

Current Plate Exemption policy

5. Exemption from the requirement to exhibit a private hire plate

- 5.1. S.75 (3) of the 1976 Act empowers the Council to exempt private hire vehicles from displaying the licence plate issued by the Council at certain times. This statutory power does not extend to hackney carriages which must display their plates at all times.
- 5.2. The Council recognises that there is a specialist market for the use of unmarked vehicles. Broadly there are 2 categories of customers in this market, namely customers who wish to give the appearance of using a chauffeur driven car and not a private hire vehicle and customers who require an unmarked vehicle for security reasons.
- 5.3. The Council will consider written applications in a form provided by the Council and upon payment of a fee from proprietors of private hire vehicles seeking exemption from the requirement to display a licence plate. In determining such applications the Council will have regard to this policy but shall not be bound by it and shall be prepared to grant exemptions in appropriate cases where provisions of this policy are not met.
- 5.4. The Council acknowledges that there may be some vehicles licensed by it which have been granted exemptions which do not meet this policy. On the renewal of the vehicle licence of any vehicle licensed by the Council which immediately prior to renewal had the benefit of an exemption then subject to the submission of a completed application and payment of the appropriate fee the Council will grant an exemption which will last as long as that vehicle is licensed by that proprietor whether or not the vehicle accords with this policy.
- 5.5. Subject to paragraph 4 above exemption will only be granted in respect of executive/prestige/high specification vehicles such as Mercedes Benz S class, E class, V class and Viano, BMW 5 and 7 series, Jaguar, Rolls Royce, Bentley, Lexus, Audi 6 and 8, Tesla and other similar types of vehicles.
- 5.6. Exemptions once granted shall, unless revoked or surrendered, continue for as long as the proprietor of the vehicle licenses the same as a private hire vehicle with the Council.
- 5.7. In addition to the standard conditions applicable to private hire vehicles the following conditions shall apply to private hire vehicles which are exempted from the requirement to display a plate and where there is any inconsistency between the standard conditions and these conditions then these conditions shall prevail:-

- 5.7.1. No logos advertisements or devices shall be displayed in or on the vehicle which may indicate that the vehicle is a private hire vehicle or which promotes or identifies the proprietor of the vehicle of any company firm or person using the vehicle without the prior written consent of the Council
- 5.7.2. The licence plate issued in respect of the vehicle, the letter of exemption and the licence badge of the driver of the vehicle must all be kept in the vehicle in a position where they are not readily visible at all time and must be produced to a Council officer, police officer or passenger immediately upon request.
- 5.7.3. Drivers shall when conveying passengers wear a chauffeur's uniform or a business suit and tie or comply with such other dress code as shall have been agreed in advance with the client.
- 5.7.4. The vehicles shall only be used for executive work or such other work as shall have been previously approved in writing by the Council.
- 5.8. An exemption in respect of any vehicle may be surrendered by the proprietor at any time by returning the exemption letter to the Council.
- 5.9. An exemption in respect of any vehicle may be revoked by the Environmental Health Manager (Commercial) or those authorised by him in the event of a serious or persistent breach of the conditions of the licence.

Where an exemption is revoked but the vehicle licence is not revoked then the proprietor may appeal against that decision to the Licensing and Environmental Health Committee as there is no right of appeal to the Magistrates Court against a revocation of an exemption. An appeal must be in writing and delivered to the Council within 21 days of the date upon which the proprietor of the vehicle is deemed to have been served with notice of revocation (2 working days after the notice is sent). The revocation shall not take effect during this period and if an appeal is made within that time the revocation will not take effect until such time as the Committee has considered the appeal.