

LICENSING APPLICATIONS COMMITTEE - 11 JUNE 2019

Present: Councillor Edwards (Chair);
Councillors Grashoff, James, Page, Rowland, Skeats and Woodward;

Apologies: Councillors Carnell, Maskell and D Singh.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 25 September 2018 and 22 May 2019 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Chair.

3. REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE UNMET DEMAND SURVEY RESULTS

The Director of Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services submitted a report asking the Committee to consider the outcome of the Unmet Demand Survey which had been carried out by LVSA Traffic Consultants in October 2018, with the final report having been received in April 2019 and whether it was appropriate to amend the current limiting policy approach to hackney carriage numbers. A copy of the Taxi Unmet Demand Survey that had been carried out on behalf of the Council by LVSA Traffic Consultants was attached to the report at Appendix 1, a copy of the Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance was attached to the report at Appendix 2, a table showing the rank hours was attached at Appendix 3 and a table setting out the rank observation results was attached to the report at Appendix 4.

The report explained that during the summer of 2018 LVSA Traffic Consultants had been recruited to carry out a survey to determine if any unmet demand existed within the Borough for Hackney Carriage Vehicles (HCVs). Following a review of the survey, officers were of the view that there was currently a good supply of HCVs in the Borough. The survey had demonstrated this to be the case as there had been no growth in passenger numbers since the previous survey. The south side ranks that were located at the rail station were still the main source of work for the hackney carriage trade and the provision of rank space on the north side of the station continued to be under used and was unlikely to be fully used by vehicles or passengers for a number of years. There was also an increase in customers who had reported the use of phone apps to book their taxi rather than use a taxi rank which had brought more work to the Private Hire Trade.

The report had highlighted some areas of taxi provision which could be changed as follows:

- Removal of ranks that were not used;
- Provision of taxi ranks on the south side of the station had remained limited due to the removal of the old bus station and if any additional Hackney Carriage vehicles were plated, they would require additional spaces to rank in the station area;
- During non-peak times there were many hackney carriages waiting at ranks for customers and this had caused disruption to other road users.

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The report stated that emissions from HCVs had continued to be an issue in the town centre and there were ongoing discussions with officers and the RTA as to how to deal with this issue.

Asif Rashid, Chairman of Reading Taxi Association, was present at the meeting and addressed the Committee. Chris Avery, Ali Sheilk, Meza Beg, from the Reading Cab Drivers Association (RCDA), were also present at the meeting and addressed the Committee.

Resolved -

- (1) That the results of the unmet demand survey, which found 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 2021, be retained.

(The meeting started at 6.30pm and closed at 6.58pm)