

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	LICENSING
DATE	25 NOVEMBER 2014
CORPORATE DIRECTOR	EWAN SUTHERLAND (ACTING)
TITLE OF REPORT	TAXI DEMAND SURVEY
REPORT NUMBER	CG/14/161

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of the report is to provide the Committee with the Taxi Demand Survey (“the Survey”) by CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd (“CTS”).

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- a. note the results of the Survey and agree to an additional 30 taxi licences bringing the maximum number of taxi licences to 1079 (“Option 2”);
- b. instruct authorised officers of Litigation and Licensing to process applications on the waiting list for taxi licences in accordance with the procedure as set out in this report; and
- c. instruct authorised officers of Litigation and Licensing to consult with officers from Communities and Housing to establish information sharing procedures as part of the monitoring process referred to in recommendation a) and report back to the Committee on progress within two cycles.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Staff resources from Litigation and Licensing, Fleet Services and Communities and Housing will be required as a result of implementation of the recommendation in the survey.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

Under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982, the Licensing Committee is entitled to refuse applications for taxi licences for the purposes of limiting the number of taxis in Aberdeen. However it can only do so if it is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for the services of taxis in the city.

In September 2011, the Licensing Committee commissioned a taxi demand survey. The report concluded that there was no significant unmet demand in Aberdeen at that time. Having considered certain recommendations in the report, the Committee imposed a limit on the number of taxi licences in Aberdeen which is currently set at 1049.

Earlier this year the Committee instructed officers to proceed with a further taxi demand survey to establish the current position with regard to potential significant unmet demand and assess whether there had been any significant change since the 2011 Report. The Survey has now been completed and the Survey Report is attached.

The Survey Report concludes that there is significant unmet demand for taxis in Aberdeen with particular emphasis on peak periods during weekends. It is proposed in the Survey Report that retaining the current limit is therefore not an option available to Members. The Survey Report therefore provides two options:-

Option 1 – Removal of the Limit on Taxi Licences

The Survey Report suggests that removal of the limit on taxi licences in its entirety is an option available to the Committee but does not recommend this for reasons stated in the report.

If the Committee were to approve Option 1, a date will require to be identified upon which the limit will be removed. There will likely be an impact on staff resources in dealing with the new applications.

Option 2 – Increase in the Current Limit

The Survey Report recommends a controlled increase in the current limit which would involve an additional 30 taxi licences with regular monitoring to ascertain whether such an increase has been sufficient to meet demand. Regular monitoring will impact on staff resources and officers will require to consult with the taxi marshals currently in Communities and Housing to ensure that the necessary data will be available in a comprehensive format. This will require consultation with the Community Safety Manager.

If the Committee were to approve Option 2, the increase in the limit could operate with immediate effect. A procedure will however be required for dealing with the issue of the new licences. At present there are 150 persons on the waiting list for a taxi licence. It is proposed that officers contact the prospective applicants on the list starting with those who have had longest wait and ascertain whether those applicants wish to progress their application. If after that process the number of licences granted does not exceed the limit, new applications can then be dealt with on a first come first serve basis until the limit is met. There will be an

impact on staff resources in contacting those on the waiting list and dealing with the new applications.

6. IMPACT

Corporate – As a result of the Survey the licensing authority is better able to meet its taxi licensing duties in terms of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982. The Committee should be aware of Council Community Safety and Transport Zone policies, which may be impacted by amendments to taxi services in the City.

Public – The Survey is of interest to members of the public who use the taxi service in the city. The addition of thirty vehicles to the fleet will improve the service to customers and assist in satisfying current unmet demand in Aberdeen.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

A hard copy of the main Survey and Appendices is available in the Members' Lounge.
Alternatively if Members wish to be provided with an electronic copy please contact Allison Swanson (01224 522822)