

**Report of Head of Licensing and Registration**

**Report to Licensing Committee**

**Date: 9 December 2014**

**Subject: Unmet demand survey – Hackney Carriages.**

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s):	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

**Summary of main issues**

1. Members will be aware that the Council regulates the number of Hackney Carriage Proprietor licences it issues. Currently that number is set at 537. When licence plates are restricted in this way the local Authority must conduct regular unmet demand surveys to ensure that the restriction is not adversely affecting the public across a range of hours.
2. That survey was due to be conducted again in 2014, but it was unclear if the Law Commission recommendations for reforming the Taxi and Private Hire services would change the whole of the regulatory framework. Officers held back but the recommendations of the Law Commission are now clear in saying they feel the position should remain as it is.
3. Officers intend to bring a report to Licensing Committee in early 2015 about all of the issues sought to be addressed in the specification of the requirements of the survey to enable Members to contribute to.
4. This report is intended to inform Members, and the trade, so that any other issues can be accommodated in the same survey, if appropriate.
5. Members will note that the opportunity is being taken to address the environmental issue of emissions and the range of vehicles which should be licensed.

## **Recommendations**

6. That Members note the report and make any observations they think appropriate.
7. Members consider deferring the issues around 5/6/7 seater Hackney carriage Vehicles (HCV's) so that a more comprehensive overview can be undertaken in the unmet demand survey.

## **1 Purpose of this report**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the need to undertake an unmet demand survey and consider if the issues about retaining a specified number of 5/6/7 HCV's should form a part of more informed research.

## **2 Background information**

- 2.1 The Council is required by law to undertake an unmet demand survey less than every 5 years. That survey will be undertaken by accredited transport researchers identified through a procurement exercise.
- 2.2 The survey is detailed and there is the opportunity for competent analysts to consider other closely related issues. For example, environmental issues or the composition of the fleet. It is intended to create a wider survey than has been the case in the past so that the Executive can consider longer term issues and accompanying Licensing Committee Member views.
- 2.3 For example; one outstanding matter from the Licensing Committee report dated 7 October 2014 was whether baseline figures should be placed on the number of 5/6/7 seater vehicle the Council licences, to ensure a wider range of accessible vehicles. The proposal is that this decision is deferred to enable a more comprehensive overview of the needs of the city and the needs of a range of service users.

## **3 Main issues**

- 3.1 The proposals of the Law Commission in reforming the legislation around HCV's and de-regulation are that there is no change in which case the Council should proceed with an unmet demand survey.
- 3.2 Once Officers have set out the proposal specification of the survey, Members would have the opportunity to comment on it. Similarly the trades may also raise issues to be considered, but it has to be born in mind that vested interests will not be included.
- 3.3 Members are informed that the Director of Environment and Housing and the Director of Public Health are already addressing vehicle emission concerns and presenting a proposed 'Low Emission Zone' feasibility study report to the Executive Board for consideration.
- 3.4 The timing of the unmet demand survey presents the opportunity for the Licensing Committee to research and contribute positively to that ongoing study. The areas of responsibility and potential for contributing positively to issues wider than simply 'do we have enough taxis' are clear and form part of the Licensing Committees authority to contribute to change under the existing legislation.

## **4 Corporate Considerations**

### **4.1 Consultation and Engagement**

4.1.1 This will be in at least three stages:

- The report and any beneficial information that might be received which could beneficially contribute to the procurement specification
- The majority of the consultation will be part of the survey and any subsequent change proposals
- Finally, any change proposals

## **4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration**

4.2.1 These will form part of the unmet demand survey.

## **4.3 Council policies and City Priorities**

4.3.1 The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to the following aims:

### **Best Council Plan 2013 -17**

#### **Towards being an Enterprising Council**

#### **Our Ambition and Approach**

**Our Ambition** is for Leeds to be the best city and Leeds City Council to be the best council in the UK – fair, open and welcoming with an economy that is both prosperous and sustainable so all our communities are successful.

**Our Approach** is to adopt a new leadership style of civic enterprise, where the council becomes more enterprising, business and partners become more civic, and citizens become more actively engaged in the work of the city.

#### **Our Best Council Outcomes**

Make it easier for people to do business with us

#### **Our Best Council Objectives**

Promoting sustainable and inclusive economic growth – Improving the economic wellbeing of local people and businesses. With a focus on:

- Helping people into jobs,
- Boosting the local economy
- Generating income for the council

Ensuring high quality public services – improving quality, efficiency and involving people in shaping their city. With a focus on;

- Getting services right first time
- Improving customer satisfaction

4.3.2 The Taxi & Private Hire Licensing policies contribute to priorities:

- Reduce crime levels and their impact across Leeds
- Effectively tackle and reduce anti-social behaviour in communities

#### 4.3.3 Safeguarding children and vulnerable adults:

Leeds City Council has both a moral and legal obligation to ensure the duty of care for both children and vulnerable adults across all of its services. This cannot be achieved by any single service or agency. Safeguarding is ultimately the responsibility of all of us and depends on the everyday vigilance of staff who play a part in the lives of children or vulnerable adults.

#### **4.4 Resources and value for money**

4.4.1 The cost of the survey will only be known at the end of a competitive procurement exercise and that will be met by the Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Section from budget reserves held solely for such trade related matters.

#### **4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In**

4.5.1 There are no legal concerns about this information report or the proposal to consider the issues of 5/6/7 seater WAV's in a wider report.

#### **4.6 Risk Management**

4.6.1 The range of types of accessible vehicle may fluctuate in the interim, but with such issues being addressed in the survey it would allow Members to have a more informed position on which to make recommendations.

### **5 Conclusions**

5.1 The Council is meeting its legal requirements to conduct an 'unmet demand' survey and necessarily contributing to the issues of environmental impact of the licensed fleet.

5.2 Maintaining the status quo with the existing fleet should meet little objection from the trade. It will also put the Council on firmer footing to make recommendations at a later date.

### **6 Recommendations**

6.1 That Members note the report and make any observations they think appropriate

6.2 Members consider deferring the issues around 5/6/7 seater HCV's so that a more comprehensive overview can be undertaken in the unmet demand survey.

### **7 Background documents<sup>1</sup>**

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<sup>1</sup> The background documents listed in this section are available to download from the Council's website, unless they contain confidential or exempt information. The list of background documents does not include published works.