

Extract of Scrutiny Committee Report to Cabinet 07.11.02

Issue	Finding	Way Forward	Proposed action and timescale
<p>6. Level of service to customers</p> <p>6.1 Length of time to locate/hire a vehicle, particularly at night</p>	<p>During the night-time period, particularly at theatre, pub and club closing times the delays in obtaining a vehicle appear to be excessive. This is to the detriment to of the night time economy and creates the potential of town centre disturbance as people either wait for a vehicle or decide to walk home.</p>	<p>Encourage the trade to operate more vehicles at night.</p> <p>Consider issuing additional hackney carriage licences as below</p>	<p>Commercial Services Manager will continue to work with the trade to explore ways of encouraging drivers to work nights.</p> <p>See next action below.</p>
<p>6.2 Availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles</p>	<p>The availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles appears not to meet the needs of local residents. This concurs with the findings of the Hackney Carriage Study undertaken by Halcrow Fox on behalf of the Council between November 1999 and February 2002 which concluded that:</p> <p>There appears to be a shortage of wheelchair accessible vehicles and those that are available are often not available to the mobility impaired.</p>	<p>Consider issuing a number of additional hackney carriage licences subject to conditions that will require the new vehicles to be wheelchair accessible. The introduction of purpose built taxis, e.g. London style cabs, will have the additional benefits of added driver security (screen between passenger compartment and driver controlled door locks to reduce the possibility of passengers absconding without paying the fare) and additional passenger capacity to transport</p>	<p>Commercial Services Manager to develop a robust process to administer the issuing of additional hackney carriage plates in a transparent and equitable manner. Guidance and specialist advice to be sought from the Legal Services Manager and Licensing Consultant. January 2003</p>

Issue	Finding	Way Forward	Proposed action and timescale
	<p>There is a case for the issuing of any new licences for wheelchair accessible vehicles only, to ensure a greater mix of vehicle types and provide a greater choice for mobility impaired customers.</p> <p>The Study was reported to the Planning and Licensing Committee on 4th April 2000 which resolved not to issue further hackney carriage licences at that time.</p>	<p>larger groups of people from the town centre at night. The fare structure rewards drivers for carrying 5 or more passengers.</p> <p>The Task Group wishes to see a gradual introduction of purpose made London style cabs, together with a mechanism controlled by the Council to prevent additional licences granted from being transferred for profit. The vehicles should have maximum availability through driver-sharing.</p>	

Task Group: List of attendees

Mr M Nicholson Chairman Eastbourne Sensory Disability Forum	Mr M Chant Chairman Radio Cars
Mr B Thomas Licensing Enforcement Officer Environmental Health Eastbourne Borough Council	Mr A Attwater Independent Hackney Carriage Proprietor
Mr N Kinnish Director of Planning, Regeneration & Amenities EBC	Mr I Millar Chairman Eastbourne Hotel Association
Mrs C Purkess Eastbourne & District Chamber of Commerce	Mr R Cussons Director of Tourism & Leisure EBC
Mr D Stone-Cox Chairman Eastbourne & Country Group	Mr C Islip Managing Director Sussex Cars
Mr D Lindsay Commercial Services Manager Environmental Health EBC	

Also invited, but unable to attend:

Mr M Gillman Manager Kings Nightclub Langney Road	J O'Meara Commercial Manager Govia
Inspector B Donald Sussex Police	

Taxi and Private Hire Data 2004 (DfT 2004)

Local Authority	No of Taxis	Restrict Number Yes/No	Wheelchair accessible taxi policy Yes/No	Wheelchair accessible taxis	Percent Wheelchair Accessible	No of PHVs	Ratio taxis to PHV
Eastbourne	84	Yes	No	4	4.8	270	0.31
Hastings	48	Yes	No	7	14.6	139	0.35
Lewes	220	No	No	1	0.5	51	4.31
Rother	146	No	No	1	0.7	78	1.87
Wealden	185	No	No	0	0.0	213	0.86
Brighton and Hove	479	Yes*	Yes	57	11.8	429	1.11
Totals	1162			70	6.2	1180	0.98
South-east	8545	-	-	-	-	13685	0.43

*Brighton and Hove increase their taxi plates by 5 each year. New plates are for wheelchair accessible taxis.

**PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION FOR ISSUING
NEW HACKNEY CARRIAGE PLATES**

The vehicle should be a purpose built wheelchair accessible hackney carriage, not more than 3 years since first registered, of type approvals EC whole vehicle and UK low volume, incorporating the following features:

- a minimum of 5 passenger seats
- the ability to carry at least one passenger safely in the cabin when seated in the wheelchair
- two-way intercom system between the driver and passenger cabin
- an induction loop to assist communication between the driver and hearing impaired passengers
- high visibility handles and controls in the passenger cabin to assist visually impaired passengers
- a near side swivel seat for people with mobility impairment
- a near side drop-down step to assist passengers entering and exiting the vehicle
- access from the near side by ramp, lift or similar apparatus for passengers seated in wheelchairs
- a screen between the driver and passengers to improve driver safety
- a CCTV system approved by the Council for improved driver safety
- all door locks controlled by the driver to avoid passengers leaving the vehicle without payment of the fare and to prevent unlawful entry
- interior lights and ventilation in the passenger cabin controlled by the passenger, with the controls accessible to people in wheelchairs.

APPLICANT INFORMATION TO BE SUPPLIED BY APPLICANTS FOR HACKNEY CARRIAGE PROPRIETORS LICENSES

1. Applications are invited from people who wish to become hackney carriage proprietors of vehicles that meet the attached specification (Appendix 4).
2. Applicants must provide adequate answers to the following questions:
 - why do you wish to apply for a licence?
 - describe your experience in the hackney carriage or private hire trade (if any).
 - do you currently hold a hackney carriage or private hire licence? If so, provide details.
 - describe your experience in caring for or transporting disabled people.
 - do you have any medical conditions which may cause difficulties in assisting disabled people in wheelchairs in and out of hackney carriages?
 - are you allergic to assistance dogs?
 - what hours do you propose to work? Please include days of the week and times, unsocial hours, including Fridays/Saturdays and at weekends.
 - will you be working on your own or with one or more drivers? If sharing, please provide a copy of this form completed by all drivers.
 - do you have a business plan? If so, please attach it.
 - do you have finance arranged for vehicle purchase? If so, please provide evidence.
 - are you willing to sign an undertaking not to transfer the licence to another person for a period of at least 2 years from the date the licence is first issued, unless the Council gives its prior written consent.
Note: The licence can only be transferred to another wheelchair accessible hackney carriage that meets the Council's requirements.