

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **LICENSING COMMITTEE**

DATE: **WEDNESDAY, 13 MAY 2015**

REPORT BY: **CHIEF OFFICER (PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT)**

SUBJECT: **CHANGES TO THE PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE SPECIFICATION**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.01** For Members to consider approving changes to the Private Hire Vehicle Specification

2.00 BACKGROUND

- 2.01** Flintshire County Council have a Private Hire Vehicle Specification, which allows Private Hire drivers to understand what is required when applying to licence a vehicle for Private Hire. The specification is shown at Appendix A
- 2.02** Number 2 of the specification includes the wording that 'Any seat must measure 400mm at the narrowest point'
- 2.03** The conditions of a Private Hire Vehicle Licence state that 'The minimum acceptable width of seat section per person is 400mm'. A copy of the conditions is shown at Appendix B
- 2.04** Recently the slight difference between the Private Hire Vehicle Specification and the Conditions of Licence has been causing some confusion with some nominated testing stations measuring across the back seat as a whole and ensuring each passenger has 400mm or more if the length is divided in to three, and some measuring between seat belt anchorages, which result in the 'narrowest' part of the seat often being too small to comply.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.01** Many vehicles including a Ford Mondeo, a large Mercedes, a Vauxhall Astra and a Range Rover have been measured by two of our nominated testing stations. One hundred percent of the vehicles measured by them would not pass the Council test if the measurement had to be taken between the seat belt anchorage points.

- 3.02** Vehicles must go through stringent testing by the manufacturers to ensure the safety of passengers. Where there are three seat belts, vehicles can seat three passengers safely in the rear.
- 3.03** The condition exists in relation to comfort rather than safety.
- 3.04** Our neighbouring Authority, Wrexham have a similar condition which is worded in the following way: 'The minimum acceptable width of seat section per person is 410 millimetres at the widest point of the seat which can include unequal seated sections'. This caters for the middle seat in the rear of a vehicle which is small if it is measured between the seat belt anchorages
- 3.05** It is proposed that the wording 'at the narrowest point' is removed from number 2 on the Private Hire Vehicle Specification, and the wording of the condition is amended to reflect the wording of the Private Hire Vehicle Conditions. This will then ensure that all nominated testing stations measure the rear seat as a whole and divide the measurement by three to ensure that all passengers have the comfort of 400mm seat width per person.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01** That the Committee approve that number 2 of the Private Hire Vehicle Specification is changed to 'The minimum acceptable width of seat section per person is 400mm'

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.01** None

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01** None

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01** None

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

- 8.01** None

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.01** None

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

- 10.01** None

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 None

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 Appendix A: Private Hire Vehicle Specification
Appendix B: Conditions of Licence – Private Hire Vehicle

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985
BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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