

Meeting of:	Public Protection Licensing Committee
Date of Meeting:	Tuesday, 02 July 2019
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	Homes and Safe Communities
Report Title:	Exemption from the Requirement to Display Door Stickers on a Private Hire Vehicle Licence
Purpose of Report:	To consider a policy detailing how the authority will deal with requests to be exempt from the requirement to display door stickers on a private hire vehicle licence
Report Owner:	Director of Environment and Housing
Responsible Officer:	Miles Punter
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	None
Policy Framework:	This is a matter for decision by the Public Protection Licensing Committee
<p>Executive Summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is a requirement for private hire vehicles licensed in the Vale of Glamorgan to display council issued identification door stickers; • There are times, however, when it is not as necessary to be identified as a licensed vehicle; • A policy has been produced intending to formalise how the authority will deal with requests to be exempt from displaying door stickers; • This report seeks approval to adopt this policy. 	

Recommendations

1. That Members consider the contents of this report and determine whether to adopt the policy detailed at Appendix A in respect of door stickers on private hire vehicles.
2. Should Members decide to adopt the policy in Appendix A, they may wish to delegate the decision to grant exemptions from the requirement to display door stickers on private hire vehicles to the Licensing Team Manager.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. The policy will help to ensure that the authority deals with requests consistently.
2. This would enable the licensing department to deal with requests more efficiently.

1. Background

- 1.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states that a district council may attach to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence, such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary. This includes conditions requiring or prohibiting the display of signs on or from the vehicle to which the licence relates.
- 1.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Conditions for Private Hire Vehicles condition 9 states that “the proprietor and/or driver shall at all times ensure that there shall be clearly displayed on the centre or upper part of each front door of the vehicle, the adhesive private hire identification sticker supplied by the Licensing Authority. The stickers must be permanently fixed to each door with the identification sticker’s adhesive backing.”
- 1.3 The rationale for Condition 9 is that members of the public can clearly identify licensed private hire vehicles (PHV) from both the rear and the side of the vehicle. The door stickers also clearly advise that the PHV must be pre-booked and display the licence number, which aids both the public and the Licensing Authority with regard to enforcement and helps to ensure the public are less likely to unwittingly get into an unlicensed vehicle.
- 1.4 Some private hire businesses’ operating models are such that the requirement to immediately recognise that a vehicle is licensed by the Vale of Glamorgan is not as important. Examples of such businesses include ‘executive’ or ‘chauffeur’ hire, where the vehicle may be used as part of a contract with media companies to transport VIP clients, or tour operators that wish to use vehicles on sightseeing tours around Wales.
- 1.5 At the meeting of 4 September 2018, the Public Protection Licensing Committee authorised the Licensing Department to consult with Members and the local taxi trade on a draft policy on how the authority will deal with applications for the exemption from condition 9 of the Vale of Glamorgan Conditions for Private Hire Vehicles (hereafter referred to as an exemption to display door stickers).

- 1.6 It is a condition for private hire vehicles licensed by the Vale of Glamorgan to display a window licence in the front, and a licence plate at the rear of the vehicle. This proposal does not affect these conditions.
- 1.7 The Exemption from the Requirement to Display Door Stickers on Private Hire Vehicles Policy is detailed in Appendix A.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

- 2.1 Recently there have been a number of requests from the trade to be exempt from the requirement to display external door stickers, for the purpose of carrying out 'executive hire' work. The Licensing Department have received comments that the requirement to display door stickers may have, in certain circumstances, the opposite effect in terms of customer safety, and could have commercial implications for the operating business, as it could deter corporate customers from using the service.
- 2.2 On 8 February 2019, officers from the Licensing Department met with the Vale of Glamorgan Taxi Association and the manager of the Alps depot to discuss door stickers on private hire vehicles. One member of the Taxi Association stated that he has 'VIP' customers that don't want door stickers when using his vehicles. Another member commented that if a door sticker exemption is wanted for VIP work then it shouldn't be a licensed vehicle. The Chair of the Taxi Association stated that they would support a Chauffeur exemption if proof of contract is shown to the Vale of Glamorgan Licensing department and is strictly enforced.
- 2.3 An email was sent to Members of the Public Protection Licensing Committee for comments on the proposals. One response was received and is detailed in Appendix B.
- 2.4 The Licensing Department asked South Wales Police for comments on the proposed policy. The department received no response.
- 2.5 Should Members decide to adopt the policy in Appendix A, they may wish to delegate the decision to grant exemptions from the requirement to display door stickers on private hire vehicles to the Licensing Team Manager. This would enable the licensing department to deal with such requests more efficiently.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

- 3.1 This report has been screened for evidence of the Five Ways of Working and how it may contribute to our Well-being Objectives.
- 3.2 The proposal supports the following well-being objective:

An environmentally responsible and prosperous Vale - Promoting regeneration, economic growth and employment.

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** None. It is not envisaged that such requests will significantly increase officer workload. However, any increase from current resources will be met from fee arrangements.

