

**Report of:** Head of Environmental Development &  
Head of Legal and Democratic Services.

**To:** General Purposes Licensing Committee

**Date:** 28th October 2008 **Item No:** 4 (c)

**Title of Report :** Hackney Carriage Demand Survey – Scrutiny Review.

### Summary and Recommendations

**Purpose of report:**

**Key decision:** No

**Portfolio Holder:** N/A

**Scrutiny Responsibility:**

**Ward(s) affected:** All

**Report Approved by:**

Tony Payne	Environmental Development
Daniel Smith	Legal & Democratic Services
Andy Collett	Finance

**Policy Framework:** (Council policy to maintain a numbers limit on hackney carriage licences based on no unmet demand)

**Recommendation(s):**

The Committee is RECOMMENDED to:-

Note the Council resolutions of 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008.

Note

That all the hackney carriages currently licensed are wheelchair accessible.

That officers already have in hand measures to improve the emissions from vehicles.

That officers are of the opinion that a hackney carriage unmet need survey is not the correct route to obtain information on taxi marshals.

That officers will commission a hackney demand survey.

The Committee must decide how the cost of the survey is recovered from fees obtained from hackney carriage proprietors.

## **Background**

1. At its meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008 Council considered the recommendations of the former Environment Scrutiny Committee 14<sup>th</sup> January 2008 and the General Purposes Licensing Committee 16<sup>th</sup> January 2008 in relation to rickshaw and taxi licensing.
2. Council made various recommendations including  
“Recommendation 3 – expand the remit of next year’s planned demand survey to include consideration of the broader issues underpinning the shortage of cabs at certain times. (For example driver safety, working of taxi ranks, taxi marshals, fee structure). In addition, consideration should be given to how the system can best ensure all taxis over time meet accessibility and fuel efficiency standards. Ensure that this survey involves open consultation with taxi drivers and users and that it is seen to be independent by funding it out of hackney cab licensing fees – which would be increased accordingly at next year’s budget. It would be commissioned as now by the City Council.”
3. Some of the items mentioned in the recommendations are already under consideration by officers and it is the opinion of officers from both Legal services and Committee services as well as taxi licensing that some of the other items would not be best addressed by an unmet need survey.

4. Emissions. The taxi-licensing officers have already been researching methods of reducing emissions from both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles and after consultations should be in a position to produce a report before the end of the current committee cycle.
5. Fee structure. Fees are reviewed annually by the licensing office together with Financial Services and any amendments are approved by this committee. The committee are reminded that the taxi licensing function is completely self-funding and that legislation requires that fees must do no more than cover the costs of the issue of licences and administration of the licensing system.
6. Taxi Marshals have been tried in various areas of the country but with very few exceptions have not progressed beyond an initial period in most cases because the initial funding was not continued. Taxi licensing is self-funding in the Authority; this could not be considered a licensing function and financed from this source. The taxi licensing office will make enquiries and report further.
7. It must be kept in mind that it is likely that any views and observations made during a survey in respect of driver safety will be in respect of hackney carriages. The safety of private hire drivers must also be considered by officers.
8. The methodology and assessment of the survey normally consists of
  - rank observation surveys
  - on street public perception surveys
  - written consultation with the trade and other associated bodies
  - data analysis
  - comparison with other authorities

9. Since, if the City wishes to continue with its policy of limiting the numbers of hackney carriages, it will be necessary for a survey into unmet demand to be carried out every three years it would seem sensible for this to be recovered from the 107 hackney carriage licence fees over a three year period. This would however require that the survey fee, which is likely to be in excess of £20,000, dependant upon what elements it contained, be paid initially by the Council.

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