

FOR PUBLICATION

REVIEW OF THE LIMIT SET ON THE NUMBER OF HACKNEY CARRIAGES (A410)

MEETING: APPEALS AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE
DATE: 30 NOVEMBER 2016
REPORT BY: LICENSING MANAGER
WARD: ALL

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the committee of the results from the latest Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey carried out in 2016 so a decision can be made on future policy.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 In December 2010 members decided to limit the number of Hackney Carriages licensed by CBC to 110. At that time there were 183 vehicles licensed as hackney carriages, a figure that had reduced to 158 in 2013 and now stands at 150.
- 2.2 A further unmet demand survey took place in 2013, paid for by the holders of Hackney Carriage licences, and in February 2014 members decided to maintain the limit at 110 hackneys and authorised a further survey in 2016. That survey has now taken place and an executive summary is attached at Appendix A with the full report available via the following link.

<https://chesterfieldintranet.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=128&MId=4805&Ver=4>

- 2.3 The author of the report, Mr Iain Macdonald, has been invited to attend the meeting and give a presentation on his findings.

- 2.4 The ability to limit the number of Hackney Carriages is provided by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and section 16 of the Transport Act 1985, and is conditional. The regulatory authority must be satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages which is unmet.
- 2.5 The Department for Transport has developed guidance documentation entitled 'Taxi and Private hire licensing: Best Guidance (2010)'. This guidance addresses a wide range of licensing considerations and issues and provides recommendations on good practice. Within the guidance it is recommended that if a licensing authority should seek to retain a quantity restriction, then a survey should be carried out to establish if there is any unmet demand for Hackney Carriages. If the result of an unmet demand survey should demonstrate that there is evidence of significant unmet demand, the recommended actions for a licensing authority may be to either raise the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers to an appropriate level, or to remove the limit all together. If the result of an unmet demand survey should demonstrate that there is no evidence of unmet demand, then a third choice of action becomes available to the licensing authority, which is to keep the cap in place at the same level. A licensing authority may choose at any time, to raise or remove a limit on Hackney Carriage numbers, but in order to retain or impose a limit; good practice guidance suggests that an unmet demand survey is required and that the result shows that there is no evidence of unmet demand.
- 2.6 Following the 2013 survey the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee suggested any future survey should involve all taxi ranks, which was adopted.

3.0 SUMMARY

- 3.1 The 2016 survey concludes there is no evidence of significant unmet demand for the services of Hackney Carriages in the Chesterfield Borough Council area.
- 3.2 Public consultation concluded that the hackney fleet in Chesterfield is generally well regarded with few issues concerning availability and the service provided.
- 3.3 Some initial feedback was received concerning the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles but this was not backed up by representatives from user groups or by a total of 17 'mystery shopper' exercises. Several organisations indicated they had an

account with a service provider; this may afford them a level of priority in the service they receive.

- 3.4 The principal feedback from the trade concerned the number of licensed vehicles from other areas working for private hire operators.
- 3.5 There is a trend within the hackney fleet for drivers who operate from the town centre ranks to also subscribe to a private hire booking circuit. Drivers who operate from the railway station rank tend to be solo operators or working within small operator companies. As such, the proportion of hackney carriages which leave the railway station rank empty (to fulfil a booking) is relatively low compared to other ranks.
- 3.6 The proportion of the hackney fleet that operated from the ranks during the survey period was relatively low and ranged from 17% in mid-morning to 35% during the period of peak demand on Saturday night. It is understood that a significant proportion of demand for hackney carriages is obtained from bookings, in addition to hires obtained off ranks.
- 3.7 The importance of the private railway station rank is highlighted several times within the report, with 57% of passenger demand for all hackneys. In 2013 it was 52%.
- 3.8 The author's conclusion is that there is an adequate supply of hackney carriages and, based on the number of vehicles licensed as hackney carriages at the present time, no additional licences would be necessary to cater for foreseeable growth in general demand over the next three years.
- 3.9 The low proportion of hackneys observed working from the town centre ranks suggests there is capacity within the fleet to deal with any moderate rise in demand.

4.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 4.1 The evidence gathered suggests there is no significant unmet demand.
- 4.2 Based on the number of vehicles licensed as hackney carriages at the time of the survey (150) there is no need to increase the number of hackney carriage licences at the present time.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The committee has a number of options available.
- 5.2 Option 1: retain the limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles at 110.
- 5.3 Option 2: remove the limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles.
- 5.4 Option 3: increase the limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles.
- 5.5 If option 1 or 3 is chosen then officers be authorised to commission a further unmet demand survey in 2019 to review the policy. The survey should be funded by the holders of Hackney Carriage licences, at present the estimate for this would be £20 per year for three years.

Further information on this report can be obtained from Trevor Durham, Licensing Manager, on 01246 345203 or Trevor.durham@chesterfield.gov.uk.