

LICENSING COMMITTEE



Report subject	To consider the latest Hackney Carriage unmet needs survey
Meeting date	27 June 2023
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	<p>Currently there is a restriction on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences issued within the Bournemouth and Poole hackney carriage zones. There is no restriction on the number of hackney carriage licences issued in the Christchurch hackney carriage zone.</p> <p>The current BCP Council Taxi and Hackney Carriage Vehicle Policy 2021 specifies that any new hackney carriage vehicle licence will only be issued to a suitable wheelchair accessible vehicle.</p> <p>In order to maintain a restriction on the quantity of hackney carriage vehicle licences issued the local authority must be able to demonstrate that there is no unmet need which would require additional licences to be issued.</p> <p>Current good practice requires local authorities to undertake an unmet needs survey every three years.</p>
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that:</p> <p>Members consider the information provided and retain the current numbers as stated within the BCP Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy</p>
Reason for recommendations	<p>It is good practice for a local authority to undertake an unmet needs survey every three years where there is a restriction on the number of hackney carriage vehicles.</p> <p>The last unmet needs survey took place in 2020 and the guidance recommends that in order to maintain a quantity restriction the unmet need must be reviewed every three years. Where there is unmet need, the restriction would need to be removed. Where there is no unmet need, the restriction can remain unchanged be amended or removed.</p>

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Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For information

Background

1. Before the formation of BCP Council, the legacy authorities of Bournemouth Borough Council and the Borough of Poole Council had long standing hackney carriage quality restrictions. There were 249 in Bournemouth and 89 in Poole.
2. Section 16 of the Road Transport Act 1985 gives the council the power to refuse the grant of a licence for the purpose of limiting the number of hackney carriage vehicles within its area, but only if it is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the service of hackney carriages within its area which is unmet.
3. The Department for Transport Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance issued in 2010 recommends that in order to justify retaining a quantity restriction, the local authority should undertake a review of this by way of an unmet needs survey at least every three years.
4. If the result of an unmet demand survey should demonstrate that there is evidence of significant unmet demand, the recommended actions for a licensing authority may be to either raise the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers to an appropriate level, or to remove the limit all together.
5. A licensing authority may choose at any time, to raise or remove a limit on Hackney Carriage numbers, but in order to retain a limit, good practice guidance suggests that an unmet demand survey is required and that the result shows that there is no evidence of unmet demand.
6. In January 2020 an unmet needs survey concluded that there was no unmet need in any of the three licenced zones within the BCP area.
7. The current BCP Council Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy (BCP Policy) came into force in June 2021. This Policy retained the existing quantity restrictions on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences within the Poole and Bournemouth hackney carriage zones.
8. Chapter 16 of the BCP Policy sets out the quantity restrictions, which state that

16.3 There will be up to 15 new Hackney Carriage vehicles licences released each year in each of the Bournemouth and Poole zones for wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) only. These licences will be released on the 1 April each year.

16.4 From the implementation of this policy Hackney Carriage vehicle licences in Christchurch zone will only be approved for WAV only.

16.7 All restrictions on numbers of Hackney Carriage vehicle licences will be removed subject to the review of this policy in 2025.

Unmet needs survey 2023

9. In line with guidance an unmet needs survey was undertaken during 2022 with the report issued in February 2023. (Appendix 1)
10. The BCP Taxi and Private Hire Trade Association requested sight of the report and this was provided to them in April at a trade meeting.
11. Surveys were undertaken at active taxi ranks in Bournemouth and Poole. The volume of passengers and hackney carriages was recorded, together with wait times for any waiting passengers.
12. The rank observations were analysed separately for Bournemouth and Poole.
13. Rank observations were undertaken in July 2022. In order to evaluate the influence of seasonal variation, some additional rank observations were undertaken at four ranks in Bournemouth and four ranks in Poole, during October 2022. The July 2022 and October 2022 data was also compared with data collected during the last unmet demand survey during October 2019.
14. The report concluded that the evidence gathered suggests that there is no significant unmet demand.
15. This means that the current restriction on hackney carriage numbers can be retained for another three years.

Options Appraisal

16. In cases where there is no unmet need, the options are to
 - a. retain the existing restriction on hackney carriage vehicle licence numbers,
 - b. amend the current restriction or
 - c. remove the restriction.
17. Any change to the current restrictions could be considered a significant change to the current policy and would require full public consultation.
18. A full review of the BCP Taxi and Private Hire Policies is planned to take place during 2024 ready for implementation in 2025 and part of this review will include proposals to remove the restriction and consider the current arrangements relating to the hackney carriage zones.
19. The full review will include member and trade workshops to draft and inform the new policy as well as full public consultation.

Summary of financial implications

20. None

Summary of legal implications

21. There are no legal implications as there is no policy change at this time.

Summary of human resources implications

22. The delivery of the service will remain within existing staffing levels.

Summary of sustainability impact

23. All vehicles licenced must meet Euro 6 emissions standards designed to reduce the harmful emissions from car and van exhausts.

Summary of public health implications

24. None

Summary of equality implications

25. None

Summary of risk assessment**Background papers**

The Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance 2010
[Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/644222/tphvg-guidance-2010.pdf)
(publishing.service.gov.uk)

BCP Council Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Policy 2021
[BCP Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Policy](https://www.bcp-council.gov.uk/policies/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-policy-2021) ([bcpCouncil.gov.uk](https://www.bcp-council.gov.uk))

Appendices

Appendix 1 – LVSA Hackney Carriage Unmet Needs Survey February 2023