Cambridge City

Hackney carriage demand survey

January 2023

Executive Summary

This Hackney carriage demand survey has been undertaken on behalf of Cambridge City Council following the guidance of the April 2010 DfT Best Practice Guidance document, and all relevant case history in regard to unmet demand. This Executive Summary provides the outline of the research undertaken. However, it should not be relied on without reference to the detailed document that follows.

This Report provides documentation of the survey undertaken by LVSA based on your Brief, our responding proposal and confirmation of instructions as received at our Inception Meeting in June 2022. On street interviews were in Summer plus some in October, principal rank observations in June with a smaller seasonal test (with all students back) in October, driver consultation through the Summer and key stakeholder contact throughout the course of the survey. The full report is documentation of the range of evidence collected to review the present application of a limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles currently operating under the City licensing regulations.

The survey was undertaken in the context of the area being one of growth, strong pro-sustainable transport policies but also focussed on the Greater Cambridge including South Cambridgeshire whose vehicles also provide service to people particularly those travelling in the wider Cambridge area. It is also in the context of The Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC). At present it is likely charges might appear in 2027/28 at the earliest, and plans to charge non-private vehicles, including both hackney carriage and private hire, are part of the consultation outcome.

The City had a period when there was no limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers. This had two impacts – a reduction of private hire vehicle numbers as well as a strong increase in the level of the hackney carriage fleet which was wheel chair accessible. The City-based fleet is hence dominated by hackney carriages although a lot of South Cambridgeshire and out of town vehicles now supplement the private hire offer people experience in the area, meaning the balance of hackney carriage and private hire is not perhaps as dominant as the fleet might suggest.

The wheel chair accessible vehicles focus on the hackney carriage fleet with a current level of 50% lower than the peak of 70% achieved, although this is still a level which suggests some grandfather rights vehicles have actually chosen to be wheel chair accessible.

Present provision for customers with disabilities was set at a high level in the recent Taxi Policy and Handbook to a level at least equalling that required by the more recent permissive enactment of Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act.

A full rank observation programme of in a typical period in June was supplemented by a supplementary observation of the three main ranks over a weekend in early November. Estimates from the principal June surveys suggest the private station rank provides 63% of all passengers (up from 49% in the last survey). St Andrew’s Street provides 22% (down from 28%) and Market Square 12%. The station rank is yet again even more dominant now than in the last surveys in 2017, a trend on going since 2012, although overall demand appears to be reduced from both the 2017 and 2012 levels despite overall reduced station patronage following the pandemic (2012 to 2017 lost 16% and 2017 to 2022 lost 22%).

Considering ranks at a high level review, covering all operational hours during the June survey period, 34% of available rank hours saw no activity, 9% of hours were hindered by parked vehicles and 43% of rank hours were counted as being ‘busy’. The remaining 14% were ‘quiet’ hours, seeing up to two vehicle movements in any hour. Downing Street is the worst location for vehicle abuse that hinders operation and public safety.

On the busiest June survey day 51% (down from 74% in last survey) of the fleet were observed active. However, the highest proportion seen in any one time period was 16%. Overall, this suggests a good proportion of the fleet may not yet be fully active following the pandemic. Based on our sample observations there were suggestions for example that no more than 100 of the 170 vehicles that had station permits were observed although many may just not have worked on that particular day.

The public told us 74% had used licensed vehicles in the area in the last three months. There were about 1.4 licensed vehicle trips per person per month with the value 1.2 for those using hackney carriages.

In terms of companies, the share of the top company had grown demonstrating successful marketing / service and possibly agglomeration for one company with the second and third companies quoted having a lot smaller share now. The third highest quoted company in 2017 was not mentioned at all now with the second most quoted in 2017 now fifth. The level of people quoting three companies was reduced with a strong growth in those quoting one, usually a sign of high satisfaction levels.

Four ranks were quoted with the station most popular followed by Drummer Street, St Andrews Street and Market Street.

