

REPORT: Regulatory Committee

DATE: 5 October 2016

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Executive Travel

WARDS: Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Executive Travel NW Limited of 24 Deacon Road, Widnes provide vehicles and drivers to the executive market and are required to licence their vehicles as Private Hire Vehicles and their drivers as Restricted Single Status Drivers (SSD)

Executive Travel NW Limited is requesting an exemption for all of their licensed vehicles from having to display the Council issued door signs.

2. RECOMMENDED: That the Committee considers the Company's request.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Executive Travel NW Ltd has been operating within Halton for over 25 years. The current owner, Mr Coogan has held a private hire operator's licence issued by the Council since 4th July 2012.
- 3.2 One of the main differences between Executive Travel NW Ltd and the traditional private hire trade is that they own almost all of their vehicles and employ licensed drivers.
- 3.3 Each vehicle is fitted with a tracking system linked to the main office where they are constantly tracked by the transport managers / controllers in order to monitor that the drivers are collecting at the correct points, at the correct times and that the drivers are where they should be.
- 3.4 On occasions when collecting clients from a Hotel or Restaurant, in order to avoid any confusion, the clients are given the vehicles registration number to aid location.

3.5 The Private Hire Operators Licence granted to Executive Travel N W Limited has two special conditions attached to it namely –

- The holder shall not (while employing any person on their system who holds a restricted driver licence) accept any private hire bookings other than out of Borough journeys (such as airport runs) booked at least 24 hours in advance.
- The holder shall be deemed to be employing a person or persons on their system until the holder has given the Council not less than five days' notice in writing that the holder no longer employs such person or persons

3.6 The following local authorities allow an exemption from door signs where certain criteria are met:

- Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Kirklees, Knowsley, Liverpool, Salford, Sefton, St Helens, Warrington, West Lancashire, Wigan.

Only Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council has no policy on exempting any form of the private hire trade from displaying door signs.

4 PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE CONDITIONS

4.1 Condition 6. Display of items supplied by the Council

The following items will be supplied by the Council and shall be permanently displayed on the vehicle in an approved manner:

- licence plates (front and rear)
- an interior licence number plate
- a sign on adhesive plastic of a size colour design and wording approved by the Council shall be required to be positioned on both front doors indicating that the vehicle is a licensed Private Hire Vehicle
- On 'Chauffeur type' vehicles a 'gold plate' may be fitted following consultation with and permission from the Council. No advertisement whatsoever will be permitted on these vehicles.

5. ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

5.1 As previously advised the Council allows Chauffeur type Private Hire vehicles to be fitted with a gold plate and no door stickers are required.

5.2 Executive Travel NW Limited currently have two licensed vehicles issued with gold plates and six licensed vehicles which comply with the

Councils criteria for Private Hire Vehicles in that they are required to display front, rear and internal plates and door stickers.

- 5.3 The primary reasons for issuing door stickers are for public safety. They also identify the vehicle to members of the public that the vehicle is licensed by the Council and therefore to provide reassurance that the vehicle is roadworthy and the driver is fit and proper. A further reason is to assist in prevent/discourage touting and highlight to the public that should they enter a private hire vehicle without pre-booking they would not be insured for the journey.
- 5.4 The Committee should determine whether the class of vehicle is relevant to its determination or how the vehicle is used (or a mixture of both).
- 5.5 The reasons given by Executive Travel NW Limited in support of their application are attached at appendix A.

6. OPTIONS

- 6.1 The options available to the Committee are:
 - Approve the request for all private hire vehicles operated by Executive Travel NW Limited to be exempted from bullet point 3 of private hire vehicle condition 6 which requires a Council approved sign to be fitted on both front doors.
 - Grant the exemption but limited to particular classes of vehicle and/or use of the vehicle.
 - Refuse the request.

7. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The application is for exemption to policy for specific reasons and not for a policy change. All such applications are treated on their merits.

8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications.

9 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

9.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

9.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A

9.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

9.4 A Safer Halton

None

9.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

10 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

11 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

12 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Application Documents	Legal Services	Nick Wheeler/ Kay Cleary