

## REPORT

To: GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE	Subject: TAXI LICENSING – REVIEW OF TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING	
From: DIRECTOR OF ADMINISTRATION		
Date: 26 July 2004	Ref: WBK/KH	

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to rehearse the issues surrounding a potential review of taxi and private hire licensing, to advise the Committee of the outcome of recent discussions with taxi trade representatives and to present a number of issues for consideration. This report provides a basic summary of the issues under consideration. The detailed history and arguments on the issues can be found in the Taxi Licensing Discussion Paper annexed to this report and it is important that members are familiar with the issues raised in that paper prior to considering the issues raised in this report.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Following local government reorganisation, there was an extensive exercise to harmonise the systems operated by predecessor authorities in the regulation of taxi and private hire licensing. Since then policy has continued to develop but there has been no further overall review of the system. There are a number of issues and local anomalies that could be addressed by such a review.
- 2.2 The single biggest issue facing the taxi trade at present is taxi accessibility. There has been a significant delay on the part of the government in the implementation of taxi accessibility regulations, which were first proposed in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. North Lanarkshire Council has a local accessibility policy that will require all taxis to be purpose built and wheelchair accessible by 1 January 2006. There is substantial trade opposition to that policy based on the impact that it may have on the local market and what the trade maintain is a lack of demand for such an extensive measure. Local authorities have difficulty in properly implementing taxi accessibility in the face of an absence of national regulation. What can be gleaned from recent government announcements is that national accessibility regulations will envisage a range of measures to provide mixed fleets able to deal with all manner of disabilities rather than blanket measures such as total wheelchair accessibility. To that extent, it is worthwhile to consider whether the policy requires amendment to bring it into line with national thinking.
- 2.3 The Office of Fair Trading produced a report in November 2003 on taxi and private hire markets and in particular the impact of numerically limiting taxi licences. North Lanarkshire Council operates such limits. Limits can impact on issues such as consumer safety and choice. They contribute to the creation of a black market in the sale of taxi licences that is unique to authorities that operate numerical limits. The OFT expressed serious reservations about such limits and indeed recommended their abolition. Both the Westminster Government and the Scottish Executive have agreed to carefully review how such limits are applied. Limits in North Lanarkshire, coupled with factors arising from the south area waiting list for taxi licences have resulted in a policy that almost prohibits the transfer of taxi licences. The principal

and somewhat unfortunate consequence of that policy is that there is a substantial black market in taxi licences in North Lanarkshire. However, that is a problem that is capable of resolution.

- 2.4 Taxi and private hire vehicles and drivers come in all shapes and sizes and are of varying standards. A substantial review of taxi and private hire conditions and vehicle specifications will raise standards overall and some of the measures proposed include vehicle age limits, uniform vehicle colour and ultimately a dress code for drivers.
- 2.5 On 1 July 2004, a meeting took place between the Convener, Vice-Convener, Council officers and taxi trade representatives to discuss the issues raised in this report. The meeting was considered to be constructive and it is hoped that it is the start of a greater spirit of co-operation between the taxi trade and the Council. Regulation is best achieved in a co-operative atmosphere and the taxi trade representatives clearly acknowledged that there was room for improvement in the trade and that a high standard of service was of benefit to the Council, the public and the taxi and private hire trades. The taxi trade representatives expressed general agreement with the measures outlined in this report as a way of improving the licensing system.

### 3. ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

- 3.1 A package of measures addressing the issues raised in this report has been developed. The Committee requires to consider whether to adopt those measures as outlined in the recommendations below. It is suggested that the measures are a carefully considered package and most of the measures impact on others in a way that makes it difficult to take only selected measures. They are the result of consideration of a number of licensing issues and constitute a professional assessment of the options available to members to overhaul and improve the taxi and private hire licensing system.
- 3.2 A number of the issues in this report and the recommendations that follow are first principle issues and the actual implementation will involve further committee consideration. For example the detail of a review of taxi and private hire licence conditions will require future consideration by members but at this stage the report seeks agreement in principle to such a review.
- 3.3 On taxi accessibility, the Council has a policy that is due for implementation in the near future. There are arguments for amending that policy to take into account the changing national position. Of course, the Committee may confirm existing policy if so minded. Whilst the wheelchair accessibility policy is a laudable aim, the Committee may view the alternative method proposed for addressing taxi accessibility as the foundation for the development of a more sophisticated policy designed to respond to diverse disabled needs.
- 3.4 On taxi licence numerical limits, it is considered important to update the data on which those limits are based. It was last updated in 2001 by a survey from the Fraser of Allander Institute. Court decisions and government guidance continue to underline the importance of robust data in the setting of numerical limits.
- 3.5 On taxi licence transfers, the Council is best placed to regulate and police the market by allowing such transfers in the same manner as, for example, pubs and snack vans. The Motherwell waiting list requires to be accommodated and the best way in which to do so is simply to allow those on the list to fulfil their ambition by offering them a licence. Aside from the waiting list, there is no good reason as to why taxi licences should not be transferable, subject to the approval of the Council, and

members will have control over operators again, which is the whole point of the licensing system.

