

# North Lanarkshire Council

## Report

### Finance and Resources Committee

approval  noting

**Ref** AA/CH/PG

**Date** 28/05/20

### Taxi and Private Hire Licensing – Vehicle Specifications

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#### Executive Summary

The purpose of this Report is to seek approval on changes to the vehicle specification of taxis and private hire cars following a consultation with the trade.

On 18 September 2019, Committee authorised the Head of Legal and Democratic Solutions to consult with the taxi and private hire trade on proposed revised specifications.

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#### Recommendations

1. That the attached taxi and private hire vehicle specifications be approved.
2. That the Head of Legal and Democratic Solutions advise the taxi and private hire trade that these new specifications for taxi and private hire cars will come into effect on 29 May 2020.
3. That the Head of Legal and Democratic Solutions be authorised to update the specifications to include any additional wheelchair accessible vehicles recommended for approval by the Council's Fleet Resource Manager.
4. That, in response to concerns that have been expressed by the trade arising in consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, it is recommended that the following wording be added to the specifications:-

“Protective screens are allowed to be fitted behind the driver and front passenger seat so long as there are no structural alterations made to the vehicle. The Council's Fleet Operations will have to inspect and approve the fitment of the protective screen and will issue a letter confirming whether the screen fitted is temporary or permanent and the protective screen will be checked at each annual inspection of the vehicle.”

This matter was not the subject of any consultation but it is thought appropriate to amend the specifications in the furtherance of driver and passenger safety.

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## The Plan for North Lanarkshire

Priority Improve the health and wellbeing of our communities

Ambition statement (14) Ensure the highest standards of public protection

### 1. Background

- 1.1 The Council, as Licensing Authority, is required to keep the regulation of taxi and private hire licensing under review. The Council should consider the modification of its specifications for taxi and private hire cars in response to changes in vehicle manufacture.

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### 2. Report

#### 2.1 Consultation

- 2.1.2 The main changes to the existing specifications which were consulted upon can be summarised as follows:-

1. a reduction in the minimum engine size for taxis and private hire cars from 1,600 cylinder capacity (cc) to 1,500 cylinder capacity (cc); maintaining the 60 kilowatts (Kw)/80 brake horse power (bhp) requirement;
2. allowing electric and hybrid vehicles which meet the 60Kw/80bhp requirement to be included in the specifications for both taxi and private hire cars;
3. allowing multi-person vehicles to be included in the specification for taxis. Multi-person vehicles are currently allowed in relation to private hire cars. This will allow taxi operators and private hire operators to have the same choice in relation to non-wheelchair accessible vehicles;
4. allowing wheelchair access to be through the rear door in relation to wheelchair accessible vehicles. Currently no rear access is allowed.

- 2.1.3 The consultation letter (which enclosed a copy of the proposed taxi and private hire vehicle specifications) was issued to the trade and requested views on the four main changes detailed above. The consultation was sent to 1650 licence holders and views on the proposed specifications for taxi and private hire vehicles were sought. 44 responses were received. The consultation lasted approximately six weeks.

#### 2.2 Summary of Responses

- 2.2.1 61% of respondents were in favour of the first, second and fourth proposals.
- 2.2.2 In relation to the first proposal, one respondent felt the proposal to reduce minimum engine size for taxis and private hire cars to 1500cc did not go far enough and made the point that engine sizes are being brought down and are more powerful. One

respondent stated that he wished the Council to consider electric as well as hybrid and fuel efficient vehicles as a matter of priority. A response was received that the emphasis should be on brake horsepower as opposed to size since engines are now smaller and more powerful.

