

WARDS
None

Licensing of New Seat Arrangement
Ford Galaxy and Similar Models

1. Purpose
 - 1.1 To provide members with the details of these specific models of vehicle which are currently not permitted within the existing licensing conditions.
 - 1.2 For members to consider the approval of the addition of these vehicles with the existing seating arrangements to the licensed fleet.
2. Background
 - 2.1 Members will be aware that in St. Helens, a private hire vehicle with seating which does not have direct access to an access/egress door, is currently not permitted.
 - 2.2 Previously those who wished to purchase a vehicle of this type were instructed to revise the seating arrangements or not to licence the vehicle to its full capacity.
 - 2.3 However, a number of factors have now changed the landscape as to how these vehicles operate and carry passengers, as explained below.
3. Findings
 - 3.1 Licensing have received a request from Mr Shaun Marnell who currently provides new vehicles to licensed drivers, on a range of terms.
 - 3.2 Mr Marnell is seeking permission from the Committee to add the following vehicle to the licensed fleet, with the existing seating arrangement.

'Ford Galaxy and similar models with additional rear seating providing they are produced to manufacturers specifications'.
 - 3.3 The vehicles are fitted with two additional seats in the rear of the vehicle, which can only be accessed by the movement of the existing seats. This arrangement is shown in the photographs below.
 - 3.4 The vehicles are produced to manufacturers specifications and are requested to be licensed for up to 8 seats.
 - 3.5 As indicated, previously the Licensing Authority had sought to have the seating arrangement changed to provide better access to doors, however it is considered that this may no longer be a safe option as this would be imposing a seating arrangement which is not within the manufacturers specification.

- 3.6 More and more new vehicles are now being produced to these specifications as the industry evolves and as such, Licensing Authorities are now considering their licensing arrangements in relation to these vehicles.
- 3.7 As these are brand new vehicles at a reasonably affordable price, they are considered to by officers to be a viable option to add to the licensed fleet.
- 3.8 The photograph below depicts the interior of the new vehicles.



4. Proposal

- 4.1 It is proposed that the Ford Galaxy and similar models produced to manufacturers specifications as new are suitable to be added to the licensed fleet.
- 4.2 It is therefore proposed that proprietors of the Ford Galaxy and similar models be permitted to maintain their existing seating arrangement and be licensed to a capacity of 6, 7 or 8 seats, consistent with the manufacturers specification.
- 4.3 These vehicles would need to have appropriate signage clearly displayed within the vehicle which would indicate to those passengers seated in the rear of the vehicle the access/egress arrangements. This signage will be specified and approved by the Licensing Authority.
- 4.4 If members decide to approve the above proposal, this would require an amendment to the existing Licensing Policy.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1 It is considered by officers that the licensing of these new models to the fleet would improve the quality of licensed vehicles and options for those who wish to acquire newer models for licencing.
- 5.2 Whilst it is acknowledged that there may be safety concerns with the licensing of seating which does not have direct access or egress via a door, it is also considered that altering the manufacturers specification of a vehicle to change a seating arrangement could also affect the safety of the vehicle.

6. Financial Implications

- 6.1 There are no financial implications.

7. Anti-Poverty Implications

7.1 Nil.

8. Recommendations

The Committee is requested to:

8.1 Consider permitting the addition of the Ford Galaxy and similar models to the licensed fleet with the existing seating arrangements, subject to appropriate approved signage being provided by the vehicle proprietor.

8.2 If members decide to approve the addition of the vehicles as outlined in point 8.1, members are requested to permit the Licensing Manager to amend the licence conditions to reflect this.

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