

Agenda Item No: 8 **Report No:** 136/13

Report Title: Proposed Introduction of a Livery Scheme for all Hackney Carriage Vehicles Licensed by Lewes District Council

Report To: Licensing Committee **Date:** 30 August 2013

Cabinet Member: Cllr Nicholson

Ward(s) Affected: All

Report By: Director of Planning and Environmental Services

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Purpose of Report:

To consider the introduction of a livery scheme for all Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed by Lewes District Council.

Officers Recommendation:

The Committee is recommended not to introduce a livery scheme at this time.

1 Reasons for Recommendations

1.1 The Committee is recommended not to introduce a livery scheme at this time as the consultation of the Trade showed an overwhelmingly negative response citing the cost to small businesses.

2 Information

2.1 At a meeting of the Licensing Committee last year, Southern Taxis from Brighton, who are the owners of South Coast Taxis, Longridge Avenue, Saltdean were granted permission to introduce a livery scheme for their own licensed taxis.

2.2 The livery consisted of an all white vehicle with a black bonnet.

2.3 Since that time Southern Taxis have introduced four Hackney Carriages to their fleet with the white and black livery.

2.4 A question raised by several Councillors at that meeting was the possibility of Lewes District Council introducing its own livery scheme for licensed Hackney Carriages.

2.5 As a result Officers were tasked by the Licensing Committee to research and cost such a scheme for presentation to the Licensing Committee.

3 Benefits

3.1 As with all licensing matters public safety is of paramount importance. If a livery scheme is adopted then Hackney Carriages within the Lewes District Council area would be easily recognisable. This is especially so with night time trade.

3.2 Because of easy recognition it gives added benefits to the safety aspect of travelling in a licensed vehicle, again especially at night.

3.3 It will provide an enhanced image and professionalism for the Taxi Trade within the Lewes District Council area.

4 Disadvantages

4.1 The principal disadvantage would be that the cost implications in introducing such a scheme could be substantial for the proprietor of a Hackney Carriage.

4.2 Cost was the main factor for those who were not in favour of a livery scheme.

4.3 From enquiries that have been made the general cost to re-spray an average size saloon car would range from £1,500 to £1,700.

4.4 The larger 6, 7 and 8 seater vehicles would attract costs of £2,000 to £2,500 depending on the size of the vehicles.

4.5 Although a vehicle can be wrapped instead of being re-sprayed the cost is comparable and there appears to be drawbacks with some aspects of wrapping a whole vehicle. This, however, would be the choice of the vehicle owner.

4.6 From our enquires there appears to be a limited supply of white second-hand vehicles suitable for taxi work. As a result the majority of owners would be required to invest heavily in a new vehicle or re-spraying or wrapping their current vehicle.

5 Background

5.1 A consultation questionnaire was sent out to all currently Licensed Hackney Carriage Drivers for completion and return to the Licensing Office by 7 January 2013.

5.2 A total of 287 forms were sent out and exactly 100 completed forms were returned in the necessary time scale.

5.3 The breakdown of the figures were as follows:

27% of those returned were in favour;

70% of those returned were not in favour; and

3% of those returned were marked 'don't know.'

- 5.4** The main colour preferences of those who completed the forms were in both the yes and no categories white, silver and black.

See Appendix A for full breakdown of figures.

6 Additional Colour

- 6.1** If the Policy is agreed the Committee will also have to consider whether they wish the bonnet, roof or boot in a different colour from the base colour.

See Appendix B for breakdown.

7 Additional Markings

- 7.1** Drivers were asked for their views on any additional markings on Hackney Carriages. Please see Appendix C for replies.

8 Private Hire Vehicles

- 8.1** If a Livery Policy is agreed Lewes District Council will require a new condition for the colour of Private Hire Vehicles. A Council would normally, in this situation, adopt a Policy of any colour other than the base colour for Hackney Carriage Vehicles i.e. white.

- 8.2** However, in Lewes District Council our main Private Hire Company, Minibus Travel Services, runs 49 mini buses to transport disabled children to school. The most common colour that mini buses are manufactured in is white, with the vast majority of MTS' buses being white. This Policy could cause additional hardship for the proprietor of this company and the Committee may need to consider alternatives, e.g. Private Hire Minibuses, any colour, Private Hire Saloon Cars any colour, but white.

9 Legal Position

- 9.1** Section 47 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provision) Act 1976 states:

1. A District Council may attach to the grant of a Licence of a Hackney Carriage under the Act of 1847 such conditions as the District Council may consider reasonably necessary.
2. Without prejudice to the generality of the foregoing subsection, a District Council may require any Hackney Carriage licensed by them, under the Act of 1847, to be of such design or appearance, or bear such distinguishing marks, as shall clearly identify it as a Hackney Carriage.
3. Any person aggrieved by any conditions attached to such a Licence may appeal to a Magistrates Court.

10 Implementation

- 10.1** If a Livery Policy is adopted a timescale of implementation will have to be agreed.
- 10.2** The Committee will have to agree a date for all newly licensed Hackney Carriage vehicles to conform to livery standards.
- 10.3** A suitable run in period for all existing licensed Hackney Carriage Vehicles, e.g. 3/5 years after the original start date, would have to be agreed.

11 Financial Appraisal

- 11.1** There are no financial implications for the Council, but the Trade response indicates that there may be significant cost implications for Taxi proprietors in the District.

12 Legal Implications

- 12.1** The Legal Services Department has made the following comments:

13 Environmental Implications

- 13.1** The Environmental Checklist has been completed and there are no environmental implications to this report. Form no. AF29067.

14 Risk Management Implications

- 14.1** The changes/issues covered by this report are not significant in terms of risk. No new risks will arise whether or not the recommendations are implemented or rejected. Form No. LDC29069.

15 Equality Screening

- 15.1** I have completed the Equalities Assessment Checklist Form No AF29207. There are no implications to this report.

16 Background Papers

17 Appendices

- 17.1** Appendix A - Main Body Colour Choices.
- 17.2** Appendix B - Colour Choices for Bonnet, Roof and Boot.
- 17.3** Appendix C - Other Suggestions for Markings.