

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LICENSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITTEE**

**7<sup>TH</sup> JANUARY 2008**

**Request to Change Detail contained within the Hackney Carriage/  
Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Badge**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:</b>	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
<b>CONTACT OFFICER:</b>	Brian Kent – Ext. 2593 Brian.kent@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES</b>	Appendix 1 – Example of Driver's Badge (Existing) Appendix 2 – Example of Driver's Badge (Proposed) Appendix 3 – Letter from Mr R K South Appendix 4 – Petition submitted by Taxi Drivers in support of the application.

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To give further consideration to an application by Mr R K South, Secretary of the Wyre Forest Taxi Drivers' Association that a driver's name should not be required to be displayed on the Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle Driver's Badge issued by the Council.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee is asked to DECIDE:**

- 2.1 **The current format of the Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver's Badge containing the full name of the Licence holder be supported, and no recommendation be made to the Cabinet to change this policy.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 This item was first considered on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> July 2006 when the Committee decided that the current format of the Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Driver's Badge containing the full name of the Licence holder be supported.

- 3.2 No recommendation was made to change the policy, but Officers were directed that a further review should be carried out before 2008.
- 3.3 The application was re-submitted to the Licensing and Environmental Committee on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2007.
- 3.4 During that meeting, Mr South asked the Committee to consider a petition (**Appendix 4**) signed by 98 drivers who supported the proposal that the name should be removed from the Driver's Badge. As a result of the petition:
  - 29 drivers claimed that incidents had occurred due to the name being displayed on the badge.
  - 69 drivers claimed that no incidents had occurred due to the name being displayed on the badge.
- 3.5 Members asked for more time to study the data submitted, and directed that they would consider the matter again on 7<sup>th</sup> January 2008.

#### **4. KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 On the 20<sup>th</sup> April 2006 a personal letter (**Appendix 3**) was received from Mr R K South, Secretary of the Wyre Forest Taxi Drivers' Association who outlined a concern that members of the public could easily trace taxi drivers from the name on their badges, and that as he worked every night his family could well be vulnerable because of this. He had had a threat made against him when someone found out where he lived.
- 4.2 He is of the opinion that the driver number and a photograph should be sufficient to identify him.
- 4.3 The name of each driver is entered on a Public Register that is open for inspection by the public so any driver could be identified quite easily from an enquiry.
- 4.4 Clear identification of a driver is essential for officers to investigate concerns / customer complaint.
- 4.5 No other driver has made representations to the Council indicating a concern over the endorsement of their name.
- 4.6 The driver's badge has always carried the name of the driver since 1976.
- 4.7 The Badges are issued in duplicate by the Council - one copy for the information of the public and worn on the outside of the driver's outer clothing, and the second copy to be displayed in the passenger compartment for the information of the fare paying passenger.

## **5. NEIGHBOURING COUNCILS**

5.1 Neighbouring Councils have the following policy:

Worcester City Council	- No names on badges
Wychavon	- No names on badges
Malvern Hills	- Requires names on badges
Bromsgrove	- Requires names on badges
Redditch	- Requires names on badges
South Shropshire	- Requires names on badges

## **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

6.1 It would cost the Council approximately £390 to change all of the Drivers' Badges for the taxi fleet. This is based on:

- Badge templates purchased at £1.95 each.
- 237 drivers on the taxi fleet.
- Cost of stock in hand / replacement.

## **7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 Hackney Carriage / Private Hire Vehicle Drivers' Licences are granted under the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, and Section 54, of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, which enables the Council to issue a driver's badge in such form as may from time to time be prescribed by them.

7.2 The Council has issued badges from the adoption of the legislation in 1976 and has required:

- Photograph of the holder
- The badge number
- The name of the holder

7.3 A new driver's badge was issued in the Wyre Forest corporate colours in February 2004.

7.4 The style and data content of the badge are to a nationally agreed pattern in the interests of:

- Driver security
- Passenger safety

- Corporate style

7.5 All drivers' licences will expire on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2008.

## 8. OPTIONS

8.1 The options open to Members are:

- To leave the badge design as it is now (**Appendix 1**) with the full name displayed.
- To remove the names from drivers' badges (**Appendix 2**).

## 9. CONCLUSION

9.1 Any change in policy must be common to all drivers without exception.

## 10. CONSULTEES

10.1 Head of Legal and Democratic Services

17.12.07