

REPORT ON THE COUNCILS LIMITATION POLICY IN RESPECT TO AYLESBURY TOWN

1 Purpose

- 1.1 For Members to agree to defer an unmet demand survey in respect to the Council's hackney carriage limitation policy for Aylesbury town.

2 Recommendations/for decision

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| 2.1 For Members to agree to defer carrying out an unmet demand survey in respect to the Council's hackney carriage quantity control policy for Aylesbury town centre until Spring 2018 for the reasons set out in paragraph 3.5. |
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3 Supporting information

- 3.1 The number of hackney carriages (taxis) serving Aylesbury town is limited to 50. They are identifiable as black, purpose built taxis displaying a white plate on the rear. Outside the town in the rural district the Council do not limit the number of taxis and at the time of writing this report there are 10 white purpose built taxis displaying a red plate on the rear.
- 3.2 Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 permits the Council to limit the number of taxis in respect of which licences are granted, if but only if the Council is satisfied that there is no significant demand which is unmet.
- 3.3 According to the Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Best Practice Guidance dated March 2010, licensing authorities are encouraged to review quantity restriction policies every three years. The Department regards no quantity restrictions as best practice but acknowledges that ultimately what matters is what is in the interests of the taxi travelling public. This involves balancing the benefits and disadvantages of continuing to limit against those for removing it. So whilst the legal requirement to maintain a quantity restriction is unequivocally based on unmet demand, once established Members can also consider what is in the interests of the taxi travelling public.
- 3.4 The last full and detailed review was carried out in 2014 and agreed in 2015. The survey concluded that there was no significant unmet demand. If the Department for Transport Best Practice was to be strictly applied demand should be surveyed this year (2017). The last report acknowledged that the white plated taxis 'operate a well coordinated and controlled trade organisation. They own a licensed operator company which accepts telephone bookings as well as rank hires. The organisation monitor the location of drivers and assign drivers to ranks to cover demand'. The report further stated 'the presence of such an organisation can provide a greater public benefit than if the trade comprised of solely owner drivers without a collective approach to the trade'.
- 3.5 In March this year Members agreed for the hackney carriage vehicle specification to be revised to enable the trade to choose from a wider range of accessible models. This revised specification has only recently been agreed and it is hoped that the trade will take the opportunity to replace older vehicles and renew and freshen the Aylesbury town hackney carriage fleet. A fleet of new vehicles would have clear advantages to the taxi travelling public and ought to be taken into consideration, in addition to demand when the survey

is eventually carried out. It is therefore proposed that the survey is deferred until Spring 2018 to give the trade the opportunity of replacing vehicles.

4 Options considered

4.1 None.

5 Reasons for Recommendation

5.1 In order to maintain a quantity restriction in respect to hackney carriages for the town of Aylesbury the Council are required to carry out an unmet demand survey.

6 Resource implications

6.1 The cost of the survey will be covered by income from taxi licensing fees.

Contact Officer
Background Documents

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