then be required to employ drivers specifically to drive those vehicles, and the drivers would be on an hourly rate, thus eliminating the problem of drivers losing money on dead

mileage etc. Members may feel that this might be a solution that could be explored. However, co-operation and agreement would be required from the operator, and further consultation and discussion would be necessary. Any arrangement would have to be properly documented to ensure that appropriate and enforceable licence conditions were imposed, and consideration would need to be given as to whether, in the interests of fairness, such an arrangement could be extended to other operators.

- 1.6 Another option members may wish to consider would be to wait until the unmet demand survey next year, and to authorise the Licensing Manager, when commissioning that survey, to request a specific assessment of the demand for and availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles, and to request that the survey report includes possible solutions based on that assessment..
- 1.7 The legal position in relation to the unmet demand survey was set out in the report considered in September which is attached at appendix 1 to this report.

2.0 Proposal

- 2.1 Members are asked to consider the responses to the consultation in relation to the perceived problem with the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles and to determine how they would like to proceed with this matter

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT

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

Improving access to taxis for all will ensure that the Council is showing consideration to all that live in and visit the area.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial Services have not been consulted.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Any person aggrieved by any condition attached to a licence would have the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

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