

**COMMITTEE:** REGULATION

**DATE:** 21<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER, 2002

**SUBJECT:** APPLICATION TO APPROVE THE VOLKSWAGEN CARAVELLE AS A WHEEL-CHAIR ACCESSIBLE ALTERNATIVE VEHICLE TO BE LICENSED AS A HACKNEY CARRIAGE

**REPORT BY:** HEAD OF ENVIRONMENTAL AND CONSUMER SERVICES

**CONTACT OFFICER:** YVONNE BACON **TEL:** 546437

**IMPLICATIONS:**

LEGAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	COMMUNITY SAFETY	<input type="checkbox"/>
EQUALITIES	<input type="checkbox"/>	ENVIRONMENT	<input type="checkbox"/>
FINANCIAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER	<input type="checkbox"/>
STAFFING	<input type="checkbox"/>	OTHER	

**WARDS AFFECTED:** ALL

**PURPOSE**

1. The purpose of this report is to enable the Regulation Committee to consider the request from Andrew Hopgood of 12 Old Orchard, Luton for permission to licence a Volkswagen Caravelle as a wheel-chair accessible vehicle to be used as a Hackney Carriage in Luton.

**RECOMMENDATION**

2. That the Regulation Committee determine the application from Andrew Hopgood to approve the Volkswagen Caravelle as a wheel-chair accessible alternative vehicle to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage in Luton.

**BACKGROUND**

3. Andrew Hopgood by letter dated 2nd September 2002, has applied to licence a Volkswagen Caravelle as a wheel-chair accessible Hackney Carriage in Luton. Mr. Hopgood was successful in gaining one of the 20 additional Hackney Carriage plates issued by this Council in May 2002. A copy of his letter of request is attached at Appendix A (pages ).
4. According to Council Minute 2656(94)/89(vi) a replacement vehicle must be of the same type and design as a Hackney Carriage licensed to ply for hire in London by the Metropolitan Police. The policy was amended by Minute 73 of the Licensing Sub-Committee of 7 July 1992, to include approved wheel-chair accessible mini-bus style vehicles. The policy was further amended by Minute 534/96 of the Environmental Services Committee of 3rd April 1996. The policy is set out at Appendix B (pages ).
5. The Department of Environment Transport and the Regions by circular distributed on 24th August 1998, notified Local Authorities that "at present no vehicles currently in

production can be said to meet the Regulations (that will be brought forward for Hackney Carriage accessible under the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995), because the Regulations do not yet exist", and recommends local authorities to set their own accessibility standards. This point was considered by the Licensing Sub-Committee at its meeting on 22nd December 1998 and the Sub-Committee were reminded that Luton Borough Council has a comprehensive black cab policy which has been amended and updated accordingly to embrace wheel-chair accessible vehicles which meets the Council's generic conditions.

6. Consultation has been sought with the Council's Transport Manager who recommends the approval of this vehicle as a wheel-chair accessible alternative vehicle to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage in Luton provided that the manufacturer make the following modifications to any vehicle supplied to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage in Luton:
  - 6.1 Paragraph 1.1 of the Conditions referred to all of the passengers' seats being to the rear of the security screen. This vehicle has front passenger seat fitted, this should be removed and a luggage pen fitted in its place.
  - 6.2 Paragraph 1.4 of the Conditions referred to seats being permanently fixed to the vehicle. This vehicle has seats mounted to tracking but can be fixed so that the seats maintain the minimum leg room of 11" per person, but they can be adjusted backwards for the larger passenger.
  - 6.3 Paragraph 1.5 of the Conditions refers to all seats having the minimum cushion size of 16" (depth) front to rear. This vehicle's cushions were only 15". However there is an option when purchased to upgrade seats to 16 or 17" cushion depth.
  - 6.4 Paragraph 2.2 of the Conditions refer to the wheel-chair passenger being provided with either 2 point lap seat-belt or 3 point seat-belt. It has been stipulated to the supplier that only a 3 point belt anchorage would be acceptable.
  - 6.5 Paragraph 10 of the Conditions refers to the luggage compartment situated at the front of the vehicle forward of the bulk-head/safety screen and on the opposite side to the driving compartment. The vehicle has an additional luggage area at the rear of the vehicle.

A copy of the Transport Managers report is attached at Appendix C (pages       ).

#### **PROPOSAL/OPTIONS**

7. That the Regulation Committee approve the Volkswagen Caravelle as a wheel-chair accessible alternative vehicle to be licensed as a Hackney Carriage in Luton in accordance with the Conditions set down by the Council's Transport Manager.

#### **APPENDICES**

Appendix A - Letter of request from Andrew Hopgood

Appendix B - Copy of relevant policies and decisions on the implementation of purpose built Hackney Carriages

Appendix C - Copy of the Transport Manager's report