

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1. Meeting:	Licensing Board
2. Date:	12 December, 2012
3. Title:	Update on amendment to Vehicle Licensing Conditions to allow use of Approved Brackets
4. Directorate:	Neighbourhood and Adult Services

5. Summary:

On 12 August, 2009, members approved an amendment to the vehicle licensing conditions to allow the use of brackets for the attachment of plates to licensed vehicles for a six month trial period.

The purpose of this report is provide members with an update on this amendment.

6. Recommendations:

- (i) That the Licensing Board note the contents of the report.

7. Proposals and Details:

On 10 March, 2009, the Licensing Manager received a written request from Rotherham Private Hire Drivers' Association to allow the use of an approved bracket for plates issued by the Licensing Authority.

The trade had experienced an increase in the number of vehicles being broken into. The request would allow the use of brackets, supplied by the Licensing Office from the supplier of the plates that were being used at the time, in addition to being able to secure the plate in line with the conditions applicable.

The proposal allowed a vehicle licence holder to either secure the plate to the rear of their vehicle with either screw fittings as per the existing conditions or allow the use of an approved bracket issued by the Licensing Office. By using a bracket it allowed the licence holder to remove the plate/bracket when the vehicle was parked up outside their home address thus reducing the likelihood of a vehicle being the subject of a criminal act.

The six month trial went well with only a handful of vehicle licence holders coming forward to purchase the bracket.

Since then the supplier of the plates and brackets has been changed and all plates are issued with a backing plate and bracket. The system allows the plate to be securely fitted to the vehicle using the backing plate only or using the bracket.

A more suitable supplier has been sourced which meets with the targets set by the Council's current Environment and Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan 2011 – 2015.

This policy dictates that with regards to procurement and resources that goods and materials should be purchased that can be disposed of in an environmentally sustainable way. It also dictates that we work in partnership with contractors and suppliers to minimise the environmental impact of their goods and services on the environment.

The plates and brackets we use are completely recyclable and the licence holder is only required to return the yellow part of the plate when it has expired. Any damaged backing plates or brackets are also completely recyclable.

As with all licence conditions licence holders do on occasion fail to comply, and where licensed vehicles are found to not be displaying the vehicle plate in the correct manner then they are required to rectify the situation immediately. An ongoing programme of random checks on vehicles and their drivers ensures that this is closely monitored.

8. Finance:

The cost of the brackets and plates is met from within the current charge of £31.00. This fee is payable on first application/when a vehicle is replaced with a different vehicle/at renewal time or when a replacement plate is required. The bracket is issued alongside these plates in the first instance. Any subsequent replacement brackets are charged at £15.50 which is the cost of the bracket from the manufacturer. If a

replacement plate and a replacement bracket are required then the fee chargeable is £31.00.

9. Risks and Uncertainties:

Using a bracket to secure the licence plate to a vehicle is now common practice throughout the Country with the supplier we use being one of the most popular brands. As a Licensing Authority we are always seeking to improve how licensed vehicles are identified by the public as well as our enforcement officers. Breaches of licence conditions are a common occurrence but rigorous enforcement ensures that this is quickly rectified and licence holders warned about the future conduct. Anyone found to be continually breaching the requirement to display their plate correctly would be brought to Licensing Board for the continued validity of their licence to be considered.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications:

The relevant acts of Parliament which dictate how we licence vehicles states that once a vehicle has been issued with a licence and identification plate it remains a licensed vehicle at all times. The current condition relating to the fixing of plates to the rear of a licensed vehicle are strictly enforced. By amending the condition slightly to allow the use of an approved bracket this allows a vehicle proprietor an element of choice as to whether they use the bracket or not, however only the bracket issued by the Licensing Office will be able to be used and again this is strictly enforced.

11. Background Papers and Consultation:

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