

REPORT OF THE DIVISIONAL OFFICER
LICENSING, FOOD & SAFETY
TO THE GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
25TH JULY 2014

LICENSING OF VEHICLES DESIGNED WITHOUT A SPARE WHEEL

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To ask Members to consider authorising licensing officers to grant hackney carriage and private hire vehicles including restricted private hire vehicles a licence where manufactured without provision for a spare wheel.

2.0 Background

- 2.1 As Members will be aware, increasing numbers of applications are being reported to the General Licensing Committee for decision as they do not comply with the Council's current licensing criteria relating to the type and age of vehicles. A number of these applications relate also to vehicles manufactured without provision for a spare wheel.

3.0 Current Position

- 3.1 Existing vehicle licence criteria dictate the standards of vehicle required by the local authority before consideration of a licence. Such documents ensure that a proprietor has clear guidance prior to making an informed choice of the type of vehicle to purchase. It is important however, that local authorities do not strictly apply these criteria and that all applications for a licence are dealt with on their individual merit.
- 3.2 Current criteria for licensing hackney carriage, private hire and restricted private hire vehicles state that: *'The Proprietor shall ensure that the licensed vehicle at all times carries a spare wheel which complies with current legal requirements (paying particular attention to depth of tread) and wheel changing equipment including a jack and wheel brace.'*
- 3.3 As Members will be aware, many car manufacturers now supply a number of different versions of spare tyre alternatives. Many vehicles are now supplied with a tyre sealant and tyre inflation packs, run flat tyres or space saving non-standard spare tyre or a skinny spare as manufacturers look for different ways of space or weight saving ideas in new models of vehicle. In many of these cases the customer does not have a choice of a spare wheel due to the configuration or design space of the model itself.
- 3.4 The tyre sealant and tyre inflation packs are used to temporarily seal a puncture and are not used to repair the tyre itself. The sealant works by externally injecting the sealant and compressed air through the tyre

valve. The pack seals and inflates punctured tyres instantly allowing the proprietor to drive to the nearest tyre repair centre where the tyre can be removed from the wheel and checked for internal damage before it is repaired permanently or replaced.

- 3.5 Run flat tyres have either a reinforced sidewall or additional internal structure to provide partial support to the tyre in a deflated condition and are being offered by more and more manufacturers on new cars. There are restrictions on use following a puncture. However in general deflated tyres should be capable of at least 50 miles, depending on load at speeds of up to 50 mph.
- 3.6 Space saving non standard spare tyres or skinny spares are increasingly being supplied as standard by car manufacturers to save space and weight. Generally these will be narrower than the standard size car tyres and the maximum speed is usually restricted to 50 mph.

4.0 Proposal

- 4.1 An increasing number of applications to licence and to replace existing vehicles that do not comply with the Council's current criteria in relation to spare wheels are being received by the Licensing Section. In view of this and as all applications to licence those vehicles outside of current criteria are required to be reported to Licensing Committee, it is proposed that officers of the Licensing Section be authorised to grant such applications. This authorisation only to apply in circumstances where the application complies with all licensing criteria with the exception of the need for a spare wheel in the vehicle. The vehicle must also pass the Council's inspection.
- 4.2 Vehicle applications received that do not comply with other current licensing criteria will be reported to the General Licensing Committee for inspection and consideration.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 It is recommended that Members authorise officers of the Licensing Section to grant vehicle licences in respect of applications that do not comply with the current spare wheel criteria for licensing vehicles, subject to the vehicle passing the Council's inspection and meeting all other application criteria.

The Licensing Committee's instructions are requested.

Background Papers: None
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