- 3.6 The Committee may, is so minded, order a public consultation on the proposals or may proceed to decision at this stage.

#### 4. **CORPORATE CONSIDERATIONS**

- 4.1. The measures contained in this report are in line with the Council's commitments to disability friendly services and proper and effective regulation as envisaged by the Enforcement Concordat.

#### 5. **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 5.1. The Committee is asked to agree to the following measures (some of which will be the subject of future reports on the manner of implementation):-
- a) All new taxi licences to require the operation of a purpose built, wheelchair accessible taxi in line with present Council policy.
  - b) Existing operators to be permitted to continue to run non-purpose built vehicles with swivel seats to be fitted by the next annual inspection, but one, to give at least a year for compliance.
  - c) All persons on the South Area waiting list to be offered a taxi licence to meet the identified wheelchair access demand. The waiting list to be discontinued thereafter.
  - d) Applications to the Council for transfer of taxi licences to be permitted to allow the Council to properly regulate the taxi market. Stronger enforcement measures to be introduced in respect of any remaining black market operations. The concept of day to day manager to be tightened up to ensure that managers are truly employees rather than black market agents or lessees.
  - e) All taxi licence transfers to be on the basis that an approved purpose built or purpose converted wheelchair accessible vehicle will require to be operated by the transferee. This will lead to a phased increase in purpose built, wheelchair accessible vehicles in respect of the existing fleet. Existing trade members would be given the option of one transfer, not subject to the wheelchair accessibility condition, to be exercised within a set time frame.
  - f) A further survey of demand for taxi services to be carried out with a view to assessing the advantages and disadvantages of numerical limits in the North Lanarkshire area and with a view to either reviewing, retaining or abolishing numerical limits.
  - g) The vehicle specification for non-purpose built taxis and private hire cars to be harmonised by 1 January 2006 and age limits for all vehicles to be set at a maximum of 5 years from the date of registration to the date of application for grant or renewal (which will give a maximum age limit of 8 years bearing in mind the licensing cycle).
  - h) All new or replaced non-purpose built taxis to be of a uniform colour unless of the clearly identifiable purpose built variety.
  - i) All taxis on grant or renewal to carry a full width roof sign.
  - j) A review of taxi and private hire conditions to be undertaken to solidify the foundations of the new taxi and private hire regime.

- k) The taxi specification to be adapted to allow the inclusion of suitable vehicles from the developing market in vehicles that are purpose adapted as accessible taxis, subject to consultation with the Transport Manager and police.

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# **North Lanarkshire Council Taxi Licensing Policy**

## **Discussion Paper**

**Department of Administration  
Legal Services Division  
19 May 2004**

# NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL TAXI LICENSING POLICY

## Purpose

1. The purpose of this paper is to detail the development of taxi licensing policy in North Lanarkshire, to highlight recent important national developments and to stimulate debate on the future of taxi licensing in North Lanarkshire.

