

 Report of: **Transport & Parking Business Manager**

 **General Purposes Licensing Committee**

 Date: **17<sup>th</sup> March 2006**  Item No:

 Title of Report : **Criteria and Conditions of Fitness**

### Summary and Recommendations

 Purpose of report: Clarification of 'Exceptional Condition'  
Criteria and Conditions of Fitness

 Key decision: No

 Portfolio Holder: N/A

 Deputy Responsibility:

 Ward(s) affected: All

 Report Approved by:

Graham Smith. Transport and Parking Business Manager  
Jeremy Franklin Legal & Democratic Services

 Policy Framework: None

 Recommendation(s):

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:-

Accept the clarification of the term 'Exceptional Condition' for inclusion in the Criteria and Conditions of Fitness for both Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles.

## Summary of report

1. For some time it has been apparent from the test failure reports and on street observations that some action must be taken to improve the overall standards of both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. Although most are maintained in a satisfactory condition, a minority are not.
2. A number of vehicles fail the six monthly test at the first attempt, which must indicate that these vehicles are not continuously maintained in good order throughout the year. Some licensed vehicles, including saloon cars have covered more than 300,000 miles.
3. To comply with Oxford City Council's Conditions, all vehicles are expected to be of a minimum standard irrespective of age. Although there are a number of older vehicles, it does not always follow that they are the ones in poor condition as many maintain their vehicles well, spending both time and money to have the vehicle regularly serviced. Rather than set an age limit for vehicles, the Licensing Office has attempted to ensure that the vehicles are scrupulously tested and following the employment of an enforcement officer also enforced, on street.
4. During a meeting held between Councillors, Council officers and a representative of Oxford City Licensed Private Hire Drivers Association a request was made that in the Criteria and Conditions of Fitness in respect of all licensed vehicles, the term 'Exceptionally Well Maintained' be clarified.
5. As an aid both to the testers and proprietors by clearly setting out the requirements for the condition of vehicles, the expression 'Exceptional Condition' has been more clearly defined. **Appendix 2** with the existing condition at **Appendix 1**

6. Driver's organisations and Operators have been consulted and a reply is to be found at **Appendix 3**.

 Name and contact details of author:  
Philip Pirouet  
Taxi Licensing Officer  
Transport and Parking Business Unit  
☎ 01865 252115  
email: [ppirouet@oxford.gov.uk](mailto:ppirouet@oxford.gov.uk)

 Background papers:

- Appendix 1 Present definition.
- Appendix 2 Exceptional Condition defined.
- Appendix 3 Response from COLTA.

# Appendix 1

"Exceptionally well maintained"

*means*

- The vehicle to be in excellent mechanical condition;
- The vehicle to be in all respects, safe and roadworthy, with no signs of corrosion to the mechanical parts, chassis, underside or body work
- The exterior of the vehicle to be clean and in excellent condition with no dents or damage of significance. The paintwork to be in excellent condition, of professional standard and consistent with the colour scheme of the vehicle
- The interior of the vehicle to be in good condition. The upholstery, linings, seats and floor coverings to be clean with no holes, tears or signs of wearing.
- The boot or luggage compartment to be in good condition, clean and uncluttered.

# Appendix 2

## Exceptionally well maintained

### Exterior.

1. All bodywork to be clean and sound, free from significant or noticable rust, dents, scrapes, scratches or loose panels.
2. All paintwork to be in first class condition with no egg-shell finish, different shades or colours either inside or outside which are visible to the Public.
3. All wheel trims to be fitted according to the manufacturers specification and all matched.
4. Door or wing mirrors to be in good condition.
5. Front and rear registration plates to be clean, clear, not obscured by towbar etc, unbroken and conform to the relevant legislation.
6. Front and rear bumpers to have no significant or noticeable rust, dents, cracks or scrapes properly painted where required and be securely fitted.
7. Mud flaps if fitted should be maintained.
8. Radiator grills should be secure and the original specification.
9. Windscreen and rear screen wiper arms should be in good condition and rust free and properly fitted. Wiper blades should be in proper working order and clear the relevant screen properly.
10. Windscreen to be clean and free of scratches or chips.
11. All door locks and boot locks fitted to be in working order.
12. All doors should be easily opened.
13. All door handles should be properly fitted easily operated and of original specification.
14. A spare wheel which conforms to legal requirements (not spacesaver or similar) must be carried, properly inflated, and securely fitted along with the relevant jack and wheel brace.
15. All road wheels to be clean, free from significant marks or damage and rust free. Types to be inflated to the manufacturers specification.

### Interior.

1. All seats to be manufacturers original design and be securely fitted, they should be well sprung and comfortable with no sagging. All seat upholstery must match, with no stains, holes or tears. Where seat covers are fitted they should be a matching set, a good fit, clean and stain free without sagging, wrinkling, holes or tears.
2. All seat belts should be clean, undamaged and in good working order. All anchorage point covers should be properly fitted and match original trim.
3. All panels should be clean and match original trim.
4. Fitted carpets should be of original specification securely fitted with no stains or holes. No unsecured carpets/mats may be fitted in areas where passengers may stand to enter or leave the vehicle.
5. All instruments, accessories, ash trays etc fitted securely, matching the trim and clean.
6. Headlining to be stain free, clean with no holes or tears.
7. All windows to operate correctly and easily.
8. The inside of the vehicle should be free from any trailing or loose wires.
9. The boot and/or luggage space should be clean and tidy with an unstained carpet or cover to manufacturers specification. Any panelling should be in good condition.
10. If a hatchback the boot cover must be original with both lifting straps fitted.
11. Window locks, handles where provided by the manufacturer to be in working order. All doors must be openable from the inside .
12. Heated rear screen, and front if fitted, to be in proper working order.

# Appendix 3

Letter from COLTA