

PUBLIC PROTECTION COMMITTEE: 10 May 2011

Report of the Operational Manager (Licensing and Strategic Services)

**APPLICATION FOR THE LICENSING OF AN ADDITIONAL FRONT SEAT IN
A PEUGEOT EUROBUS**

1. Background

- 1.1 An application has been made by Mr J Singh for the approval of the additional front seat in the Peugeot Eurobus SW+ he wishes to licence. This would increase the licensed seat number from 7 to 8 seats.
- 1.2 At present Cardiff Council's Taxi Licensing Policy Statement prohibits more than one passenger in the front seat of a minibus/MPV style vehicle.
- 1.3 This report is to provide details of the application to enable the application to be considered by Committee.

2. Details.

- 2.1 The Peugeot Eurobus is an MPV style vehicle that was approved for use as a purpose-built Hackney Carriage by Committee in November 2007, for a maximum of 7 passengers; this includes 1 passenger travelling in the front of the vehicle.
- 2.2 Mr Singh currently drives a Peugeot E7 and states that the current seating restriction of 7 seats in his E7 vehicle has meant that he sometimes has to turn away group bookings and customers have to book 2 individual taxis.
- 2.3 Mr Singh is now purchasing a Peugeot Eurobus with a front bench seat capable of carrying 2 passengers, which in total could carry 8 passengers. By having 8 licensed passenger seats, Mr Singh feels that he would be able to provide a better service to groups of passengers.

3. Considerations

- 3.1 In April 2002 the Licensing & Public Protection Committee clarified the situation with regards to licensed seating arrangements in minibus/MPV vehicles. It was concluded that in calculating passenger capacity only one seat in the front row should be utilised for the conveyance of members of the public, so as to ensure

the safety and comfort of both the public and the driver. The Cardiff Council Taxi Licensing Policy Statement was amended to reflect this decision.

- 3.2 The addition of a bench seat/double seat in the front of the taxi would result in one of the passengers being in very close proximity to the driver. This presents possible safety risks for the driver, especially if there is an altercation between the front seat passengers.
- 3.3 Front bench seats are also narrower than separate seats and it may not be comfortable for 2 passengers to sit in such close proximity to each other, especially if they are strangers. The current policy of the Committee is that rear bench seats must have a width of at least 54 inches, providing each passenger with a seating width of 18 inches. The front bench seat in a Eurobus is 31.5 inches, provide each passenger with a seating width of only 15.8 inches.
- 3.3 Mr Singh has made reference in his application to the fact that the neighbouring Local Authorities of Bridgend, Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan allow 2 front seats in a minibus/MPV vehicle to be licensed. This is correct.

3. **Achievability**

This report contains no equality personnel or property implications.

4. **Legal Implications**

- 4.1 The Council may impose such licence conditions as it considers reasonably necessary. Safety and comfort are legitimate considerations.

5. **Financial Implications.**

- 5.1 The licensing service is required to be self financing with all expenditure being met from fees and charges which are reviewed annually.

6. **Recommendation**

- 6.1 It is recommended that the application for exemption from the Council Policy be refused as the width of the bench seat does not permit room for two persons in accordance with Council Policy.

Paul Shone

4 April 2011

OPERATIONAL MANAGER (LICENSING AND STRATEGIC SERVICES)

This report has been prepared in accordance with procedures approved by Corporate Managers.

Background Papers: None