

Item

LIMITING THE NUMBER OF HACKNEY CARRIAGE LICENCES



To:

Licensing Committee [30/01/2023]

Report by:

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Wards affected:

All

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The Council may, as part of its adopted policy on the licensing of Hackney Carriages (HCV), consider whether to apply a limit on the maximum number of HCV licences which it will issue at any time. However, this power may be exercised only if the Council is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of HCVs which is unmet (section 16 Transport Act 1985). The Council has no power to limit the number of Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) licences.
- 1.2 At a meeting on 24th October 2011 the Licensing Committee resolved that a demand survey should be carried out to establish whether or not the current HCV fleet met the demand for HCV services within the district, and additionally to cover accessibility issues and the provision of ranks within the district.
- 1.3 The demand survey was carried out in 2012 but members were concerned that it had not provided a sound evidence base for concluding that there was no unmet demand, due to a lack of engagement by the taxi trade.

- 1.4 At a meeting on 21st July 2014, the Licensing Committee instructed officers to seek a further survey to establish if there is evidence that there is no significant demand that is unmet and to investigate the costs of carrying out such a survey.
- 1.5 On 26th January 2015 Officers brought a report to Licensing Committee asking members to determine whether to adopt a policy of limiting the number of hackney carriage vehicles which it license in the city, and, if so to decide at what level the limit should be set.
- 1.6 Members agreed that a limit should be set at 317 with immediate effect. However, following Committee Officers identified that due to a systems error there were currently 321 Hackney Carriage vehicles licensed with the City. The Director took an urgent decision that the limit should be set at 321 and this was endorsed at Licensing Committee on 23rd March 2015.
- 1.7 At Licensing Committee on 26th January 2015 it was agreed that this policy should be reviewed after 3 years.
- 1.8 The most recent demand survey to be completed was 2017. The survey results and committee report were brought in front of members in January 2018, who unanimously resolved they were satisfied that there was no significant demand for hackney carriages in Cambridge which was unmet and refused to remove the existing limit of 321.
- 1.9 Following the 2017 survey, the next survey was due to be completed in 2020. This did not take place, due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the various lockdowns put in place by the UK Government. It was concluded that a demand survey at that time would not be a true representation of the demand.
- 1.10 Covid-19 pandemic restrictions were eased on 19th July 2021. As time progressed to a new normal. On 31st January 2022, committee report was presented to Licensing Committee members. Members unanimously resolved to instruct officers to procure and implement a new Hackney Carriage Demand Survey to determine whether there is a significant unmet demand in the City, and to bring the results and recommendations to Licensing Committee in January 2023.
- 1.11 Members also resolved to instruct officers as part of the demand survey, to review the accessibility policy in relation to the Hackney

Carriage Vehicles and to bring the results and recommendations to Licensing Committee in January 2023.

- 1.12 Following the tendering process, LSVA was appointed to undertake the survey, which took place between June and November 2022.
- 1.13 The final LVSA report (attached in Appendix A) concludes that there is no significant demand that is unmet. The findings of the report also indicate that further work is required to better match customer and trade expectations and delivery in regards to disability.
- 1.14 The purpose of this report is to present the findings of the survey as attached in Appendix A and to ask the members of the Licensing Committee to decide whether they are satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of HCVs within Cambridge which is unmet, and if so, whether to retain a limit on the number of HCV licences that the Council issues. If members decide to retain a limit they must then decide what that limit will be.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 Members are asked, to determine whether they are satisfied that there is no significant demand for hackney carriages in Cambridge which is unmet.
- 2.2 If Members are not satisfied under 2.1 (and as such they determine that there is significant demand which is unmet), there is no power to impose a limit on the number of HCV licences, and therefore the current limit must be removed.
- 2.3 If Members are satisfied, under 2.1 (and as such they determine that there is no significant demand which is unmet), they may **EITHER** :
 - 2.3.1 Decide to retain a limit on the number of HCV licences which may be issued. If Members decide to retain a limit, they will need to resolve, on the basis of the evidence before them, the number of hackney carriage licences to be allowed. Members must determine if the limit is to:
 - 2.3.1.1 Keep the limit at the existing level of 321.
 - 2.3.1.2 Increase the existing limit. Members must determine what that limit will be and how new licenses will be issued (e.g. first come-first served).
 - 2.3.1.3 Reduce the existing limit. Members must determine what the new limit will be and how this will be achieved.

