

Dear Mr Kearsley,

RE: AGE CRITERIA POLICY – URGENT REQUEST TO SUSPEND THE EXISTING POLICY

At the JTC (Joint Trade Council) meeting held on 20th March 2014 the three member companies namely City Cabs Association, Eurocabs Association and LTO (Streamline/Telecabs) discussed the issue of the Age Criteria.

It was unanimously agreed that a request be put to the legal officers, councillors and licensing officers that the existing age criteria policy be suspended until the conclusion of the discussions with the trade members via the working group and the final decision being made by the licensing committee.

It is estimated that it will take between 9 -12 months before the policy discussions via the working group, public consultation and final approval stage is completed.

During this time span at least 25 Hackney Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs) will have reached the end of their 10 year Licensing age limit. Apart from these vehicles many saloon vehicles will also reach the end their Licensing Age limit and will need replacing.

These WAVs and the many saloon vehicles which have been serviced and maintained to a very good to excellent standard will still be able to safely transport customers for at least another year or even longer.

The JTC Committee have been getting regular complaints from customers about the lack of 5, 6 and 7 Seater vehicles, customers are having wait longer for these taxis and sometimes are having to use two 4 Seater vehicles making it more expensive for them to travel the same distance.

The greatest impact of the existing Age Criteria policy will be on the WAVs as it is estimated that a very low number will replace their 5, 6 or 7 Seater vehicles with a similar size vehicle, the remaining vehicles will be replaced with the 4 Seater Peugeot Premier.

The reasons why drivers are opting for the 4 Seater Peugeot Premiers are that;

- 1) They are cheaper to buy, a used Peugeot Premier vehicle will cost approximately £12k -£13k for an 11 plate with an average of 50k miles and £17k for a brand new vehicle. Compared to a Peugeot E7 for an 11 plate with an average of 50k miles will cost around £17k and for a brand new vehicle the cost will be £25k-£28k
- 2) The Peugeot Premier are very fuel efficient compared to the London Cabs or the 6/7 Seater Peugeot Expert E7 Vehicles in some cases giving double the mileage per gallon.
- 3) The Road fund license and insurance is also a lot cheaper for the Peugeot Premier compared to the other 5/6 and 7 Seater Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles available.
- 4) The existing fare charging system only allows the drivers to charge the normal fare plus £1.00 extra for 5 passengers, £1.50 for 6 passengers and £2.00 for 7 passengers. The fuel efficiency, cheaper insurance and cost of vehicle far outweigh the income generated for carrying the extra passengers.
- 5) The depreciation on an annual basis based on a new vehicle and the existing age restriction of 8 years is that for a Peugeot Premier costing £17k is £2,125 per year and for a Peugeot E7

costing average of £25k is £3,125 per year. This means that any driver buying the Peugeot E7 is losing £1,000 more per year compared to the Peugeot Premier.

Based on the above reasons the probability of the 25 vehicles being replaced by 5/6 or 7 Seater vehicles before the conclusion of the Age Criteria Policy reviews is very low and this will greatly affect the customer service provided by the JTC to the Leeds City Railway Station and could end up losing the contract altogether.

The 4 Seater Peugeot Premier's only allow 2 passengers to travel with a wheelchair bound passenger compared the 5, 6 or 7 Seater vehicles which allow 4 to 5 passengers so the reduction in the bigger vehicles will also have a severe impact on the disabled passengers being allowed to travel in numbers with their friends and family.

The lack of the 5/6 or 7 Seater vehicles also has an impact on the service provided to the general travelling public at other ranks in and around the city centre.

The suspension of the existing Age Criteria Policy will allow some breathing space to the vehicle owners whose vehicles are close to the end of their licensing term.

Compared to the Private Hire industry the Hackney Carriage vehicles have less resale value and would only be of any value to another Hackney Carriage driver in Leeds City Council or another town or city where the vehicle colour scheme is similar. Therefore once a vehicle has been approved to be used as a Hackney Carriage Vehicle in Leeds then it will only be replaced at the end of its Licensing term or if the owner is forced to make business decision where it is deemed not be financially viable to maintain a vehicle due to the vehicle breaking down regularly.

If the Age Criteria Policy is not suspended then any damage done to the Hackney Carriage trade will take an estimated minimum of 5 years and up to 10 years to rectify the loss of the 5, 6 and 7 Seater vehicles.

The JTC Committee are requesting that this issue be discussed and dealt with accordingly in the Licensing Committee Meeting due to be held on the 8th of April 2014, as some of the vehicles from the 25 quoted will need replacing in June 2014 and if they intend purchasing new vehicles then they will have to order them between 2 to 4 months early.

THIS REQUEST HAS BEEN APPROVED BY:

EUROCABS HACKNEY CARRIAGE ASSOCIATION, CITY CABS HACKNEY CARRIAGE ASSOCIATION AND LTO (STREAMLINE/TELECABS)

Dated: 6th April 2014