

LICENSING COMMITTEE

HACKNEY CARRIAGE AREA DEMAND SURVEY

13 November 2025

Report of the Licensing Manager

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To update members on the proposed Hackney Carriage Area Demand Survey 2025/26.

This report is public.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that members note the contents of the report.

1.0 Report

1.1 As Members will be aware, the Council currently has a policy of restricting the number of Hackney Carriage licences issued. However, in maintaining such a policy the Council must provide evidence that there is no significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriage services within the area in order to be in a position to refuse any new applications for additional licences.

1.2 The present legal provision on quantity restrictions outside London is set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a taxi (hackney carriage) licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the numbers of licensed taxis 'if, but only if, the [local licensing authority] is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet'

For this purpose, it is considered necessary to commission an independent survey to assess the level of demand for hackney carriage services, and that such survey should be conducted by an organisation specialising in this area of work.

1.3 Members may recall that in 2022/23 a hackney carriage area demand survey was carried out by on the Council's behalf by LVSA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Analysis). At that time, the survey concluded that there was no significant unmet demand for hackney carriages. The cap was therefore maintained at 108.

Members may recall that a decision was taken to issue 2 additional wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences, this was to address the local shortfalls in accessibility. The number of Hackney Carriages operating in the district is currently capped at 110.

The 2022/23 survey report is attached at **Appendix 1**.

There is a general acceptance that the findings of hackney carriage demand surveys are valid for no longer than three years. Therefore, a further survey should be undertaken in the coming months.

- 1.4 The Licensing Manager approached other Lancashire and Cumbrian licensing authorities for recommendations of providers of the surveys, this was to obtain quotes and offer a discussion on the needs of the survey specific to Lancaster. All those who maintain a cap offered the same provider, LVSA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Analysis).

Following a discussion with Ian Millership of LVSA, a quote and associated scope of the survey was offered and agreed by the Licensing Manager.

The proposed scope of the survey is attached at **Appendix 2**.

- 1.5 The cost of the survey is recovered via Hackney Carriage Licence fees, with the total cost being split equally between 110 proprietors over 3 years, (£111.00 total cost, approx. £37.00 per year)
- 1.6 Views of the local licensed trade were requested via a poll; members of the trade were asked to vote whether they thought the Licensing Authority should undertake the survey or not. Members of the trade were informed of the costs associated with the survey and recovery confirmed through licence fees.

If no survey was undertaken, it would result in deregulation; the cap would be removed and further Hackney Carriage proprietor licences being considered by the Licensing Authority.

The results of the poll are as follows:

28 persons – YES (in favour of undertaking the survey)
14 persons – NO (not in favour of undertaking the survey)

- 1.7 Licensing maintain a list of all trade email addresses provided upon application; this have proved the most efficient and cost-effective way of communication. Over 480 emails were sent. 42 responses were received from a cross section of the trade.

2.0 Conclusion

- 2.1 That members note the contents of the report.
- 2.2 The finding of the survey and subsequent report will be presented to Licensing Committee members at a future meeting.

CONCLUSION OF IMPACT ASSESSMENT (including Diversity, Human Rights, Community Safety, Sustainability and Rural Proofing)

There are no such implications arising from this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications arising from the report at this stage. The cost of the survey is recovered from hackney carriage licence fees. As the cap is currently 110, each proprietor upon renewal will cover an equal proportion of the total cost.

A written quotation is provided and offers transparency in the decision-making process.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct legal implications at this stage. No decision is to be taken at this time on whether to maintain the limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences so not subject to legal challenge.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

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