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## APPENDIX 1

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### Policy option choices

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Please give reasons, and in particular about any likely costs of this proposal

**Why have you chosen this option? Please give reasons, and in particular about any likely costs of this proposal**

**Response Text**

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I have read through Watford Borough Council's proposed Action Plan, and am an avid supporter for a number of reasons. Firstly, I am a taxi driver and work most nights. I believe there is a large surplus of Taxi's in the Watford area and supply outweighs demand. The Action Plan will benefit Watford greatly as I believe the quality of service is lacking, whilst standards are not being met by many of Watford's Taxi drivers, if not the majority. My chosen option states 'This may, over time, also lead to a reduction in the number of licensed vehicles as drivers find it more difficult to reach the new standards but this will create more competition for those who are left' I believe this would be a great outcome as, first and foremost the Taxi drivers who do not meet the appropriate requirements should not be serving for the public sector in the first place, and secondly if there is more competition between the remaining taxi drivers this will only better the trade and push these drivers to meet the standards that they are required to. The 'quality and standards within the trade' will in this case no doubt improve, and one of the main aims of the Action Plan will have been met. I further believe the introduction of IT skills, and the exploration of business opportunities will only aid in improving the quality of the trade, and if followed through Watford's Taxi services will be able to create links with other businesses and improve communications and business in the town.

Far too many drivers not enough work. Agree with stopping licences being issued immediately. we are clearly not Piccadilly Circus, there is far too long waiting between jobs and still increasing its no wonder drivers are refusing local fares such as the one recently mentioned in the newsletter (jury's inn) such behaviour makes me sick to the stomach it gives decent drivers a bad name. We have many drivers with communication barriers; how they get through stringent tests I would like to know? Bottom line is unless we are serious about resolving core issues such as stopping licences we are no closer in sorting out this mess we find ourselves in today.

It means the number of hackney carriages will probably not increase, but the higher standards should improve customer service, safety and comfort

I am fed with this town (lived her for 51 years) which is constantly reliant on poorly maintained old polluting taxi's when we should all be using buses and that includes the old and those with restricted mobility. The bus and rail fares price young kids into taxi's and think this is the norm! It wasn't like that when I was young and now that we have this culture of constantly using cars when there should be greener, punctual affordable and sustainable transportation. My girlfriend of ten years hates coming to Watford because it's so bad on public transport and we simply walk everywhere. Watford Junction is a joke and the constant queues of vehicles which rank up in Clendon Road are a danger to the public. Happy to discuss this further over the phone if you want to give me a call.

They would have to be MUCH stricter standards. Because on the few occasions I have taken licensed taxis from the front of Watford station, I have found the drivers to have either been a) rude, b) refuse to take me short distance because of the amount of time they have been queuing for a passenger, c) have not turned meter on, d) look nothing like the photo on the licensee) don't know their way round Watford f) drive really badly, even dangerously. The standard of cleanliness inside the cabs is often really bad too. I now only use minicab firms and not the rank outside Watford. I've also told both my daughters not to use the rank at the top of the town but to call a minicab firm instead. I suspect that some of the problems above are due

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to the fact that I have heard from several people that the people who have the license hire it out to friends on days they don't want to work. I think introducing spot checks by officers at ranks (who would need to pose as passengers to avoid detection) would solve a LOT of this as it would put off the fraudulent drivers, ie the ones buying days off their mates who have the license.

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The more licences taxis available the less likely it is for someone to get into an unlicensed cab and expose themselves to the dangers this may pose. Stricter controls to achieve licensing will help to raise the standards.

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Why are you even considering limiting Hackney Carriages in Watford? Just because the taxi drivers are vociferous is not a reason to accede to their demands. Why not limit the number of florist shops or hairdressers in Watford who also find it difficult to make a living? Instead of limiting the number of Hackney Carriages, take a leaf out of Bournemouth Council's book and insert 'chips' into the driver's meters annually to prevent them from charging rate 3 when they should be charging rate 1.

