

**REPORT FROM: PLANNING, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & REGULATORY SERVICES MANAGER**

**TO: TAXI LICENSING COMMITTEE**

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## **HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY**

### **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To consider the results received from hackney carriage proprietors as to whether they will fund an unmet demand survey.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

That the following recommendations be submitted to the Policy and Resources Committee:-

- (1) That an unmet demand survey is not carried out.
- (2) That the limit of 71 hackney carriage licences be removed.
- (3) That any applications for new hackney carriage licences be issued with a condition that they must be wheelchair accessible and in accordance with our age limit policy of not older than 7 years when first presented for licensing and continue until 12 years of age.

### **REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- (1) The trade do not want to pay for an unmet demand survey.
- (2) Without a survey there is no evidence supporting a restriction on the number of hackney vehicles so there is no justification to maintain a limited number.
- (3) The Council has a disproportionately low number of wheelchair accessible vehicles in comparison to saloon vehicles.

## **BACKGROUND**

1. At the meeting of this committee held on 13 July 2021 it was agreed that our hackney carriage proprietors be consulted as to whether they would fund an unmet demand survey and the results reported back.
2. An unmet demand survey should be carried out sufficiently frequently to be able to respond to any challenge to the satisfaction of a court. An interval of three years is commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys.
3. Our last survey was carried out in 2013 and adopted in 2014.
4. The survey concluded that there was no evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in Pendle and the existing limit of 71 remained.

## **ISSUE**

5. A questionnaire was sent out to 64 hackney carriage proprietors (proprietors can hold more than one licence) and Charles Oakes of the Hackney Drivers' Association. We received 33 responses and a response from the Hackney Drivers Association which equates to 51.6%.
6. The response of 51.6% is a high response as a number of our hackney carriage proprietor's work with private hire operators so this does not affect them to the same degree as the ones who work solely from the ranks.
7. Of the questionnaires received back:
  - 27 (82%) said they were in agreement for a survey to be carried out but did not wish to pay through an increase in their licence fees. The reasons for this was lack of work, reduced income from the impact of covid, already too many hackney carriages and not enough rank space.
  - 5 (15%) said they were not in agreement for a survey to be carried out and did not wish to pay through an increase in their licence fees. The reasons for this was the same as above.
  - The Hackney Carriage Drivers' Association said yes they would be willing to pay for a survey to be undertaken. The reasons for this was that a survey should be carried out to protect the trade after covid and to allow the trade in Pendle to recover. We have tried to ascertain the proportion of the trade the Association represents but they have been unwilling to supply any details. Committee cannot therefore give weight to comments of an association that we cannot verify the proportion of the trade in Pendle they represent.
8. The approximate cost of the survey was thought to be in the region of £6,000, however the company that undertook our last survey has suggested the cost will be more in the region of £10,000.

## **CONCLUSION**

9. Pendle has set a limit of 71 hackney carriage licences and even this number, at times, is too many as all the vehicles congregate where there is a thriving night-time economy, which puts a strain on the number of rank spaces available and enforcement resources.

10. Of the 71 licences, 6 have a condition that they must be wheelchair accessible and at present 5 are accessible which equates to just 7%.
11. The majority of the trade that made representations are not in agreement to fund the survey and the Council does not have a budget to fund it, therefore, it is recommended that the our policy is amended to remove the limit of 71 hackney carriage licences with a stipulation that any new applications must be for vehicles that are wheelchair accessible.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

**Policy:** The current policy is no more than 71 hackney carriage licences be issued.

**Financial:** The cost of a survey would have to be met by the Council in the first instance and recouped over a three-year period from the hackney carriage licence fees.

**Legal:** There is a risk of a challenge of our policy if a survey is not carried out.

**Risk Management:** None arising directly from the report.

**Health and Safety:** None arising directly from the report.

**Sustainability:** None arising directly from the report.

**Community Safety:** None arising directly from the report.

**Equality and Diversity:** Increase in wheelchair accessibility vehicles.

## **APPENDICES**

None.

## **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS**

1. The Department for Transport "Best Practice Guidance".
2. Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985