## Historical Background

2. North Lanarkshire Council policy on taxi licensing has been influenced by policies inherited from predecessor authorities at local government reorganisation, national initiatives impacting on taxi licensing and local policy formulated by NLC to address local licensing needs. Taxi licensing policy arises from a number of complex and inter-related factors.
3. Following local government reorganisation, NLC largely harmonised its taxi licensing policy on the foundations of inherited policies from predecessor authorities. Three licensing areas were created (corresponding to the Motherwell, Monklands and Cumbernauld & Kilsyth/Strathkelvin areas). Those became known as the south, central and north zones and each had an (inherited) numerical limit on taxi licenses applied to it (south - 182, central - 238 and north - 50). In terms of vehicle types, the north licensing area traditionally had a 100% purpose-built taxi fleet and the south and central licensing areas had a mix of saloon and purpose-built vehicles (mainly saloons as purpose built vehicles are estimated to be less than 10%). In 1998, NLC formulated a policy that would harmonise vehicle specifications by requiring that all vehicles in its area be of the purpose-built variety by the end of 2005. That decision was taken on the basis that the Council wished a distinct purpose-built fleet for better enforcement of the taxi/private hire distinction and also had an eye on the developing national picture on taxi accessibility in light of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.
4. In the course of 2001 the Council reviewed its numerical limits on taxi licences by the commissioning of a survey from the Fraser of Allander Institute. That survey concluded that there was "no significant *unmet* demand" for taxis in the three licensing areas. On 8 May 2002, following consultation with the taxi trade, the General Purposes Committee confirmed the numerical limits.
5. Following a consultation period in the course of 2002, the Council also confirmed its policy that it would require a 100% purpose-built, wheelchair accessible fleet by 31 December 2005. *That policy has met with significant opposition on the part of the taxi trade.*
6. The issue of the transfer of taxi licences is an important factor in terms of the impact that it has on taxi licensing overall. NLC has traditionally refused to allow the sale or transfer of taxi businesses by way of variation of taxi licences. The taxi trade periodically renews its calls for such transfers to be allowed. There have been primarily two reasons for refusing to permit the transfer of taxi licences. Firstly, a waiting list of persons who had applied for, but had been refused, a taxi licence on the grounds of no significant unmet demand was inherited from Motherwell District Council (south licensing area). It was considered that to allow the sale or transfer of taxi licences would prejudice the legitimate rights and expectations of those who appear on the waiting list as licences would never return to the Council. Secondly, there has also been a feeling among some Elected Members that licences should not be transferable as they do not belong to licence holders and it is for the Council to decide who is to obtain a licence. The irony of that approach is that on the one hand the Council underlines its right to

control taxi licences but on the other hand maintains a policy that perpetuates the black market in the sale of taxi businesses. There is a substantial black market in North Lanarkshire. It should be borne in mind that in licensing law, the transfer of licences is commonplace. The sale of a taxi and relative licence is essentially no different to the sale of other businesses such as pubs, burger bars or window cleaning rounds.

## NUMERICAL LIMITS

7. A local authority may limit the number of taxis in its area if it is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for the services of taxis. NLC has maintained the limits inherited from its predecessor authorities. The reasons for those authorities applying numerical limits in the first place are unknown.
8. The Office of Fair Trading ("OFT") recently produced a report on "The Regulation of Licensed Taxi and PHV (Private Hire Vehicles) in the UK". That report recommended that numerical limits on taxis should be abolished. The OFT has concluded that the overall quality of taxi services would be directly improved by removing limits. The UK Government has welcomed the report. It has declined to legislate away local authority powers to limit taxi numbers but will be taking steps to strongly encourage the removal of such limits. The Scottish Executive has largely rejected the OFT findings, arguing for the retention of local control for local circumstances.
9. The OFT has examined quantity regulation in detail. 45% of local authorities in the United Kingdom apply quantity controls. The main issues highlighted in the OFT report are as follows:-
  - (a) **Passenger Waiting Times** - The OFT concludes that a restricted supply of taxis means that passengers have to wait longer for the service.
  - (b) **Reduced Choice** - The OFT concludes that some consumers who would use taxis may have to opt for other less suitable modes of transport due to lack of taxi availability
  - (c) **Consumer Safety** – The OFT concludes that a limited service in the late evening can contribute to difficulties faced by police in clearing public places. Equally, the OFT suggests that consumers are sometimes forced into using illegal taxis or private hire cars not licensed to ply for hire. The OFT points to the invalidation of private hire insurance where the car is being operated illegally by plying for hire.

## The Impact of Numerical Limits on the Supply of Taxis

### Taxi Licence Shortage Premiums

10. The OFT found that black market licences sell for between £7,500 and £50,000. In North Lanarkshire the figure is around £10,000. The shortage premium is created by numerical limits, which monopolise the business of the consumer group to those who hold licences (but can have knock-on effects such as increased waiting times etc., through limited supply). The OFT categorically states that the black market sale or transfer of taxi licences is outwith the regulation of local authorities and is therefore inherently anti-consumer safety.

## Taxi Licence Waiting Lists

11. 23% of local authorities in Britain have taxi licence waiting lists (45% operate numerical limits). Such waiting lists contribute to the black market sale of licences by those who wish to circumvent the inordinately long waiting times that can attach to such lists.

