

## APPENDIX 2

At a meeting of the Licensing Regulatory Committee held on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> September members resolved that a consultation should commence with all members of the hackney carriage and private hire trade in the district and customers and other stakeholders asking how the Council can resolve the perceived problem in relation to the lack of available wheelchair accessible vehicles. A copy of the report considered and the minutes of the meeting are available on the Councils website at:-

<http://committeeadmin.lancaster.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=314&MId=6567&Ver=4>

The report sets out licensing officer's view of a potential way of resolving the issue. However it is the intention of this consultation to seek further views and to enable the Council to consider any other ways of ensuring accessibility to all.

The Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance in relation to accessibility states:-

'Different accessibility considerations apply between taxis and PHVs. Taxis can be hired on the spot, in the street or at a rank, by the customer dealing directly with a driver. PHVs can only be booked through an operator. It is important that a disabled person should be able to hire a taxi on the spot with the minimum delay or inconvenience, and having accessible taxis available helps to make that possible. For PHVs, it may be more appropriate for a local authority to license any type of saloon car, noting that some PHV operators offer accessible vehicles in their fleet. The Department has produced a leaflet on the ergonomic requirements for accessible taxis that is available from:

<http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/taxis/pubs/research> '

At the moment Lancaster City Council maintains quantity restrictions on the numbers of hackney carriage vehicles licenced. The limit is currently set at 108 with 15 of the vehicles being mandatory wheelchair accessible. Many of the hackney carriage vehicles work from a rank and also carry out pre- booked journeys through one of the three large operators in the district.

There are no limits set on the numbers of private hire vehicles licensed and there is no provision in the legislation to do so. There are no figures available in relation to how many private hire vehicles are wheelchair accessible as these vehicles are licensed purely on a voluntary basis and there is no obligation to continue to licence such a vehicle. In fact the legislation does not refer at any point to wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles. A private hire vehicle, in law, cannot be of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that the vehicle is a hackney carriage. This means that any purpose built wheelchair accessible taxi could not be licensed as a private hire vehicle. Private hire vehicles can only be pre-booked and cannot work from a rank or be flagged down.

The Department for Transport (DFT) latest Taxi and Private Hire statistics show that in England 58% of all taxis are wheelchair accessible. All 22,500 London Taxis are wheelchair accessible as required by the Transport for London 'Conditions for Fitness' taxi licensing policy. In England outside London, metropolitan areas have 84% wheelchair accessible taxis with substantial decline in the proportion of accessible taxis in other urban (36%) and rural areas (13%). Currently in Lancaster just under 14% of our taxis are licensed as mandatory wheelchair accessible taxis. 175 authorities (61%) require wheelchair accessible vehicles in all or part of their fleet. The DFT do not collate figures in relation to wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles presumably for the reasons set out in the above paragraph.

The Council are now seeking your views on how we can resolve the perceived problem in relation to the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles. All responses should be submitted in writing by no later than the close of business on Friday 27th November. You can respond by email to [licensing@lancaster.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@lancaster.gov.uk) or by writing to the above address.

Yours sincerely

**Wendy Peck**  
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**Lancaster City Council**