

**LICENSING AND SAFETY COMMITTEE  
1 FEBRUARY 2007**

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**STRETCHED LIMOUSINES  
(Director of Environment and Leisure)**

**1 PURPOSE OF DECISION**

- 1.1 It is a condition of a Hackney Carriage or Private Hire vehicle licence that if a vehicle has been modified structurally it must have been subject to testing and issued a single vehicle approval (SVA) or low volume vehicle approval (LVVA) certificate by the Department of Transport (DfT).
- 1.2 This requirement has been very successful within Bracknell Forest with regard to modifications such as adaptations for wheelchair users. However it has been found to be the opposite with regard to limousines that have been modified by "stretching".
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is for the Committee to consider and decide if other quality and safety schemes can be adopted as alternatives to the SVA or LVVA system presently in place for such vehicles.

**2 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 **That the Committee agrees that a vehicle modified and issued with a certificate under either the**

- (a) **Lincoln Qualified Vehicle Modifier Scheme or**
- (b) **Cadillac Master Coachbuilder Scheme**

**will be acceptable for presentation and licensing as a Private Hire vehicle.**

**3 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS**

Borough Solicitor

- 3.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 3.2 There are no significant financial implications arising from this report.

Impact Assessment

- 3.3 There are no direct consequences of this report for any group and no direct community safety communications.

## **4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 4.1 Stretched limousines are becoming increasingly common on the roads of Bracknell Forest. Where the vehicle is constructed or adapted to seat fewer than 9 passengers for the purpose of hire or reward, then it must be licensed as a Private Hire vehicle. If the vehicle is used for more than 9 passengers, then it requires a Public Service Vehicle (PSV) licence. Present regulations relating to PSVs mean that very few limousines can be licensed as a PSV.
- 4.2 A vehicle when first placed on the market will have been granted a national or EC type approval to ensure its safety.
- 4.3 Where a vehicle has been structurally modified such that it no longer conforms with the National or European type approval, it is a Bracknell Forest licence condition that it must have passed and received a certificate for a single vehicle or low volume type approval issued by the DfT. This is to ensure that the vehicle post modification is safe to use. This has been particularly successful and relevant where vehicles have been structurally modified to allow for wheelchair access.
- 4.4 Where a vehicle is to be modified, the DfT inspector will view the vehicle during modification to check the quality of the work. Modifications for stretched limousines often take place within North America prior to importation to the UK. To enable an SVA or LVVA certificate to be issued for a stretched limousine requires a significant disassembling of the vehicle to enable close examination of the work carried out. This has been found to be cost-prohibitive for the operators of the vehicles.
- 4.5 In the USA to meet Federal Motor Vehicle Safety Standards (FMVSS), coachbuilders who modify limousines are required to carry out the modification in line with agreed processes and quality control procedures known as the Qualified Vehicle Modifier (QVM) programme. The Lincoln Qualified Vehicle Modifier (LMC) and Cadillac Master Coachbuilder (CMC) are programmes which are recognised as a QVM for compliance with FMVSS for stretched limousines.
- 4.6 The recommendation for this report is that the Council recognises the LMC and CMC programmes as an alternative to the SVA and LVVA certification offered in the UK to demonstrate the safety of the construction of a modified limousine.

### Background Papers

Ford QVM Program Qualification Requirements.

QVM All You Need To Know.

### Contact for further information

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### Doc Ref

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