Levels of public perception of the service provided were excellent. Top scores were for driver knowledge, state of vehicle repair and driver behaviour, matters worth reporting to the general public.

The level of those saying they needed some form of adapted vehicle had increased to 15% from the 5% of 2017. The highest proportion needing an adapted vehicle favoured WAV but there were some others saying they needed an alternative style.

Latent demand levels have changed since 2017. The all-rank value has reduced from 1.07 to 1.049 mainly as a result of the council rank value reducing from 1.05 to 1.0049. However, the station value has increased from 1.02 to 1.0439 – these values suggest service at the station has for some reason declined in peoples' minds by them giving up waiting more there than in the city centre.

The net impact of COVID either from pre-COVID to now or from now forwards was not significant in peoples' expected usage of both kinds of licensed vehicle. 89% overall still felt there were enough hackney carriages in Cambridge at this time.

As typical around the country at this time there was little key stakeholder response, with one giving positive views of their serving private hire company, another not receiving complaints and one concern raised about vehicle types to serve those with disabilities that provided no further information on detail.

The level of response from local drivers increased from the 22% of last time to 32% this survey. 92% said the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income and 78% were hackney carriage drivers. 61% were not allied to any trade group.

Overall, drivers were working slightly less total hours but definitely over less days. Top two ranks used were St Andrew Street 27% and the station 26%. 93% felt there were enough hackney carriages and key benefits of the present limit were quoted as being preventing over-ranking and keeping pollution down. A viable trade and less need to work longer hours were also quoted.

Jobs involving wheel chair usage, both in the chair and transferring tended to be infrequent but more frequent from bookings than ranks although 14% did say they got daily wheel chair jobs.

The conclusion of the industry standard test of significance of observed unmet demand was initially high levels for this survey. However, these were focussed at the station and when those observations were removed the index reduced to 35, which is not significant. This is a valid conclusion as the council cannot add extra plates and have any opportunity they would service the station as a separate permit is needed.

Remarkably despite strong impacts of the pandemic a lot of matters and general statistics have remained remarkably similar, and trends such as reducing levels of hackney carriage usage have continued. At this time one fifth of all arriving passengers at Cambridge station leave by hackney carriage from the rank. However, for some reason various pointers suggest that service at the station has deteriorated since the last survey.

The principal conclusion is that the limit can currently be retained based on levels of service to the ranks under the influence of the City. Benefit would also be gained from making known to the public how much the current service is appreciated.

There are hints that there exists need for integrated committee / officer / trade / disability representative work to better match customer and trade expectations and delivery in this respect.

The Council can further assist development by using the new map of ranks to promote the current set of rank locations.

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1 General introduction and background

Cambridge City is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles operating within the Council area and is the licensing authority for this complete area. It retains a limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles licensed. Further historical detail of the specific local application is provided in subsequent chapters. This is the only part of licensing where such a stipulation occurs and there is no legal means by which either private hire vehicle numbers, private hire or hackney carriage driver numbers, or the number of private hire operators can be limited.

This review of current policy is based on the Best Practice Guidance produced by the Department for Transport in April 2010 (BPG). It seeks to provide information to the licensing authority to meet section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 "that the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence may be refused if, but only if, the licensing authority is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages within its local area, which is unmet." This terminology is typically shortened to "no SUD".

Current hackney carriage, private hire and operator licensing is undertaken within the legal frameworks set by the Town Polices Clause Act 1847. This has been amended by various following legislation including the Transport Act 1985, Section 16 in regard to hackney carriage vehicle limits, and by the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 with reference to private hire vehicles and operations. Many of the aspects of these laws have been tested and refined by other more recent legislation and more importantly through case law. Beyond legislation, the experience of the person in the street tends to see both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles both as 'taxis' – a term we will try for the sake of clarity to use only in its generic sense within the report. We will use the term 'licensed vehicles' to refer to both hackney carriage and private hire.