## The arguments in favour of quantity controls

12. The OFT rejected the arguments in favour of quantity controls which are principally as follows:-
  - (a) **There is "no significant unmet demand"** - The OFT has stated that numerical limits do not achieve a supply equilibrium in the market. They suggest that limits lead to under-supply to the market. People who would otherwise use taxis choose not to do so, or suffer increased waiting times. *Limits also fuel the problem of private hire cars illegally plying for hire.*
  - (b) **Quality of Service** - The OFT suggests that quality of service (e.g. vehicle specifications etc.) should be regulated separately from quantity limits as opposed to the rather crude mechanism of applying quantity limits in order to try to retain what are perceived as dedicated members of the trade who will operate better vehicles. *The OFT suggests that the only proper way to regulate quality is to do so directly.*

## Numerical limits in North Lanarkshire

13. The historical origins of such NLCs limits are unclear, but they have been maintained on a combination of an "it seems to work" attitude and taxi trade opposition to an increase in taxi licences.
14. NLC has a waiting list for taxi licences in the Council's south licensing area. That waiting list dates back to 1987. The sale or transfer of taxi licences in North Lanarkshire is not generally supported subject to an exception allowing for transfers between close family members.
15. *NLC has an increasingly inaccurate picture of who is operating taxi licences in its area due to the black market in taxi licences that arises from the combination of numerical limits, the south area waiting list, and the policy on transfers. It has been suggested that as many as 80% of taxis may be operated by people who have not been vetted by the Council and who simply hide behind the recorded operator. That is a major concern.*

## TAXI ACCESSIBILITY

### Taxi Accessibility Nationally

16. Following the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the government announced, in 1997, an informal consultation on taxi accessibility. Originally the proposal was that taxi accessibility regulations would come into force in 2002 (for new operators) and would be fully implemented by 2012.
17. The Scottish Executive has confirmed that the Department for Transport (Westminster) will be introducing taxi accessibility regulations to larger local authority areas and that the DFT are

developing technical regulations that all taxis will require to comply with in due course. A research project has been set up to inform the regulations in terms of the ergonomics of taxi design for disabled people. It is anticipated that consultation on the full package of measures (including the technical requirements) will follow, although no date has been set for that. To allow the industry sufficient time to produce vehicles that meet those standards, DFT has proposed that regulations come into force in 2010 for newly licensed taxis, with all taxis requiring to comply by 2020. Whilst there are differences between Scotland and England & Wales in terms of implementation of such proposals (which in Scotland will be through the Scottish Executive) it is likely that the position will largely develop on a UK-wide basis. It is also likely that North Lanarkshire will be among the first Councils to have the regulations applied to it on the basis of its size/population.

**18. It is notable that the Scottish Executive in its letter implicitly recognises that a mixed fleet of vehicles is the way forward rather than a 100% fleet of one type of vehicle.**

### **Taxi Accessibility in North Lanarkshire**

19. Historically, NLC has had a mix of saloon and hackney (purpose built) type vehicles inherited from predecessor authorities. Vehicle standards in terms of comfort, physical condition and modernity are varied, although obviously vehicles are subject to regular roadworthiness inspections. *The general standard of the fleet is fairly low.* In 1998, in a move towards a harmonised and distinct taxi fleet, and with an eye to disability discrimination requirements, the Council decided that it would have a 100% purpose-built fleet by 2005. In December 2002, NLC confirmed that its policy position would be that by 31 December 2005 it would require all taxis in the North Lanarkshire area to be of the purpose built, fully wheelchair accessible variety. The two reasons for that decision were the desire for a distinct taxi fleet and an acknowledgement of the spirit of the Disability Discrimination legislation.

20. *The current North Lanarkshire policy is not a taxi accessibility policy but rather a wheelchair accessibility policy.* There is some evidence of a demand for improved wheelchair accessibility but the measure is a drop in the ocean in comparison to what will ultimately be required for full taxi accessibility. There remains an argument that a mixed fleet with a percentage of purpose built vehicles and a percentage of saloon vehicles with swivel seats is a more sophisticated measure to address taxi accessibility particularly as it is more inclusive, encompassing as it does the needs of those who are disinclined to use hackney vehicles such as the elderly and ambulant amputees. There is also an inherent danger in the 2005 Policy that operators may largely seek to comply by putting on very low standard vehicles that are nevertheless purpose built and therefore meet the minimum criterion. The overall quality of the taxi fleet in North Lanarkshire would thereby decrease.

