

**PUBLIC PROTECTION  
LICENSING COMMITTEE: 2 DECEMBER 2014**

**Report of the Head of Regulatory and Supporting Services**

**APPLICATION FOR THE LICENSING OF AN ADDITIONAL FRONT SEAT IN  
A FORD TOURNEO CUSTOM TITANIUM PEOPLE CARRIER.**

**1. Background**

- 1.1 An application has been made by Mr Wayne O,Connor the managing director of St Davids Cars for the approval of the additional front seat in the Ford Tourneo Custom Titanium. This would increase the licensed seat numbers 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 mini bus/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 Ford Tourneo was approved as a prestige vehicle by Committee in March 2000 and is suitable as a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle to be licensed for 7 passenger seats this includes 1 passenger travelling in the front of the vehicle.
- 2.2 Mr O'Connor currently operates a mixed fleet of saloon vehicles and MPV vehicles and is having to turn down work from customers requesting 8 passenger seat vehicles. Mr O'Connor feels he is at a disadvantage as other private hire operators licensed with neighbouring Authorities such as Bridgend, Swansea and the Vale of Glamorgan allow 2 front passengers in minibus/MPV type vehicles.

**3. Consideration**

- 3.1 In April 2002 the Licensing & Public Protection Committee clarified the situation with regards to licensed seating arrangements in mini bus/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 Ford Tourneo Custom Titanium is 32 inches providing each passenger with a seating width of only 16 inches.

#### **4. Achievability**

This report contains no equality personnel or property implications.

#### **5. Legal Implications**

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

#### **6. Financial Implications.**

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

#### **7. Recommendation**

7.1 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 the Council Policy.

**Dave Holland**  
**HEAD OF REGULATORY AND SUPPORTING SERVICES**

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

Background Papers: None