

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES - 9 JULY 2026

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Clarke, Dennis, Gurung, Keane, Leng, McGoldrick, Saadat and Stevens.

Also in attendance via Microsoft Teams: Councillor Magon.

Apologies: Councillors Tarar and Ayub.

1. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 12 February 2026 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

2. HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

The Committee considered a report that set out the detailed results and findings of the latest Unmet Demand Survey, provided evidence of the current level of demand for Hackney Carriage services in Reading, and recommended that the existing limit of 216 Hackney Carriage vehicle licences be retained.

The report stated that the Council, as the licensing authority, currently limited the number of Hackney Carriage vehicle licences to 216 and that, under the Transport Act 1985, it could only maintain that restriction if it was satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand for taxi services. The report noted that Department for Transport (DfT) guidance (attached to the report at Appendix 2) recommended that licensing authorities which retained a limit on Hackney Carriage licences undertook an unmet demand survey at least every five years to provide evidence that the restriction remained justified. The report further noted that the DfT considered that any decision to retain quantity restrictions should, where possible, be aligned with the preparation of local transport plans, with the justification for maintaining such restrictions incorporated into that process.

The report also noted that the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance (attached to the report at Appendix 3) stated that restrictions on Hackney Carriage licence numbers could reduce availability, increase waiting times and limit competition, and that issues such as congestion, air quality and enforcement could often be addressed through alternative measures rather than quantity restrictions.

The report stated that the Council had undertaken regular unmet demand surveys since the reintroduction of the Hackney Carriage licence limit in 2009. It advised that the latest survey report, carried out by CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd in the autumn of 2025 and attached at Appendix 1, had found no evidence of significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriage services within Reading. The survey report noted that the existing cap was considered to benefit both the travelling public and the trade, was supported by the Hackney Carriage trade, and that there was no evidence to justify either removing the limit or increasing licence numbers at the present time. The report recommended that the policy should be reviewed again within five years in accordance with DfT guidance and that a further unmet demand survey would be scheduled for 2030/31, with the results to be reported to Committee in 2031. The report sought the Committee's consideration of the

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Unmet Demand Survey and its findings and a decision on whether to retain, remove or increase the current limit on Hackney Carriage Vehicle licences, with retention of the existing cap at 216 licences being the recommended option.

Mr Ian Millership from CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd attended the meeting and gave a presentation summarising the findings of the Unmet Demand Survey and answered questions.

Mr Asif Rashid, Chairman of the Reading Taxi Association and Manzoor Hussain from Reading Private Hire Association, were present at the meeting and addressed the Committee on the item.

Resolved –

- (1) That the contents and findings of the Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey be noted;**
- (2) That the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance relating to taxi licence quantity restrictions be noted;**
- (3) That the current limit of 216 Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences be retained.**

(The meeting started at 6.30 pm and closed at 7.25 pm)