
COMMITTEE	Licensing Committee
DATE	18 April 2017
DIRECTOR	Richard Ellis
TITLE OF REPORT	Taxi Demand Survey and Private Hire Car Overprovision
REPORT NUMBER	CG/17/045
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To provide the Committee with information in relation to the Taxi Demand Survey and the Overprovision Assessment for Private Hire Cars.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the committee

1. Notes that in terms of best practice a taxi demand survey should be carried out by November 2017;
2. Instructs the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to conduct a taxi demand survey before June 2018 in conjunction with taxi fare review;
3. Decides whether it wishes to introduce an overprovision policy;
4. If the Committee decides to introduce an overprovision policy; to instruct the Head of Legal and Democratic Services to carry out an overprovision assessment at the same time as the taxi demand survey.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The potential cost will depend on several factors which include inflation, the point in time at which the taxi demand survey is commissioned and any other factors which will require to be taken into account. The cost of surveys is met from licensing fees.

Should the Committee be minded to adopt an overprovision policy as per Section 10(3) of the Act in relation to taxi licences. In order to administer a limit on the numbers of PHCs an over provision assessment will require to be undertaken at regular intervals. This will result in additional expenditure which will require to be recovered through the fees

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

This section must include any legal, resource, personnel, property, equipment, sustainability and environmental, health and safety and/or policy implications.

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Taxi Demand Survey

Regular taxi demand surveys are required in order to provide a robust basis for deciding whether or not there is a significant unmet demand.

This is due to the various data that the survey is based on becoming outdated quickly and therefore, it no longer accurately reflects current demand for taxi services.

Currently, the recommended best practice is when there is a taxi licence limit in place; a taxi demand survey should be carried out at least every 3 years. The last survey was presented to the Committee on 25 November 2014. As such, a further survey would be required by November 2017.

Various steps are required to instruct and carry out survey. In summary:

- (i) The Committee must firstly decide whether or not it wishes to instruct a survey (see recommendation 2 above);
- (ii) Appoint a consultant to carry out the survey;
- (iii) Survey carried out by consultant with support from officers;
- (iv) Survey analysed by consultant who then prepares and presents a report of the findings to the Committee; and
- (v) The Committee considers the terms of the report and decides whether or not it wishes to continue with its taxi licence limit.

The survey conducted in 2014 concluded that there was unmet demand and recommended that the limit be raised by 30 to 1079. The limit remains at 1079, however there are only 965 taxis licences. If a survey was conducted and it concluded there was significant unmet demand there generally appears to be a lack of applications for a taxi licence at this time in order to service that demand. It is recommended therefore that a survey is not conducted at this time.

It is further recommend that a survey is conducted in approximately 18 months when the next fare review is to be concluded or at an earlier

date if it is considered there is has been significant change in dynamics of the taxi trade.

Officers will continue to monitor the waiting list for a taxi licence and if there is a significant move in licence numbers towards the limit of 1079, a further report would be submitted to the committee at that time for the Committee to consider conducting a demand survey.

Whilst a full taxi demand survey has not been carried out at this time the data collected by the taxi marshalls for the period from 22 July 2016 until 31 December 2016 has been analysed. Details of passenger waiting times at 30 minute intervals at 4 separate ranks were collected between the hours of 0030 and 0530 on Friday and Saturday nights and a summary of the results are as follows:

Rank 1 – Union Street (Correction Wynd)

Average waiting times on Saturday nights ranged from a minimum of 0 minutes at 0500/0530 to a maximum of 7 minutes at 0330/0400. On Sundays waiting times ranged from 0 minutes at 0530 to 11 minutes at 0400. The busiest period in terms of passenger numbers was 0330 on both Saturdays and Sundays. Waiting time for that period on Saturday was 7 minutes as stated and was 10 minutes for that period on Sundays.

Rank 2 – Union Street (Bon Accord Street)

Average waiting times on Saturday ranged from 0 minutes at 0500/0530 to 3 minutes at 0330/0400 and on Sunday from 0 minutes at 0530 to 7 minutes at 0130. The busiest periods in terms of passenger numbers were 0330 on both Saturday and Sunday. The waiting time for that period on Saturdays was 3 minutes as stated and 6 minutes on Sundays.

Rank 3 – Union Street (Summer Street)

Average waiting times on Saturday ranged from 0 minutes at 0430/0500/0530 to 3 minutes at 0330 and on Sunday from 0 minutes at 0530 to 9 minutes at 0330. The busiest periods in terms of passenger numbers were 0330 on both Saturday and Sunday. The waiting time for that period on Saturday and Sundays was 3 minutes and 9 minutes respectively as stated.

Rank 4 – Castlegate

Average waiting times on Saturday ranged from 0 minutes at 0030/0100/0130/0500/0530 to 1 minute at 0200/0230/0300/0330/0400 and on Sunday from 0 minutes at 0530 to 3 minutes at 0400. The busiest periods in terms of passenger numbers were 0330 on both Saturday and Sunday. The waiting time for that period on Saturdays was 1 minute as stated and 2 minutes on Sundays.

These figures would support the assertion that there is no current unmet demand as waiting times are not unreasonable, even in the busiest periods.

5.2 Over Provision Private Hire Cars

The Air Weapons and Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 amends section 10 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 Act to give the licensing authority the ground for refusal of a private hire car licence if they are satisfied that there is, or would be, overprovision of private hire car services in the area in which the private hire car is to operate. The Licensing Authority must have regard to the number of private hire cars operating in the locality and the demand for private hire car services in the locality.

The effect of the amendments is that if the licensing authority wish to refuse a private hire car licence on the ground that there is or would be overprovision there must first have an overprovision policy in place and they would require to conduct an overprovision assessment to inform that policy.

If the Committee decide to conduct an overprovision assessment of private hire vehicles, it is recommended that any assessment is carried out at the same time a taxi demand survey as detail above at 5.1.

6. IMPACT

Improving Customer Experience –

N/A

Improving Staff Experience –

Delaying the demand survey until a more meaningful survey can be carried out will ensure that staff time is utilised in the most efficient and effective manner.

Improving our use of Resources –

Delaying the demand survey until the next fare review (or at an earlier date as necessary) and carrying out an overprovision of private hire car licences at the same time will ensure that the costs of conducting all the surveys are borne at the same time and it is assumed therefore that costs will be minimised.

Corporate -

A future taxi demand survey will assist in meeting the Council's statutory corporate function as the licensing authority for taxis. A survey and overprovision assessment may also impact in relation to the Council's transport and accessibility policies

Public –

Future taxi demand surveys and over provision assessments of private hire cars will be of interest to the public because it is a vital part of public transport provision and a taxi demand survey will show whether or not there is unmet demand for taxis in the area. An overprovision assessment will show whether or not there is overprovision of private hire cars in the area.

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Currently, the recommended best practice is when there is a taxi licence limit in place, a taxi demand survey should be carried out at least every 3years. Delaying the survey beyond 3 years will result in Committee not having the most up to date and accurate picture of demand for taxis.

However, the current limit is set at 1079 and there are only 925 licences, therefore, even if survey was conducted and it concluded that there is a significant unmet demand there generally appears to be a lack of applications for a taxi licence at this time to in order to service that demand.

Officers will continue to monitor the waiting list for a taxi licence and if there is a significant move in licence numbers towards the limit of 1079, a further report would be submitted to the Committee at that time for the Committee to consider conducting a demand survey.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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