

Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee

Forest Heath & St Edmundsbury councils

West Suffolk
working together

Title of Report:	Single Council Preparations: Approval to Consult on Harmonised Regulation and Licensing Policies - Exploring Scope to Retain Existing Hackney Carriage Licensing Zones	
Report No:	ADDENDUM TO CAB/JT/18/018	
Report to and date:	Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee	24 July 2018
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Purpose of report:	This addendum provides information on exploring the necessity for retaining existing Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury Hackney Carriage licensing zones for the new West Suffolk Council. It is however, intended that consultation on taxi policy transition options will still be undertaken, as proposed in the original recommendations contained in Report No: CAB/JT/18/018.	

Recommendation:	<p>It is <u>RECOMMENDED</u> that the Joint Executive (Cabinet) Committee:</p> <p>(1) notes that officers are exploring the necessity to combine the hackney carriage licensing areas of Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury for the new single West Suffolk Council;</p> <p>(2) notes that officers do not intend to change the recommendation set out in the original Report No: CAB/JT/18/018, which seeks to undertake consultation on taxi policy transition options, as proposed; and</p> <p>(3) agrees to the current approach for the taxi policy transition consultation, as outlined in paragraphs 1.6 and 1.7 of the Addendum to Report No: CAB/JT/18/018.</p>
Background papers: <i>(all background papers are to be published on the website and a link included)</i>	Original report: CAB/JT/18/018 Single Council Preparations: Approval to Consult on Harmonised Regulation and Licensing Policies
Documents attached:	None

1. Key issues and reasons for recommendation(s)

- 1.1 Whilst we have not entered formal consultation yet, initial feedback from dialogue with hackney carriage operators has raised concern regarding the potential impact of hackney carriage licensing zones, and in particular the potential impact on their livelihood.
- 1.2 At present, the Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury boundaries act as a zone, which means that hackney carriage operators can only ply for trade in their district boundary. Removal of this zone would allow operators to ply for hire across West Suffolk, which could lead to increases in competition and changes in demand patterns.
- 1.3 Given this feedback, officers are exploring options with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Clauses were included in the 2008 new unitary Council "consequential orders" so that existing hackney carriage zones could be preserved unless the new council agreed otherwise. Similar clauses may be included in the consequential orders for West Suffolk Council.
- 1.6 This does not invalidate the consultation on taxi policy transition options (see paragraph 1.3 of the original Report No: CAB/JT/18/018), as the West Suffolk Council can still decide to harmonise hackney carriage licensing requirements. However, if the Councils were given the legal ability to retain taxi zones, then it means it has the option to harmonise requirements, rather than being required to do so.
- 1.7 In essence, at the time the original report was written, the only option was to remove the hackney carriage zones, and harmonise policy. Now, further options may be available:
 - a) To retain the zones, and keep current Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury licensing requirements;
 - b) to retain the zones, but modify or harmonise Forest Heath and St Edmundsbury licensing requirements; or
 - c) to retain the zones and requirements for now, but West Suffolk Council consciously decides to remove the zones and harmonise policies.
- 1.8 Officers do not intend to change the recommendation which seeks to undertake consultation as proposed, as this will provide key insights into the possible options for West Suffolk Council to take forward.
- 1.9 The recommendations are set out on page one of this addendum.