### **Disabled Groups in North Lanarkshire**

21. Disabled groups were consulted during the policy review in 2002. The response was disappointing. Of those who did respond, some advocated a 100% purpose built, wheelchair accessible fleet whilst others advocated a mixed fleet of saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles. The latter group are generally motivated by a recognition that purpose-built vehicles are not suitable for people with certain disabilities (e.g. ambulant amputees) or the elderly. One of the difficulties in respect of disabled groups is that expectations of what can be achieved in respect of taxi accessibility are probably pitched at a level more suitable to the regulations envisaged nationally, which will result from detailed and lengthy consultation with all manner of disabled groups, local authorities, taxi trade representatives and taxi vehicle manufacturers.

Local authorities can take specific measures designed to improve disabled access but such measures are always likely to be of very limited impact. Only a fully researched and funded national initiative can achieve the ultimate aims of DDA 1995.

### **The Taxi Trade on Taxi Accessibility**

22. *The depth of feeling in the taxi trade about NLC's purpose built vehicle policy cannot be underestimated.* There has been substantial opposition to the policy from taxi trade representatives. The trade difficulties are as follows:-

#### **Financial**

23. The trade states that many operators simply cannot afford to change to a purpose-built vehicle. There is no doubt that such vehicles are more expensive to buy, run and maintain. The trade has pointed to the fact that the Council does not allow members to sell or transfer taxi licences for value and therefore the Council is expecting large scale investment on the part of taxi operators with no opportunity for a return. Equally, the trade point to the fact that other forms of transport, such as buses or trains, attract large government subsidies when it comes to disabled access but taxi operators are simply individuals who receive no such assistance. Trade representatives also point to the lack of grants available to assist with the purchase of wheelchair accessible vehicles (it is understood that some local authorities in the UK may have provided such assistance). The trade has also indicated that the policy discriminates against those older operators, casting aside their many years of service to the public. The example is that an operator in his mid-50's is unlikely to want to make the substantial investment required in respect of a purpose built vehicle in comparison to perhaps an operator in his 20's or 30's. The reasoning is that the older operator cannot recoup his investment (especially when transfers are prohibited). Accordingly the older operator may be forced into unemployment/retirement.

#### **Disabled Needs**

24. The taxi trade asserts that the percentage of wheelchair users in comparison with the whole of the population in North Lanarkshire is very low. That is correct (it is thought to be 1% or less). They assert that the introduction of a 100% wheelchair accessible fleet is an unnecessary measure to address disabled access requirements to taxis in North Lanarkshire. They advocate a mixed fleet (in common with certain disabled groups). Bearing in mind that the taxi trade is effectively a number of self employed operators and drivers, the trade is unable to formulate or deliver on detailed proposals for the implementation of a mixed fleet. Such proposals raise issues such as the percentage of vehicles that require to be purpose-built, who is to be "forced" to operate those, the percentage of vehicles that require to have other measures such as swivel seats and the delivery of an effective and efficient service throughout North Lanarkshire and throughout the day. To be fair to the taxi trade, it is perhaps somewhat unreasonable to expect them to formulate such proposals. Now that the Scottish Executive and the Department for Transport have acknowledged that there is a requirement for detailed consultation on vehicle requirements, mix of vehicles, etc., it is clear that the overall issue of taxi accessibility can only be taken forward at national level. To be frank, NLC, with all the resources that it has available would have difficulty in developing a fully accessible (as opposed to wheelchair accessible) fleet, let alone a solution being formulated by a non-cohesive taxi trade. That said, the Council has never purported to be attempting to address taxi accessibility overall. The issue can only be addressed on a national level after detailed consultation and discussion with interested groups and full parliamentary debate thereafter.

25. The taxi trade also correctly point to the fact that the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is based around the concept of reasonableness. Any measures designed to address disabled access to services require not only to take into account the needs of the disabled, but require to take into account the impact on providers of the service with a view to a full and fair cost/benefit analysis being undertaken to establish what measures are necessary and appropriate in the circumstances.

## **Miscellaneous issues**

### **Vehicle Types**

26. There is a developing market in vehicles that are “purpose adapted” for use as taxis. These tend to be MPV type vehicles that have been converted for wheelchair access. They are marketed as alternatives to the traditional London Taxi, which is by far the most expensive (albeit probably the best) vehicle available. There has been some consultation with the taxi trade on alternative vehicle types, but the trade has concentrated its efforts on seeking policy change rather than seeking to identify vehicles that will comply with the policy.

