


Cambridge Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Study

Cambridge City Council

Final Report

March 2011





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Document history

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Cambridge City Council

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1 Study Objectives and Overview

1.1 General

This consultation study has been conducted by Halcrow on behalf of Cambridge City Council. The study sought to obtain the views of the public, trade, and stakeholders on the following proposals:

- The introduction of a shared hackney carriage service; and,
- The introduction of a 'sliding scale' for taxi licensing fees related to CO2 emissions.

Cambridge City Council has a commitment to promoting Cambridge as a sustainable city and these proposed changes could have a positive effect on reducing the carbon dioxide emissions across the City.

Consultation on these proposals has been undertaken by a number of means and with a range of consultees. The consultation has been split into a number of distinct tasks:

- Public Consultation;
- Trade Consultation; and
- Stakeholder Consultation.

1.2 Cambridge Overview

Cambridge is the administrative centre of Cambridgeshire. Cambridgeshire is located in East Anglia and is approximately 50 miles from London. Cambridge is well known for a large student population.

According to the 2001 Census, Cambridge has a population of 108,863 which includes 22,153 students. Cambridge is home to many high-tech businesses including Microsoft Research, Abcam, CSR, ARM Limited, CamSemi, Jagex, and Sinclair.

Cambridge has good train links to London as well as Peterborough, Norwich, Ipswich, and Stansted Airport. The M11 and the A14 run on the outskirts of the city. Cambridge was also one of the UK's eleven "Cycling Cities", a status given in 2008.

The City Council currently licenses some 312 hackney carriages and 197 private hire vehicles.

2 Background

2.1 General

This section of the report provides a general background to the taxi market in Cambridge and the relevant legislation governing the market.

The Department for Transport first issued Best Practice Guidance in October 2006 to assist those local authorities in England and Wales that have responsibility for the regulation of the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) trades. In March 2010 this was updated following a feedback and consultation exercise. This guidance is intended to assist licensing authorities, but it is only guidance, and decisions on any matters remain a matter for the authority concerned.

The guidance provides detailed information on flexible transport services, whilst the information on environment related vehicle licensing policy is limited. Details are provided below:

2.2 Legislation – The Transport Act 1985

There are three sets of provisions conferring different levels of operational flexibility on operators of taxis or private hire vehicles and their passengers. In summary the provisions are:

- Section 10 lays down the conditions under which a hackney carriage may be hired at separate fares for a journey commencing there and then; and
- Section 11 provides provisions for shared advanced hackney and private hire bookings; and
- Section 12 allows hackneys and private hire vehicles to operate local 'bus' services – often known as taxibuses.

2.3 Shared Schemes

Shared taxis – immediate hirings

Section 10 of the Transport Act 1985 states that local taxi licensing authorities can set up a taxi sharing scheme so that passengers, who would not normally travel together but who are going to the same or similar destinations, can travel in the same taxi and pay separately. Passengers must all board the taxi at a designated place, usually a taxi rank. Where a rank is also in use for a regular taxi service, passengers can make their own choice on whether they wish to hire the vehicle as a whole or if they wish to share the journey and pay separate fares.

Licensed taxis (not PHVs) can be hired at separate fares by up to eight people from ranks or other places that have been designated by the authority. (The authority is required to set up such a scheme if holders of 10% or more of the taxi licences in the area ask for one.) The passengers pay only part of the metered fare but the driver receives more than the metered fare.

The benefits of shared taxis is that passengers pay only a proportion of the metered fare so more people may be attracted to use shared taxis. Drivers also benefit because collectively they will receive more than the metered fare.

Local authorities gain from shared taxi schemes because the number of vehicles being used on their streets may be less, thereby reducing congestion and pollution, and they can plan where to put ranks for shared use.

Taxi or PHV sharing by advanced booking

Section 11 of the Transport Act 1985 allows taxi's and private hire operators to offer discounted fares to those passengers, booking in advance - usually by telephone - who are willing to share a journey and pay separately even though they do not know each other. The initiative for this lies with the operator, although would-be hirers can ask operators if there is anyone suitable for a shared journey.

This could be for "one-off" journeys, such as two passengers in the same vicinity wishing to travel to the local airport, or used for journeys on a regular basis, such as weekday journeys to and from the local train station or weekly visits to town and back on market day.

The benefits of a shared taxi or PHV through advanced booking offers taxi and private hire operators flexibility to match up passengers either at pick up or on return, or both. Passengers also pay lower fares than for an exclusive hiring, but overall operators will take more for shared journeys, as well as having the potential to attract more passengers because of lower fares.

Taxibuses

Section 12 of the Transport Act 1985 allows owners of licensed taxis and private hire vehicles can apply to the Traffic Commissioner for a 'restricted public service vehicle (PSV) operator licence'. The vehicle owner can then use the vehicle to run a bus service for up to eight passengers. The route must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and must have at least one stopping place in the area of the local authority that licensed the taxi, though it can go beyond it. The bus service will be eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant (subject to certain conditions) and taxibuses can be used for local authority subsidised bus services. The travelling public have another transport opportunity opened for them, and taxi owners have another business opportunity. The Local Transport Act 2008 contains a provision which allows the owners of PHVs to acquire a special PSV operator licence and register a route with the traffic commissioner.

2.4 Experience of Innovative Taxi Schemes

Since the 1985 Transport Act there has been mixed success and experimentation with Section 10, 11 and 12 taxi schemes. This Section reviews some of this mixed success.

The launch of the Rural Bus Challenge Competition in 1998 and Urban Bus Challenge Competition in 2001 resulted in an increase in the number of innovative transport projects. A number of these innovative projects were called 'taxibus' schemes. However, these are schemes predominantly run under PSV licensing and are registered as scheduled bus services. Examples of these schemes run in most rural counties and a number of metropolitan areas.

One reason for this predominance of bus-based schemes is that the majority of local authorities bidding for challenge money are County Councils and therefore do not license taxis. Another reason is maybe due to the tendering process for such schemes.

It appears that when County Councils and Passenger Transport Executives tender for such schemes the lowest tender is usually provided by a PSV operator.

Section 10

Blackpool Borough Council operated a Section 10 Shared hackney scheme. The scheme was in existence in the late 1980s and was instigated by the borough council – however it is no longer running. The scheme operated from designated stands along the promenade and had a fixed fare/fixed destination fare structure. The taxi must be hired and agreement to sharing is required of the first boarding passenger.

The scheme had little success, which was partly due to poor publicity. The licensing authority has stated that the scheme did not work as it was set up to due to taxi drivers ‘plying for hire’ with passengers. Essentially, the scheme offered discounted fares for passengers travelling along the promenade. Since the scheme was not widely publicised individual hackney drivers found it more attractive to offer the standard fares to passengers. It is possible that the lack of impetus behind the scheme arises from a desire to support ridership on the Blackpool tram system, which is owned and run by Blackpool Borough Council.

Section 11

The APT (Arranged Passenger Transport) scheme in Greater Manchester is a shared private hire scheme operating across the GMPTE area. The service runs on four routes across Greater Manchester and uses a combination of private hire vehicles and minibuses. All journeys must be booked in advance.

Section 12

Exeter City Council licensed a Section 12 taxibus scheme in 2000. The taxibus was developed and operated by a local hackney proprietor. The taxibus served Exeter and the surrounding area between 2300 and 0300 providing transport for those leaving the city’s nightclubs and bars.

The scheme was not very successful and was withdrawn three months after it started by the operator. The lack of success was attributed to two main reasons. Firstly the service was not allowed to commence close to the city’s main nightclubs. People were required to walk across the city to board the service. Secondly, there was little support or demand for the service.

Taxi Share UK

Taxi Share UK works by matching taxi users with others making the same or similar journey on a regular basis. The service aims to provide a convenient, affordable, door-to-door chauffeur driven ride to your chosen destination. To take part in the scheme people have to register as a member and register the journey required. The administrator then matches the member with people making similar journeys and arranges the members regular taxi journeys, pickup times, etc. The member pays in advance for using the service. The scheme is currently running in Milton Keynes but it hoped that it will expand to other areas.

Only registered members can take part in the scheme. Taxi sharers can be picked up en-route from different locations and also be dropped off at different locations. If a sharer was ill or on holiday, the taxi would continue to provide the service whilst there were funds available.

London Paddington Taxi Share Scheme

Since 1998, to help reduce waiting times, Heathrow Express has operated a taxi sharing scheme from London Paddington on weekday mornings. It runs on weekday mornings, between 08:30 and 10:30, however they stop operating the service once there are sufficient taxis for everyone. Taxi travellers choose to share a taxi. It is not compulsory, although sharers do generally depart quicker. Heathrow Express employs taxi marshals, members of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association, who help organise sharers into groups travelling to the same central London zone.

To book a taxi share users collect a destination zone voucher from the Share Marshals at the taxi queue; skip the queue straight to the priority loading bays; the taxi marshal shows the passenger to the shared taxi; and then the passenger pays the driver the fixed fare shown on the zone voucher for your chosen destination.

2.5 Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing and the Environment

The Best Practice guidance states that the local licensing authorities may wish to consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental policies that the local authority may have adopted. This will be of particular importance in designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs). Local authorities may, for example, wish to consider setting vehicle emissions standards for taxis and PHVs. However, local authorities would need to carefully and thoroughly assess the impact of introducing such a policy; for example, the effect on the supply of taxis and PHVs in the area would be an important consideration in deciding the standards, if any, to be set. They should also bear in mind the need to ensure that the benefits of any policies outweigh the costs (in whatever form).

Cambridge City Council is committed to promoting Cambridge as a sustainable city, particularly in relation to reducing carbon dioxide emissions. A key action for Environmental Services for 2010/2011 is to consider introducing a 'taxi' licence fee related to CO2 emissions.

2.6 Summary

The policy review undertaken has identified that there is a range of legislation available to allow the hackney and private hire trade to develop innovative sustainable transport solutions. A number of authorities have sought to develop schemes under this legislation with mixed results. The majority of schemes however have received some initial 'pump priming' funding to kickstart them. It is also clear from the policy review that thought should be given to the role that hackneys and private hires have to supporting local environmental policies.

3 Public Attitude Pedestrian Survey Results

3.1 Introduction

A public attitude interview survey was designed with the aim of collecting information regarding opinions on both shared taxi services and licensing fees.

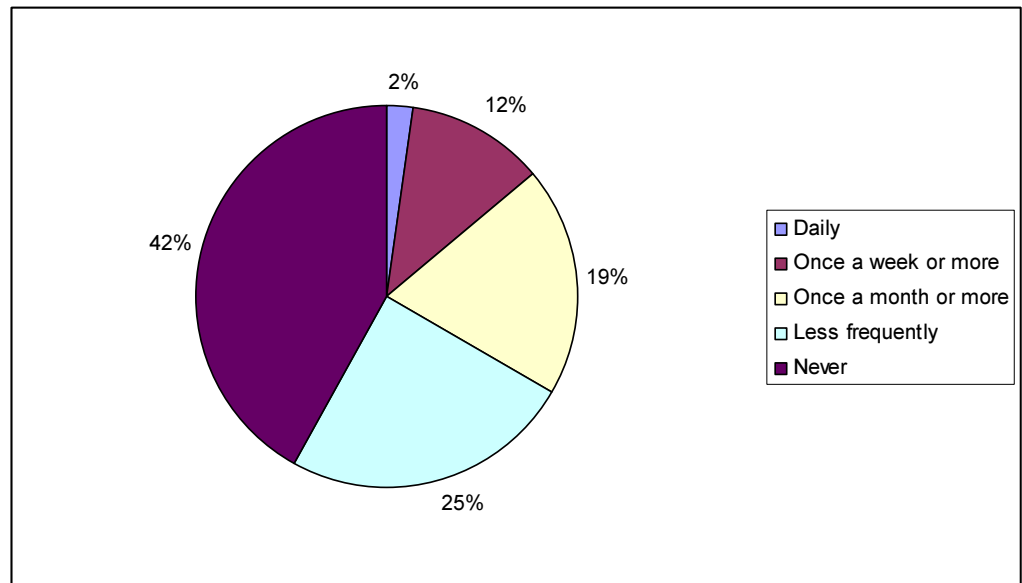
Some 582 on-street public interview surveys were carried out between November 2010 and February 2011. The surveys were conducted across a range of locations within Cambridge City Centre. A quota was followed so that the survey reflected the age and gender characteristics of the local community. This, in turn, ensured that broadly representative results were obtained.

It should be noted that in the tables and figures that follow the totals do not always add up to the same amount. This is due to one of two reasons. First, not all respondents were required to answer all questions; and second, some respondents failed to answer some questions that were asked.

3.2 General Use of Hackney Carriages

Respondents were asked how often they used hackney carriages in Cambridge. Figure 3.1 details the results.

Figure 3.1 How often do you use hackney carriages?



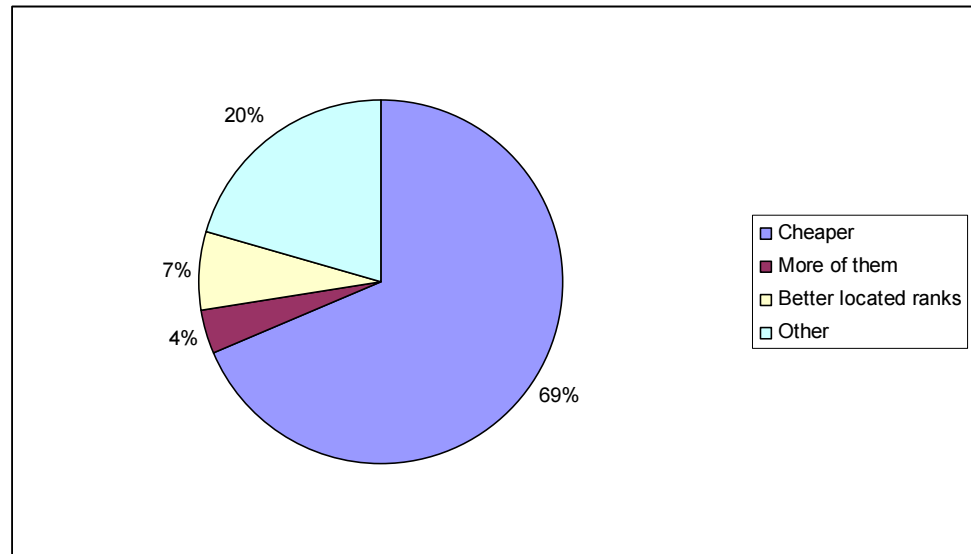
Some 42% of respondents stated that they never use hackney carriages in Cambridge, with 19% stating that they use them once a month or more. Respondents were then asked what the main reason was for them not to use taxis in Cambridge more often. Table 3.1 details that a third of respondents did not use taxis more because they were too expensive. A fifth of respondents (20.8%) did not use taxis more due to their being a bus available. Those that had an 'other' reason included:

- Live in the City Centre so don't need to use taxis; and
- Rude/impolite drivers.

Table 3.1 What is the main reason that you don't use taxis in Cambridge more often?

	Frequency	Percentage
Too expensive	189	33.6
Waiting time/availability	14	2.5
Distance to ranks	3	0.5
Don't feel safe	6	1.1
Car available	64	11.4
Bus available	117	20.8
Walk/cycle	78	13.9
No need	82	14.6
Other	9	1.6
Total	562	100.0

Respondents were also asked what would encourage them to use taxis more. Figure 3.2 highlights these results.

Figure 3.2 What would encourage you to use taxis more?

Some 69% of respondents stated that they would use taxis more if they were cheaper. Some 20% of respondents stated an 'other' reason that would encourage them to use taxis more. These included:

- When less able to travel independently;
- Nothing would encourage me as I have no need to use taxis;
- More eco friendly vehicles;
- Car seat available for children; and
- If there were less buses.

3.3 Shared Taxi Services

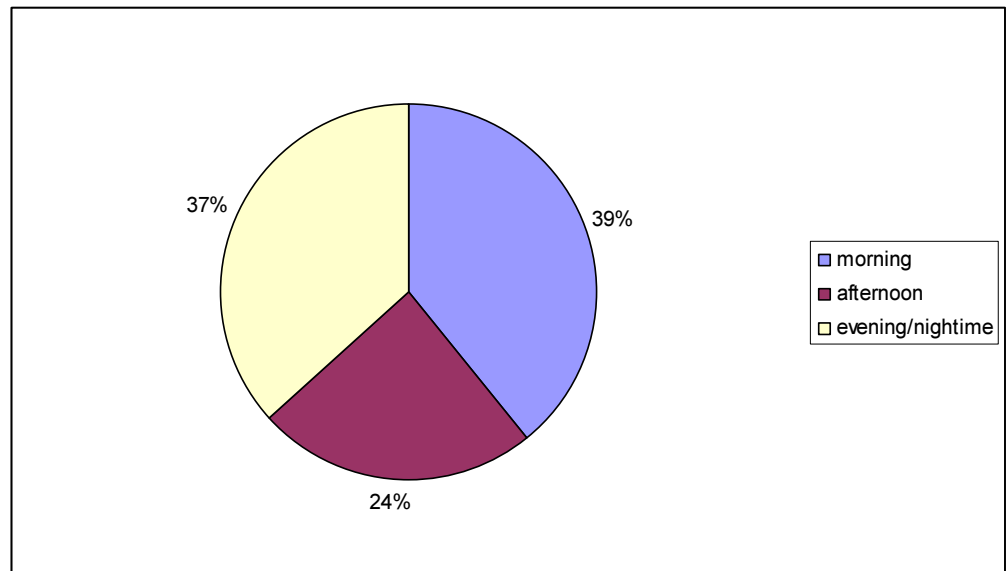
Members of the public were then told the principles of how a shared taxi scheme may work in Cambridge. They were then asked whether they would consider using such a scheme. Some 36.6% stated that they would with 63.4% stating that they would not consider using such a scheme.

Those 36.6% that would consider using such a scheme were then asked a series of questions. Firstly respondents were asked for the type of journeys that they would use it for. The most popular starting points and destinations suggested were:

- Cambridge City Centre;
- Rail Station;
- Cherry Hinton;
- Trumpington;
- Tesco;
- Grafton;
- Addenbrookes Hospital
- Sawston; and
- Newmarket Road.

Respondents varied across the potential time of day that they would use such a service. As detailed in Figure 3.3, 39% would use the service during the morning, 24% in an afternoon and 37% during the evening and night time period.

Figure 3.3 What time of day would you use such a service?



Respondents were asked what was the maximum length of time that they would be prepared to wait for a shared taxi. The results are detailed in Table 3.2

Table 3.2 Maximum length of time you would be prepared to wait (those who would use such a scheme)?

	Average Time (mins)	Minimum (mins)	Maximum (mins)
	14.4	1	40

Respondents were subsequently asked for the amount they would be prepared to pay for a two mile journey. The average price was £2.84 with a minimum of £1 and a maximum of £6.

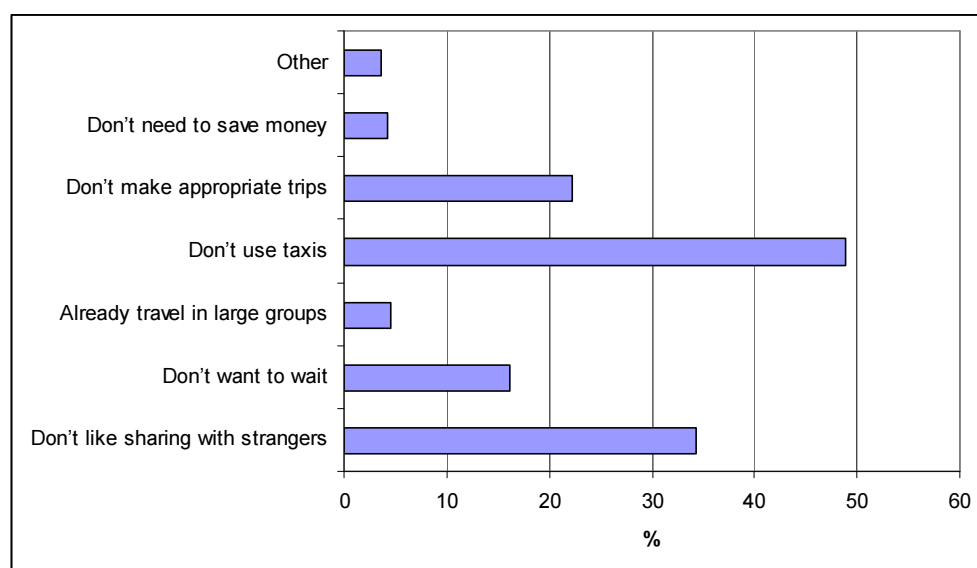
In terms of the types of trips that respondents would consider using a shared taxi service for Table 3.3 details the results.

Table 3.3 What types of trips would you use a shared taxi service for? (multiple responses)

	Percentage
Commuting	61.5
Connection with other transport	78.5
Health Care	52.4
Education	44.0
Leisure	72.7
Shopping	66.3

Some 78.5% of respondents stated that they would use a shared taxi service in order to connect with other transport e.g. access to the rail station. Less popular choices was access to education (44%)

Those respondents who would not consider using such a service were asked for their reasons. Results are detailed in Figure 3.4.

Figure 3.4 Reasons for not using shared taxi services

Some 48.9% of those stating that they would not use a shared taxi service stated it was because they didn't use taxis. 'Other' responses included:

- Use Park & Ride;
- Have no need to use such a scheme;
- If pay for a taxi I would want its sole use.

Respondents were then asked what if anything would make them consider sharing a taxi with strangers. As detailed in table 3.4 the majority of respondents (94.2%) would share a taxi in order to save money.

Table 3.4 What would encourage you to use a shared taxi service

	Percentage
To save money	94.2
To avoid a long wait	53.8
Alternative to the bus	33.2
If strangers were the same sex	26.0
If only sharing with one other	23.6
If sharing with the same people each time	42.8

Respondents were then asked whether they would use the service if they only had to pay half of the fare. Results were evenly split with some 48.5% stipulating that they would use the service if they had to pay half the fare and 51.5% stating that they would not.

However if users had to only pay a quarter of the fare some 65.5% stipulated that they would use the service.

Respondents were then asked what was the maximum length of time that they would be prepared to wait for a shared taxi. The results are detailed in Table 3.5

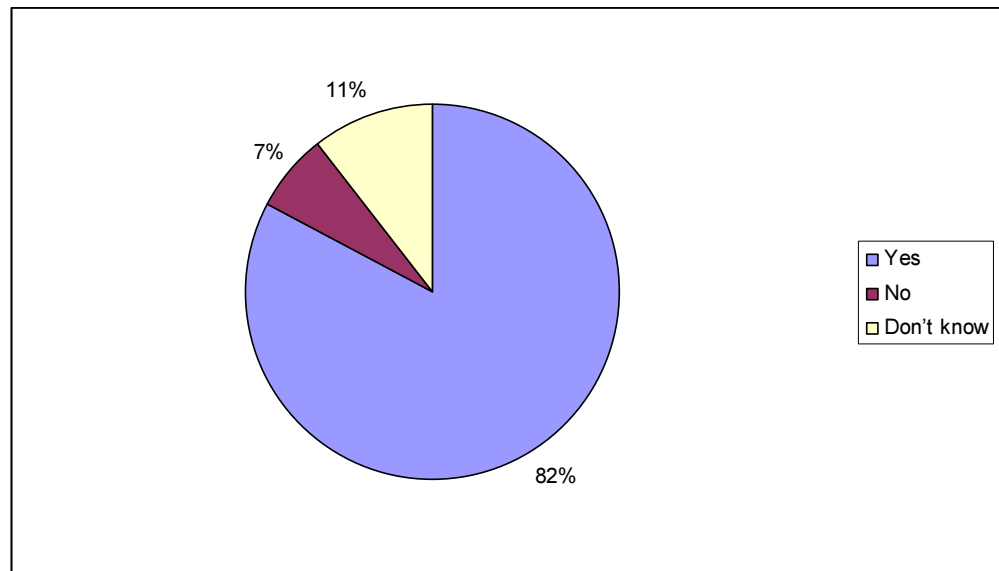
Table 3.5 Maximum length of time you would be prepared to wait (those who wouldn't use a shared taxi scheme)?

	Average Time (mins)	Minimum (mins)	Maximum (mins)
	13.0	1.0	50

3.4 Taxi Emissions and Fees

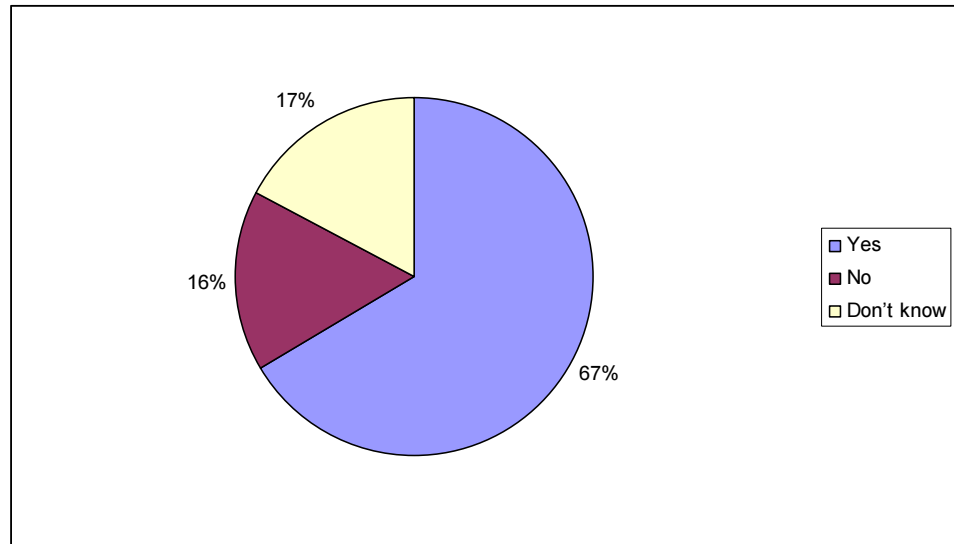
Respondents were consulted regarding the contribution taxis and private hire vehicles make towards improving air quality in Cambridge. As detailed in Figure 3.5 some 82% of those surveyed felt that taxis should contribute towards improving air quality.

Figure 3.5 Do you think it is important that taxis and phv's contribute towards improving air quality in Cambridge by running lower emission licensed vehicles?



Respondents were also asked whether drivers with more polluting vehicles should pay more to licence their vehicles than those with less polluting vehicles. The results to this question were more mixed with two thirds of respondents (67%) agreeing that drivers should pay more for greater polluting vehicles. Figure 3.6 details the results.

Figure 3.6 Do you feel that taxi drivers with more polluting vehicles should pay more to licence their vehicles than those drivers with less polluting vehicles?



4 Trade Survey

4.1 Survey Administration

The survey was conducted through a self completion questionnaire. These were sent to all 794 licensed hackney and private hire drivers and operators in Cambridge. A total of 63 questionnaire forms were completed and returned, giving a response rate of around 7.9%, a fairly low value for this type of survey. Therefore caution should be exercised when interpreting these results. In addition to these survey forms a number of forms (10) were received from members of the trade stating that they were not going to complete the survey and that they would be advised further by their trade representatives.

Of the respondents 69.8% were hackney carriage respondents and 30.2% were from the private hire trade. It should be noted that 13 hackney trade respondents were also private hire car drivers.

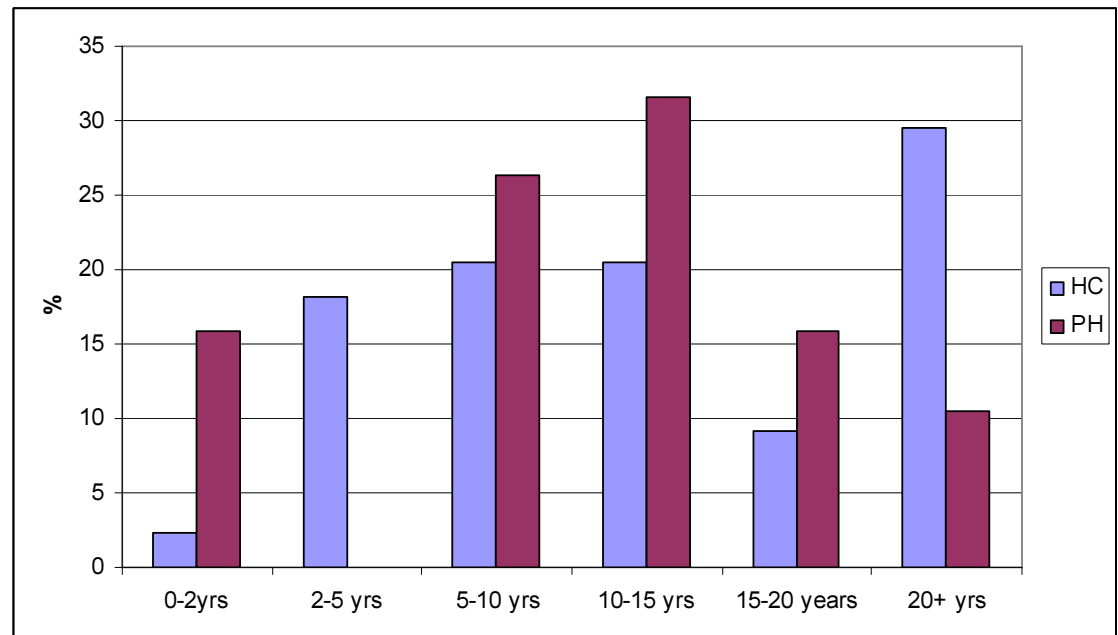
It should be noted that not all totals sum to the total number of respondents per trade group as some respondents failed to answer all of the questions.

4.2 General Information

The responses provided have been disaggregated on a hackney carriage and private hire trade basis.

Figure 4.1 indicates that that 59.1% of hackney carriage respondents have been involved in the Cambridge taxi trade for over 10 years, with more of the private hire trade (57.9%) working in the trade for over 10 years.

Figure 4.1 How long have you been involved with the trade in Cambridge?



Respondents owing a vehicle were asked which tax band their vehicle falls in to. As detailed in Figure 4.2 those respondents owning a Private Hire vehicle have lower polluting vehicles than those owning hackney carriage vehicles. Some 55% of hackney carriage vehicle owners own vehicles in Bands A-G compared to 85.7% of private hire vehicle owners.

Figure 4.2 Tax Band of vehicles

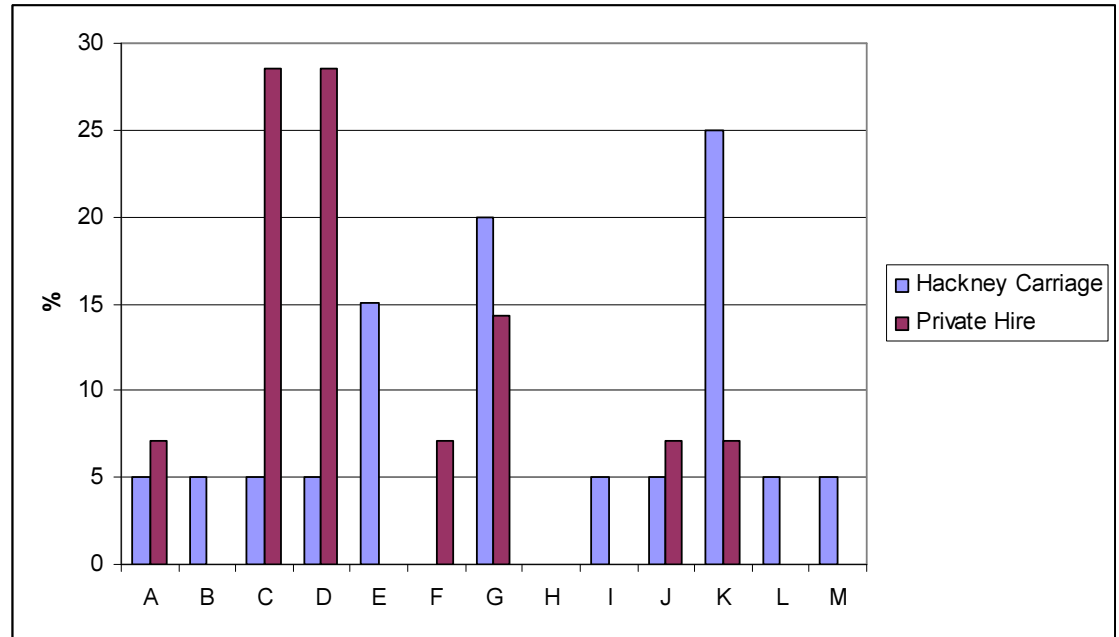
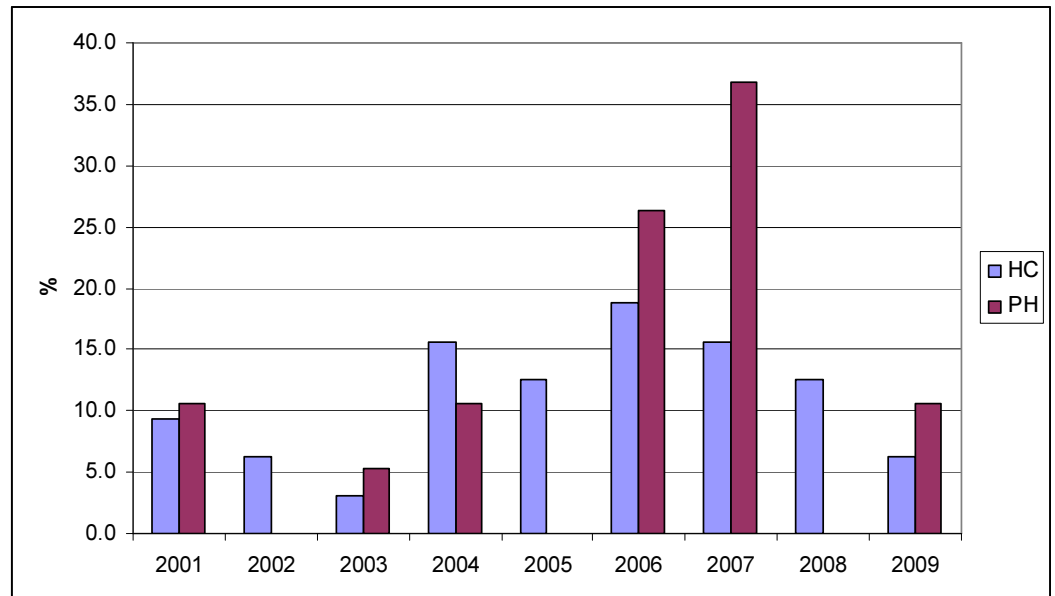


Figure 4.3 details the age range of vehicles owned by respondents to the survey. Some 73.7% of private hire vehicles were less than five years old compared to 53.1% of hackney carriages.

Figure 4.3 Age range of vehicles



4.3 Shared Taxis

Members of the trade were asked for their views on a potential shared taxi service. Table 4.1 details the views relating to potential advantages to such a scheme. Views were mixed however some 38.6% of the hackney respondents felt that there were no advantages to a shared taxi scheme. Those who stated 'other' included:

- Customers will argue late at night over fares;
- Customers want privacy and don't want to share;
- Taxi drivers do not want shared taxis;
- The Council is putting taxi drivers lives at risk as there will be fights over fares;

Table 4.1 Advantages of shared taxis

	Hackney	PH
Better value to passengers	27.3	21.1
Allows taxis to compete more effectively with buses	18.2	15.8
Allows peak demands to be met more effectively	18.2	15.8
Reduces passenger delay and increases customer satisfaction	15.9	5.3
Reduces passenger delay and reduce unmet demand	4.5	0
Make better use of vehicle capacity	20.5	10.5
Allow drivers to earn more income per trip	11.4	15.8
Improve air quality and reduce the carbon footprint	13.6	10.5
No advantages	38.6	21.1
Other	18.2	26.3

Respondents were then asked whether they would take part in a shared taxi scheme. Some 61% of hackney respondents stated that they would not take part in such a scheme compared to 59% of private hire respondents. However some 22% of hackney respondents stated that they would take part.

Those stating a desire to be involved in such a scheme were asked what type of journeys the service could be used for. Suggestions included services between the city centre and:

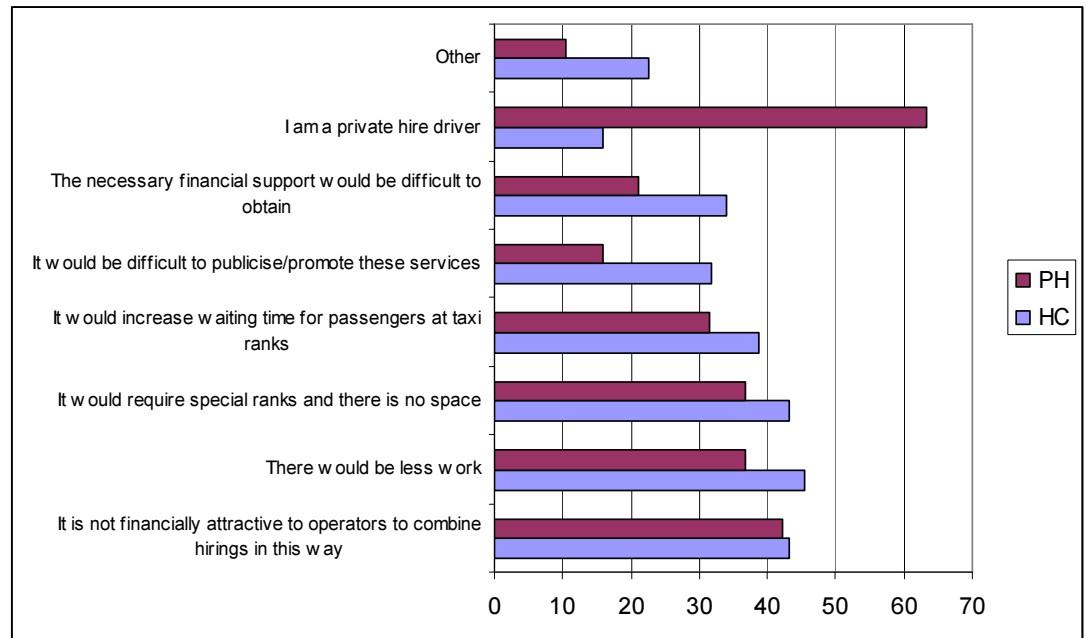
- Rail Station;
- Addenbrookes hospital;
- Science Park;
- City Centre bus stops.

A wide range of operating hours were provided which covered the majority of day time hours. No body suggested that the scheme would be effective at night. When questioned as to the maximum length of time that a driver would be prepared to wait for the vehicle to fill up the results were mixed as detailed in Table 4.2

Table 4.2 Maximum length of time you would be prepared to wait?

	Average Time (mins)	Minimum (mins)	Maximum (mins)
Hackney Carriage	14	5	35
PHV	12.5	5	20

Those respondents who did not wish to take part in a shared taxi scheme were asked for their reasons why.

Figure 4.4 Why would you not wish to take part in a shared taxi scheme? (multiple responses)

As detailed in Figure 4.4 respondents had a range of reasons for not wanting to take part. Some 45.5% of hackney respondents felt that there would be less work as a result of the scheme.

Respondents were also asked what would encourage them to take part in such a scheme. Guaranteed subsidy was the most popular response with 34.1% of hackney respondents and 36.8% of private hire respondents.

Table 4.3 What would encourage you to take part in a scheme?

	Hackney Carriage	PHV
Guaranteed subsidy	34.1	36.8
Dedicated taxi sharing ranks	20.5	10.5
Access to bus lanes/gates	27.3	15.8
Other	18.2	5.3

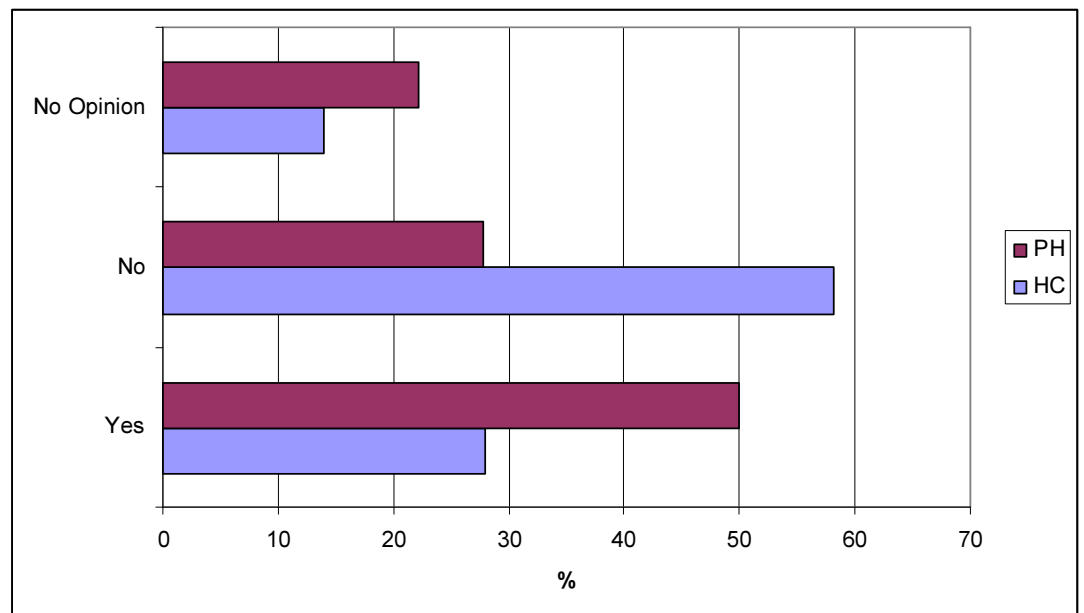
Other responses included:

- Reduce licensing fees;
- Nothing would encourage me;
- Only if the Council limited hackney numbers;
- Don't believe that there is public demand.

4.4 Taxis and CO2 Emissions

In order to consult on the proposed sliding scale for taxi licensing fees a number of questions were posed to the trade. Firstly the trade were asked whether they supported a proposal for a 'sliding scale'. As detailed in figure 4.5 over half (58.1%) of hackney carriage respondents did not support the proposal. However half of private hire drivers supported the proposal.

Figure 4.5 Do you support the 'sliding scale' proposal?



Those who did not support the proposal gave the following reasons why:

- 'Unfair on those with wheelchair accessible vehicles';
- 'It will penalise those with purpose built vehicles';
- 'Everybody is doing the same job so why should some pay less'; and
- 'It's a means for the Council to obtain extra money'.

Following this question respondents were asked when they felt that this policy should be applied. Some 91% of hackney respondents stated that this should be applied at Vehicle replacement. A number of respondents stated that this should never be applied.

Respondents were subsequently asked what the effect would be on their personal circumstances should the proposal be introduced. Table 4.4 documents the results.

Table 4.4 Effect of introducing the proposal (multiple answers)

	Hackney	Private Hire
Purchase a lower emission vehicle when required	0	0
Purchase a lower emission vehicle sooner than required	0	10.5
Obtain a licence from a different authority	22.7	15.8
Keep the same vehicle	18.2	36.8
Leave the trade	11.4	5.3
Other	22.7	10.5

Others included:

- Cant afford at the moment to change vehicle;
- Become a private hire driver;
- Become a South Cambs driver;
- Will change vehicle if the Council provide financial support.

When asked what the effect would be on the environment of this policy change some 64% of hackney respondents felt that the policy would not have a positive effect on the environment compared to 27% of private hire respondents.

5 Stakeholder Consultation

5.1 Introduction

A number of organisations and key stakeholders were contacted by letter, email or telephone and given the opportunity to provide written consultation or face to face consultation on issues regarding the proposals put forward by Cambridge City Council. Consultation included:

- Hackney carriage and private hire trade;
- Cambridge City Council;
- User/disability groups representing those passengers with special needs;
- Local interest groups including hospitals, visitor attractions, entertainment outlets and education establishments; and
- Rail, bus and coach operators.

5.2 Direct Consultation

A number of relevant stakeholder organisations were given the opportunity to attend a meeting in February 2011 to discuss a series of issues regarding the proposals put forward by Cambridge City Council. Separate meetings were organised with the following:

- Hackney Carriage Trade Representatives;
- Private Hire Trade Representatives;
- Disability Representatives
- Planning, Highways, and Safety;
- Businesses; and,
- Tourism

The comments from those attending the organised meetings are summarised below.

Trade Representatives

Representatives from Panther Taxis, CCLT, NPHA and a Cambridge City Councillor attended the meeting.

The representatives did not support the consultation study and they did not feel that the study was necessary as the Council know that they are against the proposals. These issues along with others were noted and reported to the Council.

With regards to the proposals, the representatives did not support the idea of a shared taxi scheme in Cambridge and said that it would not work. There is a lack of rank space at the moment so it was felt that there would be no room for additional shared taxi ranks.

The representatives were concerned as to how long they would have to wait for the shared taxi to fill up, and if it did not fill up they would expect the Council to subsidise the loss in fares.

The trade felt that taxi marshals would be required at the shared taxi ranks and were concerned over who would pay for them. They do not think it is right that the trade should have to pay for taxi marshals, particularly as they do not support the scheme.

The trade feel that people use taxis to travel privately and that they would not want to travel with strangers. They also felt that there could be safety issues due to people travelling with strangers and due to the confined nature of a taxi.

It was stated that shared taxi schemes may work in London where there are a lot more people travelling to the same destinations. Cambridge does not have the same footfall as London and people wish to travel to multiple destinations.

The representatives felt that air pollution could be improved if more rank space was provided because this would stop taxis having to drive around the city looking for a rank to park up in.

The representatives were against the proposal to have a 'sliding scale' for taxi licensing fees relating to the CO2 emissions. It was explained that wheelchair accessible vehicles are more polluting so drivers may change their vehicles to a saloon. This would then reduce the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles in the city. There would need to be an exception for wheelchair accessible vehicles.

It was stated by the trade that cars and taxis only make up 3% of the pollution in Cambridge, whilst buses contribute to 44% of the pollution. It was felt that bus operators should be targeted to reduce their emissions before taxis. It was explained that Arriva have already reduced their emissions but Stagecoach have not. It was felt that the Council should be putting their efforts in to ensuring Stagecoach reduce their CO2 vehicle emissions.

It was also stated that even if the trade replaced their vehicles to the tax band below the one their vehicle currently falls in to, it would only save them £10, which is not much of an incentive.

It was stated that if one or both of these proposals were implemented, drivers would move to another licensing district such as South Cambs. It would then cause an increase in illegal plying for hire.

It was also stated that only 10% of the 312 hackneys in Cambridge are petrol. The rest are diesel and diesel vehicles emit two thirds less pollution than petrol vehicles. It was therefore felt unnecessary to require taxi drivers to pay more licensing fees.

The representatives felt that the proposed 'sliding scale' in licensing fees was an excuse for the Council to increase the fees.

Travel Plan Plus and Travel to Work Partnership

The Travel Plan Plus (TP+) and Travel to Work Partnership took part in the consultation. A representative came along to a meeting and as well as providing written consultation. The representative is the Area Travel Plan coordinator for the Travel Plan Plus Project which covers the Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge Business Park, St John's Innovation Park, Cambridge Regional College and Taylor Vinters Solicitors. This area includes over 200 employers and over 7,500 commuters.

Employers in the TP+ area range from large employers such as Napp (850 staff), Cambridge Regional College (870 staff), Cambridge Silicon Radio (600 staff), RSC (330

staff), Amgen (400 staff) to small one, two three man organisations based in serviced offices located on the Cambridge Science Park, Cambridge Business Park and St John's Innovation Centre. It was felt that commuters and visitors to these companies would benefit from a shared taxi scheme.

There is currently a planning application for a 260 room hotel to be built on the Cambridge Science Park, if approved construction will start in the summer of 2011 (2 year build). Hotel guests would also use the service.

It was explained that there is increasing demand for a taxi services between the area covered by TP+ and:

- Cambridge Railway Station – the TP+ area is not directly served by bus linking them to the train station.
- Cambridge University buildings - spin-out organisations from the University tend to set up their first office locations in the TP+ area. It must be noted that university buildings are spread out across Cambridge rather than one campus.
- South East based airports (Stansted, Heathrow, Luton, London City). Employers in have asked TP+ to investigate some form of taxi pooling scheme for shared travel to from airports.

It was also recognised that there may be problems with locating a shared taxi point in areas covered by TP+ because part of the site is within the City Council boundaries (Cambridge Business Park and St John's Innovation centre) and the other half is located in South Cambridgeshire's licensing authority (Cambridge Science Park). Therefore it was unclear whether a shared taxi point or rank would have to be located with the city councils boundaries.

In addition to the area covered by TP+ , there are number of other areas which would benefit from a shared taxi scheme, including:

- West of the city – there are a number of business parks and large business such as Capital Park, University buildings, Microsoft and Aviva.
- Addenbrookes hospital
- Marshalls, East Cambridge – A large employer of between 2-3,000 people

It was noted that when the Cambridgeshire guided bus is running it will link the TP+ area to the train station. The guided bus scheme is 2 years behind schedule

The representatives felt that the advantages of a shared taxi scheme would be:

- Sharing of cost
- Shorter taxi queues
- Reduction in congestion
- Environmentally friendly
- Potential to travel with colleagues
- Networking opportunities (meeting new potential contacts)

The representatives felt that the disadvantages of a shared taxi scheme would be:

- Waiting too long for the taxi to fill up with potential travellers going to the same location
- Taxi may not go direct to a location - the last person out of a group of 4 may feel aggrieved that he/she has not been taken direct
- Need to factor in wait time when using service - if someone arrives at the station and is potentially late for a meeting they may not want to wait further for the taxi to fill up
- Reluctance for people to share with people they do not know
- Women may be less willing to share than men

It is very important that any shared taxi scheme is publicised so that people know about it. This could be undertaken through posters, and advertising on the back of train tickets. TP+ sends out regular newsletters to all of their members so they could publicise a shared taxi scheme.

The representatives felt that the maximum waiting time for a shared taxi should be 10 minutes. If passengers were not able to wait in the taxi, then there should be appropriate shelters available.

The representative felt that for a two-mile journey which would normally cost £6, a person sharing the journey should pay £1.50-£2.

The proposal for a 'sliding scale' for taxi licensing fees relating to CO2 emissions is supported and it was stated that the scheme would act as an incentive for taxi owners to purchase more environmentally friendly solutions. It was felt that if the proposal was introduced, there would be a gradual improvement in air quality over time.

It was highlighted that everybody needs to contribute to improving air quality, not just the owners of taxis and private hire vehicles.

There is a general appetite for consumers to adopt environmentally friendly practices and hence there will be an increasing trend to choose solutions which match their beliefs. So if there is a choice between a green taxi and a more polluting taxi hopefully people should choose the more environmentally friendly solution.

