

Permission to Apply for a Private Hire Vehicle Licence

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Purpose of the Report

1. The Committee is asked to consider a request from an applicant to be permitted to apply for a private hire vehicle licence contrary to paragraph 3.13 of the South Somerset District Council Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.

Public Interest

2. The Council has a policy which states, the Council will only issue licences to vehicles which meet the current euro standard (emissions) except where the vehicle is currently licensed and a renewal application is submitted. This report is to request that the Committee consider departing from this policy so the applicant can apply to licence this vehicle.

Recommendation

3. That the Licensing Committee:
 - Review all of the information provided and make a decision on whether to:
 - a) Refuse the application as it does not meet the criteria written in the policy or;
 - b) Accept the application on the grounds the applicant has demonstrated exceptional circumstances.

Background

4. South Somerset District Council adopted the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy in January 2022 agreeing it was to take effect from 4 April 2022. The policy is published on our website.
5. The policy states at paragraph 3.13 that all new vehicle applications be restricted to vehicles which are compliant with the current Euro standard. The relevant sections from the policy are shown below. The emissions policy was introduced for environmental reasons as the aim of the standards is to reduce the levels of harmful



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emissions, which include, nitrogen oxides and carbon monoxide. This requirement supports the Council's commitment to reduce emissions.

Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy Environmental Vehicle Standards

3.13 In recognition of the Council's wider role, the Licensing Authority will require all new licensed vehicles to be compliant with the current European Emission Standard (Euro).

3.15 Specific requests for vehicles outside of this specification would have to be approved by the Licensing Committee.

6. The applicant's vehicle was licensed, however, the applicant did not submit the application to renew the licence before the expiry, therefore, it is treated as a new application. The vehicle doesn't meet the current standard required for licensing.
7. The email provided by the applicant (Appendix 1), said that he did not receive a reminder about the expiry of the plate. The applicant also said that the vehicle has a tail lift ramp and is used to provide transport for people who use wheelchairs as part of a contract with Somerset County Council. Reminders are sent by text the month before the expiry of the licence and the expiry of the licence is shown on the internal and external private hire vehicle plates.

Financial Implications

8. None at this stage, however if an official application is made and refused there are the possible costs of appeal to Magistrates if the licence is refused.

Council Plan Implications

9. None as this is one request to depart from the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

10. Nothing which affects the report on "greenhouse gas emissions from local authorities' own estate and operations".
11. The requirement for vehicles being licensed for the first time has been set at the current Euro standard to help reduce the number of older vehicles which have higher harmful emissions. Licensing vehicles which do not meet the current Euro standard would mean there is a greater contribution to the air pollutants which have a detrimental effect on the environment.

Equality and Diversity Implications

12. There are no equality implications arising from this report.



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Privacy Impact Assessment

13. There are no privacy concerns arising from this report.

Background Papers

South Somerset District Council – Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy.