

# Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

## Report of Corporate Director of Enterprise, Tourism and the Environment

to  
Cabinet  
on  
8th January 2013

Agenda  
Item No.

Report prepared by: Dipti Patel – Head of Public Protection

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### Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2012

Environment & Economic Scrutiny Committee –  
Executive Council: Cllr Tony Cox

*A Part 1 Public Agenda item.*

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#### 1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the findings of the Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2012, undertaken by Halcrow on behalf of this Authority, and if there are any implications for the Council's current policy on limiting hackney carriage vehicles plates.

#### 2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That Members note the outcome of the Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey and agree to maintain its current entry control policy and maintain a limit of 276 hackney carriages.**

#### 3. Background

- 3.1 Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 came into effect on 6 January 1986. It provides that the Licensing Authority may refuse an application for a taxi licence for the purpose of limiting the number of Hackney Carriages if, but only if, it is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of Hackney Carriages within the area to which the licence will apply which is unmet.
- 3.2 In 2006, the Department for Transport (DfT) produced 'Best Practice Guidance'; for taxi licensing. The guidance restated that the DfT considers it best practice not to impose quantity restrictions. Where restrictions are imposed, the Department urges that the matter is regularly reconsidered.

- 3.3 As part of this authority's ongoing policy of limiting the issue of Hackney Carriage Licences, Unmet Demand Surveys were undertaken in 1988, 1990, 1996, 2001 and 2009.
- 3.4 The last of these surveys in 2009 concluded that there was not significant unmet demand and Council agreed to maintain its policy to limit numbers of Hackney Carriages and not to issue any further Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences.
- 3.5 In June 2012, the Authority commissioned Halcrow to carry out a survey to assess whether or not there was significant unmet demand for the services of Hackney Carriages within the Borough.
- 3.6 The survey was carried out from June 2012 to August 2012. Halcrow's Final Report has been placed in the Members Room for information. Members attention is drawn particularly to Section 10 of the report which provides a Summary and Conclusions, and to Section 10.5 which provides the Recommendations as a result of the survey.
- 3.7 The 2012 report concludes that there is NO significant unmet demand for the services of Hackney Carriages in Southend.
- 3.8 The report was consulted by Members of the Economic & Environmental Scrutiny Committee on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012 as part of pre Cabinet Scrutiny. Members of the Committee resolved 'that the proposals in the report be endorsed for submission to Cabinet for consideration at the meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2013'.
- 3.9 Opposition Portfolio Lead Members have also been briefed on the content of the report.

#### **4. Other Options**

- 4.1 The Unmet Demand Survey 2012 report provides other options for the authority to consider including agreeing to issue any number of additional plates as it sees fit, either in one allocation or a series of allocations OR to remove the numerical restriction currently in place.

#### **5. Reasons for Recommendation**

The Unmet Demand Survey 2012 has identified that there is NO evidence of significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriages in Southend and therefore there would be no justification at this time to issue further hackney carriage vehicle licenses.

#### **6. Corporate Implications**

##### **6.1 Contribution to Council's Vision & Corporate Priorities**

The hackney carriage service contributes to the Safer and Excellent corporate priorities: Safe in respect of providing the only 24 hour transport service for residents and visitors, particularly during the late night / early morning period; Excellent in maintaining and improving transport availability within the borough.

## 6.2 **Financial Implications**

The recommendation contained in the Unmet Demand Survey Report does not place any financial burden on the authority. However it does reduce the opportunity for the council to generate additional income as the ability to manage demand and issue additional licences would be removed.

## 6.3 **Legal Implications**

The Department for Transport provides guidance that any Licensing Authority that imposes a restriction on numbers of hackney carriages undertakes to regularly review its considerations. The Unmet Demand Survey 2012 provides that review and supporting evidence for a decision to be taken. Any further DfT Guidance will be taken in to account in respect of reviewing this position.

## 6.4 **People Implications**

The hackney carriage service is seen as key in providing 24 hour transport services for the residents and visitors to Southend and in particular assists in the safe transport of passengers during the late night / early morning periods where other transport services are unavailable.

## 6.5 **Property Implications**

None.

## 6.6 **Consultation**

The Unmet Demand Survey included wide ranging consultation with the hackney carriage / private hire trade, the public, community representative groups and representatives of council services.

## 6.7 **Equalities and Diversity Implications**

The Unmet Demand Survey included Equality and Diversity considerations in consultation with the public and community representative groups, particularly in respect of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV), of which Southend's hackney Carriage fleet has 100 WAV out of 276 vehicles (36%).

## 6.8 **Risk Assessment**

The Unmet Demand Survey results and recommendations are considered valid / robust for a period of three years. A further survey will need to be commissioned after three years if the council agrees to continue to implement a policy of limiting hackney carriage numbers. Any future Department of Transport advice will be taken into account in consideration of variation to this review period.

## 6.9 **Value for Money**

The administration of the hackney carriage licensing service operates on a cost recovery basis.

## 6.10 **Community Safety Implications**

The hackney carriage / private hire service contributes to community safety in terms of it being the only 24 hour transport service for the residents and visitors to Southend and in particular assists in the safe transport of passengers during the late night / early morning periods where other transport services are unavailable.

## 6.11 **Environmental Impact**

The hackney carriage service is part of the integrated transport system for Southend and therefore contributes to the efficient and effective operation of public transport services across the borough, minimising the environmental impact of transport services.

## 7. **Background Papers**

7.1 Unmet Demand Survey Report 2012.

## 8. **Appendices**

Southend-on-Sea Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey