

REPORT: Regulatory Committee
DATE: 20 March 2006
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Taxi licensing matter
WARDS: Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

VIP Logistics Limited trading as Elite North West Chauffeur Service has recently set up in Manor Park Runcorn. The company operate solely as a "Chauffeur Service basis" and are required to licence their vehicles as Private Hire Vehicles. Although they have not yet made any application to the Council, Elite North West requested that they be permitted to use black cars for the service they provide. In Halton the conditions require that Private Hire Vehicles should be any colour other than black.

2. RECOMMENDED

That the Committee considers whether the company's black vehicles can be licensed as Private Hire Vehicles.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1** Elite North West Chauffeur Services have moved their place of business from Chester who do not enforce the licensing requirements for the chauffeur type vehicles. The company are making efforts to comply with the Councils Licensing requests regarding the licensing of drivers vehicles and operator.
- 3.2** The Council are advised that the Company run a large fleet of vehicles which specifically contracts to businesses providing chauffeurs and vehicles to industry in the borough and do not use their vehicles in the general Private Hire/Hackney Carriage market.
- 3.3** The vehicles are all under two years of age. With the exception of two Jaguar Sovereigns (value approx £50,000 per vehicle) the fleet comprises of Audit A8 cars (value between £50,000 and £70,000 per vehicle)
- 3.4** It is foreseen that eventually the fleet of vehicles will number approximately 30 cars.

- 3.5 The request to the committee is that the company be permitted to use black cars for the service they provide.
- 3.6 The Council's Private Hire Vehicle conditions require all vehicles to be painted any colour **other than** manufacturer's black
- 3.7 To operate legally within the borough the company requires properly licensed drivers and vehicles together with an operator's licence none are in place or have been applied for. However the preconditions for driver's licence applications are in the process of being complied with.
- 3.8 The applicant has been invited to the meeting and will attend with their Legal representative.

4 REASONS FOR CURRENT CONDITIONS

- 4.1 The reason for the Council's criteria on the colour of private hire vehicles is to distinguish between Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Saloon/Estate/Multipurpose/Multiseat vehicles. Purpose built Hackney carriage vehicles which are approved by the Public Carriage Office can be painted in any manufacturer's colour. The reason for this is that the shape of these vehicles distinguishes them as only being Hackney Carriage.
- 4.2 In addition to the colour difference all Hackney carriage vehicles must be fitted with permanent mounting brackets for the front and rear plates together with a roof sign and mounting and an approved 'For Hire' sign. Private Hire vehicles must **not** be fitted with any roof sign or mounting nor fitted with a 'For Hire' sign

5 ISSUES FOR THE COMMITTEE TO CONSIDER

- 5.1 The question arises if there would be confusion by the general public if private hire vehicles were painted the same colour as Hackney Carriage Vehicle saloon/estate/MPV/MSV vehicles.
- 5.2 If this approval were given how would the Council deal with any other requests for change of colour criteria for private hire vehicles?
- 5.3 The Council understands that Elite North West Chauffeur Services has ordered new vehicles painted in the company image of black. Did the Company order the vehicles prior to the move to the Halton area?
- 5.4 If the request were not approved would Elite North West Chauffeur Services leave the Halton area rather than repaint the vehicles.

5.5 Members might also consider the local economy and local employment. It is envisaged that the company will licence approximately 30 vehicles and 30 drivers though it is not known if the drivers would be from this borough.

5.6 Since becoming aware the requirement for their vehicles to be licensed it is understood that the company are only accepting work on the basis of exclusive contracts which would be compliant with the Local government (Miscellaneous Provisions) act 1976

6 OPTIONS

6.1 The options available to the Committee are:

- Approve the request for black private hire vehicles or
- Approve the application when received for a limited period of time during which the vehicles must be painted a different colour or
- Refuse the request (this implies taking enforcement action)

7 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

8 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Application Documents	Legal Services	John Tully/Kay Cleary

NAME OF BOARD: Regulatory Committee

DATE OF MEETING: 20 March 2006

REPORT TITLE: Taxi Licensing Matter

AUTHOR: Kay Cleary/John Tully

STANDARDS SECTIONS – CHECKLIST

All reports must be submitted together with the following checklist **fully completed**

	Yes	No
Resource Implications The financial, manpower and land (buying or selling) considerations should be clearly detailed including any corporate implications of following the recommended course of action.	N/a	
Social Inclusion Implications Any implications relating to social inclusion/anti-poverty should be highlighted.	N/a	
Sustainability Checklist Any implications that affect the sustainability themes of economy, society and the community and the environment should be included.	N/a	
Best Value Any Best Value implications should be included.	N/a	
Legal Implications Any legal implications should be included.	Yes	
Crime and Disorder Issues Any crime and disorder implications should be included.	Yes	

Please review these potential effects, within the context set out overleaf, to compose your summary assessment

Summary assessment of Implications: *This wording will appear in the Board report.*

If the checklist is not submitted or incomplete the report will not go forward onto the Agenda and will be returned to the author.

