

9 March 2016

Report of	Head or Professional Services	Author	Jon Ruder
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Title	Hackney Carriage Vehicles – Survey of Unmet Demand		
Wards affected	Not applicable		

The purpose of this report is to deliver the findings of the recently undertaken Survey of unmet demand with regard to the provision of Hackney Carriage Services in the Borough and to seek resolution to implement the findings therein

1. Decision Required

- 1.1 To note the results of the Unmet Demand Survey report undertaken by Vector Transport Consultancy (VTC) and to determine whether or not to continue to restrict the number of vehicle licences it provides in line with the recommendations of that report.
- 1.2 The options available are:
 - a) Maintain the current limit
 - b) Issue any number of additional plates as it sees fit
 - c) Remove the numerical limit
- 1.3 To approve liaison with the trade to address the lack of the availability of taxis on Saturday evenings

2. Reasons for recommendation

- 2.1 The Council currently restricts the number of hackney carriage vehicles that are permitted to be licensed within the Borough. The current limit is set at 131. Where the Council continues to restrict hackney carriage numbers, the Council must undertake a survey of unmet demand every three years in order to provide justification for the continued restriction of numbers. This report delivers the results of the latest survey and seeks the Committee's approval to resolve to maintain the current limit (option 1.2 a).
- 2.2 The survey has identified that whilst there is no unmet demand that needs to be met by the addition of further plates, there is a problem in the provision of taxis Saturday nights which the Council would like to address by working with the trade to boost the number of taxis available during this period.

3. Highlighted Risks

- 3.1 Failure to conduct the three yearly survey of unmet demand whilst numbers remain limited could leave the policy on continuing to limit numbers open to challenge by means of Judicial Review.

4. Supporting and Background Information

- 4.1 Section 37 Town Police Clauses Act 1847, as amended by section 16 Transport Act 1985 enables Councils to License Hackney Carriage vehicles and to restrict the number of

vehicles it licenses provided they are satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for these services.

- 4.2 Following a successful tendering process, Vector Transport Consultancy were selected on 25 September 2015 as the consultants to conduct the survey on behalf of Colchester Borough Council. The consultant's report and recommendations are attached to this report at Appendix A.

5. Survey of Unmet Demand

- 5.1 The Survey was carried out from 1 October 2015 to 5 October 2015 in the town centre area, and the station ranks between 8 October and 12 October 2015, with the main survey work being undertaken in November 2015.
- 5.2 Generally the survey report states that that there is **no significant unmet demand** for the services of Hackney Carriages in Colchester Borough area. The retention of the current levels would maintain the balance to the benefit of the travelling public.
- 5.3 The available options considered by Vector Transport Consultancy as a result of the survey undertaken were:
- a) Maintain the current limit
 - b) Issue any number of additional plates as it sees fit
 - c) Remove the numerical limit
- 5.4 The preferred option of VTC and therefore the recommendation of this report is option a. However, VTC did state, *'there is a shortage of supply at peak demand on Saturday night. This is exacerbated by some vehicles not operating'. 'if more drivers can be encouraged to operate on Saturday nights, at times of peak demand , this would address the wait times experienced by the small proportion of passengers who need to wait for a hackney carriage to come to the rank'.*

6. Consultation

- 6.1 Consultation was widely conducted and is outlined in the report submitted by VTC.

7. Equality, Diversity and Human Rights Implications

- 7.1 There are no specific implications that have not been fully considered as part of the unmet demand survey.

8. Community Safety Implications

- 8.1 The survey is aimed at protection of the travelling public by means of ensuring that there are sufficient numbers of licensed vehicles.
- 8.2 More widely the limitation on numbers in conjunction with perceived demand and the availability of rank space will ensure that the balance is maintained and that there are no safety implications from congestion caused by queuing for ranks for example.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 The survey, as attached and presented by Iain MacDonald from VTC, has been full and thorough and having considered all relevant aspects in relation to demand, members are respectfully requested to implement its findings