



Equality Impact Assessment

Service

Environmental Health

Title of policy, function or service

Hackney carriage vehicles ("Taxis")
numerical limits

Lead officer

Jeffrey Leib (Licensing Manager)

People involved with completing the EIA

Justine Hoy (EHL Section Head)

Type of policy, function or service:

Existing

New/Proposed

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Step 1 – Make sure you have clear aims, objectives and outcomes

What are the aims, purpose and outcomes of the policy, function or service and how do these fit in with the wider aims of the organisation, i.e. corporate priorities?

This policy aims to improve the taxi service provided to passengers in Watford through limiting the number of available licences for taxis and, in the process, creating the environment to raise existing standards through licence conditions. The outcome of the policy is expected to be a zero increase in the number of taxis available for public use but an increase in standards over 2-3 years.

How will these aims support the Equality Duty to:

1. Promote equality of opportunity?
2. Eliminate discrimination?
3. Eliminate harassment?
4. Promote good community relations?
5. promote positive attitudes towards disabled people?
6. Encourage participation of disabled people?
7. Consider more favourable treatment of disabled people?
8. protect and promote human rights?

There is no human rights impact on taxi passengers arising from the proposal; and the proposals will help support aims 5, 6 and 7 by requiring drivers to undergo regular re-validation of their disability awareness skills.

Who is the policy, function or service going to benefit and how?

It will benefit passengers who should see an improvement in the standards offered by drivers and in the vehicles used in the local taxi trade.

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What outcomes do you want to achieve?

- (1) Limiting number of taxis
- (2) improving the passenger experience of using taxis in Watford

Step 1– Make sure you have clear aims, objectives and outcomes continued

What barriers are there to achieving these outcomes?

None apart from legal barriers associated with implementing a limit on the number of taxis, which are being addressed as part of the overall policy approach.

How will you put your policy into practice?

The Licensing Committee needs to agree to implement a prohibition on granting new taxi licences, and to the implementation of an action plan which will require licence conditions to be amended over a three year period.

NB: This policy relates to the ability to own a licence to own and operate a **taxi**, and not a licence to drive a taxi which is subject to a different policy.

Step 2 – Collecting your information

What existing information/data do you have?

We do not have any specific information about the users of taxi services in Watford but it is a reasonable assumption (and there is no evidence to the contrary) to suggest that all sectors of the community may use taxis from time to time.

In terms of the Watford population overall:

Population

The Office for National Statistics released new mid-year estimates for 2010 in August 2011 which estimated that Watford's population had increased to 86,000. The component changes of this increase in population are as follows (figures rounded):

Table 1: Mid-year (2010) estimates of population in Watford

	000s
Mid 2009 population	83.80
Live births	1.40
Deaths	0.60
Natural change (i.e. number of live births minus number of live deaths)	0.80
Net migration and other changes	1.50
Total change	2.20
Mid 2010 population	86.00

Gender

Watford's population is 50 per cent male and 50 per cent female, broadly in line with the male/female ratio in the East of England and across England as a whole.

Age

Watford has a higher than average number of people of working age and lower than average number of people of retirement age and over (figures are rounded)

Table 2: Watford mid-year (2008) population estimates by age range

	Population (rounded)	Watford %	Herts %	Eastern %	England %
0 – 15	17,100	19.9%	20.0%	18.8%	18.6%
16 – 64¹	55,900	65.0%	64.6%	63.7%	64.8%
65² +	13,000	15.1%	15.5%	17.5%	16.6%

Mid year 2010 population estimates – Office for National Statistics (2011)

¹ These population figures are based on 20-64 years for males and 20-59 years for females

² These population figures are based on 65+ years for males and 60+ years for females

Ethnicity

The non-white proportion of Watford's population was 18% based on mid-year estimates shown in the table below. The breakdown below uses the mid-year estimates for 2009 and estimates the populations for different ethnic groups within Watford. This is taken from an experimental data set and should be treated with some caution.

Table 3: Population by ethnic group in Watford, based on mid-year estimates 2009

Ethnic group	Total population 000s	Male population 000s	Female population 000s
Total	83,800	41.9	41.9
White British	60.2	30.2	30.0
White Irish	1.7	0.8	0.9
White other	4.2	2.0	2.2
Mixed white and Black Caribbean	0.7	0.3	0.3
Mixed white and Black African	0.3	0.2	0.2
Mixed white and Asian	0.8	0.4	0.4
Other mixed	0.6	0.3	0.3
Asian or Asian British: Indian	4.0	2.0	2.0
Asian or Asian British: Pakistani	3.9	2.0	1.9
Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi	0.8	0.4	0.4
Asian or Asian British: other Asian	0.9	0.5	0.4
Black or Black British: Black Caribbean	1.3	0.6	0.7
Black or Black British: Black African	1.6	0.8	0.8
Black or Black British: other black	0.3	0.1	0.1
Chinese	1.7	0.9	0.8
Other ethnic group	0.8	0.4	0.4

Figures rounded to 1 decimal place. Mid year 2009 population estimates / experimental data set – Office for National Statistics

Disability

The 2001 Census did not ask about disability but 11,321 people stated they had a "limiting long term illness".

