

EAST HERTS COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 30 OCTOBER 2019

REPORT BY HEAD OF HOUSING AND HEALTH

CONSIDERATION OF RESPONSES TO THE PROPOSAL TO LIMIT
HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCES TO TWO HUNDRED

WARD(S) AFFECTED: ALL

Purpose/Summary of Report

- In March 2019 East Herts Council contracted LVSA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment) to carry out an Unmet Demand Survey of East Herts licensed Hackney Carriage trade.
- The survey concluded that there is no “significant” unmet demand for Hackney Carriage services within the District.
- At a meeting of the Licensing Committee on 21st August 2019 the findings of the unmet demand survey were considered and members recommended placing a limit on the number of Hackney Carriage vehicles licences issued.
- As the suggested limit of 200 licences was below the number of vehicles East Herts had currently issued the decision was made to further consult the trade to get their views on the proposed figure.

<u>RECOMMENDATION FOR DECISION: That</u>	
(A)	The Committee consider the consultation responses and decide whether or not the proposed limit of 200 Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences is the correct level;
	and
(B)	The Committee recommend to Council that a limit be imposed on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences that are issued, including the level of that limit, from 1st January 2020.

1.0 Background

1.1 East Herts is an authority that grants licenses for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers, vehicle proprietors and operators.

1.2 For a number of years the East Herts Hackney Carriage Trade has raised concerns that there are too many Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed within the District. Parts of the Hackney Carriage trade have advocated that the authority limits the numbers of Hackney Carriages.

1.3 Some concerns had been raised regarding the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) within the District.

1.4 As a result of the above factors an Unmet Demand Survey was commissioned which evidenced that there is no significant unmet demand allowing the authority to limit the numbers of Hackney carriage vehicle licences it issues.

2.0 Report

2.1 The consultation with the Hackney Carriage Trade regarding the number at which the proposed limit would be set ran from 26th August 2019 and closes at midnight on 19th September 2019. Every member of the trade received this either via email or post. The contents of the consultation letter can be found at **Essential Reference Paper 'B'**.

2.2 During this consultation three responses were received and these included the views of 11 Dual Driver licences holders licensed by East Herts. Each response is dealt with individually below.

2.3 Response 1 (received on 27th August 2019): The first paragraph of this response endorses the approach of limiting the number of licences issued for Hackney Carriage Vehicles. This respondent suggests that the limit should be set lower than

the proposed limit of 200 licences and that the limit should be 180-190. The response does not contain any reasoning to explain the view that this limit would be more suitable than the suggested limit of 200.

- 2.4 The second paragraph deals with a number of issues unrelated to the consultation however these were still addressed in the response from the Licensing Team. Response 1 can be viewed at **Essential Reference Paper 'C'**.
- 2.5 Response 2 (received on 29th August 2019): This response did not directly address the question of the level at which the limit on Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences should be set but gave the opinion that this was too little too late. The Licensing Team replied seeking clarification regarding the consultation response but the consultee responded only to reiterate that it was "too little too late". Response 2 can be viewed at **Essential Reference Paper 'D'**.
- 2.6 Response 3 (received on 30th August 2019): This response agrees that the limit should be set at 200 licences and is from 9 licensed dual drivers. Response 1 can be viewed at **Essential Reference Paper 'E'**.

2.7 **OPTIONS**

1. Recommend to Council that the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences issued by this authority be limited to the figure of **200** detailed in the consultation.

Or

2. Recommend to Council that the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences be limited to another figure between **180-190**, as detailed in the first consultation response.

2.8 Officers would suggest that the limit be set at 200 vehicle licences as proposed in consultation.

3.0 Implications/Consultations

3.1 Information on any corporate issues and consultation associated with this report can be found within **Essential Reference Paper 'A'**.

Background Papers

Not applicable.

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