- 2.2.3 In relation to the second proposal, one respondent felt that the proposal would not be taken up as the cost of purchasing a hybrid vehicle is expensive and there are a lack of charging points in the area. Another response was in favour of the second proposal but made the point that initially the cost would be expensive.
- 2.2.4 Almost all of those respondents in favour of the first, second and fourth proposals were opposed to the third proposal since they felt it would penalise operators who have already invested in 6-seater wheelchair accessible vehicles in respect of that investment. It was stated that 6-seater wheelchair accessible vehicles cost more to purchase and those vehicles have higher running costs. 66% of respondents overall were opposed to the third proposal. Further objections to the third proposal were that it would discourage operators upgrading to wheelchair accessible vehicles and that current wheelchair accessible vehicle licence holders would be at a disadvantage. One respondent felt that door motion sensors should be fitted to protect vulnerable passengers. Another respondent stated that wheelchair accessible operators rely heavily on multi-passenger bookings to offset increased running costs and if this proposal was adopted it would put a further strain on them. The respondent favoured allow seven passenger vehicles. Another respondent felt that there would be an incentive to downgrade from a wheelchair accessible vehicle to a saloon vehicle.
- 2.2.5 In relation to the fourth proposal two respondents wished more types of vehicles to be added to the two detailed in the specification. Two respondents objected to the fourth proposal for safety reasons; one had concerns about the safety of wheelchair passengers in the rear and the means of exit if the rear door is damaged, and access to the vehicle on a main road while another stated that in a previous year one in four accidents had involved a rear-end collision.
- 2.2.6 A small number (14%) of respondents were in agreement with all four proposals.

### 2.3 **Additional Comments**

2.3.1 Comments were made in relation to matters not consulted upon:-

- It was an omission that no swivel seats were needed for private hire cars.
- There should be a revision of the age limit for private hire cars since this had not been changed since 2005 and technology has advanced since then.
- Vehicles carrying six passengers should be allowed to charge a meter and a half fare since this would offset the costs in running those vehicles.
- Private hire vehicles should have a sign on the side stating “pre-booked hires only.”
- The Council should reconsider the signage on taxis.
- Vehicles of any colour should be permitted as replacement of a vehicle involved in an accident would be easier. The Council should consider vehicle wrapping since this costs less than having a vehicle resprayed.
- Passengers should be allowed to travel in the front of wheelchair accessible vehicles.

## **2.4 Conclusion**

- 2.4.1 As the majority of respondents were opposed to the third proposal, it would seem appropriate to amend the proposed taxi specification to exclude taxis being multi person vehicles.
- 2.4.2 In relation to the opposition to rear door access for wheelchair users, it was noted that the main concern was in relation to passengers in the rear and drivers. The vehicles identified in the proposals have European Community Whole Vehicle Type Approvals (ECWVTA) issued by the Vehicle Certification Agency (VCA) to ensure that environmental, safety and security standards are met. Rear access wheelchair accessible vehicles must comply with legislative requirements, currently the Road Vehicles (Approval) Regulations 2009. Additionally, the proposed vehicles have been examined from a safety perspective by the Council's Fleet Resource Manager and the two vehicles detailed in the specification meet those requirements. The Council's Fleet Resource Manager examined a large number of vehicles with a view to assessing their suitability to allow rear access for passengers and it is not considered appropriate to include the two vehicle models suggested.
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## **3. Equality and Diversity**

### **3.1 Fairer Scotland Duty**

The Fairer Scotland Duty is not applicable.

### **3.2 Equality Impact Assessment**

The Equality Impact Assessment can be accessed here - <https://www.northlanarkshire.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=24130&p=0>.

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## **4. Implications**

### **4.1 Financial Impact**

There will be no significant financial impact to the Council, although resources will be required to implement the proposed changes to be made.

### **4.2 HR/Policy/Legislative Impact**

If the recommendations are approved, the Council's policy in relation to the requirements for vehicle specifications will change.

### **4.3 Environmental Impact**

The proposal to allow electric vehicles to be included in the specification for both taxi and private hire cars has the potential to benefit the environment.

### **4.4 Risk Impact**

None.

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**5. Measures of success**

5.1 Approving economic opportunities outcomes.

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**6. Supporting documents**

6.1 The proposed taxi specification numbered as Appendix 1.

6.2 The proposed private hire car specification numbered as Appendix 2.

A handwritten signature in grey ink, appearing to read 'C. C. C.', is positioned below the list of supporting documents.

**Head of Legal and Democratic Solutions**

## PROPOSED TAXI SPECIFICATION

### INTRODUCTION

Vehicles operated under TAXI OPERATORS Licences issued by North Lanarkshire Council must comply with the undernoted specification and must be maintained in accordance with this specification throughout the currency of the Taxi Operators Licence.

#### **Note for information**

Please note that this specification sets *minimum* standards that Taxis must meet. However, even if a vehicle meets these standards, the Council will still assess whether the vehicle is suitable overall for use as a Taxi. The Council will give general consideration to the type, size and design of the vehicle.