OR

- 2.3.2 Decide to remove the limit.

3. Background

- 3.1 Cambridge City Council licences both hackney carriages (HCV) and private hire vehicles (PHV) to operate within the city.
- 3.2 HCVs operate from ranks and can be hailed in the street and they can also accept pre-booked fares, either direct or from a licensed operator.
- 3.3 PHVs may only accept pre-booked fares from an operator. However, there is no power for the Council to limit their numbers, nor to regulate those licensed by other Councils and operating in the city.

- 3.4 The Transport Act 1985 allows the Council to limit the number of HCVs it licences, but only if it is satisfied that there is no significant demand for HCVs which is unmet.
- 3.5 There is currently a limit on the numbers of HCV licenced by Cambridge City Council, 321.

Review of “demand surveys” conducted since 1990

- 3.6 The Council operated a policy on limitation up until 2001. Surveys conducted in 1990 and 1993 concluded that the Council should maintain a limit of 120 HCVs.
- 3.7 Further surveys were carried out in 1995 and 1997 which showed a growth in demand and, in 1995, 5 extra vehicles licences were approved. In 1997 a further 22 vehicle licences were approved bringing the total to 147. Also in 1997 Members asked for a report to remove the limitation on the number of licences issued.
- 3.8 In 1999 a further survey was carried out which concluded that a further 14 licences should be issued to meet the unmet demand.
- 3.9 In March 2000 Environment Committee considered a report which recommended approval of an additional 14 licences. Members also voted on a proposal to remove the limit on the number of hackney carriage licences to be issued by the Council in 12 months’ time (July 2001). 6 members voted in favour, 6 members voted against. Under the convention at that time, Chairs of committees with an even number of members could not exercise a casting vote and the matter was referred to City Board.
- 3.10 On the 10th July 2000 City Board referred the matter to full Council for consideration on 20th July 2000. At full Council the decision was made to de-limit the number of HCV licences issued with effect from 1st July 2001, with the continued condition that any new HCV licences issued had to be for wheelchair accessible vehicles, but not necessarily a purpose-built HCV.
- 3.11 In 2011 the taxi trade requested that a further survey should be carried out and in October 2011 Licensing Committee resolved that the purpose of the demand survey was to establish whether or not the current HCV fleet met the demand for services within the district, and

additionally to cover accessibility issues and the position of ranks within the city.

- 3.12 A demand survey was conducted by CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd in 2012. Licensing Committee on the 28th January 2013 considered the report and agreed that a full consultation and community engagement programme should be carried out to gather further evidence. Members were concerned that the report did not provide a sound evidence base due to a lack of engagement by the trade.
- 3.13 On 21th July 2014 Licensing Committee decided to seek a further survey and a specification was drawn up by officers and tenders sought. The tender selected was by CTS, the author of the previous survey. The purpose of the survey was to update the previous survey and, specifically, to undertake a more in-depth consultation with the taxi trade.
- 3.14 The updated survey work was carried out in November 2014 and on the 26th January 2015 at Licensing Committee members took the decision to adopt a policy of limiting the number of HCVs which it will licence in the City to 317 with immediate effect and subsequently 321 under urgent decision powers due to an administrative error.
- 3.15 At Licensing Committee on 26th January 2015 it was agreed that this policy would be reviewed after 3 years.
- 3.16 On the 20th March 2017 Officers brought a report to Licensing Committee recommending that Officers procure a company to carry out a further demand survey to establish if there is significant demand for the services of HCVs which is unmet.
- 3.17 Following Committee decision to seek a further demand survey, a specification was drawn up by Officers and tenders sought. The tenderer selected was LSVA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment) which is an amalgamation of the previous survey author, CTS, and Transportation and Vector Consultancy. The survey work took place between June and November 2017.
- 3.18 A review on whether to limit numbers of hackney carriage licences should take place every three years and be subject to local consultation. The funding for it has been incorporated into the hackney carriage vehicles renewal licensing fees from 2018/19.
- 3.19 On the 31st January 2022, report was presented to Licensing committee recommending officers procure a company to carry out a demand

survey to establish if there is significant demand for the services of HCVs which is unmet.

- 3.20 Specification was developed by officers and tender published. The tender selected LSVA, who had previously completed the demand survey within Cambridge.
- 3.21 Survey took place in June and November 2022.

National Policy Position

- 3.22 In March 2010 the Department for Transport issued Best Practice Guidance to assist local authorities in England and Wales that have responsibility for the HCV and PHV trades.
- 3.23 The Guidance is intended to assist licensing authorities but it is only guidance and decisions on any matters remain a matter for the authority concerned. It is for individual licensing authorities to reach their own decisions both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters in the light of their own views of the relevant considerations.
- 3.24 Paragraph 47 of the Guidance says “Most licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions; the Department regards that as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed the Department would urge that the matter should be regularly reconsidered”. The Guidance suggests that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public – that is to say, the people who use the taxi services. The Guidance suggests that authorities consider what benefits or disadvantages arise for the travelling public as a result of imposing controls and what benefits or disadvantages arise as a result of applying no limitation on numbers.
- 3.25 Paragraph 48 of the Guidance says that in most cases where quantity restrictions are imposed, vehicle licence plates command a premium, often of tens of thousands of pounds. The Guidance comments that this indicates that there are people who want to enter the taxi market and provide a service to the public but who are being prevented from doing so by the quantity restrictions. The view expressed in the Guidance is that this seems very hard to justify.
- 3.26 At paragraph 49 the Guidance says: “If a local authority does nonetheless take the view that a quantity restriction can be justified in

principle, there remains the question of the level at which it should be set, bearing in mind the need to demonstrate that there is no significant unmet demand. This issue is usually addressed by means of a survey; it will be necessary for the local licensing authority to carry out a survey sufficiently frequently to be able to respond to any challenge to the satisfaction of a court. An interval of three years is commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys”.

- 3.27 A recommended list of questions for local authorities to address when considering quantity controls is set out at Annex A to the Department for Transport (DfT) Guidance.
- 3.28 In addition, The Law Commission has been considering and consulting on a wide range of potential reforms of the taxi trade as a whole, on behalf of the Government.
- 3.29 The Law Commission’s final document was issued on 23rd May 2014, in which it made 84 recommendations in relation to the changes in taxi licensing law. Some of the recommendations relevant to this report include Licensing Authorities continuing to have the power to limit the number of taxi vehicles licenced in their area, subject to a statutory public interest test on how this test should apply, and the potential for mandatory disability training for all drivers. The report further recommended that any limit on the number of taxi vehicles, and an accessibility review, should be undertaken at 3 yearly intervals.
- 3.30 The Department for Transport (DfT) released a consultation between 28 March 2022 and 20 June 2022 seeking the views on the update to best practice guidance in England.
- 3.31 Results are yet to be released, as analysis of feedback is still being completed. However, consultation document maintained the general principle of the 2010 Taxi and Private Hire vehicle licensing: Best practice Guidance, regarding administration of the Demand survey.

Summary of the Findings of the 2022 Demand Survey

- 3.32 Please refer to the full survey at Appendix A for more detail.
- 3.33 The table below outlines the total number of vehicle licence by year:

Year	HCV	PHV	Total
1994	120		

1997	125	281	406
1999	147	352	499
2001	175	325	500
2004	235	236	471
2005	257	209	466
2007	282	135	417
2009	298	199	497
2010	302	197	499
2011	303	211	514
2012	293	217	510
2013	266	179	445
2014	309	179	488
2015	324	178	502
2016	327	153	480
2017	326	144	470
2018	318	129	447
2019	321	134	455
2020	316	117	433
2021	308	98	406
2022	306	93	399

3.34 Majority of drivers currently hold dual driver licenses (513) which enable them to drive both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. There are currently 6 drivers who hold a specific Hackney carriage driver licences and no private hire driver only licence holders. As the number of drivers exceeds the number of vehicles licences, it is likely vehicles are shared amount drivers.

3.35 In March 2018, Licensing committee agreed to reduce the number of Wheelchair Accessible vehicles within the Hackney Carriage Fleet from 65% to 50%. This was done by offering 50 current WAV the opportunity to trade their WAV for an electric vehicle. To date, all available electric plates have been allocated.

3.36 At present there are 147 WAV currently licenced, with 15 vacant HCV plates, 13 of which are designated to be WAV. Of the 13, 6 have been offered to perspective proprietors and 7 remaining to be offered out. Plates 1-121 retain grandfather rights not to adhere to this requirement.

Rank Surveys

3.37 There were two elements to the rank observation.

1. The full rank observation which included all ranks within Cambridge, and took place from 10:00 on Thursday 17th June 2022 until 11:59 on Sunday 19th June.

2. The three busiest ranks; St Andrew's Street (including its Drummer Street feeder), the private rail station and the main Market Square location were observed during November from Thursday 10th November at 06:00 through to 05:59 on Sunday 13th November 2022.

3.38 The full rank observation in June covered 770 hours across all ranks, with a supplementary mid-November survey looking at the three busiest ranks over a 72-hour period in November, to identify potential impact of students being back in the City.

3.39 Observations found that estimates of average weekly passenger demand for 2022 show the dominance of the station rank, which provides 63% (up from 49% in 2017) of all passengers. St Andrew's Street provides 22% (28%) with Market Square 4.5% (12% 2017). The top two ranks now provide 85% of all passengers – higher than the 77% of 2017. Against the trend, the Bridge Street rank had increased usage and share, up to 2.9% of the total and marginally busier than Drummer Street feeder (2.7%).

3.40 Hackney carriage passenger levels at ranks continue to fall – but the impact of the pandemic appears marginal in this respect. 2017 flows were 16% down on 2012 and 2022 a further 22% down. Interestingly the three-rank test in November found overall estimated weekly flows down 9% but masking a larger reduction at the station and increases for the two central ranks. Thursday and Friday flows were lower overall, but central area flows were much higher on the Saturday with rail flows even further down (44% down on the Saturday)(not the impact of a rail strike).

- 3.41 The main rank survey found demand increasing from Thursday to Friday to Saturday but that the difference between the latter two days was relatively small (just 12% more). Peak flows were 23:00 Saturday and then midnight Friday. The level of 200 passengers per hour was sustained from 22:00 Friday to 03:00 Saturday and then from 13:00 Saturday through to 23:00 that day. Demand remains non-peaky.
- 3.42 In terms of total vehicle movements, 88% of those observed in the main rank activity were hackney carriages. Local private hire were 4% and out-of-town vehicles 2%. 3% were private cars.
- 3.43 In terms of rank usage, St Andrew's Street tends to grow in usage through the day with an overnight peak whilst the station tends to drop in usage as train service levels reduce. Saturday flows are higher than Friday. Market Square is a key provider of night demand with the new Downing Street rank also making a clear contribution to night demand. Thursday demand is similar throughout the day but lower at night, whilst both Friday and Saturday both rise to overnight peaks. However, demand in Cambridge at this time cannot be considered to be 'peaky' as there are no significant spikes observed in data collected.

Public Consultations

- 3.44 276 people were interviewed in the streets of Cambridge (as in 2017). 48% (18% last time) were interviewed near the railway station. With the remainder in the shopping streets of the City Centre. 22% of interviews were undertaken in mid-October once students had returned (all in city centre).
- 3.45 The result was 74% said they had used a licensed vehicle in the last three months, the same as in 2017. The central area and station samples provided similar usage levels.
- 3.46 When using frequency levels, 1.4 (2.4 in 2017) trips per month were made by licensed vehicle against 1.2 for hackney carriages (same as in 2017). The station figures suggest 62% (83% in 2017) of licensed vehicle trips at the station were made by hackney carriage. For the city sample, the proportion by hackney carriage is 85% (was 46%). This compares to the quoted level of normal usage from ranks of 47% (37% last time), high but less than the frequency based estimate. This still

suggests frequency of trips is higher, albeit less than in 2017, with those saying they use hackney carriages actually making more trips per person.

- 3.47 In terms of companies phoned, responses this time suggest agglomeration and successful marketing / service for one company. This increased the share of mentions to 59% from the 51% who named one company last time, with that level being 80% (was 86%) at the station. Last time the next companies had 21% and 19%. This time the next highest share was 13% with both the companies in second and third last time dropping in share – the 21% company fell to fifth and the 19% disappeared. There was a strong reduction in the numbers naming three companies and an increase in those just naming one company, usually a sign of satisfaction.
- 3.48 People were aware of four active ranks. Within this survey the station rank received the most mentions (70%) followed by Drummer Street (three names, but totaling 15%), St Andrews Street (13%, less than last time), then Market Square. The station respondents gave much less to the central area ranks suggesting more demand from the station to non-central areas rather than into the city for return trips. A lower proportion, 54% said they used ranks they named (was 73%) but this is still high.
- 3.49 The review of service perception found an excellent score with most responses focusing on service being 'very good'. As is normal around the country, price was the worst performing, with some 'very poor' scores. Top scores are for driver knowledge, state of vehicle repair and driver behaviour.
- 3.50 In terms of matters that might encourage people to use hackney carriages or use them more, 75% said if they were more affordable. Next mentions only scored 6% each, for driver quality improvements and more hackney carriages at ranks or to hail. The level of people saying there was nothing to increase their usage was very low at just 2%.
- 3.51 The level of people saying either that they needed a WAV, or knew someone who did, was increased from 2017, rising from a net 5% to 15%. Most of those needing an adapted vehicle said it would be a full WAV style vehicle but with a higher level saying they needed a different adaptation not WAV.

- 3.52 Latent demand values this time focused on the station, with that value being 1.0439 (1.02 last time), 1.049 for all ranks (1.07) and 1.0049 for just council ranks (1.05). This reflects other values, showing station levels of service have reduced.
- 3.53 89% of the public responding to the question (56%) said they thought there were enough hackney carriages in Cambridge at this time.

Stakeholder consultations

- 3.54 Several stakeholders were contacted as part of the survey. They included, supermarkets, hotels, public houses, and police.
- 3.55 The overall response was very low. Many acknowledged receipt of their opportunity to respond but provided nothing further.
- 3.56 Four responses were received - one of the four being very positive about the company they regularly used, the police having no concerns or complaints and a representative of the disabled tabling concern over vehicle types but giving no detail.

Taxi Trade Consultations

- 3.57 32% of all dual drivers sent letters responded to our invitation, exceeding the 22% response from 2017.
- 3.58 92% of respondents told us the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. One respondent had left the industry and had no intention to return, 2% were not working at the time of survey but planned to do so, 2% were part time with no other income and 3% part time but with other sources of income.
- 3.59 78% of respondents were drivers of hackney carriages, 17% both kinds of vehicle and 5% only private hire.
- 3.60 In terms of associations, 22% of respondents were with one trade group, 7% with another, 6% with a company and 61% without any formal allegiances.
- 3.61 The days and hours worked suggested people were working marginally less hours but over fewer days. Vehicle ownership for the current sample was higher and 60% said they accepted pre-bookings of some format. Evidence also suggested the top reason for when people

worked was family commitment. 7% said they avoided times of awkward customers and 11% avoiding heavy traffic times (although this was down from a high 32% last time).

- 3.62 In terms of ranks, St Andrews Street saw 27% and the Station 26%. 6% said Market Square, 5% Parkside and 3% Sidney Street (which one not specified).
- 3.63 93% felt there were enough hackney carriages at the present time. Key benefits of the limit on vehicle numbers were quoted as preventing over-ranking and reducing pollution. They also told us it kept the trade viable and drivers from working too long hours.

Air Quality and Accessibility Considerations

- 3.64 The City has given significant consideration to both accessibility and air quality impacts of its hackney carriage and private hire fleet in recent years.
- 3.65 The DfT guidance suggests that authorities may wish to consider how far the vehicle licensing policy can and should support local environmental policies that the Licensing Authority may have.
- 3.66 The Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy currently encourages the shift to low emission and zero-emission licenced vehicles.
- 3.67 The 2015-25 Air Quality Action Plan includes a strategy to reduce polluting emissions to improve poor air quality in Cambridge City and to develop taxi licensing policies to transform the vehicle fleet into a low emission fleet which will lead to a significant reduction in emissions and a significant improvement in air quality, whilst maintaining sufficient levels of access and capacity for travel in the City.
- 3.68 In support, on 19th March 2018, Licensing committee Members agreed incentives and regulatory policies, which are designed to encourage and reward the uptake of Ultra- low emission and electric vehicles within the taxi fleet, following consultation.
- 3.69 Incentives included full licence fee exemption for zero emission vehicles and a 50% discounted fee for Ultra-low emission vehicles (on the basis of available funding).

- 3.70 Licensing committee members also agreed to reduce the percentage of wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) to 50% across the whole fleet in order to encourage the uptake of zero emission vehicles. This was done by offering current WAV licence holders, the opportunity to trade their WAV for an electric vehicle. 50 plates were allocated to this incentive. To date, all available electric plates have been allocated.
- 3.71 Within Cambridge City fleet of licenced vehicles, almost all WAVs are within the hackney carriage fleet. Which is currently 50% of the HCV fleet, at time of writing this report.
- 3.72 The latest full DfT statistical survey, undertaken for March 2022, covering all English licensing authorities, excluding London, the average level of WAV HCV is 40%, with the WAV PHV level at just 4%. There are three authorities in England without any hackney carriages at all. A further four have no WAV vehicles in their fleet at all, whilst nine more have WAV only in their PHV fleets. 58 English authorities have fully WAV hackney carriage fleets. The remaining 206 English authorities with mixed (WAV and saloon) hackney carriage fleets have an average WAV level of 22%.
- 3.73** Cambridge is therefore at a higher level with its current 50% of the HCV fleet WAV style. Taken in context of mixed fleet authorities, Cambridge is 21st highest in terms of the level of WAV proportion of the hackney carriage fleet. Listed with all English authorities excluding London, including those fully WAV, Cambridge would be in 81st place overall of the 280 authorities.

WAV Rank activity

- 3.74 Of the hackney carriage vehicle movements, 34% appeared to be wheel chair accessible style vehicles. This is lower than the 50% within the fleet suggesting many WAV may not service ranks.
- 3.75 The levels of WAV at ranks varied from 20% to 75% with the lowest value being that for the Station rank (related to the high proportion of saloon vehicles having permits for the station). Downing Street and Market Hill had the highest levels (although these could be focussing on WAV that had larger capacities to meet demands here). The St Andrews Street and Drummer Street feeder locations saw about 53-

54% of the vehicle observations as WAV style, more in line with the proportion in the fleet.

- 3.76 During the course of the survey period, 11 records were made of wheel chair usage at the ranks. There were six such movements at the Station rank, three at St Andrews Street and one each at Sidney Street Boots and Bridge Street.
- 3.77 There were a further 58 observations at ranks where a person visibly appeared disabled and needing assistance. Again, the bulk were at the two main ranks with 29 at St Andrews Street and 25 at the Station. The balance of three were at the Drummer Street feeder location.

Public survey on WAV availability

- 3.78 85% of those interviewed (a very high 95% last time) said they did not have, nor knew anyone who did have, any disability that meant they needed an adapted vehicle when travelling by licensed vehicle. The remaining 15% were split between 11% knowing someone needing a WAV and 4% knowing someone needing an adapted vehicle other than WAV. This suggests need for adapted vehicles appears to have grown, with a focus on WAV style, but not exclusively so.

Trade views on WAV availability

- 3.79 When asked about wheel chair passengers, both in the chair and transferring saw higher proportions from bookings and most saying they saw such jobs monthly. However, 14% said they got rank wheel chair jobs daily.

Conclusion on Wheelchair accessible vehicle availability

- 3.80 Survey results shows there has been an increase in the number of people who knew someone who needed an adapted vehicle when traveling in a licenced vehicle. Survey also highlights more in depth research, listening to those with issues, and possibly training for drivers that ensures they keep knowledge of how to help people with disabilities at the forefront of their minds.

Standard index of significant unmet demand

- 3.81 An industry standard index of significant unmet demand (ISUD) has been developed and used since the initial Government guidance that limits could be applied. Early in the process of developing the index, it was identified that a cut-off point of 80 was the level beneath which unmet demand is not regarded as significant, and that above 80 it would be concluded there is significant unmet demand.
- 3.82 The ISUD calculations draw from various elements of the rank surveys and public consultation exercise. It provides a useful benchmark measure of the level of unmet demand that is present.
- 3.83 Using all the June data found high and significant levels of unmet demand. Both off peak and general delay levels were high, and average passenger delay was nearly a minute. However, removing the station data brought values to a level of 35 (not significant)
- 3.84 The ISUD calculations in Cambridge do not take into account the activity at the private railway station rank. This is because the issue of permits to operate at the station rank is controlled by the railway company on their private land, and outside the control of the City Council. The Council has no way to ensure that, if more licences are issued the HCVs will be available at this location and hence the exclusion from the calculations in this study. However, it is important that there is an understanding about what is happening at this location as the public rarely differentiate between ranks.
- 3.85 The overall conclusion from this is there is currently no unmet demand for hackney carriage in Cambridge City licensing which could be seen as significant.

4. Decisions to be made by Members

- 4.1 Following review of this report and the detailed survey undertaken, members have a number of decisions to make. These are each considered below, and must be determined on the evidence as presented.
- 4.2 Firstly, members need to determine whether or not they are satisfied that there is significant unmet demand;
- 4.3 If members are satisfied that there is significant unmet demand then the current limit on numbers of HCV must be lifted as per the legislation

requirements. This means that no limit can be imposed and it is removed entirely.

4.4 If members are instead satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand, then there are four possible options

- To remove entirely the current limit on number of HCV licences. This would be a change in policy and an implementation date would need to be agreed.
- To retain the limit at the level currently licensed of 321. This would be a pragmatic approach, allowing the retention of existing licences.
- To set the limit at a level lower than the current number of licences. If this reduction is greater 321 than in order to reduce the number of licences, natural wastage would be required, as and when licences are surrendered, as the only practical way of achieving this, over an indeterminate period.
- To set the limit at a number greater than the current number of HCV licences. As Members will have determined, by this point, that there is no unmet demand that is significant then increasing the numbers may be inappropriate because it will have been accepted that there are currently enough HCVs available.

4.5 In making the above decisions, Members should give full reasons for their decisions, which are based on the evidence before them.

Potential Advantages and Disadvantages of Limit Options

4.6 Potential Benefits of retaining the current limit

- It may assist in limiting the perception that there is little road space for vehicles to wait in the central area
- It may halt the trend towards working longer hours and assist in improving passenger and driver safety
- Driver focus could be on developing the current customer base rather than fighting with each other for trade
- Potential improvement in air quality with the reduction of further HCVs travelling in the City
- Retaining the limit would be supported by the existing cohort of hackney carriage drivers of licensed vehicles

4.7 Potential Disadvantages of retaining the current limit

- Retaining limit may create a market for vehicle licences which would not, necessarily, be in the public interest.
- It may reduce the opportunity for drivers to become plate owners
- There may be a lack of competition between those operating the licensed vehicles which may lead to a fall in standards

4.8 Potential Benefits of imposing unlimited numbers

- It would provide more choice for employment and give opportunities for taxi drivers to become plate owners.
- Potential for a more effective service to the public.
- With a reduced bus service to and from the City during the evening, the policy could contribute towards a significant proportion of the community's needs and enhance the night-time economy

4.9 Potential Disadvantages of imposing unlimited numbers

- It may be necessary to take enforcement action on over ranking at the Drummer Street rank.
- The issue of safety arising from continued increase of working hours by drivers would be relevant as there will be increased competition for work.
- Potential increase in air pollution due to increase in vehicles

Cambridge City Decision-Making Process

4.10 The Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000 define whether responsibility for Council functions rests with the Executive or with the full Council. Regulation 2 and Schedule 2 state that the power to license hackney carriages and private hire vehicles shall not be exercised by the Council's Executive. This licensing function (which includes imposing a limit on numbers) is what is often referred to as a "regulatory function".

4.11 The Council has delegated responsibility for most of its regulatory functions to committees. The scheme of delegation in the Council's Constitution places responsibility for this function with the Licensing Committee. The Council has not reserved any aspect of this function to itself and therefore the Committee is entitled to make decisions on the matters raised in this report. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair has a casting vote.

- 4.12 If the Committee is unwilling or unable to take a final decision, it may decide to refer the matter to Civic Affairs (for decision or reference on to full Council) or direct to Council. The matter shall also be referred to Civic Affairs Committee (for decision or reference on to full Council) on the request of the committee spokesperson for a political group, or on the request of any two other members.
- 4.13 Members should give full reasons for decisions made in respect of this report.

5. Implications

(a) Financial Implications

None

(b) Staffing Implications

None

(c) Equality and Poverty Implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment has been carried out as Appendix B

(d) Environmental Implications

None

(e) Procurement Implications

None

(f) Community Safety Implications

None

6. Consultation and communication considerations

- 6.1 The survey consulted with members of the public, stakeholders and the trade. It also consulted with disability groups.

7. Background Papers

Law Commission Taxi and Private Hire Services (2014)

http://www.lawcom.gov.uk/app/uploads/2015/03/lc347_taxi-and-private-hire-services.pdf

Department of Transport Best Practice Guidance 2010

Index of Significance unmet demand calculations

8. Appendices

- (A) LVSA Demand Survey 2023
- (B) EQiA

9. Inspection of papers

To inspect the background papers or if you have a query on the report please contact Wangari Njiiri, Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, tel: 01223 - 453833, email: Wangari.njiiri@cambridge.gov.uk