

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Agenda
Item No.

Report of Director of Technical & Environmental Services

to

Licensing Committee

on

14 September 2004

Report prepared by: Allan Evans

Request to operate a Fiat Freedom as a Private Hire Vehicle/Hackney Carriage Environmental Scrutiny Committee – Executive Councillor: Councillor Ann Holland

A Part I Public Agenda Item

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider a request from Mr Lesley Webb to waive the Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Condition below, which would, if granted, permit a Fiat Freedom motor vehicle to be licensed as a Private Hire Vehicle or Hackney Carriage.

Condition 1) b)(iv)

A length of not less than 432 cms (170 inches).

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That Members give consideration to the application by Mr Webb with regard to the vehicle's length.**
- 2.2 **It is not recommended that the application be approved and that Licensing Condition 1) b)(iv) is upheld in this instance.**

3. Background

- 3.1 Conditions were made by the Licensing Committee with regard to age and size of vehicles to ensure that suitable vehicles were used for public and private hire. Licensing Conditions require a vehicle to be not less than 432 cms (170 inches) in length. The Fiat Freedom measures 415.9 cms (163½ inches), which is 8½ inches short of the required length. Please see **Appendix 1**. However, 4¼ inches of this overall length is achieved by a rear step which protrudes from the rear of the vehicle. Without this rear step, the vehicle would be almost 13 inches short of the required length.
- 3.2 If successful, Mr Webb's application could pave the way for numerous vehicles of a similar length which are now considered unsuitable (eg Ford Escort size vehicles) to be put forward for licensing.
- 3.3 In June 2004, a letter was circulated by the Spinal Injuries Association urging Local Authorities not to licence vehicles adapted for use as wheelchair accessible taxis where the passenger is loaded from the rear. Please see **Appendix 2**.
- 3.4 The neighbouring Borough of Castle Point refuses to licence these vehicles due to their lack of length and also being a rear loading vehicle. Following the letter from the Spinal Injuries Association, Castle Point has made a condition that all wheelchair accessible vehicles must be side door loading on the grounds of safety. Please see **Appendix 3**.

4. Proposal

4.1 It is proposed that a Fiat Freedom be made available for Members to view at the Civic Centre on the morning of the Committee Meeting to consider its suitability and the points made from 3.1 to 3.4 above.

5. Background Papers

5.1 Letter of request for this alteration from Mr Lesley Webb.

6. Appendices

6.1 The following appendices are included in this report:

6.1.1 **Appendix 1** - Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Conditions.

6.1.2 **Appendix 2** - Letter from the Spinal Injuries Association.

6.1.3 **Appendix 3** - Borough of Castle Point Vehicle Licence Conditions.