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There are too many cabs waiting around for hire

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I believe there are far too many taxis licensed in Watford and the service being offered by a considerable number is below an acceptable standard. While the most important criteria is service to the public the taxi operators have to be considered too. If they are not able to make an acceptable living from the trade then they will leave and we will lose experienced operators. These will in turn be replaced by new less experienced operators.

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I am a general public and my comments are just general. In any industry healthy competition is always good. If you issue more licences than it shall be good for local residents. Because more taxis, more competition in terms of fare and services. If you stop issuing new license than there will be monopoly of the old taxi drives and they will charge high fares and may not provide good standard services by knowing that no additional licences will be issued. So as a public we recommend continuing issuing new licences that will benefit local residents. Thanks

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I think this is the right decision

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It appears that there are too many taxis in Watford. What I've found this leads to is a surly attitude from taxi drivers if you are only wishing to make a short journey, especially from Watford Junction. If there is some reason that you require a taxi to complete a short journey, you have to be prepared to accept a barrage of mutter comments about how long they've waited in the queue only to get this 'pathetic' run and how can they make a living, etc etc. If they weren't so rude, I might be encouraged to tip. Witnessing the driving exhibited by some taxi drivers is worrying to say the least, in and around Watford.

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We need to improve both the quality of the drivers and the cabs to a much higher standard; the condition of our cabs inside must be the worst in the county.

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It is the easiest option to implement.

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from a customers point of view, the current set up works well Reducing the number of licenses is more likely to result in an increase to fares or result in a shortage of supply, impacting customers It is preferable to allow the free market to find its own equilibrium, without restricting the number of licenses thanks Dan

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The fourth option will not harm anyone already in the trade and give them the opportunity to gain new skills and possibly consider a change of career.

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I think it would be good to have more competition in the taxi market, especially from 'Black Cab'. The taxi market in Watford appears to be dominated by a certain group.

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I live on the Cassiobury Estate, not far from Watford Junction Station. Taxi drivers are reluctant to accept a fare for such a short distance (I know they have to accept it) because they can charge only £5 and then have to get into the long queue again to get their next fare. There's the same problem when I want to be picked up from my house. Fewer taxis would mean those left could make a better living and wouldn't have to spend so long queuing for passengers. You are well aware that there is a problem because you took away the public metered parking in Clarendon Road and extended the taxi rank.

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Taxi drivers on occasion have been rude and unfriendly. The taxi drivers have a constant demand at Watford Junction. Drivers could benefit from offering better customer services, communication skills need improving. More consistency with pricing needs to be established,

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the same journey can cost £6-£10, for a 5 minute journey.

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Fed up with hearing about drivers refusing fares a short distance from station. eg Town Centre. Some people have a difficulty walking or do not want to walk through the town late at night or have luggage to carry.

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I think that the more taxi's we have, the better; however, the standard has to be improved. I have had to show the driver the way on a few occasions. Even here in the area! And some drivers are constantly talking on their mobile phones, from the beginning to the end of the journey, not just illegal but rude also.

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I believe we have far too many Taxis in Watford. In addition the quality of driving by Watford taxi drivers is woefully short of an acceptable standard. I have seen flagrant disregard for road markings and lane discipline and plain dangerous driving. I think the numbers do need to reduce but primarily the standard of driving and behaviour needs to be tackled firstly and most urgently. Professional drivers need to be setting a standard for others to emulate, the standard in Watford does not, in my opinion, meet an acceptable standard.

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this is not good people going to sell their taxi again like before

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there are a no of sub-standard taxis operating in Watford; stricter criteria and vetting and capping numbers would improve service and public perception

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I have noticed that many taxis that now pick up from Watford Junction don't know their way around because they are not from Watford. I always used to use the taxis at the front of the station because they were local - usually Allied or United - nowadays I prefer to go across the road and find an Allied car if one is there - to make sure I get home safely. When phoning for a taxi I use Allied, United, Eagle or Lucketts because they offer a good local service.

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There are always too many unused taxis parked around Watford Junction station some of which park in the pull-in bay which is really annoying when picking up family from the train.

