

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 8 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillor Woodward (Chair);
Councillors Chrisp, D Edwards, Livingston, Page, Skeats and Vickers.

Apologies: Councillors Dennis and Singh.

4. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4 November 2015 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

5. PETITIONS & QUESTIONS

A petition on the following matter was submitted:

	<u>Petitioner</u>	<u>Subject</u>	<u>Reply</u>
1.	Sayed Abbas	Hackney Carriage Licensing Criteria	Councillor Woodward

(NB - The full text of the petition and reply would be made available on the Reading Borough Council website).

6. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY RESULTS

The Director of Environment and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to consider the results of the recently completed hackney carriage unmet demand survey and whether it was appropriate to amend the current limiting policy approach to hackney carriage numbers. A copy of the Taxi Unmet Demand Study that had been carried out on behalf of the Council by CTS Traffic and Transportation was attached to the report at Appendix 1 and a copy of the Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

The report explained that during summer 2015 officers had contacted three transport consultants with requests for proposals to carry out an unmet demand survey. CTS Traffic and Transportation were retained to carry out a survey to determine if any unmet demand existed within the Borough.

The report detailed two options that had been prepared by officers, the first of which stated that was the view of officers' that there was currently a good supply of hackney carriages in Reading and the results of the survey had demonstrated this to be the case. The survey had identified some areas of taxi provision which could be changed including the removal of ranks that were not used. The survey did indicate that there was a growth in passenger numbers since the last survey

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and the south ranks located at the rail station were still the main source of work for the hackney carriage trade.

The redevelopment of the train station was complete and operational and the provision of rank space on the north side of the station was under used and was unlikely to be fully used for a number of years. The provision of taxi ranks on the south side remained limited due to the removal of the old bus station and during none peak times there were many hackney carriages waiting at ranks for customers and this had caused disruption for other road users. Any additional Hackney Carriage licences would require additional spaces to rank in the station area. For these reasons, officers did not believe that it was necessary for further hackney carriage licences to be issued at this time.

The second option stated that while option one sat within the results of the unmet demand survey results, it was recognised that passenger numbers had grown and were likely to continue to grow over the coming years. The limit on hackney carriage numbers could therefore be removed but a restriction placed on any issuing of licences to a maximum number in a particular period, for example two per year if the applicants met the taxi criteria that had been approved at the meeting on 4 November 2015 (Minute 3 refers). This would provide a drip feed approach to the increase in numbers of passengers that had been identified in the report, rather than a large number of licences being issued in three years' time if growth continued.

Ian Millership, CTS Traffic & Transportation, attended the meeting and gave a presentation on the results and recommendations of the unmet demand survey.

Asif Rashid, Chairman of Reading Taxi Association, was present at the meeting and addressed the Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That the results of the unmet demand survey stating that there was currently no significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in the Reading rank based market be noted;
- (2) That the current policy of not issuing any further hackney carriage licences, pending another review due in late 2018, be retained.

(In accordance with Standing Order 38, Councillors Skeats and Vickers requested that their votes against resolution (2) above be recorded)

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 7.10pm)