

**Report to:** Environment and Safety Committee

**Date of Meeting:** 12<sup>th</sup> April 2017

**Report Title:** Update on new Hackney Carriage licences following decision to remove the limit on numbers.

**Report By:** Mike Hepworth Assistant Director Environment and Place.

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### **Purpose of Report**

To inform members of the current situation with new Hackney Carriage applications following the decision in 2016 to delimit numbers.

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### **Recommendation(s)**

- 1. Members to note content of report.**

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### **Reasons for Recommendations**

Hastings Borough Council had for many years limited the number of Hackney Carriages within the Borough, but to retain that limit an unmet demand survey was required every 3 – 5 years. Such surveys are expensive to conduct and in February 2016 Council decided to remove the restriction.

The decision to remove was subject to all new applications complying with strict criteria laid down by a working party made up by Council officers, the trade and the disability forum. That working party agreed a set of conditions for new vehicle applications, which were implemented in early October 2016. It was also agreed that a six month report be prepared and presented to Environment and Safety committee on the impact of the new conditions and the trade, which is due now.

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## Introduction

1. Hastings Borough Council is the licensing authority for the Borough in respect of hackney carriages, and for many years it has restricted the numbers of hackney licences issued in the borough.
2. The limit stood at 48 and could have continued at this figure provided the Council provided evidence of no unmet demand for hackney services in the Borough, the power being contained in Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985.
3. In February 2016 a full Council decision was taken to delimit our Hackney Carriage fleet and as a result the need for an “Unmet Demand Survey” was no longer appropriate.
4. At the same time, it was decided to delimit but with conditions being attached to any new Hackney Carriage applications received. It was further agreed that the existing Hackney Carriage plate owners (HC 001 to HC 048) would retain grandfather rights forever going forward and that the Licensing Manager would prepare a six (6) month report after the implementation of delimitation to assess its impact on the trade and the Borough.
5. A working party consisting of trade representatives, a disability forum member and Council officers was formed and met on several occasions. It formulated a set of conditions for new hackney carriage applications.
6. The conditions suggested by the working party were accepted by the Environment and Safety Committee in October 2016 and were applied with immediate effect. A very thorough set of conditions were agreed, to ensure that any new applications raise the standard of the fleet in the Borough and in particular raise the availability of disabled access vehicles for the local population. Copy of the conditions attached Appendix A.
7. At the time of writing this report no new applications have been received, although the licensing department are aware of 2 potential new vehicles being prepared for licensing very shortly. Both of these planned applications are for “high end” vehicles which fully comply with the conditions set by the working party.
8. When the change was made in 2016, the main concern of the trade representatives was a large spike in new applications, this has not proved to be the case. However, the licensing manager has agreed to keep new applications under review and should we receive a spike in excess of 10% (5 vehicles) in any calendar year he will report back to Full Council for it to consider if a new survey would be required.

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## Wards Affected

Insert the list of wards affected

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## Policy Implications

Please identify if this report contains any implications for the following:

Equalities and Community Cohesiveness  
Crime and Fear of Crime (Section 17)  
Risk Management  
Environmental Issues  
Economic/Financial Implications  
Human Rights Act  
Organisational Consequences  
Local People's Views  
Anti-Poverty

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## Additional Information

Appendix A. List of new Hackney Conditions..

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## Officer to Contact

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