### **The Private Hire Trade**

27. It is unrealistic to consider taxi licensing policy without having regard to private hire car licensing policy. Taxi operators continually assert that there is illegal plying for hire by private hire drivers in North Lanarkshire. That is undoubtedly correct. If the taxi vehicle specification is too onerous then there is a danger that taxi operators will migrate to private hire and that there will be an increase in private hire cars operating as taxis thereafter (by illegally plying for hire). That situation can only be addressed by effective enforcement, although there are barriers to enforcement, not least in connection with obtaining sufficient evidence of the offence. Illegal plying for hire is not a justification for keeping the taxi specification at a lower level than would otherwise be desirable.

28. There is also anecdotal evidence from at least one local authority that the private hire sector is beginning to grow in order to avoid a wheelchair accessibility condition that is applied to all new taxi licences. Accordingly, it may be necessary to give consideration as to whether the minimum vehicle standard for private hire should be raised to discourage the illegitimate growth of that trade. The introduction of a disabled access requirement of some sort, for example swivel seats and the general raising of the vehicle specification is a possibility. The last review of the private hire specification was in 2001 with 3 yearly reviews anticipated. Accordingly, it is an apt time to revisit this issue.

## **CONCLUSION**

29. Current taxi licensing policy in North Lanarkshire is fairly sound in terms of the reasons for the decisions taken, bearing in mind the prevailing circumstances at the time that those decisions were taken. There is an argument that the development of the national position is rendering North Lanarkshire policy out of step with national thinking. On numerical limits the OFT has asserted that such limits are anti-consumer. Such an acknowledgement, albeit not entirely embraced by the Scottish Executive, gives some scope for increasing taxi numbers to specifically to meet disabled needs. On disabled access the current policy on vehicle specifications will have a small positive impact, essentially on wheelchair users, but potentially a disproportionate impact on quality of service to the general public or on the taxi trade.

30. It has to be acknowledged that there is no evidence of widespread support among disabled groups, taxi operators or the general public for a 100% purpose built fleet. Whilst not suggesting that the present policy is necessarily unsound, there is an argument for adjusting the policy to meet the changing circumstances.

31. The taxi trade is continuing to call for policy change. The Council requires to respond one way or the other with a final verdict on the future of taxi licensing from 2006 onwards.

### **Potential options**

If changes to the current policy are considered desirable there are a number of measures worthy of consideration:-

1. All new taxi licences to require the operation of a purpose built, wheelchair accessible taxi (which is presently the policy).
2. Existing operators to be permitted to continue to run saloon vehicles with swivel seats to be fitted by the next annual inspection, but one, to give at least a year for compliance.
3. All persons on the South Area waiting list to be offered a taxi licence to meet the identified wheelchair access demand. The waiting list to be abolished thereafter.
4. Applications to the Council for transfers of taxi licences to be permitted to allow the Council to properly regulate the taxi market. Stronger enforcement measures to be introduced in respect of black market operations. The concept of day to day manager to be tightened up to ensure that managers are truly employees rather than black market agents or lessees.
5. All taxi licence transfers to be on the basis that a purpose built, wheelchair accessible vehicle will require to be operated by the transferee. This will lead to a phased increase in purpose built, wheelchair accessible vehicles in respect of the existing fleet.
6. A further survey of demand to be carried out with a view to assessing the advantages and disadvantages of numerical limits in the North Lanarkshire area with a view to either reviewing, retaining or abolishing numerical limits.
7. The vehicle specification for non-purpose built taxis and private hire cars to be harmonised by 1 January 2006.
8. Age limits for all vehicles to be set at a maximum of 5 years from date of registration to date of application for grant or renewal (which will give a maximum age limit of 8 years bearing in mind the licensing cycle).
9. All new or replaced saloon taxis to be of a uniform colour unless of the clearly identifiable purpose built variety. (i.e. applying the Central colour criterion to the South area).
10. All taxis on grant or renewal to carry a full width roof sign.
11. A review of taxi and private hire conditions to be undertaken to solidify the foundations of the new taxi and private hire regime.
12. The taxi specification to be adapted to allow the inclusion of suitable vehicles from the developing market in vehicles that are purpose adapted as accessible taxis.

*13. If the status quo is maintained, then the widening of the approved list of vehicles will be the single most important issue remaining for consideration.*

**It should be noted that the list of potential options presented in this paper is not exhaustive, nor is the list to be taken as an indication that any of the measures are to be implemented. The paper is solely for the purposes of stimulating debate on the issues raised.**