

Item

HACKNEY CARRIAGE NUMBERS

To:

Licensing Committee [22/03/2021]

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction / Executive Summary

- 1.1 The Council may, as part of its adopted policy on the licensing of Hackney Carriages (HCV), consider whether to apply a limit on the maximum number of HCV licences which it will issue at any time. However, this power may be exercised only if the Council is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of HCVs which is unmet (section 16 Transport Act 1985). The Council has no power to limit the number of Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) licences.
- 1.2 In January 2015 members agreed that a Demand Survey should be completed every 3 years in order to review the limit on the number of HCV. This is to ensure the council is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for the service.
- 1.3 The most recent Demand Survey was completed in 2017. Within the report produced by the company completing the survey, it was

concluded that there was no significant unmet demand. As a result of these findings, the number limit for HCV remained at 321.

- 1.4 As the council have a limit in the number of HCV they have within the city, as part of the demand survey process an expression of interest 'list' was created for those who wished to hold a HCV, when one become available. This list is currently closed and the council are not currently accepting new expressions of interest.
- 1.5 Since March 2020, 4 plates have become available and offered to those currently on the list. Due to the impact of Covid - 19, those offered plates have been provided with 12 months to licence a new HCV, as apposed to 3 months previously. This extension is in response to Covid-19. There are also a further 9 individuals who remain on this list.
- 1.6 The next Demand Survey was due to be completed in 2020, however this did not take place due to the restrictions in place throughout the Country and the city, in response to the Covid – 19 pandemic.
- 1.7 The Environmental Health Manager, deemed that if a Demand Survey was to be completed under the restrictions in place, the results would not be a true representation of the demand for HCV services.
- 1.8 The above decision was communicated with Committee Members and members of the trade.
- 1.9 Following the above decision not to proceed with the Demand Survey in 2020, the Environmental Health Manager received a request from a member of the trade to stop or freeze the issuing of plates, which have been returned to the council (appendix A).
- 1.10 It is apparent that owing to the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions throughout the country that the taxi trade has been impacted due to decreased demand for the services. As the restrictions ease over the next coming months, demand is likely to increase, however it is unknown how quickly things will go back to 'normal' at this point in time.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are recommended to approve that council officers put on hold handing out plates returned to the council to the next persons on the Expression list, for the next 6 months.

3. Background

- 3.1 Cambridge City Council licences both hackney carriages (HCV) and private hire vehicles (PHV) to operate within the city.
- 3.2 HCVs operate from ranks and can be hailed in the street and they can also accept pre-booked fares, either direct or from a licensed operator.
- 3.3 PHVs may only accept pre-booked fares from an operator. However, there is no power for the Council to limit their numbers, nor to regulate those licensed by other Councils and operating in the city.
- 3.4 The Transport Act 1985 allows the Council to limit the number of HCVs it licences, but only if it is satisfied that there is no significant demand for HCVs which is unmet.
- 3.5 There is currently a limit on the numbers of HCV licences granted by Cambridge City Council of 321.
- 3.6 The above number was agreed on the 26th January 2015 at Licensing Committee when members took the decision to adopt a policy of limiting the number of HCVs which it will licence in the City to 317 with immediate effect. Subsequently this was amended to 321 under urgent decision powers due to an administrative error.
- 3.7 It was also on 26th January 2015, in which Members agreed that the policy would be reviewed every 3 years.

- 3.8 The most recent review was completed in 2017, in which survey finding demonstrated no unmet demand, and so the number limit of 321 remained.
- 3.9 The next survey was due to be completed in 2020, however this did not occur due to local and national restrictions in place in response to the Covid-19 pandemic.

4. Implications

a) Financial Implications

None.

b) Staffing Implications

None.

c) Equality and Poverty Implications

None.

d) Environmental Implications

None.

e) Procurement Implications

None.

f) Community Safety Implications

None.

5. Consultation and communication considerations

None completed.

6. Background papers

No background papers were used in the preparation of this report.

7. Appendices

Appendix A – E-mail from member of the trade.

8. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Wangari Njiiri, Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, tel: 01223 - 458533, email: wangari.njiiri@cambridge.gov.uk.