



Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee

Scrutiny Project Group Report on Hackney Cab Capping Review Process

Date : 13th December 2013

PROJECT GROUP MEMBERS:

Councillors:

Lead Member	Vicki Lang
Group Members	Tom Murphy Gordon Simmons

1. INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW AIMS

The Council is currently undertaking its first review of the cap on the number of hackney cab licences, since the cap was introduced 3 years ago.

1.2 This scrutiny review aims to ensure:

- a) That the review process has the confidence of both members and the taxi trade within the borough.
- b) That the review is robust enough to aid the Council with its aim of reducing the number of Hackney cabs to an acceptable level that allow the Hackney trade within the borough to thrive.

2. REASONS FOR THE REVIEW AND LINK TO PRIORITIES

2.1 The main objectives of this review are:

- a) The council needs to have a good working relationship with the Taxi companies in the town, the capping review needs to be an open and clear process that all parties have confidence in.
- b) A sustainable and reliable Taxi service within the town is essential to meet the Councils priorities of:
 - 1. A Sustainable Community
 - 2. An Accessible Community

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 The Scrutiny Project Group recommends :

- a) A clear comparison of the survey is produced and broken down into each rank to aid members of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the decision making stage.
- b) That a clear written process is put together including the reviews inclusion in the Council's Forward Plan in future.
- c) That the Appeals and Regulatory Committee consider taking action to resolve the number of Hackney plates within the Borough such as removing the option to transfer the plate.

4. REVIEW APPROACH

- 4.1 Meetings with Chesterfield Borough Council Officers
- 4.2 Meetings with Hackney Cab Drivers

5. EVIDENCE AND RESEARCH

5.1 Evidence gathered to support the review work includes:

- 2013 Survey process
- Comparison with 2010 survey process
- Capping effectiveness and effect on the trade so far

6. REVIEW FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

- 6.1 The project group found that drivers believe that the survey this year did not include the same observation time at the Railway Station rank and that this was cut by 6 days. The time at the Railway Station rank this year was actually 12 hours in comparison to 17 hours in 2010. However, overall across the town observation time was 1 hour less than that undertaken in 2010.

The observation process needs to be reported clearly to aid both members and the trade to see a true comparison, this will also stop any false belief to spread among the trade and undermining the process.

Recommendation(s) : A clear comparison is produced and broken down into each rank to aid members of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the decision making stage.

- 6.2 The scrutiny project group found that we do not have a clear internal process for the capping review to follow and this is essential for both members and the trade to have confidence in the process.

Recommendation(s): That a clear written process is put together to include the review's inclusion in the Forward Plan.

- 6.3 The project group found that although the number of Hackney plates in the borough had fallen it was at a very slow pace, this was undermining the aim of the cap and any benefit from it was slow to take effect making the process feel like a waste of time and effort.

To keep the process robust the capping number needs to be achievable rather than a distant figure that no one believes will be achieved. It feels like we are doing the survey research but not helping the outcome to be achieved, by allowing it to take so long.

Recommendation(s) : That the Appeals and Regulatory Committee consider taking action to resolve the number of Hackney Plates within the Borough such as removing the option to transfer the plate.

7. REVIEW CONCLUSIONS

- 7.1 The project group feels that the recommendations will help to build a good working relationship with the trade within the Borough and to improve the service for the residents and visitors to the town.

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