The legislation around licensed vehicles and drivers has been the subject of many attempts at review. The limiting of hackney carriage vehicle numbers has been a particular concern as it is often considered to be a restrictive practice and against natural economic trends. The three most recent reviews were by the Office of Fair Trading in 2003, through the production of the BPG in 2010, and the Law Commission review which published its results in 2014. None of these resulted in any material change to the legislation involved in licensing.

The upshot of all these reviews in respect of the principal subject of this survey is that local authorities retain the right to restrict the number of hackney carriage vehicle licenses. The Law Commission conclusions included retention of the power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers but utilizing a public interest test determined by the Secretary of State. It also suggested the three-year horizon also be used for rank reviews and accessibility reviews. However, both this response, and that to the House of Commons review that followed, are now all wrapped up in the consultation on revising the full BPG document whose publish date remains unconfirmed.

Unmet Demand Industry Standard Tool

After introduction of the 1985 Transport Act, Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies developed a tool by which unmet demand could be evaluated and a determination made if this was significant or not. The tool was taken forward and developed as more studies were undertaken. Over time this 'index of significance of unmet demand' (ISUD) became accepted as an industry standard tool to be used for this purpose. Some revisions have been made following the few but specific court cases where various parties have challenged the policy of retaining a limit. Some of the application has differed between Scottish and English licensing authority's due to some court cases in Scotland taking interpretation of the duty of the licensing authority further than is usual in England and Wales.

DfT current requirements

The DfT asked in writing in 2004 for all licensing authorities with quantity restrictions to review them, publish their justification by March 2005, and then review at least every three years since then. In due course, this led to a summary of the government guidance which was last updated in England and Wales in 2010 (but more recently in Scotland).

The BPG in 2010 also provided additional suggestions of how these surveys should be undertaken, albeit in general but fairly extensive terms. A key encouragement within the BPG is that "an interval of three years is commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys". BPG suggests key points in consideration are passenger waiting times at ranks, for street hailing and telephone bookings, latent and peaked demand, wide consultation and publication of "all the evidence gathered".

The most recent changes in legislation regarding licensed vehicles have been enactment of the parts of the Equality Act related to guidance dogs (sections 168 to 171, enacted in October 2010), the two clauses of the Deregulation Act which were successful in proceeding, relating to length of period each license covers and to allowing operators to transfer work across borders (enacted in October 2015), and most recently enactment of Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act, albeit on a permissive basis (see below). 2022 saw two further Acts added to Royal Assent – the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety Act) (31 March 2022)" and the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) (28 June 2022)".

In November 2016, the DfT undertook a consultation regarding enacting Sections 167 and 165 of the Equality Act. These allow for all vehicles capable of carrying a wheel chair to be placed on a list by the local council (section 167). Any driver using a vehicle on this list then has a duty under section 165 to:

- Carry the passenger while in the wheel chair
- Not make any additional charge for doing so
- If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheel chair
- To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort
- To give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required

This was enacted from April 2017.

The two new 2022 Acts make small but significant changes. The first makes it mandatory for any licensing authority in England that has information about a taxi or phv driver licensed by another authority that is relevant to safeguarding or road safety concerns in its area to share that information with the authority that issued that drivers licence, whilst the second amends the Equality Act to place duties on taxi and phv drivers and operators such that any disabled person has specific rights and protections to be transported and receive assistance when using a taxi or phv without being charged extra.

Unmet demand case history

In respect to case law impinging on unmet demand, the two most recent cases were in 1987 and 2002. The first case (R v Great Yarmouth) concluded authorities must consider the view of significant unmet demand as a whole, not condescending to detailed consideration of the position in every limited area, i.e. to consider significance of unmet demand over the area as a whole.

R v Castle Point considered the issue of latent, or preferably termed, suppressed demand consideration. This clarified that this element relates only to the element which is measurable. Measurable suppressed demand includes inappropriately met demand (taken by private hire vehicles in situations legally hackney carriage opportunities) or those forced to use less satisfactory methods to get home (principally walking, i.e. those observed to walk away from rank locations).

