

Gambling, Licensing & Regulatory Committee 14 May 2013

Report from the Assistant Director – Housing and Community Safety

Wheelchair Accessible Hackney Carriage Vehicles

Summary

1. This report asks Members to consider revising an existing policy with regards to wheelchair accessible hackney carriage vehicles.

Background

2. The council currently has the following policy/vehicle licence condition in place:
 - 14)b) All hackney carriage vehicles licences from number 159 onwards are subject to the following condition:-
 - ‘This licence is only valid for wheelchair accessible vehicles. Such vehicles must have wheelchair access from the nearside of the vehicle, i.e. be side loading”.
3. This condition was introduced by the Licensing and Regulatory Committee in November 2007. There is no reasoning within the report brought before the committee to explain why vehicles should be restricted to side loading only.
4. The council currently licences 183 hackney carriage vehicles, 138 licensed vehicles have no restrictions on type of vehicle, 20 licensed vehicles must be wheelchair accessible, no restriction on rear or side loading and 25 licensed vehicles must be side loading wheelchair accessible.
5. Officers have received a request from the Independent Taxi Associations to remove the requirement that vehicles licensed from number 159 onwards must be side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles. They have requested that the policy/condition should be the same as for vehicles licensed from number 121 to 140 inclusive, which is states:-

- This licence is only valid for vehicles which satisfy the City of York Council definition of wheelchair accessible vehicles.
6. This would allow vehicle licensed from 121 to 140 (inclusive) and 159 onwards to be side or rear loading wheelchair accessible vehicles.
 7. The reasons that the trade have made this request are as follows:
 - a) It is easier to load wheelchairs into rear loading vehicles;
 - b) It is easier to safely restrain passengers in rear loading vehicles;
 - c) It is easier to safely lock wheelchairs into place in rear loading vehicles;
 - d) Rear loading vehicles can carry a larger variety of wheelchairs, for example larger electric wheelchairs and some mobility scooters;
 - e) Wheelchair passengers can face forward when travelling;
 - f) The cost of purchasing a rear loading vehicle can be approximately 50% cheaper than a side loading vehicle.
 - g) Rear loading vehicles are used by the private hire trade and there are no disadvantages.

Consultation

8. A formal consultation has not taken place regarding this proposal. The Independent Taxi Associations have requested this change to policy/condition. This report has been circulated to all Hackney Carriage Associations.

Options

9. Option 1 – instruct officers to remove the condition/policy currently in place on all hackney carriage vehicles licensed from number 159 onwards which restricts the vehicle type to side loading wheelchair accessible vehicles only, and instruct officers to apply the condition/policy currently in place on hackney carriage vehicles licensed from number 121 to 140 – this licence is only valid for vehicles which satisfy the City of York Council definition of wheelchair accessible vehicles, to come into effect from 1 June 2013.
10. Option 2 – instruct officers to take no action.

Analysis

11. Option 1 – will give hackney carriage vehicle licence proprietors greater choice of wheelchair accessible vehicles, in which they will be able to load and secure wheelchair passengers safely. It may provide wheelchair users, especially those who use larger heavier electric wheelchairs, more vehicles which will be able to carry them. It would be the responsibility of the driver to make sure wheelchair passengers are loaded and unloaded safely from the road.
12. Option 2 – there will be no changes to the current conditions/policies relating to wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Council Priorities

13. The provision of hackney carriage licensing supports the council's priority of 'Get York Moving'.

Implications

14.

(a) Financial

There are no financial implications.

(b) Human Resources (HR)

There are no HR implications.

(c) Equalities

Wheelchair accessible vehicles assist those dependant on a wheelchair for mobility. A community impact assessment has been completed.

(d) Legal

There are no legal implications.

(e) Crime and Disorder

There are no crime and disorder implications.

(f) Information Technology (IT)

There are no IT implications.

(g) Property

There are no property implications.

(h) Other

There are no other implications.

Risk Management

15. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

16. That Members approve Option 1 of this report.

Reason: This option will provide a greater range of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

Contact Details

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Wards Affected:		All	√
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Annexes

None