

Licensing Committee

Front Plates Report

Report of Executive Member for Neighbourhoods

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28th February 2023

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to request approval for revisions to existing standards in relation to vehicle front plates.

Recommendations

That Members:

- 1) Note the report; and

Approve amendments as outlined within the report

Front Plates Report

1. Purpose of the report

1.1. The purpose of the report is to request approval for revisions to existing standards in relation to vehicle front plates.

2. Anti-social behaviour / revised front plates

2.1. Members were provided information relating to anti-social behaviour and trade requests to remove front plates at the last Committee hearing in November 2022. At that time Members were asked to consider a proposal to reduce the size of the front plates currently in use, in order to mitigate some of the ASB shown towards easily identifiable licensed vehicles.

2.2. The Licensing Authority have been working with the trade on issues surrounding anti-social behaviour and associated vehicle attacks. The trade were asked to report matters to Greater Manchester Police and were also asked to feed that information into our online reporting tool to better inform policy decisions going forward, particularly in respect of their requests to remove front plates.

2.3. There is insufficient data to warrant a request for front plates to be removed at this time. It is therefore suggested that a smaller front plate be approved for use. A summary of ASB reports submitted since the facility was put in place in March 2022 is included in the table below

2.4.

Report Date	Incident Date	Location	Details
11/04/2022	09/04/2022	Every Street, Manchester	Stones thrown, windscreen smashed, passengers inside
27/04/2022	14/04/2022	Ripponden Road, Oldham	Rock thrown, damage to bodywork/bonnet
03/08/2022	10/07/2022	New Moston	Two teenagers threw rocks, smashed multiple windows, passengers inside
07/10/2022	07/10/2022	Ashton Road, Oldham	Driving back to Oldham, youths attacked vehicle, no passengers

2.5. The proposed templates for the revised front plates for both private hire and hackney carriage vehicles are attached at Appendix 10.1 to this report.



2.6. Members raised concerns over the impact of reducing the size of the plates on visually impaired vehicles users. As a result of these concerns an Initial Assessment was completed to ascertain whether an Equality Impact Assessment was required, with the assistance of the Corporate Policy Lead Officer. This assessment is attached at Appendix 10.2. The outcome of this assessment was that an EIA was not required as the proposal was unlikely to disproportionately affect any groups. In addition to this, the requirements will still meet the GM Minimum Licensing Standards which already has a GM wide Equality Impact Assessment in place.

2.7. In addition to the EIA at Appendix 10.3, a copy of the existing and reduced text size as confirmed by the plate supplier is attached.

3. Legal Services Comments

3.1. Under section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council may attach such conditions to the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence as the Council considers to be reasonably necessary, including conditions requiring or prohibiting the display of signs on or from the vehicle to which the licence relates. Under section 48 of the Act, the Council is required to issue a plate for every private hire vehicle it licences which must be exhibited on the vehicle in such a way as the Council requires. There is no requirement to display plates on both the front and rear of vehicles, but the Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance 2010 states that: "The licence plate is a helpful indicator of licensed status and, as such, it helps identification if licence plates are displayed on the front as well as the rear of vehicles." (A. Evans)

4. Co-operative Agenda

4.1. The licensing process is in place not only to protect the public but also to support and where necessary regulate businesses within the Borough.

5. Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

5.1. None

6. Equality, Community Cohesion & Crime Implications

6.1. Equality impact assessment, initial assessment, carried out with the Policy Lead.

7. Key Decision

7.1. No

8. Key Decision Reference

8.1. N/A

9. Background Papers

9.1. None

10. Appendices

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- 10.1. Proposed front plates
 - 10.2. Equality Impact Assessment
 - 10.3. Confirmation of plate sizes