

Report of	Meeting	Date
Director of People and Places	Licensing and Public Safety Committee	12 Sept 2012

HACKNEY CARRIAGE SERVICE – UNMET DEMAND SURVEY

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To advise Members of the outcome and recommendations arising from the recently commissioned unmet demand survey relating to hackney carriage taxi provision.

RECOMMENDATION(S)

2. It is recommended that Members note the report and determine which of the three outcomes with regard the Hackney Carriage taxi provision highlighted in the report and reproduced at paragraph 9 below should be adopted by the Council.
3. It is further recommended that Members approve the recommendations of the report insofar as exploring the provision of a taxi rank at Chorley Railway Station and Chorley hospital. Members should note that any proximate provision of a rank at the railway station would need the consent and cooperation of Network Rail and the Hospital Trust as land owners of each likely site for such provision.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF REPORT

4. At the meeting of the Licensing and Public Safety Committee on 7 March 2012, Members instructed the Director of People and Places to proceed with an unmet demand survey of hackney carriage taxi provision in the Borough.
5. Tenders for the survey were received and reported to Members and Halcrow were awarded the contract to undertake the survey.
6. The survey has now been completed and Members can access the report at:

www.chorley.gov.uk/hackneycarriage

7. A summary of the main recommendations arising out of the survey are reproduced below and Members will be given a presentation by a representative from Halcrow on the survey findings as part of the submission of this report.

Confidential report Please bold as appropriate	Yes	No
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CORPORATE PRIORITIES

8. This report relates to the following Strategic Objectives:

Strong Family Support		Education and Jobs	
Being Healthy		Pride in Quality Homes and Clean Neighbourhoods	
Safe Respectful Communities		Quality Community Services and Spaces	✓
Vibrant Local Economy		Thriving Town Centre, Local Attractions and Villages	✓
A Council that is a consistently Top Performing Organisation and Delivers Excellent Value for Money			

BACKGROUND

9. The unmet demand survey, undertaken during June, July and August 2012 by Halcrow has resulted in the following broad recommendations:

“10.4 Recommendations

The 2012 study has identified that there is NO evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in Chorley. This conclusion covers both patent and latent/suppressed demand and is based on an assessment of the implications of case law that has emerged since 2000, and the results of Halcrow's analysis.

On this basis the authority has discretion in its hackney licensing policy and may either:

- Maintain the current limit of 36 hackney carriage licences;*
- Issue any number of additional plates as it sees fit, either in one allocation or a series of allocations; or*
- Remove the numerical limit.*

Further recommendations based on the outcome of the consultation exercises include:

- The feasibility of a rank at Chorley Station should be investigated with Northern Rail. The trade, stakeholders and members of the public all expressed a desire for a rank in this location, therefore if one were to be introduced it is likely it would be viable and used by both passengers and drivers.*
- Further investigation should be undertaken into the provision of taxi services at Chorley Hospital. Some 68% of public respondents believed a hackney carriage rank should be introduced here. However only 2 of the hackney carriage trade respondents stated they would use a rank in this location if one were provided meaning it is unlikely a traditional rank would be viable unless the trade could see a clear demand for their services.”*

IMPLICATIONS OF REPORT

10. This report has implications in the following areas and the relevant Directors' comments are included:

Finance	✓	Customer Services	
Human Resources		Equality and Diversity	
Legal	✓	Integrated Impact Assessment required?	
No significant implications in this area		Policy and Communications	

COMMENTS OF THE STATUTORY FINANCE OFFICER

11. The results of the survey recommend adoption of one of three options:
- (1) Maintain the current limit of 36 Hackney Carriage licences.
 - (2) Issue any number of additional plates.
 - (3) Remove the numerical limit.

Option one, to maintain the current limit, will have no impact on the budget.

Options two and three will lead to an increase in income (the current fee is between £145 and £288 per three year licence dependent on the type issued).

However it must be noted that, under statute, as the fees received for the licensing of taxis should not exceed the cost of providing the licensing service itself there would be no net effect on the Licensing service budget; the additional income being offset by additional staff time in processing applications and monitoring the function. In summary this means that there would be no overall change to the department's bottom line budget.

The provision of new taxi ranks may require a capital investment by the council although at this stage budget provision is not required. At any stage that this becomes applicable a report will be made to request approval for any costs that could not be met from existing budgets.

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COMMENTS OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

12. If the Council is to continue its policy of limiting the number of hackney carriage licences then it could rely on the unmet demand survey if a legal challenge were made to the refusal to issue further vehicle licences. However notwithstanding that no significant unmet demand has been identified the Council is not obliged to continue with the limitation policy and could pursue the alternative options identified in paragraph 9.

JAMIE CARSON
DIRECTOR OF PEOPLE AND PLACES

There are no background papers to this report.

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