During a recent trip to Wellington New Zealand the representative noted that there was a taxi service in the city based on Hybrid vehicles - the taxi's were all painted green and the green message was heavily promoted.

Disability Representatives

Representatives from the disability organisations Headway and Shopmobility attended a focus group. It was felt that people with disabilities and people who are vulnerable may or may not feel comfortable using a shared taxi. Some people may find sharing a taxi with others reassuring and a chance to meet new people however other people may feel uncomfortable. It was therefore felt that a shared taxi scheme would be a good idea as long as there is still the option to obtain taxis privately.

It should be also noted that a person in a wheelchair would take up a lot more space in a taxi therefore they should not be penalised in anyway in relation to cost.

In addition, people may be more comfortable sharing a London style taxi with strangers rather than a saloon vehicle due to the size and personal space it provides.

Taxis are also expensive so it would be attractive for people who use taxis a lot to use a shared taxi service.

Cambridge City Council run a Taxicard scheme therefore consideration would be needed as to whether the vouchers could be used in shared taxis.

The areas where a shared taxi scheme could be used is the train station, bus station, Addenbrookes hospital, the town centre, the Triangle, Grafton, the Cineworld, the Beehive shopping centre, the County Council offices, and the main Colleges and University buildings.

The representatives felt that the maximum waiting time for a shared taxi would be 10 minutes. The representatives felt that for a two-mile journey which would normally cost £6, a person sharing the journey should pay between £2 and £4.

5.3 Indirect Consultation

In addition to the face to face consultation undertaken a number of stakeholders were contacted by letter. In accordance with advice issued by the DfT the following organisations were contacted:

- Cambridge City Council;
- user/disability groups representing those passengers with special needs;
- local interest groups including hospitals, visitor attractions, entertainment outlets and education establishments; and
- rail, bus and coach operators.

5.4 Comments Received

Travel for Work Partnership

In addition to the written response from the Coordinator at Travel Plan Plus Project which has been incorporated in to the comments from the focus group, written comments were received from the Development Manager at the Travel for Work Partnership.

The Travel for Work Partnership is a 10 year old partnership that helps business promote and facilitate environmentally friendly and healthy travel to and for work – mostly by the development of workplace Travel plans. They currently work with over 89 employment sites (including most of the Science and Business parks) employing over 59,000 commuters. The Travel for Work Partnership are also managing the EU supported Travel Plan plus project on behalf of our host organisation, Cambridgeshire County Council.

The locations in Cambridge where a shared taxi service would be beneficial include the rail station, hospital, university and the Science Park. Other business park areas might also benefit such as West Cambridge, Peterhouse Business Park, Capital Park, Fulbourn Road. Trips could link to Cambridge Rail Station making rail journeys to work more attractive. The scheme could be linked to the Travel for Work train discounts.

It was suggested that employees at out of town centres of employment and visitors/patients for Addenbrooke's hospital would use the shared taxi service.

It was felt that the advantages of shared taxis in Cambridge would be a reduction in vehicles on the road, encouraging modal shift to train or shared journey from home and a reduction in CO₂.

It was felt that people would be encouraged to use shared taxis by the substantial commuter savings; an easy to use booking system (online or via mobile phone etc); option to pay in advance; a reliable service; a comfortable service; and an opportunity to meet people and make friends.

From the Travel for Work Partnership experience of promotion of car sharing, they are aware that people are wary of sharing with people they don't know – though when 'forced' to do so they often find they like it. This is why the benefits must be so great that they overcome this 'fear' to try it in the first place.

It was felt that 10 minutes would be the maximum waiting time for a shared taxi. Waiting more than 10 minutes would prove unattractive to most commuters – especially if they had to wait outside.

The representative felt that for a two-mile journey which would normally cost £6, a person sharing the journey should pay £1.50.

The representative felt that it was important that taxis and private hire vehicles contribute towards improving air quality in Cambridge by running lower emission licensed vehicles. Only with incentives will taxis become as environmentally friendly as possible. If the scheme is introduced there should be a period of grace to warn of the change and to allow owners to consider their next taxi purchase.

Electric Taxis for Cambridge City Centre would also be good. This would link in with the region's Plugged in Places initiative.

It was felt that if a sliding scale is introduced in Cambridge there would be an improvement in air quality over time.

It was noted that there is a taxi sharing scheme in Milton Keynes which is a good model to consider.

Passenger Transport Services

A response was received from the Community Transport Officer of the Passenger Transport Services Team, Cambridgeshire County Council. The representative explained that he did not have any specialist knowledge of taxis specifically, but the passenger transport team has contracts with the larger taxi operators in Cambridge for them to accept taxi vouchers as part payment for journeys made through these companies. Voucher holders have to meet certain criteria. This is slightly different to the scheme operated by Cambridge City Council.

Passenger Transport Services Team would like to ensure that permitted taxi card holders would still be able to use their vouchers as part payment in any taxi-sharing initiative being considered. It is in the terms and conditions of the taxi vouchers that should users wish to share a taxi and pool vouchers then the taxi driver must accept more than one voucher per journey upon request. This currently differs from the terms and conditions in the City Taxicard Scheme (i.e. one voucher only per journey).

Either way, the taxi driver will not be out of pocket as we will continue to honour and reimburse the taxi operator for vouchers accepted as part-payment.

The representative also comments that as a wheelchair user, he would be happy to share a taxi with other passengers in a sharing arrangement, but wheelchairs tend to take up at least two seats/spaces, therefore it is hoped that taxi shares do not get complicated, with wheelchair users being turned away because they take up too much space or it is uneconomical to share with others.

Disability representative

A representative who suffered from a stroke took part in the consultation through a telephone interview as they were unable to make the focus group. The representative did not personally feel that she would use a shared taxi due to her experiences of using a voluntary shared taxi scheme when she used to visit Addenbrookes hospital. The representative and the other passengers did not like to share the taxi as it involved a lot of waiting time. This would cause problems with being late to hospital appointments and then coming back home there would often be a long time to wait before the taxi was full. After a hospital appointment, the representative did not want to wait for a long time, as they wanted to get home.

In addition, the representative felt uncomfortable using a taxi with strangers because her medical condition meant that she could not communicate through speech.

The representative prefers to use a taxi on her own because the taxi driver provides more assistance and help to the passenger. The taxi driver was always rushed and unable to provide as much assistance in a shared taxi.

The representative was supportive of the proposal for a sliding scale in taxi licensing fees related to CO2 emissions. It is particularly important for taxis who work in the centre of town. It was felt that there is a lot of congestion in the centre of Cambridge and congestion and air quality would improve if taxis had more environmentally friendly vehicles.

Another representative whose wife has suffered from a stroke took part in a telephone interview. The representative felt that shared taxis would be beneficial in Cambridge as long as they were located in areas where there were enough people and served 2 or 3 of the most popular destinations. The suggested destinations included the rail station, Addenbrookes hospital, and the city centre such as outside John Lewis. It was highlighted that it would be difficult to serve the University because the buildings and colleges are spread out across the city. It was also pointed out that if the taxi dropped people at individual homes rather than a key destination, the journey could take a very long time, making it a less attractive option.

The respondent also felt that it would be important for there to be a limit of the length of time people would have to wait for the shared taxi and this was suggested as a maximum of 20 minutes. Another issue could be making sure there was plenty of room for luggage.

A shared taxi scheme needs to be as simple as possible, with a small number of key destinations, and set fare prices. It was also felt that the fares need to be a set price and this should be clearly publicised. The representative felt that a 2 mile journey should cost £2 in a shared taxi. It was suggested that passengers could prepay for the

journeys by buying a book of vouchers. There could be an incentive such as 'buy 10 journeys get a journey free'.

It was suggested that the concept of a shared taxi should be promoted as a new form of transport. It was suggested that minibus style vehicles that can hold up to 10 people could be used, so they are recognised as being different to a taxi and a bus.

The respondent suggested that an application could be developed for mobile phones so that people could register a journey and a time and then they could get an alert when a shared taxi is due to leave from a particular point.

The respondent was supportive of the proposal for a sliding scale in taxi licensing fees related to CO2 emissions. It was felt that this proposal would reduce the number of cars in Cambridge city centre and therefore congestion would be reduced. It was noted that the representative did not recognise Cambridge as having a noticeable problem with air pollution.

It was also suggested that taxis could have electric vehicles as these would be ideal for short journeys.