Deliberation of overall taxi policy and national current context

During September 2018 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on taxis produced its long-awaited Final Report. There was a generally accepted call for revision to taxi licensing legislation and practice, including encouragement for local authorities to move towards some of the practical suggestions made within the Report. However, the Report has no legislative backing and the key conclusion was that the Government needed to act firstly to revise the 2010 BPG but then to move to revisions to primary legislation as soon as practicable. Despite some opposition from members of the group, the right to retain limits on hackney carriage vehicle numbers was supported, with many also supporting adding a tool which would allow private hire numbers to be limited where appropriate, given reasonable explanation of the expected public interest gains.

During the early part of 2022, the Department for Transport opened a consultation on revising the remainder of the Best Practice Guidance 2010 not amended by the issue of the "Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards" (STPHVS) in July 2020. This consultation ran through April, May and June 2022 but has not yet seen any response from the DfT. It included suggestion of need for rank review and accessibility review on a similar three-year time frame to that retained for demand surveys. However, apart from general comments again discouraging regulation, no change to the requirements for or regarding unmet demand studies was envisaged.

Present situation and developing challenges

In conclusion, the present legislation in England and Wales sees public fare-paying passenger carrying vehicles firstly split by passenger capacity. All vehicles able to carry nine or more passengers are dealt with under national public service vehicle licensing. Local licensing authorities only have jurisdiction over vehicles carrying eight or less passengers.

These are split between hackney carriages which are alone able to wait at ranks or pick up people in the streets without a booking, and private hire who can only be used with a booking made through an operator. If any passenger uses a private hire vehicle without such a properly made booking, they are not insured for their journey.

Drivers can either be split between ability to drive either hackney carriage or private hire, or be 'dual', allowed to drive either kind of vehicle (or in some cases a mixed set of conditions, e.g. hackney carriage drivers being able to drive either whilst private hire cannot drive hackney carriage). Whilst a private hire driver can only take bookings via an operator, with the 'triple-lock' applying that the vehicle, driver and operator must all be with the same authority, a hackney carriage driver can accept bookings on-street or by phone without the same stipulation required for private hire.

For Cambridge, there remain a small number of hackney carriage and private hire only drivers' licences but the bulk of the drivers have opted to take dual licences allowing them to drive whichever kind of vehicle is most appropriate to their needs.

Recent legislation needing clarification has some operators believing they can use vehicles from any authority as long as they are legally licensed as private hire. At first, under the 'Stockton' case, this was hackney carriages operating as private hire in other areas (cross-border hiring). More recently, under the Deregulation Act, private hire companies are able to subcontract bookings to other companies in other areas if they are unable to fulfil their booking, but the interpretation of this has become quite wide.

The 'triple lock' licensing rule has also become accepted. A vehicle, driver and operator must all be under the same licensing authority to provide full protection to the passenger. However, it is also accepted that a customer can call any private hire company anywhere to provide their transport although many would not realise that if there was an issue it would be hard for a local authority to follow this up unless the triple lock was in place by the vehicle used and was for the area the customer contacted licensing.

Further, introduction of recent methods of obtaining vehicles, principally using 'apps' on mobile phones have also led to confusion as to how 'apps' usage sits with present legislation. This continues to be debated with the key issue being if obtaining a vehicle using an app (most of which rely on proximity to choose a vehicle) is a pre-booking or not, given the often minimal time between the person making known their need on the app and a vehicle meeting that need.

Over the last few years, from before the pandemic, pressure on licensing authorities to work with the environmental sections of their authorities in order to assist in the reduction of vehicle emission issues within Government guidelines has developed.