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I think that the number of taxis in the town is best left to the market to determine. Numbers will vary with demand and this is not something in which Council either needs to, nor is well equipped to, involve itself. However, there are currently some issues concerning taxis that do fall within the scope of council responsibilities and if stricter standards could address them I think that would be appropriate. I have in mind here driver competence, vehicle condition and the need for drivers to accept their obligation to accept a journey once the passenger inside the vehicle irrespective of the length of the journey required (either short or long).

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There are far too many taxi's especially queuing down Clarendon Road and at the station. At times there are queues of taxis up Clarendon and in-front of the police station - over 50!! As these taxis have been waiting for so long they often refuse to take less than £10 fares. Too many taxis are present currently.

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Taxis in Watford are rubbish; they're smelly, seem to take the longest route, and only accept cash even if the vehicles displaying credit/debit card symbols. The only good thing was the old requirement for clear marking (black/white) which made it far easier to distinguish between dodgy mini cabs and real taxis in the town centre on a Friday night.

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I as a hackney driver no how hard it is to make money, to many taxis waiting most nights up to two hours for a job the taxi trade is finished, I personally believe the licensing team need to improve the quality and standards within the trade .most of the drivers cant even speak proper English, their English is so bad it spoils it for the rest of drivers.

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Restricting vehicle numbers will not improve anything if the drivers are of a lower standard. We need to follow the London standard, high entry standards and no restrictions on numbers.

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this option limits numbers but also raises standards of those participating in the TAXI trade but also consideration should be given to raising standards of those involved in regulating the TAXI trade as they have no experience of actually working a TAXI.

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Stopping license allows the taxi ranks to not overflow and not have too much taxis, because it represents there's loads of jobless/ easy jobs in Watford. Allowing only London cabbies- makes the town neater and better. It makes it look more like a city and rich. Also it decreases taxi in Watford as the majority is family cars with the Watford sticker!! Some of them might have to buy a cab and then (the government) gets more money per the VAT on each car!! Then put a limit in - to stop it overflowing.

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There is never a shortage of getting a taxi from anywhere within the town centre. Most drivers

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are very good and polite, but several that I've had the misfortune to travel with have shown very poor standards of driving and their customer care could well do with a great deal of improvement, they let the other drivers down with their poor attitudes

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Because there are too many taxi drivers in Watford. In all my years living in Watford I have never seen a hackney carriage style taxi pick someone up of the street like they do in London, so I am unsure what is a hackney carriage and what is a mini-cab. Anyway Taxis regularly mess-up the traffic flow in the Watford junction/Woodford road/Clarendon road area while waiting for potential passengers. For the sake of traffic flow a limit on the maximum number of taxis needs to be imposed. Another reason why I have chosen this option is because I feel that many of these taxi drivers are opportunist and pray on people in certain circumstances (for example when there was a problem with the trains at Watford junction and no rail replacement buses, the taxi drivers had suddenly increased their fares for stranded passengers. Also if you need to go anywhere on a Friday or Saturday evening prices are also sky high).

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Becoming a taxi driver appears to be something that is relatively easy to do for people (usually men) who lack qualifications so that any help that could be offered in the way of training should be helpful in finding alternative employment.

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What sort of action plan are licensing officials suggesting, if it is to improve the language skills and setting tough intensive exam then that will be a good step forward, but anything where drivers are subject to more money being taken out of their pockets at unreasonable amount it is unsatisfactory.

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Dear sir or madam, Watford is a town not city there is more than enough taxis to go round in 24 a day 7 days a week at this moment drivers getting stressed out not earning wages to go buy Watford council is aware off taxis are congesting Watford town. Requesting to Watford council please put cap on the hackney at least 4 next years regards A Ditta

