

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE CONSULTATIVE  
PANEL

12 JANUARY 2000

This report may be of interest to: All Members

**PROVISION OF HIRE DOOR SIGNS FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES**

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**1. Purpose**

- 1.1 To seek the Panel's approval to introduce door signs for Private Hire Vehicles that clearly set out the procedure for booking and outline the implications should these procedures not be adhered to.

**2. Summary**

- 2.1 Quite distinct and separate sets of criteria exist determining how Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Vehicles can accept bookings. These are determined, in most part, by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847. Whilst Hackney Carriages can be approached directly by customers on ranks or be hailed, Private Hire Vehicles need to have been booked in advance through the operator. There is some concern at present that the different criteria are not readily apparent and the introduction of signs on Private Hire Vehicles that detail such criteria will heighten public awareness.

**3. Recommendations**

- 3.1 That the Panel approves the introduction of door signs. Provision for their introduction is covered within existing terms and conditions which instruct the proprietor to ensure vehicle drivers display any sign or notice relating to Private Hire Vehicles which the Council may from time to time require. **Annex A** provides an example from another authority albeit the recommendation is that the MK sign would clearly state that the booking should be made through the operator.

## **4. Background**

- 4.1 There are currently in excess of 400 Private Hire vehicles and 78 Hackney Carriage vehicles operating in Milton Keynes and the two sectors service the customer by quite separate means as outlined earlier.
- 4.2 A concern in Milton Keynes, as in many authorities, is the issue of Private Hire vehicles who 'Ply for Hire' which means unlawfully accepting fares from customers without a prior booking. Whilst every effort is made through enforcement activity to minimise the practice it is virtually impossible, given the level of resources, to eradicate it completely.
- 4.3 The major concern about this practice is that any passenger making such a booking is not covered by the vehicle's insurance as the driver is only covered to accept prior bookings through an operator. It also creates considerable friction between the two sectors.
- 4.4 The introduction of a clear door sign, preferably on both back doors or at least on the passengers side, should detail:
- How the vehicle should be booked
  - Who it should be booked through
- 4.5 The advantage of its introduction would be twofold. It would increase customer awareness on the rules governing the trade and assist in the enforcement of plying for hire.

## **5. Issues and Choices**

- 5.1 The problem of plying for hire is a national one, not unique to Milton Keynes. It does have to be taken seriously because of the issues identified earlier. Recruiting more enforcement staff is costly and will not guarantee solving the problem. The option of utilising door signs is relatively inexpensive and does increase customer awareness.

## **6. Implications**

### 6.1 Environmental

There are no environmental implications

### 6.2 Equalities

There are no equalities implications

### 6.3 Financial

There will be an initial cost of £650 for purchasing the signs and an annual on going cost of £100. This can be contained within the existing supplies and services budget.

### 6.4 Legal

Clause three of Private Hire Vehicle Licence Condition enables the Council to require signs to be demonstrated which the authority may from time to time require (**Annex B**).

6.5 Staff and Accommodation

There are no staffing or accommodation implications

**7. Conclusions**

7.1 Milton Keynes, in keeping with many authorities have concerns regarding Private Hire Vehicles plying for hire. The introduction of appropriately worded signs will acts as a low cost deterrent to this activity.

7.2 It will also provide information to potential customers who may be unaware of the distinction between the sectors and may be undertaking an unlawful and uninsured journey

Background Papers: Private Hire Vehicle Licence - Conditions