Whilst there are a number of authorities now mandated to introduce Clean Air Zones, other authorities presently do not have such stipulation although there remains strong pressure on health grounds to take action. Given that many hackney carriages, and particularly the larger ones including those that are wheelchair accessible, were diesel vehicles for practical operational reasons (petrol engines often could not deal with the size and weight needed), which are now seen as the more critical contributors to the worst elements of air pollution, often there is strong pressure to see reduced emissions from the overall licensed vehicle fleet. A Greater-Manchester wide review of clean air is currently on hold, pending agreement of a new Direction by Government and it appears that other clean air developments are also being put back. It is only during 2022 that non-diesel based wheel chair accessible vehicles have begun to appear more widely, although even this development has been hampered by company issues of various kinds. Nonetheless, some areas have introduced schemes improving air quality and also including their licensed vehicle fleets within the development. Bath was at the forefront of these changes.

All these matters can impact on hackney carriage services, their usage, and therefore on unmet demand and its significance.

Coronavirus

The serious Covid-19 virus took hold in the UK during March 2020. Whilst life carried on almost as normal until mid-March, formal lockdown was applied from Tuesday 24th March 2020 until further notice. Significant reductions in movement had begun to bite from the previous week. The last dates in 2020 when on-street and rank surveys occurred were effectively Sunday 16th March 2020.

The lockdown began to be eased on 13th May 2020 with people encouraged to return to work if they were not able to work from home. Restrictions on outdoor exercise, golf courses, tennis courses and socialising at distance, with restart of construction also allowed. From 15th June, bars, restaurants and hairdressers were allowed to return to a 'new normal'. The next wave of easement occurred on 4th July 2020.

However, a range of different re-restrictions were applied in various locations as cases began to rise again. Schools were re-opened in September, but a new 'rule of six' was introduced shortly after reducing the ability of people to socialise as rates of infection rose again, together with a 22:00 close time for all hospitality venues. In general, new restrictions tended to be introduced with a few days lead in but this ended with a new lockdown from Thursday 5th November ending on Wednesday 2nd December that year.

After that, new Tiers were introduced and then again another national lockdown from early January 2021 but with the start of vaccinations providing some hope of an eventual overcoming of the impacts of the virus.

As levels of vaccination increased and infection / hospitalisations and deaths reduced, a new road out of lockdown was announced and implemented. The final stage, removal of most English restrictions, was delayed about a month but was finally instigated towards the end of July 2021. The Government focus has since then been on ‘coping with the virus’ although as Winter has progressed infection levels have tended to move upwards.

Later in Winter 2021 appearance of a new variant led to further concern and encouragement to partake in a booster vaccination programme as well as taking further care about interaction. Mask wearing was returned to being a legal requirement at the start of December 2021 in many, but not all of the previous circumstances. The situation around Christmas 2021 was very tense. Working from home was reinstated towards the end of 2021.

Early 2021 saw more confidence that the ‘omicron wave’ could be survived although in early January there was pressure on many industries arising from staff isolating. Various methods were being considered to minimise the impact of need to self-isolate. By the end of February all legal restrictions in England were removed with the focus clearly moving to ‘living with the virus’ although unintended consequences of rising fuel and other prices from the reopening of the economy were also exacerbated by the current issue of the Ukraine occupation. At the time of writing this report (early September 2022) there was a high level of infection but the link between infection and serious illness appeared to have been broken, although the need to keep levels of immunity to severe disease may well lead to further immunisation as time proceeds. Another booster injection was starting to be rolled out.

Overall, the pandemic led to a significant period of lack of business for both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, in various ways as the pandemic developed. Some of the impacts of this are discussed in public and driver attitude chapters below, as well as review of impact on demand in the rank chapter. More significant was the reappraisal of many as to their involvement with the industry, and the general job market churn that was instigated not just in the taxi arena. In many areas there is clear knowledge that many who planned to retire brought that date forward whilst others found that the certainty of income from delivery driving was preferable to the vagaries of taxi passenger demand. Yet others found the shortage of private hire drivers meant more requirement on hackney carriages in the daytime, in turn meaning they could earn more in the week, and not be reliant on servicing less-preferable customers in the early hours of Saturday and Sunday.

A further issue we have observed is that even pubs, restaurants and night venues are now reducing their opening hours or days in reaction to rising costs and staff shortages. This can lead to taxi demand in an area becoming peaky or peakier with such change. Further, most commercial operators now tend to focus on customer service but away from widespread engagement with anyone other than their direct customers.

Further, the impacts of the developing war in Ukraine and other economic changes partly arising from Brexit is again putting pressure on costs of providing licensed vehicle services. Rising fuel prices have also added to the issues. The days when the main aim of a demand survey was checking if passenger demand had changed to see if supply remained sufficient have now been replaced by a much wider research need to identify both demand and supply side changes. Even long-standing areas with limited hackney carriage vehicle numbers have been impacted by having spare hackney carriage vehicle licences available for the first time in decades.

2 Local background and context

Key dates for this Hackney carriage demand survey for Cambridge City are:

- appointed LVSA at the end of May 2022
- in accordance with our proposal of April 2022
- as confirmed during the inception meeting for the survey held on 1 June 2022
- this survey was carried out between June and November 2022
- On street pedestrian survey work occurred in August with a sub-sample undertaken in mid-October to capture returned students
- the video rank observations occurred in June and November 2022 with the latter covering the busiest three ranks and reviewing impact of the student population on these
- Licensed vehicle driver opinions and operating practices were canvassed during July and August 2022 by an all-trade questionnaire
- Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the period of the survey
- A draft of this Final Report was reviewed by the client during December 2022
- and reported to the appropriate Council committee following.

The City of Cambridge

Cambridge City is one of five district councils within the county of Cambridgeshire. The City has a current population of 145,700 from the initial estimates from the 2021 census (rising from the 125,900 for 2017 estimates currently available from the 2011 census). This is a large 16% increase since the previous study estimates. A key different factor about Cambridge is that it is surrounded tightly by the South Cambridgeshire hinterland which is a separate licensing authority. Levels of cycling are very high, as are levels of commuting given the two key rail routes to London. The authority also services a much wider hinterland beyond pure City borders.

In terms of background council policy, Cambridge City has transport planning principally led by the County. Their developments have included the St Ives Busway project, a key section of which runs through and south of the City centre near to the rail station. A very strong pro-bus / pro-sustainable transport policy has long been in place, supported by a strong pedestrianisation of the central core, which has no car access between 10:00 and 16:00.

The Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC) was adopted by Cambridgeshire County Council on 4 March 2014 and ensures that local councils plan together for sustainable growth and continued economic prosperity in the area.

It is predicted that approximately 44,000 new jobs and 33,000 new homes will be created in Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire by 2031. The strategy will provide a plan to cope with the rising population and increase in demand on our travel network by shifting people from cars to other means of travel including cycling, walking and public transport.

This success brings prosperity and growth for the local and national economy, but also places pressure on the transport network. Forecast growth is expected to create 26,000 more daily car journeys over the next decade (Up to 2031). Congestion is already a major and growing problem, threatening mobility, health and well-being and detracting from the appeal of Cambridge, for residents, employees, businesses and visitors alike. Cambridge is currently the 16th most congested city in the country. During 2019, people spent an average of 71 hrs driving time in congestion.

Over the last ten years, traffic levels have increased by 10% and Cambridge's peak AM and PM periods, when the city experiences highest traffic volumes and worst congestion, have lengthened by up to 2.5 hours. Poor air quality is a concern in some areas and contributes to 106 deaths annually across Greater Cambridge. High levels of car use mean carbon emissions per capita in Cambridgeshire are 150% of the national average.

Greater Cambridge attracts people to work from a wide area, but many people have no good alternative to their car and are held back from accessing opportunities by a lack of viable public transport or walking and cycling connections. To reduce congestion, improve air quality and reduce carbon emissions and create a more sustainable network for the future, we need significantly more people travelling by public transport, cycling and walking and significantly fewer people travelling by car. The Greater Cambridge Partnership (GCP) has a plan to make that happen by giving people better choices to travel sustainably.

In May 2020, a Government 'Gateway review' hailed 'significant success and progress' the Partnership has made since 2015 on ambitious plans ranging from city cycleways to better public transport routes to transform travel for thousands of people. The successful release of a further £200m brings City Deal funding totalling up to £300m to continue delivery of GCP's sustainable travel programme to tackle building transport pressures and transform the way we travel.

The GCP's programme aims to deliver a public transport and infrastructure network for the future, supporting sustainable and inclusive growth by creating new and improved infrastructure for better, greener journeys.

This commitment is brought into sharper focus by the impacts of Covid-19 and plans reflect the GCP's shared commitment to support communities and businesses. As communities continue to recover and grow in line with the area's Local Plan, sustainable transport options remain vital to access work, study and other opportunities the city has to offer – whether using public transport, cycling or walking. The City Deal offers a once-in-a-generation opportunity to fund improvements with real impact over the next decade and beyond. The GCP's programme will support the area to emerge stronger from the crisis and helps deliver a green recovery.

Vision for a Future Network

The GCP's **Future Network Map 2030** presents a vision for substantially enhanced infrastructure over the next decade, forming a cohesive network throughout the Greater Cambridge area and further afield. This enhanced infrastructure facilitates a **Future Bus Network,** the GCP's vision for a transformed public transport network, giving more people the choice of attractive sustainable transport journeys by better serving employment and existing, new and growing residential areas.

The GCP's **four corridor schemes** connect new and growing communities outside the city with key employment hubs. Cambourne to Cambridge, Waterbeach to Cambridge, Cambridge Eastern and Cambridge South East are offering better public transport and active travel routes along four corridors identified as essential to link growing communities to the north, south east, east and west. The schemes form an integral part of the GCP's vision for a Future Bus Strategy.

Making Connections A City Access Scheme public consultation was completed on 23rd December 2022. The proposal in the consultation stated that from a as early as mid-2023 the proposal is to transform the bus network through more services to more locations, with cheaper fares capped at £1/£2. Alongside the bus network, we are proposing more investment in new sustainable travel schemes, such as better walking and cycling links. From 2027/28, there is a proposal to introduce a Sustainable Travel Zone in the form of a road user charge on behalf of Cambridgeshire County Council as the Highway Authority. Vehicles would pay to drive into the Zone at certain times. The Zone would be phased in from 2025, after the first bus improvements are introduced. There would be discounts, exemptions and reimbursements for some including those on low incomes, blue badge holders and possibly taxis.

The present Air Quality Action Plan Theme 1 is 'reduced emissions from taxis'. (it should be noted that the term 'taxi' in this context means both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles). Measures include items as follows:

46 – Clean Air Zone
48 – Installation of taxi only rapid charge points
55 – licensing conditions to require low emission taxis
54 – fee reductions for low emission taxis

Item 46 will need to be reviewed in light of the outcome of the consultation on Making Connections. The target is a 100% electric or ultra low hybrid taxi fleet by 2028. South Cambridgeshire have also introduced a similar policy. The taxi only rapid charge points have been fully funded from a range of sources. 17 rapid charge points have been installed with a further 4 will be installed by April 2023 totally 21 rapid charge points for exclusive use of taxis.

The City Councils taxi policy has required all HCV since 1999 to be WAV. However, to support the air quality action plan, it was agreed by members that 50 WAV plates could be traded in for Electric vehicles. This would still leave 50% of the HCV fleet as WAV.

