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## Licensing and Regulatory Committee

9<sup>th</sup> January 2009

Report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services

### Review of issue of new Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences

#### Summary

1. This report asks Members to consider the commissioning of an interim demand survey for hackney carriages to inform a review of the policy of issuing new vehicle licences in light of the current economic climate.

#### Background

2. At the meeting of this committee on the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008 Members approved a policy of issuing 15 new hackney carriage vehicle licences from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2008, then, after a period of 12 months, releasing a further 2 vehicle licences every 6 months subject to review after 3 years.
3. The 15 new vehicle licences have been issued and the vehicles are trading in the city. Since that decision the economic situation has worsened. A request has now been received from the York Taxi Association (YTA) that the Council suspends the implementation of this policy, letter attached as Annex 1.

#### Consultation

4. This issue has been discussed with the YTA and has prompted their written request.

#### Options

5. Option 1 – Suspend the current policy for a set period of time.

Option 2 – Suspend the current policy indefinitely.

Option 3 – Conduct an interim survey of unmet demand and undertake a full consultation with those currently on the waiting list prior to making a decision.

#### Analysis

6. As a licensing authority we have a responsibility to ensure our policies provide for a taxi service that meets the needs of our community now and in the future.

Our existing policy was designed to deliver that requirement. There can be no dispute, however, that the economic climate has changed since the current policy was introduced which will likely have impacted on taxi usage.

7. In making any decision Members are reminded that the YTA is made up of those already in the trade and excludes those who aspire to enter it. Those on the waiting list will have expectations of being granted a licence in the future. As people on the list were notified of their respective positions when the 15 new vehicle licences were issued, those at the top will no doubt have calculated when they would receive their vehicle licences under the current policy.
8. Halcrow, the consultants who conducted the previous unmet demand survey, have quoted £3720 + VAT for an 80 hour survey and report to compare the current situation with that of when the policy was made. Any costs of a survey will be met out of the taxi licensing account which is funded by licence fees.

### **Corporate Priorities**

9. An efficient, high quality, accessible taxi service will reduce the dependence on the private car for short journeys in and around the city contributing to making York a sustainable city.
10. Taxis also remain the key transport out of the city late at night. The safe transportation out of the city of those enjoying the late night economy contributes significantly to the reduction of crime, disorder and anti social behaviour making York a safer city.

### **Implications**

11. Financial – None

Human Resources (HR) – None

Equalities – None

Legal (Contact – Head of Legal and Democratic Services)

Crime and Disorder – None

Information Technology (IT) – None

Property – None

Other – None

### **Risk Management**

12. There are no risks associated with this report.

## Recommendations

13. Members are asked to approve Option 3.

Reason: This will enable members to have an objective assessment of demand in the taxi market and enable the views of those who wish to enter the trade to be heard.

## Contact Details

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### Chief Officer Responsible for the report:

Andy Hudson  
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Report Approved



Date 19<sup>th</sup> Dec 08

Wards Affected:

All



For further information please contact the author of the report

### Background Papers:

Report of Licensing and Regulatory Committee 21<sup>st</sup> May 2008

### Annexes:

Copy of letter from the York Taxi Association