

| Report of: | Meeting | Date | Item no. |
|---|---------------------|------------------|----------|
| Michel Ryan Corporate Director of People and Places | Licensing Committee | 26 November 2015 | 4 |

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| Hackney Carriage Survey-Results and determination of further limitation Policy |
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1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 To inform members of the outcome of a survey to identify any unmet demand for hackney carriages in the Borough.

2. Outcomes

- 2.1 Members will be aware of any unmet demand for hackney carriages in the borough.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 That members acknowledge the result of the survey which has been carried out to ascertain if there is any unmet demand due to the limit that the Council places on the number of hackney carriage licences that are issued.
- 3.2 That members agree to a continuation of the limit placed on the number of hackney carriage licences issued by this Council, that being 160.

4. Background

- 4.1 The Transport Act 1985 gives the power to a local authority to limit the number of hackney carriages in its area but only if it is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for hackney carriages. That is to say that there is a sufficient number of hackney carriages to accommodate passengers.
- 4.2 The number of hackney carriage plates issued in Wyre has been restricted to 160 for over 40 years, since 1974.
- 4.3 The determination of unmet demand can only be determined following a comprehensive survey undertaken by transport consultants.

- 4.4 The Department of Transport (DoT) recommend that unmet demand surveys only remain valid for 3 years and therefore should be repeated after this time.
- 4.5 The previous survey was carried out in 2008, but due to the complete overhaul of all the taxi ranks in the borough by Lancashire County Council a subsequent survey was delayed until all the works were completed.

5. Key issues and proposals

- 5.1 CTS Traffic and Transportation Limited were commissioned to carry out an unmet demand survey within the borough.
- 5.2 This survey was undertaken earlier this year and they are now in a position to present their results.
- 5.3 A representative from CTI will attend the meeting to present the results of the unmet demand survey. However a summary of their findings is attached as Appendix 1.
- 5.4 As members can see from the report and presentation by Mr Millership at this meeting the conclusion from the report is that “there is no significant unmet demand” in Wyre Borough. That is to say that the number of hackney carriages licensed by this Council meets the demand of customers and does not need to be increased.
- 5.5 Should members agree to maintain the current level of 160 hackney carriages, a further study will be commissioned in 2018, subject to changes in legislation. The administrative charge levied on hackney carriage vehicle licences will continue to pay for any future study.

| Financial and legal implications | |
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| Finance | The cost of the survey has been met by a £25.00 surcharge on all hackney carriage licences. |
| Legal | Compliance with the Transport Act 1985. The findings of the survey will be used to help determine any future policy etc. |

Other risks/implications: checklist

If there are significant implications arising from this report on any issues marked with a ✓ below, the report author will have consulted with the appropriate specialist officers on those implications and addressed them in the body of the report. There are no significant implications arising directly from this report, for those issues marked with a x.

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|------------------------|-------|
| community safety | ✓ |
| equality and diversity | x |
| sustainability | x |
| health and safety | x |

| risks/implications | ✓ / x |
|--------------------|-------|
| asset management | x |
| climate change | x |
| data protection | x |

| report author | telephone no. | email | date |
|------------------|---------------|------------------------------|------------|
| Christa Ferguson | 887476 | christa.ferguson@wyre.gov.uk | 12/11/2015 |

| List of background papers: | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------------|
| name of document | date | where available for inspection |
| Taxi Licensing and Enforcement Policy | August 2004 | Licensing section |

List of appendices

Appendix 1- CTS Executive Summary of the hackney carriage survey report.

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Executive summary

CTS Traffic and Transportation were appointed by Wyre Council to undertake their “Survey of demand for hackney carriage services” on 4th June 2015. This report presents the results of all investigations undertaken to provide a database of robust information on which a decision can be taken by councillors in regard to the hackney carriage vehicle limitation policy. All research was undertaken in line with the current Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance (April 2010) and taking advantage of the extensive research undertaken by the Law Commission in their recent review of licensing.

Wyre is a borough council within the larger Lancashire county authority. Highway and transport powers are therefore led by the County. Its background transport policy only mentions taxis in regard to encouraging training for operators and improving interchanges. There is a comprehensive and active policy for licensing hackney carriage and private hire including exercising the power to restrict the number of hackney carriages licensed since 1974.

Present industry statistics show a private hire fleet smaller than in 1997 and a level of drivers also lower than at that date. With the limited number of hackney carriages, their numbers have remained stable. Compared to population, Wyre has the highest level of hackney carriages after Rossendale and Blackpool. The fleet size is well above the Lancashire average and the national average for England excluding London. The proportion of wheel chair accessible vehicles is about half of that for equivalent Lancashire districts (ie those with mixed fleets). The urban parts of the area see mainly mixed fleet operations which has reduced the level of overall private hire in the area. Fares are just below the national average but higher than the average for Lancashire.

Some 593 hours of rank surveys were undertaken at 11 ranks in Fleetwood, 10 in Thornton-Cleveleys and both the Poulton-le-Fylde ranks. From the vehicle observations at ranks 8% were cars abusing the ranks involved. From the hackney carriage observations some 12% appeared to be WAV style (higher than the 8% in the fleet). Two people were observed using hackney carriages in wheel chairs in the area at ranks. 42 other people were assisted into vehicles by drivers.

Of the 23 ranks observed just five were active in passenger terms for more than nine hours per day. The busiest rank was Ball Street Poulton. This saw an average of over 23 passengers per hours across its active hours – serviced by over 31 vehicles per hour on average (and higher at peaks)(particularly since daytime usage here was very low in comparison). London Street Fleetwood was the next busiest rank, plus three other Cleveleys ranks. Best service to ranks overall was found in Cleveleys.

A large number of ranks were frequented by vehicles which left empty – most likely responding to phone calls. This was a positive factor providing the opportunity for some people to get hackney carriages at ranks that might otherwise have never seen vehicles from a public demand point of view.

There appears to have been a significant increase in overall usage of hackney carriages at ranks since 2008 although much of this growth was at Poulton. The two ranks here provide 51% of estimated weekly usage of ranks by passengers in the Borough. Cleveleys appears to have seen a change between the fortunes of the ranks there.

Half the fleet were observed active on the busiest day of the survey. Further, Friday and Saturday nights were found to provide peak demand, but at about the same overall level. Compared to this, daytime demand is relatively low which appears to be a change since 2008.

The ISUD index demonstrates the unmet demand observed is not significant although with increased usage at ranks most aspects of the index have increased in level since 2008.

250 people were consulted across the area of which 49% had used a licensed vehicle in the area in the last three months. Phone usage of licensed vehicles dominates but many of these are likely to be hackney carriages. Garstang has no demand for hackney carriages and is well serviced by smaller private hire companies although there was also evidence that many people use Preston hackney carriages to get to this part of the area from Preston station.

While rank use and knowledge was low the responses suggested similar or slightly increased usage of licensed vehicles overall since 2008. There was high overall satisfaction with the hackney carriage service. Fleetwood tends to see use throughout the day, Cleveleys more daytime with moderate night, and Poulton has one rail-focussed rank and another principally night time rank.

Good stakeholder consultation was obtained despite many places being found either to have closed down, failed to answer, or refused to answer. There was some knowledge of ranks from stakeholders but many used phoned-for vehicles.

Trade response came from 7% of those invited to respond. 82% were from hackney carriage but responses from three of the mixed fleet companies were included as well as two other private hire companies. Most key ranks were serviced. Half said they got fares from the phone, 28% said ranks, 15% said school contracts and 4% hailing.

Even private hire felt the limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers should remain. Many said the key issue was driver shortages even though we did find two thirds telling us their vehicle was also used by someone else when they were not using it.

Despite increase demand at ranks, overall demand at ranks is not high apart from in Poulton-le-Fylde. A key factor is vehicles waiting at ranks for telephone calls as well as walk-in fares and this improves the overall service to the public significantly. Wyre tends to be an area where people make phone bookings for licensed vehicles and are serviced by a hackney carriage (apart from in rural Over-Wyre which is more typical private hire country). Present overall policies support the current balanced service which is well-appreciated by those using it in this area.

There is no unmet demand which is significant at this time and no evidence at all that any significant change to overall licensed vehicle policy is needed. Continual review and thought about ranks (and opportunities to market them) is needed but in general the current status quo is serving the public interest of those using licensed vehicles well.

Detailed recommendations are provided in the final chapter of the report relating to rank marketing, improving integration, future review of the limit policy, and the importance of council supporting the present very effective licensing function.

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