

Taxi Licensing – Have your say!



Trade Consultation on proposed changes to standards applying to wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) and Executive Vehicle (discreet) licensing

Introduction

There are two main areas that are the focus of this consultation:

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

The Equality Act 2010 relating to licensed vehicles came into force in April 2017. This allows Licensing Authorities, to create a list of Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs). The creation of this list makes it an offence for drivers of WAVs to refuse to carry/help a passenger using a wheelchair, unless the driver is medically exempt. In the first instance the authority would need to introduce a minimum standard for a vehicle to be classed as a WAV.

Discreet Plates

The current arrangements for granting discreet plates to a private hire vehicle have the potential to cause a public safety concern - i.e. vehicles which have been granted an exemption from displaying licence plates on the outside of the vehicle may be used in place of regular licenced private hire vehicles. This may lead to users becoming accustomed to getting into non-marked vehicles which may be exploited by unlicensed drivers. It is therefore proposed to tighten up the pre-licensing checks and the conditions applying to such vehicles.

We therefore wish to consult on the following:

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)

- How to establish what a wheelchair accessible vehicle is.

Discreet Plates

- Requirements to apply for discreet licensing
- Proposed conditions to discreet licences

Each issue is explained in more detail below, together with details of what we are proposing to do.

We now want to know what you think and want to encourage as many people as possible to respond to this consultation. Your views will be considered and proposals taken to the Licensing committee. Further consultation may still be required prior to a full policy review.

Proposed standard of a wheelchair accessible vehicle

Background

The definition of a wheelchair accessible vehicle in our current policy states that each vehicle must have approved anchorages, Restraints for the wheelchair and occupant that must be independent of each other. Anchorages for the safe stowage of the wheelchair when not in use, folded or otherwise, if carried in the passenger compartment. They must be designed so as not to cause injury to other passengers. A ramp or ramps for the loading of a wheelchair and occupant must be available at all times for existing wheelchair vehicles. The entry must be either via the nearside passenger door or via the rear. An adequate locking device must be fitted to ensure that the ramps do not slip or tilt when in use. Provision must be made for the ramps to be stored safely when not in use.

Currently this is determined upon visual inspection during the vehicles compliance test.

What we are proposing

To define what a wheelchair accessible vehicle is and to ensure that it has been built or adapted to Whole European Type Approval.

To clarify this, the council would require you to provide us with a copy of the vehicles V5, or certificate of conversion, as both of these documents evidence that the conversion has been carried out to the approved standard.

What do you think?

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

If you disagree with the proposal, could say why and could you suggest an alternative?

Discreet Plate Licensing

Background

The current percentage of discreet plated vehicles in the Selby District as of January 2018 was approximately 20% of the fleet.

Currently, an exemption to not display the vehicle licence plate can be acquired from the Council by submitting a written request and three references along with payment for a discreet badge that goes inside the vehicle. The Licensing Committee decide if the exemption is given.

If the exemption is given, there are no further conditions to the private hire vehicle licence, and the exemption continues until there is a change of vehicle.

What we are proposing

Amending the application process to include:

The Application Process

- i. That a formal application form be used for applications for a discreet vehicle licence, which should be accompanied by 3 references from potential customers who would use the executive service (Appendix 1).
- ii. That the Licensing Committee should consider executive hire vehicle suitability on a case by case basis, aided by the submission of photographs of the vehicle with the application for a discreet licence.
- iii. That the applications for discreet licenses continue to be considered by the Licensing Committee until such time as Members are satisfied that consideration can be delegated to officers.

Conditions upon the Grant of Discreet Vehicle Licences

That it be made a condition upon the grant of a discreet vehicle licence that:-

- iv. The vehicle must only be used for executive hire – this included no school contracts, or other contracts that involved the transport of children, young people, or vulnerable adults.
- v. The private hire licence plate must be carried in the vehicle at all times, although they need not be visible to the passenger.
- vi. The driver of the vehicle must wear visible photo identification at all times.
- vii. The executive hire vehicle is kept to a high standard both internally and externally at all times.
- viii. The exemption certificate (granting the discreet vehicle licence) is displayed on the left of the dashboard/ bottom left of the windscreen.
- ix. A record is kept of all executive hire contracts undertaken by the vehicle and is to be made available for inspection by the Council's Licensing and Enforcement officers upon request.
- x. A dress code is adhered to by drivers, to include a collar and tie.
- xi. The Discreet plate is renewed annually.

What do you think?

To what extent, if at all, do you agree or disagree with this proposal?

- Strongly agree
- Tend to agree
- Tend to disagree
- Strongly disagree

If you disagree with the proposal, could say why and could you suggest an alternative?