

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Report of Corporate Director for Place

to
Cabinet
On
28th June 2016

Agenda
Item No.

Report prepared by: Dipti Patel – Head of Public Protection

Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey 2015 Environment & Economic Scrutiny Committee –Executive Council: Cllr Mark Flewitt

A Part 1 Public Agenda item.

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To consider the conclusions of a Hackney Carriage Demand Study 2015 undertaken by CTS Traffic & Transportation on behalf of this Authority.

2. Recommendation

- 2.1 **That Cabinet agrees to maintain the authority's current entry control policy and maintains 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 The latest guidance provided by the Department for Transport (DfT) 'Best Practice Guidance'; for taxi licensing, 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 reviewed and considered.
- 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, 2009 and 2012.
- 3.4 The last of these surveys in 2012 also concluded that there was no significant unmet demand and it was decided by Cabinet to maintain the policy to limit numbers of Hackney Carriages and not to issue any further Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences.

- 3.5 In May 2015, the Authority commissioned CTS Traffic & Transportation 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 July 2015 to November 2015. CTS Traffic & Transportation's Final Report (December 2015) has been placed in the Members Room for information. Members' attention is drawn particularly to page vii of the report which provides the Executive Summary, and pages 43 - 49 of the report which provides a Summary and Conclusions and Recommendations as a result of the survey. Attached at **Appendix 1** is the Executive Summary.
- 3.7 The 2015 report concludes that there is NO significant unmet demand for the services of Hackney Carriages in Southend.
- 3.8 The report goes on to make other recommendations in respect of public awareness of ranks and the potential to provide information boards at rank locations to assist the public. These matters will be considered outside the remit of this report.

4. Other Options

- 4.1 While the Unmet Demand Survey 2015 report recommends that the current limit on licences remains in place, the authority may consider other options, 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

That the Unmet Demand Survey 2015 has identified that there is NO evidence of significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriages in Southend.

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 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 2015 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 year. 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 carbon footprint of transport services.

7. Background Papers

7.1 Unmet Demand Survey Report 2015.

8. Appendices

Appendix 1- Unmet Demand Survey 2015 – Executive Summary