

# Licensing Committee

19<sup>th</sup> July 2018

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

## HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCE – SURVEY ON DEREGULATION

<b>Final Decision-Maker</b>	Licensing Committee
<b>Lead Director or Head of Service</b>	John Littlemore
<b>Lead Officer and Report Author</b>	Lorraine Neale
<b>Classification</b>	Non-exempt
<b>Wards affected</b>	All

**This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:**

That the Hackney Carriage Licence Survey on Deregulation is noted.

**This report relates to the following corporate priorities:**

- Keeping Maidstone Borough an attractive place for all

**Timetable –**

<b>Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Policy and Resources Committee	N/A
Council	N/A
Other Committee	N/A

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1 That Members are advised of the results of the Survey carried out by Clare Harvey, Digital Intelligence Officer and consider the options open to the Council with regard to maintaining, partially maintaining or removing a limit on the number of hackney carriage licences that are issued.

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## **2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 Maidstone Borough Council is the licensing authority for the Borough in respect of hackney carriages, and for many years it has restricted the numbers of hackney carriage vehicles
- 2.2 The limit currently stands at 48 and there is a discretion for that to continue at this figure provided the Council is satisfied there is no significant demand for hackney services in the Borough which is unmet, the power being contained in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985.
- 2.3 In order that such a position can be evidenced an independent review of demand for the service is needed, and such a survey must reflect the current position and needs updated around every 3 years. The last survey carried out in Maidstone was in July 2016 and that report went to Licensing Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016, it recommended that no new licences be issued as there was no significant unmet demand.
- 2.4 At the Licensing Committee on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016 the Head of Housing and Community Services was asked to undertake a 12 week consultation with stakeholders on the following three options for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences with a view to a report back to the Licensing Committee at the earliest opportunity to enable a recommendation to be made to the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee. The questions to be asked being whether to:-
1. Maintain the current limit on Hackney Carriage numbers; or
  2. Issue any number of additional vehicle licences as appropriate; or
  3. Remove the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers.
- 2.5 The survey run from the 5<sup>th</sup> March 2018 until 27<sup>th</sup> May 2018 and was carried out online and by email, with a direct email to approximately 8,000 customer who had consented to being contacted and was promoted on the Council's website, social media and in the local press. A direct email was sent to licensed taxi operators using customer details provided by the licensing team. Paper copies of the survey and alternative formats were available on request.

- 2.6 Those affiliated with the taxi industry were asked their views on rank locations, the number of hackney licenses issued and if the limit should remain. They were also able to submit additional comments. Residents were asked the same questions as outlined above for those in the taxi industry but were also asked questions about their experience of engaging a taxi in Maidstone.
- 2.7 A total of 474 people (including 120 taxi drivers or representatives of taxi businesses) responded to the questionnaire.
- 2.8 In response to the question at page 13 of the report "There are currently 48 Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed by Maidstone Borough. Is this number..." . 59% of respondents indicated that this number was about right.
- 2.9 In response to the question at page 14 of the report "Do you think the Council should limit the number of Hackney Carriage vehicle licenses it will issue". 50% of respondents agreed that the Council should continue to limit the number.
- 2.10 Included in the additional comments at page 15 reference is made to increasing numbers of plates.

"Twenty people said that the current limit should be increased, some of these suggested new limits these ranged from an additional two plates up to having a total of 75 however none of these commenter said that the limit should be scrapped altogether."

However comments are also made not to increase

"Twenty one people made comments to the effect that they are against removing the limit or that they do not want/see the need for the current limit on taxis to be increased and five made comments that there are too many taxis in Maidstone"

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### **3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS**

- 1 Maintain the current limit on Hackney Carriage numbers; or
- 2 Issue any number of additional vehicle licences as appropriate; or
- 3 Remove the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers.

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### **4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 Maintain the current limit on Hackney Carriage numbers as the report does not justify an increase to plate numbers. An Unmet Demand Survey is due to be undertaken in July 2019 that will highlight demand should there be any.
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## 5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

5.1 Consultation results can be seen at Appendix 1

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## 6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

6.1 Committee to consider the responses and agree to maintain the number of plates at 48 and to recommend that option to the Communities, Housing & Environment Committee supported by evidence in the report.

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## 7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

<b>Issue</b>	<b>Implications</b>	<b>Sign-off</b>
<b>Risk Management</b>	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Financial</b>	None	[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
<b>Staffing</b>	None	[Head of Service]
<b>Legal</b>	Included in the body of the report	[Legal Team]
<b>Equality Impact Needs Assessment</b>	None	[Policy & Information Manager]
<b>Environmental/Sustainable Development</b>	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Community Safety</b>	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Human Rights Act</b>	None	[Head of Service or Manager]
<b>Procurement</b>	None	[Head of Service &

		Section 151 Officer]
<b>Asset Management</b>	None	[Head of Service & Manager]

## **8. REPORT APPENDICES**

The following documents are to be published with this report and form part of the report:

- Appendix A - Report by Clare Harvey, Digital Intelligence Officer.
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## **9. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None