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(1)Some drivers can't speak two words of English how they going to talk to a customer(2) No ranks need more ranks.(3)Some taxi drivers don't pick up local jobs want big jobs for that you need tackle this with a under cover operation (4) DSA test should stay same every 3 Renewals and others courses you do as same.(5)The cab age should stay same as long as regular work been done it passes the M o t that should be fine.(6)If you consider to have minimum fare £5.00 that should about 70% of taxis would pick up should help with people Refusing local jobs other are doing it why not us.(7)more ranks soon as you can do something about that stop delimitation soon as too many of us not much work its very hard to make ends meet most of the time its hard as it is you can't find more jobs out there please about time you the council stop plates please.(8)more ranks outside hospital and football ground and the big super stores and other train stations and Harry Potter theme park please consider these places too

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**Limit the number of taxi licences from 19 March 2012.**

**There is no evidence that there is significant demand for taxi services that is not being met, and so a limit would be legally justifiable. A limit would reduce the pressure on road and rank spaces identified in the report. It would help reduce competition amongst drivers, allowing them to invest in raising standards. Please give reasons, and in particular about any likely costs of this proposal**

**Response Text**

I am not sure about any cost implications except implementing the action plan must have some cost attached due to enforcement

I believe this is a good option there certainly is no extra demand for more taxis this will actually reduce costs e.g less paper work for licensing officials.

I believe this would lead on the one hand to a reduction in costs for the council as they would be granting fewer licenses, but an increase in costs associated with imposing and checking higher standards are maintained. Overall hopefully no higher costs.

No idea about cost but if the report is correct, a similar survey would need to be run a year later to ensure taxi service is adequate

What evidence is there that by limiting the number of licences, that existing drivers are going to improve standards? Simply by reducing licences will not encourage the existing licence holders to invest in new or newer vehicles. It will however become the first step towards a return of the old practice of selling licences.

The number of taxis should be reduced and the only cost would be the council's loss of revenue from the licenses.

Do not limit the licenses. More licenses will create healthy competition and good services in any industry. Stopping new licences will increase fares and compromise on services even if these are not up to standard. Stopping new licences shall be a win to old taxi drivers only and very bad for general public where in tough financial conditions public need lower fare and that can happen if you issue more licences and create healthy competition.

Raising standards would be welcomed. The number of taxis appears to outnumber rank spaces and the overflow spaces from Watford Junction are, in all honesty, ridiculous.

Any costs would be minimal as the licensing system is already in place. Any costs to the driver to improve their vehicle would be recouped by increased passenger numbers per taxi as there would be much less sitting around waiting for a fare.

I agree with the reasons above. I think the costs to meet this are low. I do not, however, think that anyone with a current licence should be made to lose it right away.

Free market

I think putting a limit on the number of licences will have to go together with an "improvement plan" as you suggested on the previous page.

The congestion, especially around Watford Junction station caused by taxis does imply an excess. Less badly driven taxis on the road has got to be major plus point on safety alone. I would like to see the poorest drivers leaving this business sector first.

at present there is no 'competition' you have to take next on rank (good or bad) more random checks/vetting and removal of licences for sub-standard vehicles/drivers would be appropriate

The limit would have to be pitched at the point where demand is met - lower than this and unmet demand would be created. But there is no evidence to suggest that at that level driver earnings would be raised to the extent of increasing their disposable income to a level where they would invest money in their vehicles. Their immediate priorities would be improving their and their family's standard of living.

As long as prices are regulated by the council and availability is monitored I don't see the

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problem.

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I don't think by limiting the number of taxi licences would help the existing drivers. There are far too many taxis in Watford and the Watford council need to put a stop on issuing more licences.

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Drivers who can't license a taxi will just license a private hire. In short no change in vehicle numbers. And then every three years the council will be paying out tens of thousands on further taxi surveys. Why not wait until the Law Commission have published their proposals?

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Would go some way to limiting congestion of other road users, reduce emissions, taxis would possibly be more economically viable as trip turnover would increase and overcharging which should never happen be reduced as a direct result. TAXIS would be available more easily to the public as numbers plying for hire would increase due to shorter waiting times between trips at ranks there by possibly increasing the earnings of the TAXI. Public gains by better service, probably charged the correct fares, standards are raised.

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A smaller number of drivers will improve the customer experience as those that hold a license will have to be at the top of their game with their customer attitude

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Tough exam in English so at least drivers can communicate with their passengers.