



Name of meeting: Licensing and Safety Committee

Date: 17th December 2020

Title of report: Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2020

Purpose of report: The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of a survey to measure the demand for hackney carriages within the District.

Key Decision - 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
Key Decision - Is it in the <u>Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports)</u> ?	No Private Report/Private Appendix – No
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	Not applicable
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance? Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning?	Colin Parr – 07.12.2020 Eamonn Croston – 07.12.2020 Julie Muscroft – 07.12.2020
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Paul Davies

Electoral wards affected: All

Ward councillors consulted: None

Public or private: Public

Has GDPR been considered? Yes – any personal data has been redacted for the purposes of this report.

1. Summary

1.1 To consider whether the Council should continue to impose quantity restrictions of Hackney Carriage licences.

2. Information required to take a decision

2.1 Kirklees Council currently restricts the number of Hackney Carriage to 235 licences for the whole of the district; there are some 2350 licensed private hire vehicles in Kirklees.

2.2 At the meeting of the Licensing and Safety Committee on the 18th July 2017 it was resolved there be no increase in the number of hackney carriages. This was following a survey conducted in relation to whether there was any significant unmet demand for hackney carriages.

2.3 In accordance with the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance, that future surveys be conducted every three years, a further study has been carried out.

2.4 The 2020 study has been conducted by Ian Millership from Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment ('LVSA'), Mr Millership carried out the previous study in 2017, which provides a level of consistency in how the study is conducted.

2.5 A summary of the key findings of the study will be presented to Members at the Committee by Mr Millership and a full copy of the report is attached at **appendix I**.

Methodology

2.6 The following methodology was used to conduct the study: -

- Review of relevant policies, standards etc: to understand the authority's aspirations for meeting travel needs and social inclusion and provide context to determining overall demand for travel and how this should be met,
- Extensive rank observations (421 hours) and audits of all the ranks in the Authority, including monitoring passengers' waiting time, any illegal plying for hire, use of Hackney Carriages by wheelchair users and rank audits,
- On street interviews: a survey of 200 representative people on street to obtain information about their understanding of the sector, their last taxi journey, their overall levels of taxi use, about quality and barriers to use. Consultation: including consultation with all relevant stakeholders – appropriate local authority representatives, police, trade associations, all drivers, mobility impaired, specific user groups, businesses, and other major generators of taxi trips

2.7 The above methodology incorporates developments in methodology since the last survey, and DfT Best Practice Guidance.

2.8 The present legal provision on quantity restrictions for Hackney Carriages outside London is set out in Section 16 Transport Act 1985. Until this Act local authorities had unrestricted discretion to limit the number of Hackney Carriages which they would licence. Section 16 removed this discretion and states the following.

Consultation

2.9 Public consultation took place via a twenty seven question attitude survey. Whilst full details of the survey results are detailed in the attached report the key findings will be reported in the presentation.

Overall Conclusions

2.10 The study considers observed supply and demand and concludes that at the time of the survey there is no significant unmet demand within the Kirklees licensing district.

2.11 The report states that the overall picture of demand for hackney carriages at the start of 2020 was optimistic and positive. There was also evidence of increased usage of both licensed vehicles overall and specifically of hackney carriages at some ranks. However, the overall average weekly demand reduction since the last survey of around 11% appears to relate to closure of specific demand generators.

2.12 The report, however, does note some waiting for vehicles (page 21) with longest passenger delay being 12 minutes. There were only four passengers who experienced delays of 11 or 12 minutes. Just 13, or 0.3% of the total of all passengers, had delays of six to ten minutes. 2% had delays between one and five minutes. However, this needs to be balanced against an average passenger delay of five seconds, over all passengers.

2.13 It is pleasing to see the report finds the hackney carriage trade is well-known and appreciated across the district, and that it is active in all main areas; and that the trade are working together to meet demand in developing areas of the night time economy.

2.14 The final stages of the survey were undertaken as the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic began to be felt by the trade and page seven of the survey provides further information on the position of the survey in light of national lockdown.

Guidance

2.15 The Taxi Survey being presented to the Licensing and Safety Committee contains extracts from the Department of Transport (DfT) Best Practice Guidance on the subject of quantity restrictions.

2.16 Members should note that in order to justify continuing to limit the number of hackney carriages within the District further surveys should be undertaken every three years.

Number of Hackney Carriage Licences

2.17 The report, at page 13, provides information on previous surveys undertaken and LVSA have identified a discrepancy in the numbers of hackney carriage licences in place between 2005 and 2019. Despite research into these discrepancies the service can find no explanation as to why differing number of licences in place have been reported.

2.18 As such, and for the avoidance of doubt in any future surveys and given the report states there is no significant unmet demand, Members will be asked to set the limit to 224.

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

One of the Licensing Service key priorities is to ensure there is a raising of standards across the private hire and hackney carriage trades in order to protect the travelling public; and ensure people across West Yorkshire are transported safely and protected from harm; and that people in Kirklees experience a high quality, clean, sustainable and green environment, as well as improve the customer experience

3.2 Working with Partners

In developing its policies, the licensing services works with a number of partners, including, Kirklees Safe Guarding Children's Board, West Yorkshire Police, Public Health, Environmental Health, Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Community Safety Partnership and other West Yorkshire Authorities (inc York).

3.3 Place Based Working

There is no specific impact in the context of this report. However, a review of policies will enable the service to examine how it interacts and engages with licence holders, residents and communities.

3.4 Climate Change and Air Quality

There is no specific impact in the context of this paper. However, a review of policy will be an opportunity look at any changes that may need to be made in relation to vehicle licensing and its impact on climate change and air quality.

3.5 Improving outcomes for children

The Council wants to ensure children have the best start in life and to ensure that the people of Kirklees feel safe and are protected from harm. The Council has a duty to protect the travelling public and safeguard children travelling in licensed vehicles and in particular for the purposes of school transport.

3.6 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Consultees and their opinions

Legal

The principle legislation is the Town and Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

The purpose of taxi licensing is detailed in the Department for Transport "Taxi and Private Hire Licensing Best Practice Guide" paragraph 8 which states: "The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) trades is to protect the public."

Taxi and Private hire vehicle licensing in England and Wales is undertaken by licensing authorities, which have the responsibility for ensuring that the public travel in safe, well maintained vehicles driven by competent drivers; as well as providing a fair and reasonable service for the taxi and private hire vehicle trade. Council's following best practice will meet or communicate regularly with licensing committees and officers in neighbouring councils to ensure critical information is shared and that there is a consistent and robust in decision making.

4. Next steps and timelines

4.1 Members are asked to consider the outcome of the study and relevant guidance and have the options of:

- a) continue to limit the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences,
- b) releasing a set number of licences (possibly as Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles or Electric Vehicles),
- c) lifting quantity restrictions altogether.

4.2 Members should note that should they be minded to consider options b or c above they should only do so following formal consultation.

5. Officer recommendations and reasons

5.1 Members are recommended to -

- note the report, and the study by LVSA, and
- Take a decision as to whether to agree to limit the number of hackney carriage licences to 224

6. Cabinet Portfolio Holder's recommendations

Cllr Paul Davies welcomed the report by LVSA and its conclusions.

7. Contact officer

Russell Williams
Operational Manager – Public Protection
Tel. 01484 221000
russell.williams@kirklees.gov.uk

8. Background Papers and History of Decisions

LVSA report attached at appendix I

9. Service Director responsible

Sue Procter
Service Director – Environment
Tel: 01484 221000
Email: sue.procter@kirklees.gov.uk