Religion or belief

Of those who indicated their religion in the 2001 Census, 66.4% indicated a Christian background. The second largest religious group was Muslim, indicated by 6.1%.

Marriage and Civil Partnership

In Watford, the 2001 census shows:

- 47.7% of people aged 16 and over in households were living as a married couple
- 12.1% of people were co-habiting
- 25.4% were single (never having been married)
- 14.9% remaining were not living in a couple, being widowed, divorced, separated or married to somebody not resident in the household

In 2006, 797 marriages took place in Watford and 794 in 2007.

In 2001, 114 people in Watford aged 16 and over (0.18% of 62,145 people) stated that they were living together in a same-sex couple

The Civil Partnership Act came into force on 5 December 2005 in the UK – the first day couples could give notice of their intention to form a civil partnership. The Act enables same-sex couples, aged 16 or over to obtain legal recognition of their relationship.

Figures show that 116 civil partnerships were formed in Hertfordshire in 2007, 92 in 2008 and 74 in 2009 (the figure for 2009 is provisional).

Pregnancy and maternity

The average completed family size for women born in 1964 in England and Wales and completing their childbearing in 2009 was 1.9 children per woman. This compares with their mothers' generation, represented by woman born in 1937, who had an average of 2.4 children.

The UK has relatively high fertility levels compared with many European countries. The conception rate in England and Wales for 2009 has risen to 80.9 conceptions per 1000 women aged 15-44, from 79.9 in 2008. Between 2008 and 2009 conception rates increased in all age groups apart from those aged under 25.

The under 18 conception rate decreased by 5.9 per cent, from 40.7 conceptions per 1000 women aged 15-17 in 2008 to 38.3 in 2009 (figures for 2009 are provisional).

There has been a long term rise in the proportion of conceptions occurring outside a legal partnership. In 2009 conceptions outside a legal partnership accounted for 57 per cent of all conceptions in England and Wales, whereas it was 42 per cent in 1989.

The under 18 conception rate in Watford for 2007-09 (provisional) was 27 per 1,000 females, higher than the county average of 24.7 per 1,000, but lower than the regional average (31.9 per 1,000) and the national average (40.2 per 1,000) (ONS statistics – rates for 2009 are provisional)

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

We do not currently have data on sexual orientation or gender reassignment. This is a data gap that will be looked at corporately.

Using your existing data what does it tell you?

The data on Watford indicates that it is a diverse community with individuals and groups with varying needs. Any of these individual and / or groups could be in need of a responsive taxi service with good customer care standards and an understanding of the impact of some of these needs in relation to being able to access the service offered. This needs to be reflected in the standards set for the taxi service by the council and in its ongoing monitoring and review.

The council also needs to ensure that there is a fair and effective complaints system in place that will allow people to raise any issues in relation to the service and that can be used to identify areas where improvements can be made

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Step 3 – What is the impact?

Consider the information gathered in Section 2 of this assessment form – does, or could this policy, function or service have a positive/negative impact on members of the ‘protected characteristics’ below?

(a) Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their age?

Age	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Age			✓	<p>Introducing a limitation policy may have an impact in two ways. It may indirectly reduce the provision of taxi services to the public at certain times of the week when a particular section of the public has more need for taxis than at other times. However, given the current over-supply of taxis that has been objectively observed during the autumn of 2011 this would appear to be a very low risk.</p> <p>Most drivers are currently in the 40 – 59 age bracket. As the proposed policy is restrictive in nature it will prevent anyone outside the existing age groups from obtaining licences, other than by purchasing an existing licence (and almost certainly at a premium).</p> <p>The policy could by introducing a limit discriminate against younger people (e.g. 18-25) as there will be less opportunities open to enter the trade and that it might, unintentionally, benefit older people who have had the opportunity to enter the trade in Watford in the past. However, there are no bars (as stated above) to obtaining a licence to obtaining drivers’ licences, but in relation to owning a vehicle. The policy is in case intended to be reviewed every three years at the most in order to gauge its effectiveness.</p>

(b) Do you think that the policy impacts on people on the grounds of their **race**?

