

**Committee:** Licensing Committee  
**Date:** 9 June 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 4  
**Title:** LICENSING VINTAGE CARS  
**Author:** Richard Secker (01799) 510580

### **Summary**

- 1 This report recommends that a new class of licensed private hire vehicle be created to cover vintage cars and suggests some additional conditions to control passenger safety and comfort.

### **Background**

- 2 Outside London and the larger urban areas, the style of vehicle licensed as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle has traditionally been either a standard saloon or estate car. More recently, the people mover vehicles accommodating up to eight persons have become more popular. In all cars the latest technology and safety features are becoming the norm together with mechanical reliability.
- 3 Special classes of vehicles are created from time to time to deal with special groups of vehicle for which there is a public demand and appropriate conditions applied to ensure that safety and comfort is not compromised. An example of this is the stretched limousine for which a special class was adopted for private hire use.
- 4 Currently no licence is required for vehicles used for funerals or weddings and in the latter case in addition to prestige models many classic vintage vehicles are often used.
- 5 A company within the district has now imported from North America several vehicles originally built in the 1920's, these are either already restored or in need of restoration. To date, use has been limited to weddings and film production work where period vehicles are required.
- 6 However, even for these cases the Vehicle Inspectorate must issue approvals and normal MOT tests must be passed albeit that the standards are appropriate to the original specifications. Recently a specimen vehicle was taken to our Dunmow vehicle workshop for an appraisal to which an independent vintage car restoration specialist was invited.
- 7 Based on the views of the inspection staff involved there would appear to be no reason why a special vintage private hire class could not be created to permit these vehicles to be used with special relevant conditions. The

company concerned are agreeable to the additional conditions suggested which are:-

- (i) Use to be limited to the period 1 April to 31 October in any year, plus the Easter weekend if that falls in March of that same year.
- (ii) Use to be limited to day light hours only.
- (iii) Use to be within a radius of 25 miles of the operating base nominated.
- (iv) Capacity to be limited to three passengers.
- (v) Applicable to vehicles manufactured pre 1945 only.
- (vi) A reduced annual licence fee of £100

RECOMMENDED that a new class of vintage private hire licensed vehicle be created and to be subject to the additional special conditions in paragraph 7 above.

Background Papers: None

**Committee:** LICENSING COMMITTEE  
**Date:** 9 June 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 5  
**Title:** VEHICLE TESTING  
**Author:** Richard Secker (01799) 510580

### **Summary**

- 1 This report advises Members of the current taxi testing arrangements and recommends the continuation of these and the improvement of facilities to be available at the new Great Dunmow depot premises in 2006.

### **Background**

- 2 Licensed Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles are inspected annually until they are five years old when tests are carried out six monthly. The only exceptions are brand new vehicles with only delivery mileage when licensed by Uttlesford. These tests are over and above the normal MOT which is only first required at three years and then annually.
- 3 All Hackney Carriage and private hire vehicles are inspected at this Council's vehicle workshop at Great Dunmow by appointment at a cost of £35.00 and any retests are without charge if within 14 days. The main benefits of this

system are that all vehicles are tested and examined by the same team and they have no commercial interest in either generating repair work or passing their own poor quality workmanship. Test standards are as those in the MOT testers manual but with due regard to the very high annual mileages covered.

- 4 Any complaints/disputes are dealt with by the DSO Manager with at times reference to the Head of Environmental Services. Any unresolved matter is then referred to the Chelmsford VI Test Station with costs paid by the unsuccessful side. To date, there has not been a need to resort to this resource as in the few cases where this has been offered the vehicle owners have not taken up that option.
- 5 The Dunmow depot which includes the vehicle workshop is to be relocated to a new site in Great Dunmow in a partnership project with Essex County Council in 2006. This will enable more spacious and better equipped premises to be provided not only for the maintenance of all this Council's vehicles but also to improve arrangements for the taxi tests undertaken (428 in 2002/03).
- 6 It is anticipated that one bay of that workshop will be equipped to full MOT Test Station requirements so that the taxi operators could be offered the opportunity of having an MOT carried out at the same time for convenience and potentially at overall lower cost.
- 7 In the interim, the VI have confirmed that the current equipment and facilities are adequate for the safety/mechanical inspections required albeit using older technology in some areas.

RECOMMENDED that the continued use of the centralised non-commercial test facilities continue to be used and that inclusion of test station requirements be endorsed subject to a feasibility study as part of the relocation in 2006.

Background Papers: None

**Committee:** LICENSING COMMITTEE  
**Date:** 9 June 2004  
**Agenda Item No:** 6  
**Title:** COMPLAINTS  
**Author:** Richard Secker (01799) 510580

### Summary

- 1 This report advises Members of the complaints received over the last three years about the licensing service of this Council.

## Background

2 Recently all Members were advised of the total number of complaints from the public and the various service customers. Subsequently, your Chairman requested a brief report on any complaints in respect of licensing over the last three years: 2001/02, 2002/03 and 2003/04. The complaints as recorded for these purposes are those where the actions of officers/committee and any policy as applied is felt by the complainant to be unfair or unreasonable.

3 However, licensing matters are unusual in that in almost every area there is a right of appeal to Members and often the courts which are not available in most other services. Additionally, there are liaison arrangements with both officers and members for taxi licensing which does permit an alternative means of challenge. Therefore, it is perhaps not unexpected that the following table shows very few complaints.

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### 2001/02

Street collections

1. Against refusal to grant on basis of very limited benefits to the charity.

Taxis

3. Objections to fares increase.

### 2002/03

Nil.

### 2003/04

Taxi

1. Letter complaining of difficulty in contacting officers by phone.

1. Petition objecting to fee increases signed by 185 drivers. Subsequently complaints were also made to the District Auditor and Local Government Ombudsman.

5 Although not directly impacting on the levels of service and customer satisfaction, it should be noted that the Stevenage and Uttlesford Internal Audit Partnership have recently completed an audit of the full licensing service. The overall audit opinion was "No significant problems were identified during the tests and it can therefore be concluded that the various systems of control are functioning satisfactorily. The individuals involved should therefore be commended".

RECOMMENDED that the Committee note the low level of complaints received.

Background Papers: Internal Audit Report 2004.