

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT HOUSING AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

ORIGINATING SECTION: PUBLIC PROTECTION SERVICE

REPORT TO: LICENSING COMMITTEE

20:09:2011

TITLE : ANNUAL REVIEW OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE LICENCES

### 1. PURPOSE

To report the annual review of the issuing of Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences

### 2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That Members note the report and forward comments in respect of the review to the Executive Member

### 3. KEY ISSUES

Blackburn with Darwen Council limits the numbers of Hackney Carriage Vehicles.

Last year the Council undertook a full review of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and Standards and decision was made to suspend the issue of any new hackney carriage vehicle licences.

*The policy states: Due to the current level of trade in the borough, the remainder of the plates that are not currently issued, 7 in total, be suspended for 5 years with an annual review of the suspension. A decision as to what age limits would apply if they are brought into use would be considered at a later date.*

In July and August this year, 3 hackney carriage vehicle licences have been granted in principle, as the applications for these licences were received prior to the Council's decision to freeze the issue of licences. To date none of these licences have been issued.

The decision was made due to the low level of trade in the borough. Over the last 12 months there has been a 15% increase in footfall in particular from the new mall development. There has been a return of a wider catchment in the daytime with stronger retail which is attracting more people from Hyndburn, Burnley and the Ribble Valley. In conjunction with this though, there has been a 30% increase in the use of the Mall's car park which would indicate that a lot of the shoppers are coming into town by car. The increase use of the Mall's carpark is also attributed to the extra 300 spaces they have built, the closure of the market car park and the reduction of spaces around the college.

All of the above figures relate to the daytime economy, the night time economy is still struggling, and as indicated if people are travelling into town by other means of transport it will not generate any more demand for the hackney carriages.

Photographs of the hackney ranks will be presented to the meeting of the committee to show the level of demand at various times of day and night.

#### **4. RATIONALE**

This is the first annual review and the hackney trade have been consulted about the suspension. The consultation was undertaken via letter which was sent to all the licensed hackney carriage drivers, and people who have in the past expressed an interest in obtaining a hackney carriage vehicle licence. The letter is attached at appendix 1, and, a breakdown of the responses can be found at appendix 2

43 responses were received and of that 38 wanted the Council to maintain the suspension and the limit on the number of hackney carriage licences. The reason stated for this is still the lack of trade within the town.

Guidance from the Department of Transport states that where a council seeks to limit a hackney carriage fleet, an unmet demand survey should be carried out every 3 years. The last survey that was commissioned in Blackburn was in 2005. The cost of the survey should be borne by the trade. The Licensing Committee may wish to consider whether another unmet demand survey should be commissioned.

#### **5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The annual review is a policy matter and should therefore be considered by the Executive Member.

The expertise of the Licensing Committee in this area of work is recognised, The Licensing Committee should consider the reviews and their observations will be forwarded to the Executive Member as part of the consultation process.

The Executive member will consider any comments or recommendations received as a result of the consultation process.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

None

#### **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no legal implications of amending the policy decision. Provided the correct procedures are followed for the adoption of any amendments,

**8. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

None

**9. CONSULTATIONS**

As detailed in Rationale

**10 . CONTACT OFFICER**

Donna Riding – Principal Licensing Officer  
Telephone 01254 222505



Date : 5<sup>th</sup> August 2011  
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Dear Sir/Madam,

**Re: Consultation on the Hackney Carriage Vehicles**

Last July the Council undertook a full review of Hackney Carriage Vehicles and standards. In that review the Council decide to suspend the issue of any new hackney carriage licences for a period of five years, subject to an annual review.

***The policy states: Due to the current level of trade in the borough, the remainder of the plates that are not currently issued, 7 in total, be suspended for 5 years with an annual review of the suspension. A decision as to what age limits would apply if they are brought back into use would be considered at a future date.***

This is the first review of the 5 year suspension and we want to seek your views on this policy. The results of this consultation will be placed before the Licensing Committee in September, so please complete the short questionnaire below and return to Licensing service by 8<sup>th</sup> September 2011.

Views are being sought from current licence holders and persons who have expressed an interest in licensing a hackney carriage vehicle.

1) Should the Council lift the Suspension of the hackney carriage plates?

YES

NO

2) Should the Council maintain a limit on the number of hackney carriage licences?

YES

NO

3) Do you currently hold a hackney carriage vehicle licence?

YES

NO

4) Have you expressed an interest in holding a new or an additional licence?

YES

NO

**Name** .....

**Address** .....

**Vehicle plate number** .....

**Any other comments**

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Yours faithfully

*Donna Riding*

Donna Riding  
Principal Licensing Officer

### Results of Hackney Carriage Consultation

Should the Council Lift the Suspension	Yes	5	No	37	N/A	2
Should the Council maintain a limit	Yes	38	No	4	N/A	2
Do you currently hold a hcv	Yes	43	No	0	N/A	2
Have you expressed an interest in holding new/additional Licence	Yes	7	No	36	N/A	2

The majority of comments from vehicle owners who want the suspension of plates to remain, where that there is currently very little trade, in Blackburn at the moment.

Comments from vehicle owners who want the suspension lifting state1) Hackney vehicle owners can work with private hire companies, and 2) the council will have more control and prevent the street selling of plates

N/A - name and address supplied but consultation questions not completed.