Race	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Race (this includes ethnic or national origins, colour and nationality)		✓		Most existing licence-holders are British Asian /Asian Pakistani and so the policy may have the same consequences as they do in relation to age. People outside of this group will find it harder to enter a restricted market where licences are very limited. There is no evidence that the negative aspects of the current policy (over-supply of taxis leading to depressed earnings) is influenced by or has any bearing on race.

(c) Do you think that the policy impacts on people with a **disability**?

Disability	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Visual impairment			✓	Council policy since November 2009 has required newly licensed vehicles to be suitable for people with disabilities either by being able to convey passengers whilst sitting in wheelchairs or be fitted with a swivel cushion and being able to carry a folded wheelchair. Limiting the number of new vehicles should not affect the existing numbers of available vehicles as any replacement vehicle would still have to meet that criteria. There are no disability restrictions in terms of being able to apply for a hackney carriage vehicle licence.
Hearing impairment			✓	
Physically disabled			✓	
Learning disability			✓	
Mental health			✓	

Other (HIV positive, multiple sclerosis, cancer, diabetes, epilepsy)			✓	
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(d) Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their **religion or belief**?

Religion or belief	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Religion or belief			✓	There is no evidence that the current policy has an impact on people because of their religion or belief. There is no evidence that imposing a limit on the number of vehicle licences would have an impact on licence-holders because of their religion or belief. There is equally no evidence that the current policy has an impact on customers because of their religion or belief, or that a more restrictive policy would do so.

(e) Do you think that the policy affects **men** and **women** in different ways?

Gender	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Male	✓			Over 99% of current licence-holders are male and a limit on vehicle licences would perpetuate this without allowing an equality of opportunity. However, licence applications from women could potentially be viewed as a genuine exception that ought to be granted. There should not be any impact on the provision of taxi services to men.
Female		✓		Restricting licence issues will deny women an equal opportunity to enter what has traditionally been a male-dominated trade in Watford. A restrictive policy would also mean that women passengers would only have male drivers to choose from.

(f) Do you think that the policy impacts on people because of their **sexual orientation**?

Sexual orientation	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Gay men			✓	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.
Lesbians			✓	
Bi-sexual			✓	

Heterosexual/straight			✓	
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(g) Do you think that the policy impacts on people because they are **married or in a civil partnership**?

Marriage/Civil partnership	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Marriage/Civil Partnership			✓	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.

(h) Do you think that the policy impacts on women because of their **pregnancy/maternity leave**?

Pregnancy/ Maternity	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Pregnancy/ Maternity			✓	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.

(i) Do you think that the policy impacts on people because they are undergoing/have undergone **gender reassignment**?

Gender Reassignment	Positive	Negative	None	Reasons for your decision
Gender Reassignment			✓	There is no evidence that this policy would impact on people in any way because of this characteristic.

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Step 4 – What are the differences?

Are any groups affected in a different way to others as a result of the policy, function or service?

Prospective passengers with any protected characteristic should not face any negative impact as a result of the policy, although passengers with disabilities should benefit from an enhanced level of service. (It is explicitly recognised in the Equalities Act that taxi drivers owe passengers with disabilities a greater degree of service than other passengers).

Does your policy, function or service either directly or indirectly discriminate?

Yes No

Additional information – if yes how are you going to change it?

Step 5 – Now you need to consult!

Who have you consulted with?

Licence holders and stakeholders were consulted as part of the initial review into the provision of taxi services (see page 75 of the report for list of consultees which included representatives of the Watford equality panel); a specific exercise with existing licence-holders and more generally with the public was held between 5 February and 6 March 2012.

Step 5 – Now you need to consult! continued....

If you have not consulted yet please list who you are going to consult

How are you going to consult with specific groups or communities (see the council's Consultation Strategy for tips on how to do this).

An open day was held with existing licence-holders on 6 February 2012, and the general public were invited to respond to an online survey.

Step 6 – Make a decision based on steps 2 – 5

If you are in a position to introduce the policy, function or service, but still have information to collect or actions to complete to ensure all equality groups have been covered, please list:

Consultation exercise to be held from 6 February – 7 March 2012.

If you are not in a position to go ahead what actions are you going to take?

Step 6 – Make a decision based on steps 2 – 5 continued....

How are you going to monitor the policy, function or service, how often and who will be responsible?

The proposed action plan lasts for an initial three years, which will be overseen by the licensing team. During that time the policy will be monitored on an annual basis by the Licensing Committee, to whom reports will be submitted.

Step 7 – Now just publish the results

Tick list

Have you completed your service equality action plan with the actions you are going to undertake?

Has your head of service to sign off the EIA?

Have you sent an electronic copy of the EIA to the Equalities Officer who will publish it on the website

This EIA has been approved by:

Date:

Contact Number: