

DECISION ITEM

REPORT OF	MEETING	DATE	ITEM NO
RESOURCES DIRECTORATE	PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE	8 JULY 2020	4
REQUEST FOR DISPENSATION FROM DISPLAYING PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE SIGNAGE			

PUBLIC ITEM

This item is for consideration in the public part of the meeting.

SUMMARY

A request has been received from a prospective Private Hire Operator seeking dispensation from displaying the required private hire vehicle signage.

The signage requirements set within the Borough are for the protection of the public with regards to the ease of recognising private hire vehicles. However, it is understood that the vehicles for which the dispensation is sought are to operate in conjunction the applicant's main business.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the Committee considers the report and determines the request.

SUMMARY OF PREVIOUS DECISIONS

There are no previous decisions relating to this applicant.

Dispensation has been issued previously to operators which fall within the Policy.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Spending your money in the most efficient way to achieve excellent services (Value for Money)	√
Delivering the services that customers expect of an excellent council (Clean and Green)	√
Working with all partners (Vibrant Economy)	√
To make sure Fylde continues to be one of the most desirable places to live (A Great Place to Live)	√
Promoting Fylde as a great destination to visit (A Great Place to Visit)	√

REPORT

1. Private Hire vehicles are currently required to display the Fylde Borough Council door stickers and identity plates to the front and rear of the vehicle. However, S75 (3) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, does provide Local Authorities with the discretion to provide dispensation from displaying signage, in writing.

2. Dispensation is currently granted to some Private Hire Operators in Fylde Borough involved in the Chauffeur Business. The proprietors of vehicles are still required to display a disc confirming the vehicle to be licensed as a Private Hire vehicle, whilst all signage such as the identity plates and door signs must be conveyed in the boot of the vehicle.

3. A formal request has been received from the Travel Style Group for dispensation from displaying the required signage upon two vehicles he intends to licence as private hire vehicles as part of his business. At the time of writing, the vehicles have not been purchased but it is understood, the applicant is considering purchasing Mercedes E Class and V class vehicles.

4. The applicants state states,

Travel Style Group is a new business, the vision of a successful multi business owner, based in the Fylde, with a track record of delivering high levels of customer service, who values and delivers high service standards.

Travel Style Group will offer travel services to both businesses and individuals, who require a company that will take care of all of their travel requirements, for both business and pleasure.

It is intended that to provide the enhanced level of service our customers expect, we will provide an executive private hire / chauffeur service to ensure that any journey starts and finishes in style.

As the business is in the early stages of development, it makes sense to tap into the transport requirements of the group companies, consisting of BIU St Annes, BPG Lytham, Corebenyah Lytham, and a number of other companies within the group. We intend to offer transport services for business travel and visitors to our sites, as well as offering our services to members of staff for any special occasions / holiday airport transfers etc.

Once the business is up and running, we will be offering our executive private hire and chauffeur services to other corporate organisations in the Fylde coast area. We will be offering our services to private individuals for special occasion transport, such as airport transfers, date nights etc and sporting events etc. Our services will be provided on a pre booked basis.

We are currently in the process of developing our website, to provide customers with a window to our services and to allow them to make bookings and receive confirmations etc.

Also we are working on building in back office systems to manage accounts and admin functions etc.

We are working on including a fleet management facility to manage the compliance of both cars and drivers, to include car test dates, service reminders, insurance renewal dates. And such things as driver details, record driver licence checks etc. Reminders for drivers to undertake daily checks of their vehicle, with an acknowledgement tick box.

Initially we will be employing directly employed drivers driving our own company cars, however as the business grows we will consider owner drivers, providing they meet the standards we set ourselves, such as executive type cars and uniformed drivers to include, suit shirt and tie.

5. The [Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy](#) refers to dispensation requests at Appendix F, and comments:

All applications for dispensation from the requirements to display external vehicle licence plates will be considered by the Public Protection Committee who will take account of the individual circumstances of the case. Dispensations are unlikely to be granted unless the applicant can satisfy the committee that their vehicle(s) are of such a type and age that they would be appropriate for executive travel and that such work represented at least 80% of their total business (verified by operator records in the case of existing vehicles). Such vehicles must display a windscreen badge, provided by the council. These badges will show the details of the vehicle as they appear on the plate. Vehicle licence plates and door signs will be provided and must be carried in the boot of the vehicle at all times. Vehicles given this exemption will normally be limousines, executive type cars, such as top range Mercedes, BMW's etc.

6. As such, the matter is referred to the Public Protection Committee so that consideration may be given to the request.

7. The applicant has been invited to attend the meeting.

IMPLICATIONS	
Finance	There are no financial implications arising directly from the report.
Legal	<p>The requirement to display a licence plate is imposed in the interests of public safety and is intended to enable anybody picked up by a private hire vehicle to verify that the vehicle is a genuine licensed PHV. A further reason for plates being required is to enable a passenger or other member of the public to identify the vehicle in the event of an incident or cause for complaint. Allowing vehicles to operate without complying with the normal requirements to display a plate compromises these protections.</p> <p>In summary, members should, in considering whether to grant the dispensation, satisfy themselves that the lowering of the level of protection offered to the public is offset by some advantage offered by allowing the requests. None has been identified in the report, but no doubt the applicants will be able to provide more information to support their request.</p>
Community Safety	No implications arising directly from the report.
Human Rights and Equalities	No implications arising directly from the report.
Sustainability and Environmental Impact	No implications arising directly from the report.
Health & Safety and Risk Management	No implications arising directly from the report.

LEAD AUTHOR	CONTACT DETAILS	DATE
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BACKGROUND PAPERS		
Name of document	Date	Where available for inspection
Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy	November 2017	http://www.fylde.gov.uk/assets/files/11/Hackney-Carriage-and-Private-Hire-Licensing-Policy.pdf

Attached documents

Appendix 1 – Formal request with supporting documentation