Employment

- 4.2** None.

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** Under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council may attach to the grant of a licence such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary.

5. Background Papers

None.



Vale of Glamorgan Council

**Exemption from the Requirement to Display Door Stickers on
Private Hire Vehicles Policy**

2 July 2019

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to set out how the Licensing Authority will deal with applications for the exemption from condition 9 of the Vale of Glamorgan Conditions for Private Hire Vehicles (hereafter referred to as an exemption to display door stickers).
- 1.2 The Vale of Glamorgan Conditions for Private Hire Vehicles condition 9 states that *“the proprietor and/or driver shall at all times ensure that there shall be clearly displayed on the centre or upper part of each front door of the vehicle, the adhesive private hire identification sticker supplied by the Licensing Authority. The stickers must be permanently fixed to each door with the identification sticker’s adhesive backing.”*
- 1.3 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 states that a district council may attach to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence, such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary. This includes conditions requiring or prohibiting the display of signs on or from the vehicle to which the licence relates.
- 1.4 The Licensing Authority will determine each application on its merits, but will place public safety above all other considerations, whilst taking a balanced approach to licensing requirements. Its objective is the provision of an exemption to allow proprietors who use their vehicle for ‘executive hire’ to operate without displaying door stickers.

2 Vehicle Type

- 2.1 Applications may be in respect of individual vehicles only. Applications to exempt a fleet of vehicles will not be accepted. Each application will be determined on its merits.
- 2.2 Vehicles will be of a standard of comfort and equipment higher than that of a ‘standard’ private hire vehicle. Considerations as to whether a vehicle meets this standard include but are not limited to cost, reputation, specification, appearance, perception and superior comfort levels. Examples of such vehicles include:
 - i. Mercedes Benz E/S Class, Audi A6/A8, BMW 5/7 Series, Tesla Model S;
 - ii. High specification MPV type vehicles, such as the Mercedes Benz V Class or Volkswagen Caravelle.

This is not an exhaustive list but gives an indication as to the type of vehicle that may be accepted (higher specification executive type vehicles from other manufacturers may also be considered).

- 2.3 Vehicles must be in pristine condition with no visible defects, dents or blemishes to the external bodywork or internal trim and seating.

3 Evidence to Support an Application

- 3.1 The type of work undertaken will be 'executive' in nature. There must be a demonstrable need for an exemption to apply rather than a one off contract. The type of work that may be considered 'executive' will include:
- i. Corporate bookings to transport employees and clients on business related journeys;
 - ii. Other journeys where the client specifically requires a vehicle without any signage on it at the time of booking;
 - iii. Bookings for clients (for example politicians and celebrities) who for security or personal safety reasons would not want the vehicle to be identifiable as a private hire vehicle.
 - iv. Tour operators that wish to use vehicles on sightseeing tours
- 3.2 If a proprietor wishes to make an application, they will be required to complete the appropriate application form.
- 3.3 An application to renew an exemption must be accompanied by a copy of the relevant private hire operator records to evidence the nature of the work carried out over the previous licence period.
- 3.4 A notice of exemption from displaying door stickers will be granted at the Licensing Authority's discretion. The applicant must provide sufficient documentary evidence to support their application. Such evidence may include:
- a) A letter from a customer that indicates why they require a vehicle that does not display identification door stickers.
 - b) Copies of written contracts with customers.
- 3.5 The Licensing Authority may require applicants to provide additional documentation as reasonably necessary in order make an informed decision. Where such documentation is not provided to the satisfaction of the Licensing Authority, the application will be refused.

4 Exemption

- 4.1 Where an exemption from displaying door stickers is granted for the purposes of executive hire, the vehicle must not display any indication that it is a private hire vehicle other than the Council window badge and rear plate. This includes advertising, company names, telephone numbers, web site addresses or anything that indicates that the vehicle is a private hire vehicle or is available for future hire.
- 4.2 An exemption from displaying door stickers will not be granted to vehicles that also carry out School Contract work as it is important that such vehicles are immediately recognisable. Should a vehicle that holds an exemption be used for a School Contract during the term of the exemption, the exemption will expire with immediate effect.
- 4.3 Exemption notices issued by the Licensing Authority will expire on the same day as the expiration of the vehicles current private hire licence, unless it is otherwise surrendered or revoked.

- 4.4 If the vehicle or nature of the work is deemed to no longer comply with this policy, the Licensing Authority reserves the right to revoke an exemption from displaying door stickers.

DRAFT

Appendix B

From: Crowley, Robert (Cllr) <rcrowley@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>

Sent: 01 May 2019 12:23

To: Davies, Gareth J <gjdavies@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Proposed Policy on the Exemption to Display Door Stickers on Private Hire Vehicles

Hi Gareth. At Licensing Committee meetings in the past, we have granted requests to de-sticker taxis for specific purposes. The guidelines you have stated are sensible and reasonable, so I would have no objection to granting such permission on individual merit.

Rob.

Robert Crowley
Conservative Councillor for Dinas Powys
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