

Policy For Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences

Summary

1. This report asks Members to consider the findings of a recent unmet demand study carried out within the authority area, relating to the provision of the hackney carriage service, and implementation of a new policy in relation to hackney carriage vehicle licence numbers. This relates to motorised hackney carriages only.

Background

2. City of York Council currently regulates the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences issued. At this time there are 183 licensed vehicles, of which 45 are wheelchair accessible. Due to regulating the number of licences the council operates a waiting list for those who wish to obtain a new hackney carriage vehicle licence. Due to the nature of the market a vehicle licence has never been surrendered.
3. As the council regulates the number of licenses it is considered best practice, by the Department for Transport that an Unmet Demand Survey is carried out once every three years.
4. The policy currently in place regarding hackney carriage vehicle licences is that 2 new licences will be granted every 6 months to wheelchair accessible vehicles until the next unmet demand survey is carried out.
5. At its meeting on 25th April 2012 this committee resolved to suspend the granting of new hackney carriage vehicle licences until a consultation had taken place.
6. At its meeting on 16th September 2013, following a report on a taxi licensing consultation that had recently taken place, this committee resolved that the existing policy be retained, but with the suspension of

the issue of 2 new licences every 6 months to wheelchair accessible vehicles. The committee also resolved that an Unmet Demand survey should take place in 2014 during University term time, to ensure that the survey is reflective of York at its busiest time.

7. Halcrow, one of the UK's largest transport planning consultancies, were contracted to carry out a study of the taxi industry in York. On behalf of the authority Halcrow have carried out similar studies in 2008 and 2011. The study report is attached at Annex 1. A project manager from Halcrow will be present at the meeting to answer any questions relating to the study.

Unmet Demand Study

8. Halcrow conducted a rank observation survey during March 2014. Some 20,761 passengers and 14,069 cab departures were recorded.
9. This survey has identified that there is no evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in York.

Policy for new hackney carriage vehicle licences

10. It is proposed that no new hackney carriage vehicle licences are issued, and that an unmet demand study is carried out in three years time.

Allocation of New Licences

11. Since 1996 the council has operated a waiting list for those who would wish to obtain a hackney carriage vehicle licence, should any be issued in the future. There are currently 201 persons on the list.
12. The waiting list is a points based system designed to give priority to those who have worked in the trade but have not had the opportunity to hold a vehicle licence in their own name. Points are allocated as follows:
 - All applicants – one point for every full month on the list.
 - Holders of a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence – one extra point for every month on the list, except for licensed drivers who currently hold or have previously held a hackney carriage vehicle licence issued by one of the constituent local authority areas which make up the City of York Council area.

- Holders of a hackney carriage or private hire driver's licence – one point for every full year in which a driver's licence has been held prior to joining the list or the list being established.
13. On the 21st May 2008, Licensing and Regulatory Committee resolved that:
- An applicant has a period of 3 months from receiving an offer to obtain a vehicle licence to putting a vehicle on the road. Any person who has been offered a vehicle licence but fails to take up the offer will not be offered a further opportunity to obtain a vehicle licence for a further 12 months. They will retain the accrued points to that date but will not accrue any additional points within the 12 month period.
 - Having obtained a new vehicle licence the applicant can remain eligible for the issue of another licence but all accrued points to that date will be spent and s/he would have to start from the bottom of the list.

Consultation

14. As part of the study Halcrow carried out a public attitude pedestrian survey, that was aimed at collecting information regarding opinions on the taxi market in York. Some 407 on-street public attitude surveys were carried out in May and June 2014. Survey results are detailed in Section 5 of the study.
15. Halcrow also complied with the Department for Transport guidelines and consulted with the following organisations and stakeholders:
- All those working in the markets;
 - Consumers and passenger (include disabled) groups
 - Groups which represent those passengers with special needs;
 - The police;
 - Local interest groups such as hospitals or visitor attractions; and
 - A wide range of transport stakeholders such as rail/bus/coach providers and transport managers.

Stakeholders were contacted by letter and email, and all relevant organisations and bodies were provided with an opportunity to comment. Responses received are detailed in Section 6 of the study.

Options

16. Option 1 – Apply the policy set out in paragraph 10 of this report.
17. Option 2 – Apply an alternative policy for the release of new hackney carriage vehicle licences and either:
 - a) Utilise the waiting list by offering the person at the top of the list the opportunity to obtain a licence, in line with the current policy as detailed in paragraph 13.
 - b) Utilise the waiting list but with an alternative criteria.
 - c) Do not use the waiting list as a means to release new vehicles licences, apply an alternative selection method.
18. Option 3 – Deregulate completely.

Analysis

19. The council has 17 appointed taxi ranks, 15 of these are within the city centre:
 - Duncombe Place – fulltime rank – 10 cars
 - Queen Street – fulltime rank – 4 cars
 - St Leonard’s Place – fulltime rank – 4 cars
 - St Saviourgate – rank A – fulltime rank – 12 cars
 - St Saviourgate – rank B (feeder rank) – fulltime rank – 4 cars
 - The Crescent (off Blossom St) – fulltime rank – 1 car
 - Tower Street – fulltime rank – 4 cars
 - Clifford Street (for Kuda Nightclub) – midnight to 6.00am – 4 cars
 - Clifford Street (opposite side of road from Kuda) – midnight to 6.00am – 4 cars
 - Micklegate (outside The Parish) – midnight to 6.00am – 3 cars
 - Toft Green (for Tokyo Nightclub) – midnight to 6.00am – 4 cars
 - Exhibition Square – 8.00pm to 6.00am – 3 cars
 - Piccadilly – 11.00am to 6.00am – 2 cars
 - St Sampson’s Square – 8.00pm to 6.00am – 8 cars

The two ranks outside of the city centre are located at:

- Clifton Moor Cinema – fulltime rank – 3 cars
- York Racecourse (Race Days only) – 12 cars

20. The rank located at the Railway Station is a private rank and is outside of the control of the council.
21. As part of the rank observation Halcrow recorded 20,761 passengers and 14,069 cab departures from various ranks within the city centre. The busiest rank is the Railway Station with 8,400 passenger and 6,065 cab departures (40.5% of passenger and 43% of cab departures from ranks).
22. The busiest appointed rank is Duncombe Place with 3,957 passenger and 2,306 cab departures (21.4% of passenger and 18.6% of cab departures from ranks).
23. As part of the public attitude pedestrian survey, 407 respondents were asked to rate four elements from their last journey on a scale from very poor to very good, responses as follows:

	Very Good	Good	Average	Poor	Very Poor
Vehicle quality	41%	49%	10%	0	0
Driver	39%	49%	10%	1%	1%
Price	11%	29%	49%	9%	2%
Customer service	29%	57%	10%	2%	2%

24. The 407 respondents were also asked whether they felt that the taxi services in York could be improved. Some 47.6% of respondents considered that services could be improved. Of these the following were the most popular responses:
- cheaper;
 - more of them; and
 - better ranks.
25. Respondents were asked if there were any locations in York where new ranks were needed. 36.5% of respondents said that no new ranks were needed, whilst 49.6% did not know. Of the 13.9% of respondents who stated they would like to see a new rank the most common locations included:

- Parliament Street;
- Piccadilly; and
- Coney Street.

26. Committee should note that as highlighted in Para 19 there is currently a rank on St Sampson's Square which is very close to Parliament Street, there is also a rank Piccadilly. Given the nature of Coney Street, i.e. its width it is not possible to have a rank in this location.
27. Respondents were asked if they felt safe using hackney carriages and private hire services in York. 97.1% did feel safe when using them during the day whilst 92.4% felt safe whilst using them at night. When asked how security could be improved, the most common response was the installation of CCTV at ranks.
28. Key points from the public attitude survey can be summarised as follows:
- Some 61% of hiring's are pre booked via a telephone;
 - High levels of satisfaction with delay on last trip;
 - Some 11.4% of people had given up trying to obtain a taxi at a rank or by flagdown;
 - Some 47.6% of respondents believed taxi services in York council be improved.
29. Some responses received from stakeholders were as follows:
- Unite the Union (York Branch) – representative felt that overall hackney carriage supply in York was sufficient. Comment was made as to the traffic management situation at York Rail Station which can prevent taxis from leaving the rank and therefore prevent available taxis joining the rank.
 - Independent Taxi Association – representative felt that there is an adequate supply of hackney carriages across the day and night but noted that whilst passengers may have to wait a short time at peak periods due to heavy traffic etc, the majority of the time hackney carriages are ranked up waiting for customers to appear and can be waiting up to one hour or more from arriving at the back of the rank to pick up a customer, e.g. York Station rank.
 - North Yorkshire Police – the officer felt that hackney carriage and private hire supply was adequate across York. He noted that driver

quality was generally ok but felt they would benefit from vulnerability training, similar to that received by door staff.

- MRH Presents – this individual considered there to be a good supply of hackney and private hire vehicles. With regard to the quality of vehicles he noted that some vehicles were very old. Drivers attitudes were considered to be mostly good but some may benefit from additional training to facilitate a smoother journey.

Council Priorities

30. The provision of hackney carriage and private hire licensing supports the council priority 'Get York Moving'.

Implications

31. The direct implications arising from this report are:
- (a) **Financial** - There are no financial implications.
 - (b) **Human Resources (HR)** - There are no HR implications.
 - (c) **Equalities** - Wheelchair accessible vehicles assist those dependant on a wheelchair for mobility.
 - (d) **Legal** - There are no legal implications.
 - (e) **Crime and Disorder** - There are no crime and disorder implications.
 - (f) **Information Technology (IT)** - There are no IT implications.
 - (g) **Property** - There are no property implications.
 - (h) **Other** - There are no other implications.

Risk Management

32. There are no known risks associated with this report.

Recommendations

33. That Members approve Option 1 of this report.

Reason: The unmet demand study has identified that there is no evidence of significant unmet demand.

Contact Details

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	Report Approved	√	Date 9 th Oct 14
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Wards Affected:		All	√
For further information please contact the author of the report			

Annexes

Annex 1 - Halcrow Report – City of York Hackney Carriage Demand Study
August 2014