

Name of meeting and date: Licensing & Safety Committee – 16th September 2010

Title of report: Quantity Restrictions of Hackney Carriage Licences

Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	No
Is it in the Council's Forward Plan ?	Not applicable
Is it eligible for "call in" by Scrutiny ?	Yes
Cabinet member portfolio	Regeneration, Environment & Transportation

Electoral [wards](#) affected and ward councillors consulted: All wards

Public or private: Public

1. Purpose of report

For Committee to decide whether the Council should continue to impose quantity restrictions of Hackney Carriage Licences.

2. Key points

Kirklees Council currently restricts the number of Hackney Carriage licences to 249 for the whole of the district, 55 of these wheelchair accessible vehicles, and at present there are some 1,520 licensed Private Hire vehicles in Kirklees, 120 of these being wheelchair accessible.

The present legal provision on quantity restrictions for Hackney Carriages outside London is set out in Section 16 Transport Act 1985.

The Department for Transport Guidance states it is good practice not to impose quantity restrictions. (See DFT Guidance at Appendix 1 of the Unmet Demand Study (UDS) attached as Appendix A)

In order to continue limiting Hackney Carriage Licence availability committee must be satisfied that there is no significant demand for Hackney Carriage services throughout the Council area that it unmet.

Authorities wishing to maintain quantity restrictions are expected to review their local case for restrictions at least every three years. This is achieved by undertaking both quantitative and qualitative analysis through a comprehensive study of the taxi trade in the authority area, prior to considering any changes to their Licensing policy.

In order to achieve this, in October 2009 Kirklees Licensing Service commissioned a 'Taxi Unmet Demand Study', to assess current demand and to identify any significant unmet demand.

This study aims to provide the committee with sufficient information to enable an informed decision to be made as to whether the Council should continue to restrict Hackney Carriage licence numbers or deregulate.

The study provides detailed information on the following:

1. A profile of the taxi trade in Kirklees
2. Current demand and any latent demand, including demand for wheelchair accessible vehicles.
3. Identifies any requirement to provide additional licence plates to eliminate any significant unmet demand.

4. Research

The study has used a range of research to establish whether there is unmet demand for taxi provision within Kirklees, including:

- Review of relevant policies, standards etc
- Extensive rank observations and audits
- On street interviews
- Consultation
- Benchmarking against other authorities

4. Consultees and their opinions

A wide consultation exercise was carried out as part of the study. Consultation was undertaken with a range of key stakeholders by letter, email, telephone and face to face interviews.

(For full details of the consultation please see section 5 of the UDS, attached as Appendix A)

5. Conclusions of the Study

The study concluded that there is no significant unmet demand in the rank based taxi market throughout Kirklees Council area.

In the absence of any significant unmet demand the committee may choose to either:

- a. Maintain the current level of Hackney Carriage licenses.
- b. Issue additional Hackney Carriage licences as it sees fit. (e.g. to increase wheelchair accessible vehicle service provision and can be used as a stepping stone towards deregulation))
- c. Remove the current limitation on Hackney Carriage licenses (i.e. de regulation)

(For positive and negative impacts of the final decision please see Section 7 of the UDS, attached as Appendix A)

6. Officer Recommendations

Catherine Walter, Licensing Manager, Kirklees Licensing Service

The above officer recommends that the committee consider the Unmet Demand Study and its recommendations before deciding whether to continue to restrict Hackney Carriage numbers.

7. Contact officer and relevant papers

Catherine Walter, Licensing manager, Kirklees Licensing Service

Unmet Demand Study, attached as appendix A

