

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET MEETING
25TH AUGUST 2005

Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Deregulation Plan

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	A Better Environment
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Enabling Community Wellbeing
KEY PRIORITY:	Taxis
CABINET MEMBER:	Councillor Maureen Aston
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
CONTACT OFFICER:	Mark Kay Ext 2580 mark.kay@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
APPENDICES	Appendices 1/2 - Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Deregulation Plan 2005-2008 (Available in Group Rooms. A public inspection copy is available on request. See front cover for contact details)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1 To consider the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Deregulation Plan 2005-08.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to **DECIDE** that:

- 1 The Wyre Forest Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Deregulation Plan Part 1 and Part 2 with the exception of Appendix 2, as outlined in the report, be approved and become effective on 1st October 2005.
- 2.2 Appendix 2 (Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions) be referred to the Licensing and Environmental Committee on 5th September 2005 for consideration and further recommendation to Cabinet on 29th September 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

- 1 The Halcrow Group Ltd Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey dated 31st March 2005 identified significant unmet demand within Wyre Forest District and recommended that the authority issue Hackney Carriage Licences on demand up to a point which the unmet demand is removed. Halcrow have calculated that an extra ten licences are required.
- 2 Council considered the recommendation of the Halcrow report at its meeting of 18th May 2005 at which time the Halcrow report was accepted and it was agreed that ten additional licences be issued by way of a ballot to be agreed by Licensing and Environmental Committee and this ballot took place on 18th July 2005. Further the Head of Planning, Health and Environment in consultation with the Head of Legal and Democratic Services was authorised to prepare a Deregulation Plan to de-restrict the licence numbers over a three year period and this was then to be considered firstly by the Licensing and Environmental Committee and the by Cabinet. The Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Deregulation Plan 2005-2008 (*Appendix 1*) is available in Group Rooms.
- 3 Licensing and Environmental Committee at their meeting on 10th June approved the issue of nine Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence by ballot, which took place on 18th July. One other licence is to be issued to an applicant whose application had previously been refused but had given notice of intention to appeal to the Crown Court.
- 4 The Department for Transport (draft) consultation document on taxi licensing was published on 3rd August 2005 'Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing : Consultation on draft best practice Guidance' sets out a best practice approach to setting quality standards for Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.
- 5 The above document will require a review of the quality requirements for taxis as set out in Appendix 2 of the Deregulation Plan and so it is proposed that, following consultation with the Trade, the Licensing and Environmental Committee will review these conditions on 5th September 2005 and make recommendations for approval to Cabinet on 29th September 2005.
- 6 It is proposed that Cabinet on 29th September 2005 will, subject to recommendations from the Licensing and Environmental Committee, approve the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence Conditions with or without amendment and decide whether to apply the new conditions to the nine licences awaiting issue following the ballot.

4. KEY ISSUES

- 1 The Deregulation Plan Proposes the issue of ten additional new, purpose built, wheelchair accessible Hackney Carriage vehicle licences to comply with the recommendations within the Halcrow 'Unmet Demand Survey' report and will address the issue of the currently identified 'significant unmet demand.'

- 2 It is proposed to issue another five additional Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences (by ballot) in April 2006 and again in April 2007 and number restriction will cease in April 2008.
- 3 The Deregulation Plan also contains revised conditions for Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licences, Private Hire Vehicle Licences, Operators Licences and Drivers Licences. In particular the plan seeks to improve the safety and quality of the Hackney Carriages and the service offered by operators and drivers. In light of the current consultation paper on taxi quality standards, the Licensing and Environmental Committee will review Appendix 2 of the Deregulation Plan to ensure it accords with best practice as foreshadowed in the Draft Consultation Paper.
- 4 Measures to improve Safety and quality within the plan include:
 - Reducing the age of the Fleet (Change in age limits)
 - Hackney Carriages to be new, purpose built wheelchair accessible
 - Provision of a livery (Silver for Hackney Carriage, Red for Private Hire)
- 5 Measures to improve service within the plan include:
 - Training for drivers dealing with disabled passengers
 - The compulsory adoption of a complaint and dispute resolution procedure
 - Adoption of customer care policy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 1 The issue of additional licences will result in additional licensing income in respect of application fees.
- 5.2 It is proposed to meet any costs resulting from the implementation of the Deregulation Plan from existing budgets.

6. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no significant legal or policy implications arising from this report.

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 7.1 By adopting a three year Deregulation Plan the Council would not have to justify its reasons for staying within regulation and would be meeting the initial unmet demand as well as moving towards best practice.

8. CONCLUSION

8.1 The Deregulation Plan meets the initial unmet demand whilst proposing a phased deregulation as recommended by the Department for Transport. Matters of quality safety and customer service are also addressed within the plan bringing the administration of taxis into line with best practice once the taxi licence conditions have been agreed and approved.

9. CONSULTEES

- 1 Head of Legal and Democratic Services
- 2 Chief Executive
- 3 Head of Financial Services

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 10.1 Previous reports to Council and Licensing and Environmental Committee January - July 2005)
Draft Deregulation Plan 2005 - 2008

16th August 2005