Access Officer – Cambridge City Council

The Access Officer from Cambridge City Council took part in the written consultation. The Access Officer felt that in general disabled people would welcome shared taxi journeys. There may need to be some negotiation as the City Council has a Taxicard scheme to reduce fares for disabled people. The Taxicard scheme means that those who qualify receive 100 vouchers per year and one voucher can be used per journey. There could be times when two Taxicard holders would both want to use vouchers on a shared journey and the protocols for this would have to be established.

The representatives felt that a shared taxi scheme would work at the train station, hospital, and to the city centre from local centres. It was felt that older people would make most use of a shared taxi scheme.

The main advantages of a shared taxi scheme would be the reduced cost to the passenger. The potential issues with a taxi sharing scheme would be how the costs are shared; that fact that you had no choice who you shared with; and the extra time incurred to complete the journey.

The maximum length of time to wait for a shared taxi is 10 minutes. The representative felt that for a 2 mile journey should cost £4 in a shared taxi.

The Access Officer felt that it is not important that taxis and private hire vehicles contribute towards improving air quality in Cambridge by running lower emission licensed vehicles. However the representative did feel that taxi drivers with more polluting vehicles should pay more to licence their vehicles than those drivers with less polluting vehicles.

If the proposal for a sliding scale for licensing fees related to CO2 emissions was introduced, it was felt that there would be no effect on the air quality in Cambridge.

Support Services Manager, Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

The Support Services Manager from Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust took part in the written consultation. The representative manages the taxi contract that they have in place with Panther.

The representative felt that people undertaking journeys to the hospital would use shared taxis. The representative stated that the rail station is the only location where the hospital has regular journeys to and from. The rail station, schools, universities, hospitals, night clubs, bars and pubs are locations where people could make use of shared taxis.

It was suggested that the cost would encourage people to share taxis. If shared taxis were implemented, the number of vehicles on the road should be reduced and therefore journey time should be reduced.

Potential issues with a taxi sharing scheme was identified as: having to wait for the taxi to fill up; not going directly to your destination; possible longer journey time if several drops are made on route; and the effort it would take to plan the route.

The representative felt that the maximum length of time that they would be prepared to wait for a shared taxi is 5- 10 minutes.

The representative felt that a 2 mile taxi journey which usually costs £6, should be cheaper than a bus fare, therefore less than £2.

The representative was supportive of the proposal for a 'sliding scale' for taxi licensing fees related to CO2 emissions. The representative felt that taxis and private hire vehicles should contribute towards improving air quality in Cambridge by running lower emission licensed vehicles. It was explained that this is already part of the requirement for their current contract with Panther Ltd.

The representative felt that taxi drivers with more polluting vehicles should pay more to licence their vehicles than those drivers with less polluting vehicles. It is hoped that this might kind of policy would encourage drivers to purchase lower emission vehicles. It was also suggested that arrangements could be made with dealers so that drivers who hold a licence could purchase a vehicle at a lower cost.

The representative was asked what they thought the effects would be on air quality if a sliding scale was introduced in Cambridge. It was thought that that a sliding scale would enable taxi owners to make a saving by selecting a car suitable for the type of customer they target thus reducing their carbon footprint and providing cleaner air quality. It was suggested that Cambridge City Council should explore partnerships with car manufacturers/sellers with regards to reduced prices in return for Cambridge City Council advertising the 'Green' use of their cars.

Written response from a Taxi Driver

A written response was provided by a taxi driver. The driver felt that proposals for sharing taxis may be viable in the summer but asked what would happen in winter when customers are waiting in cold weather. He felt that as a result cars would be sat with their engines running in order for the heating to work which would result in greater levels of CO2 being emitted.

The driver states that if the Council are committed to lowering CO2 they should either:

- Provide more ranks for vehicles to ply from; or
- Stop issuing hackney carriage plates.

The driver feels that reducing CO2 is something that needs to be looked at but that taxi sharing is not the solution – relimiting is.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This exercise was undertaken on behalf of Cambridge City Council who wished to consult on the following proposals:

- Introduction of a shared hackney carriage service; and
- Introduction of a 'sliding scale' for taxi licensing fees related to CO2 emissions.

Consultation on these proposals has been undertaken by a number of means and with a range of consultees. For ease the consultation has been split into a number of distinct tasks:

- Public Consultation;
- Trade Consultation; and
- Stakeholder Consultation.

6.2 Shared Hackney Carriage Services

The consultation undertaken with the trade identified that the majority of drivers would not take part in such a scheme – many believing that there was no public demand for such a scheme. However some 22% of hackney respondents to the trade survey stated that they would take part. Those stating a desire to be involved in such a scheme suggested potential services between the city centre and:

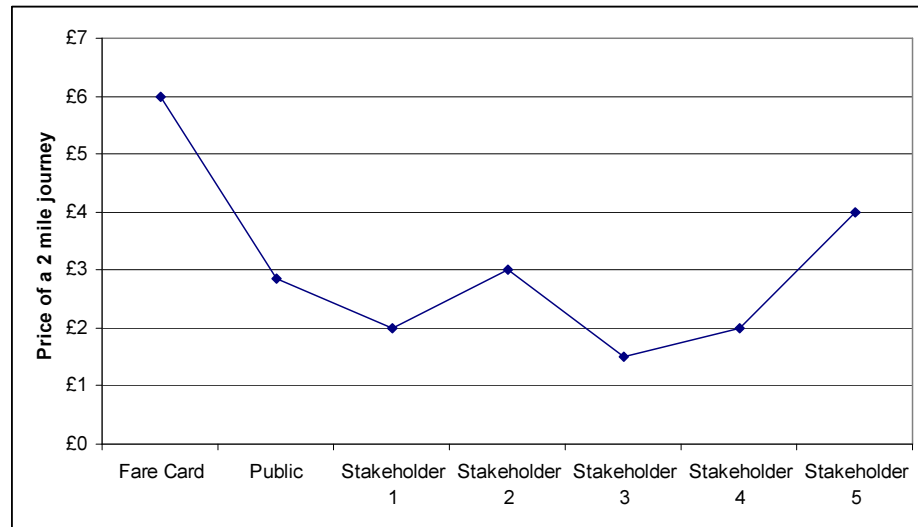
- Rail Station;
- Addenbrookes hospital;
- Science Park;
- City Centre bus stops.

Following discussion with the trade representatives it was clear that they were against the scheme in any form.

Consultation undertaken with the public provided similar results with only 36.6% stating that they would use such a scheme.

However consultation undertaken with stakeholders was more positive with stakeholders suggesting that shared taxi services may be popular with out of town employment sites and the hospital.

When identifying potential fares for a 2 mile journey all stakeholders varied as to the fare to be charged. Figure 6.1 details this. The majority of respondents wished to pay less than half of the farecard rate.

Figure 6.1 Comparison of proposed shared fares

6.3 CO2 emissions and Taxis

Views from the trade were mixed regarding this proposal. Over half of drivers responding to the trade survey were against the proposal; however half of private hire drivers were for the proposal. The main reason for not supporting the proposal was the fact that vehicle owners would be penalised for having an accessible vehicle. The focus group with members of the trade echoed this sentiment.

Members of the public overwhelmingly felt that taxis should contribute towards improving air quality. However only two thirds of respondents felt that drivers should pay more for more polluting vehicles.

Stakeholders were generally in favour of the proposals. Many supported the 'sliding scale' as they felt it would encourage taxi drivers to buy more environmentally friendly vehicles. Others felt that it would reduce the number of vehicles in the city centre. However one stakeholder felt that everybody needs to contribute to improving air quality, not just the owners of taxis and private hire vehicles

6.4 Recommendations

It would appear from the consultation that the majority of the trade are against the introduction of a shared hackney carriage service. Without the trade responding to such a proposal in a more positive manner it is unlikely that any such scheme would be successful in Cambridge. Suggested reasons included:

- 'Unfair on those with wheelchair accessible vehicles';
- 'It will penalise those with purpose built vehicles';
- 'Everybody is doing the same job so why should some pay less'; and
- 'It's a means for the Council to obtain extra money'.

However it appears that there is some public and stakeholder demand for such a service especially in relation to out of town shopping and employment sites as well as Cambridge Rail Station. Based on this there may well be the opportunity to develop a shared private hire service at one of these centres. Further discussion with the Travel to Work Partnership may bring the potential for a more structured pre booked service.

It would appear from the consultation that two thirds of the public felt that drivers should higher fees for more polluting vehicles. Whilst this may initially seem a fair system we would agree that this may penalise those who have invested in fully accessible vehicles. We would recommend that a separate sliding scale is developed in order to deliver a fairer system for wheelchair accessible vehicles. This would hopefully encourage drivers to purchase more efficient and clean accessible vehicles and not penalise them from purchasing an accessible vehicle.

For details of your nearest Halcrow office, visit our website
halcrow.com