Any new models will be subject to inspection by North Lanarkshire Council.

**If you are considering a vehicle of a type not already licensed by the council (this includes new models of existing approved vehicles) it is in your interest to contact the Council as to the suitability of the vehicle PRIOR to making a purchase. Tel: 01698 506241**

Please ensure that the vehicle presented for test meets the minimum requirements, as any vehicle that does not meet the standards will be rejected.

## PROPOSED TAXI SPECIFICATION FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE

### Council approved wheelchair accessible vehicles permitted to operate in the North, Central and South Areas:-

#### Purpose Built Vehicles:

- (1) Metrocab
- (2) LTI – TX1
- (3) LTI – TX2
- (4) LTI – TX4
- (5) LEVC TX

#### Side Access Purpose Adapted Vehicles:

- (6) Peugeot Euro 7
- (7) Peugeot E7 ( including Series 2 )
- (8) Peugeot Eurotaxi
- (9) Peugeot Expert Teepee – Eurotaxi
- (10) Fiat TW200
- (11) Fiat Scudo Urban 7 Eurocab ( Jubilee)
- (12) Mercedes Vito 111 CDI
- (13) Citroen Eurotaxi
- (14) Ford Transit Tourneo Custom

#### Rear Access Purpose Adapted Vehicles:

- (15) Peugeot Premier (rear door wheelchair entry)- Allied Vehicles
- (16) VW Kudos (rear door wheelchair entry) – Allied vehicles

#### All vehicles to have Whole Vehicle European Type Approval

**PLEASE NOTE THAT PURPOSE BUILT/PURPOSE ADAPTED VEHICLES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED TO CARRY A MAXIMUM OF SIX PASSENGERS WHO MUST BE IN THE REAR OF THE VEHICLE - NO PASSENGER TO BE SEATED TO THE LEFT OF THE DRIVER (THIS REQUIREMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO THE 2 REAR ACCESS PURPOSE ADAPTED VEHICLES LISTED). ALL PURPOSE BUILT/PURPOSE ADAPTED VEHICLES SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE HEATING AND LIGHTING IN**

**THE REAR OR THE VEHICLE FOR PASSENGER COMFORT. VEHICLES MUST BE FITTED WITH MOTION SENSOR LOCKS.**

**Occupied wheelchairs may only be transported facing forward or rearwards. The wheelchair must be secured independently of the occupant. The wheelchair occupant must be secured completely independently of the wheelchair.**

### **Age Limits for Purpose Built Vehicles:**

- (1) Vehicles shall be no more than 12 years old calculated from date of first registration to date of grant of a licence, date of renewal of licence or date of substitution of vehicle. **Vehicles over 12 years will be subject to twice yearly inspection.**

**This age limit is in effect from 5 February 2015**

### **Age Limits for Purpose Adapted Vehicles:**

- (2) Vehicles shall be no more than 9 years old calculated from date of first registration to date of grant of a licence, date of renewal of a licence or date of substitution of vehicle. **Vehicles over 9 years will be subject to twice yearly inspections.**

**This age limit is in effect from 5 February 2015**

**Non-wheelchair accessible vehicle permitted to trade in the South and Central Areas must comply with the undernoted:**

### **Age Limits for non-wheelchair accessible vehicles:**

- (3) Vehicles shall be no more than 5 years old calculated from date of first registration to date of grant of a licence, date of renewal of a licence or date of substitution of a vehicle.

**This age limit is in effect from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2006**

- (a) shall have a minimum engine size of 1500 cc with a minimum of 60kw / 80bhp for petrol engines, turbo diesel engines, and non turbo diesel engines. Electric vehicles and hybrids must have a minimum of 60kw / 80bhp;
- (b) shall have fitted a swivel seat approved by the Council by first inspection and maintained thereafter;
- (c) shall have a minimum seating capacity for 4 adult passengers and a maximum seating capacity of 6 adult passengers ( both excluding the driver );
- (d) shall allow for a minimum seating width of 410 mm per seat per passenger or 1230 mm overall, measured in accordance with the provisions of the Road Vehicles ( Registration and Licensing ) Regulations 2002 and any amendment thereof;
- (e) shall have a minimum distance between front and rear seats of 203mm;
- (f) shall have a minimum luggage capacity of 11.4 cubic feet (323 litres );
- (g) shall be a production line 4/5 door right hand drive suitable saloon, estate or hatchback vehicle ( if vehicle is a 5 door hatchback type the fixed rigid rear parcel shelf must remain in position during the duration of the hire ) All seats must be forward facing;
- (h) shall have an approved fare structure card displayed in a visible position;
- (i) shall have a sealed meter securely fixed and wired through the taxi sign. The sign must not be operated through a separate switch.
- (j) shall not have its vehicle specification altered from manufacturer's equipment except in relation to installation of a swivel seat;
- (k) shall be White in colour for South Area and Black in colour for Central Area – vehicle re-sprays are permitted to a standard solely determined by the Council. All visible parts must be re-sprayed (includes door sills and door checks );
- (l) shall be provided with seating of uniform colour and material except in relation to the installation of a swivel seat;
- (m) shall be provided with carpets of uniform colour and material;
- (n) shall have external mirrors fitted to its nearside and offside;
- (o) shall have a full width taxi sign minimum 36 inches of a specification approved by the Council fixed securely to its roof with the cable securely clipped – the sign must not show red at the front or white at the back;

- (p) shall be fitted with a properly maintained suitable fire extinguisher with either a manufacturer's date or an expiry date ( minimum 0.5kg – maximum 1kg dry powder or foam) held in an appropriate fastener and in an approved position having regard to passenger safety and ease of access thereto;
- (q) shall carry a properly maintained and suitable first aid kit (1 – 10 people) with either a manufacturer's date or expiry date
- (r) shall comply with current legislation regards fitting of surveillance equipment/display screens, fixed mobile telephone & charging equipment/points can only be fitted in accordance with MOT regulations in regards to obstructing the driver's line of vision;
- (s) Taxi plates should be fitted to the vehicle at the rearmost position of the vehicle next to the registration plate or on the rear bumper. Taxi plates **must not** be fitted or placed in the rear window.

### **Dual Fuel Conversion**

The Council has approved in principal dual petrol and liquid gas fuel systems. Approval for such vehicles will be granted when the vehicle meets all other vehicle specifications and when the conversion has been undertaken by an approved Company. For details of approved contractors contact the Licensing Section, Civic Centre, Motherwell.

# PROPOSED PRIVATE HIRE SPECIFICATION

## INTRODUCTION

Vehicles operated under Private Hire Car Licences issued by North Lanarkshire Council must comply with the undernoted specification and must be maintained in accordance with this specification throughout the currency of the Private Hire Car Licence.

### **Note for information**

Please note that this specification sets *minimum* standards that Private Hire Cars must meet. However, even if a vehicle meets these standards, the Council will still assess whether the vehicle is suitable overall for use as a Private Hire Car. The Council will give general consideration to the type, size and design of the vehicle.

Any new models will be subject to inspection by North Lanarkshire Council.

**If you are considering a vehicle of a type not already licensed by the council (this includes new models of existing approved vehicles) it is in your interest to contact the Council as to the suitability of the vehicle PRIOR to making a purchase. Tel: 01698 506241**

Please ensure that the vehicle presented for test meets the minimum requirements, as any vehicle that does not meet the standards will be rejected.

## PROPOSED PRIVATE HIRE CAR VEHICLE SPECIFICATION FOR NORTH LANARKSHIRE COUNCIL

Vehicles operated under private hire car licences issued by North Lanarkshire Council must comply with the undernoted specification and must be maintained in accordance with this specification throughout the currency of the private hire car licence.

### **Wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs)**

- (1) Peugeot Eurobus (side door wheelchair entry) – Allied Vehicles
- (2) Peugeot Premier (rear door wheelchair entry)- Allied Vehicles
- (3) VW Kudos (rear door wheelchair entry) – Allied vehicles

### **All vehicles to have Whole Vehicle European Type Approval**

### **Age Limits for Purpose Adapted Vehicles**

Vehicles shall be no more than 9 years old calculated from date of first registration to date of grant of a licence, date of renewal of a licence or date of substitution of vehicle.

**Vehicles over 9 years will be subject to twice yearly  
Inspection.**

**This age limit is in effect from 5 February 2015**

### **Non-wheelchair accessible vehicles permitted to trade must comply with the undernoted:**

### **Age Limits for non-wheelchair accessible vehicles:**

Vehicles shall be no more than 5 years old calculated from date of first registration to date of grant of a licence, date of renewal of a licence or date of substitution of a vehicle.

**This age limit is in effect from 13<sup>th</sup> January 2005**

- (a) shall have a minimum engine size of 1500 cc with a minimum of 60Kw / 80bhp for petrol engines, turbo diesel engines, and non turbo diesel engines. Electric vehicles and hybrids must have a minimum of 60kw / 80bhp
- (b) shall be a production line 4/5 door right hand drive suitable saloon, estate or hatchback vehicle ( if vehicle is a 5 door hatchback type the fixed rigid rear parcel shelf must remain in position during

- the duration of the hire ), if not such a vehicle, a vehicle falling within paragraph (c) below. All seats must be forward facing;
- (c) if it is a multi-person vehicle (MPV) or people carrier type vehicle a maximum of 6 passengers will be permitted ( that is for avoidance of doubt, excluding the driver ). It should be noted that a vehicle will be classed by the Council for the purpose of this specification as an MPV or people carrier, regardless of any manufacturer description, if it has three rows ( including front driver's row ) of individual seats for passengers. All seats must be forward facing;
  - (d) shall have a minimum seating capacity for 4 adult passengers and a maximum seating capacity of 6 adult passengers ( both excluding the driver);
  - (e) shall allow for a minimum seating width of 410 mm per seat per passenger or 1230 mm overall, measured in accordance with the provisions of the Road Vehicles ( Registration and Licensing ) Regulations 2002 and any amendment thereof;
  - (f) shall have a minimum distance between front and rear seats of 203mm;
  - (g) shall have a minimum luggage capacity of 11.4 cubic feet (323 litres ). Where the vehicle is not designated for luggage to be kept separate from the passenger compartment in a boot covered by a rigid fixed rear parcel shelf, then the vehicle must be fitted with a manufacturer approved load partition/restraint that can be fixed securely to the interior of the vehicle to form a secure partition between luggage space and passengers;
  - (h) shall not have its vehicle specification altered from manufacturer's equipment. There are limited exceptions to this condition. Please contact the Council on the numbers provided for further information;
  - (i) shall remain painted in the original manufacturers colours unless re-sprayed to a standard to be solely determined by the Council. All visible parts must be re-sprayed (including door sills and door Checks ) **In the South Licensing Area the vehicle must not be white. In the Central Licensing Area the vehicle must not be black.**
  - (j) shall be provided with seating of uniform colour and material;
  - (k) shall be provided with carpets of uniform colour and material;
  - (l) shall have external mirrors fitted to its nearside and offside;
  - (m) shall be fitted with a properly maintained suitable fire extinguisher with either a manufacturers' date or an expiry date ( minimum 0.5kg – maximum 1.0kg dry powder or foam ) held in an appropriate fastener and in an approved position having regard to passenger

- safety and ease of access thereto;
- (n) shall carry a properly maintained and suitable first aid kit (1 – 10 people) with either a manufacturers' date or expiry date
  - (o) If it is a MPV/People carrier shall have a minimum distance between the seats for legroom of 220 mm.
  - (p) Where a row of seats is available between the front seats and the rear seats (middle row), the middle row must fold and tip on both sides to allow access to the rear row of the seats. Where there is a middle row of seats the rear seats must be able to stow to the side, fold forward or lie flat to provide luggage space.
  - (q) shall comply with current legislation regards fitting of surveillance equipment/display screens. Fixed mobile telephone & charging equipment/points can only be fitted in accordance with MOT regulations in regards to obstructing the driver's line of vision.
  - (r) Private Hire plates should be fitted to the vehicle at the rear most position of the vehicle next to the registration plate or on the rear bumper. Private hire plates **must not** be fitted or placed in the rear window.

### **Dual Fuel Conversion**

The Council has approved in principal dual petrol and liquid gas fuel systems. Approval for such vehicles will be granted when the vehicle meets all other vehicle specifications and when the conversion has been undertaken by an approved Company. For details of approved contractors contact the Licensing Section, Civic Centre, Motherwell.