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NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

REPORT

To: PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE (Roads and Transportation Sub-Committee)		Subject: Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency, Consultation on Vehicle Number Plate Security
From: DIRECTOR OF PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENT		
Date: 8 October 2003	Ref: D/TT/16/40/JM	

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report informs Committee of the above consultation and seeks Committees approval to respond to the section proposing distinctive number plates for taxis and private hire cars (mini cabs).

2. Background

- 2.1 In September 1998 the Vehicle Crime Reduction Action Team was established by the Home Office to develop and implement a strategy to meet the Government objective of reducing crime. The team recommended the introduction of a statutory registration scheme to control the supply of number plates, as well as the introduction of additional security features on number plates. The first part of this strategy was implemented in January 2003 with the establishment of a register of number plate suppliers in England and Wales. The current consultation puts forward proposals aimed at completing the process of creating a secure number plate system.

3. Consultation

- 3.1 Among other proposals, the consultation document seeks views on the use of distinctive number plates for taxis and private hire cars. It notes that there have unfortunately been a number of instances of people posing as taxi and private hire drivers to lure unsuspecting members of the public into their vehicle. Serious crime sometimes results from such deception.

4. Proposals

- 4.1 At present all front plates have a white background and rear plates a yellow background. In order to make licensed taxis and private hire cars easily distinguishable to the public, it is proposed that number plates issued to these vehicles should be a different colour, e.g. blue or red.

5. Comments

- 5.1 Distinctly coloured number plates for taxis and private hire cars would complement the existing forms of identification aimed at securing public safety, therefore producing a positive benefit. It is crucial to ensure a distinction between taxis and private hire cars. Anything that gives the impression that they are one and the same is liable to cause problems. Private hire cars plying for hire and otherwise acting as taxis is a continual and

increasing problem. The Council has expressed its commitment to maintaining the taxi/private hire distinction.

6. Recommendation

- 6.1 In order to aid proper enforcement, taxis and private hire cars should have different coloured plates from one another.
- 6.2 Committee are asked to approve a Council response to this consultation document stating that :-
 - a) the Council endorses the use of different coloured backgrounds for taxi and private hire cars licence plates and,
 - b) that in order to aid proper enforcement, it is essential that taxis and private hire cars should have different coloured plates from one another.



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25 September 2003

Local Government Access to Information Act: for further information about this report, please contact John Marran, on 01236-616253