

SCRUTINY PROGRESS MONITORING REPORT ON : HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE LIMIT

This is the progress report on item Ref EW4 of the Scrutiny Monitoring Form - to provide progress in implementing recommendations of the Enterprise and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee from its scrutiny project work on the Hackney Carriage Licence Limit. These recommendations were considered by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee on 12.02.14, for action and further consideration.

Recommendation 1 : That a clear comparison of the review survey be produced and broken down into each taxi rank to aid members of the Appeals and Regulatory Committee at the decision making stage.				
Action	Responsibility / Implementation by:	Resources Needed / Available	Target Date	Achievement / Completed
As recommendation.	Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing Licensing Manager, and Solicitor (Local Government & Regulatory Law) & Deputy Monitoring Officer.	Existing resources.		For the next council review of the limit on hackney carriage numbers, which is due to commence autumn 2016, comparisons by taxi rank will form part of the survey contract specification.
Recommendation 2 : That a clear written process be put together including the reviews inclusion in the Council's Forward Plan in future.				
Action	Responsibility / Implementation by:	Resources Needed / Available	Target Date	Achievement / Completed
As recommendation.	Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing Licensing Manager, and Solicitor (Local Government & Regulatory Law) & Deputy Monitoring Officer.	Existing resources.		The required commissioning of an independent review process/survey, means the written procedure for each (3-yearly) review will comprise the Council's adopted procurement process and the Appeals and Regulatory Committee will be involved with this process. The findings and report for a formal policy decision by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee, will be included in the Forward Plan at the appropriate time as a non-key decision.

Recommendation 3 :

That the Appeals and Regulatory Committee considers taking action to resolve the number of Hackney Carriage licences within the borough, such as removing the option to transfer the licence, when legislation permits.

Action	Responsibility / Implementation by:	Resources Needed / Available	Target Date	Achievement / Completed
As recommendation.	Cabinet Member Health and Wellbeing Licensing Manager, and Solicitor (Local Government & Regulatory Law) & Deputy Monitoring Officer.	Existing resources.		The consideration of other options to help reduce the number of hackney licences is ongoing. Legislation has now passed through parliament and been made – this is the Deregulation Act 2015. The Act does not include any power to enable the control of transfer of hackney carriage licences. There is currently no proposed legislation to remove or control the ability to transfer a licence.

Any Additional Information :

Supplied August 2015

When the Council first limited the number of hackney carriages in December 2010, the limit was set at 110, at which time there were 183 hackneys. By the time of the next survey in 2013 the number of hackneys had reduced to 158 and it is now down to 150.

The proposed changes to legislation that would have prevented the transfer of hackney licences were not supported by the government. There are no proposals to try to force the current number to reduce further. It will only reduce should a driver voluntarily give up their licence (eg retiring) or where a licence is revoked for breach of conditions.

In five years the number of hackneys has dropped by 33, but the majority of that reduction came in the first three years. It could now be argued that the level of reduction has tailed off to such an extent that the market has found its level. Rather than looking for ways to force the number to reduce, it may be that the level the cap is set at or whether a cap should continue to operate, needs to be reconsidered.

The process for considering another survey will commence next year with the decision planned for December 2016 by the Appeals and Regulatory Committee.