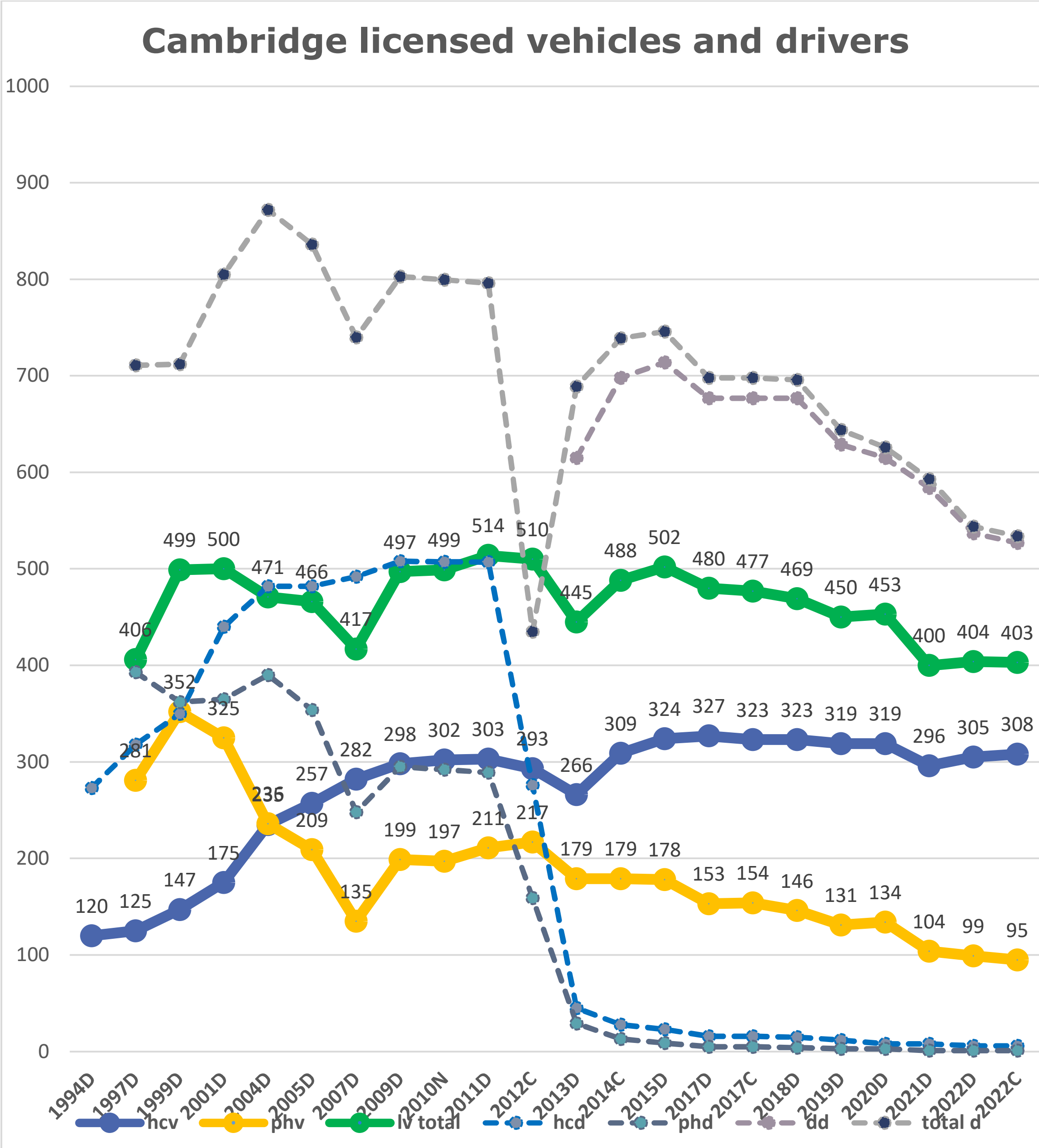
Concerns have been expressed by disability passengers that there is lack of availability for WAV when needed. However further investigation has indicated it is not a lack of vehicles but lack of drivers to take these bookings.

Extent of Licensing Authority Powers

The nature of the authority means that rank provision is principally via the County Council, with the City having input, but not full control of the traffic regulation orders required.

All licensing authorities have full powers over licensing the vehicles, drivers and operators serving people within their area. Cambridge City has chosen to utilize its power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers, this was reintroduced in January 2015 and is kept under review every 3 years.

By drawing together published statistics from both the Department for Transport (D) and the National Private Hire Association (N), supplemented by private information from the licensing authority records (C), recent trends in vehicle, driver and operator numbers can be observed. The detailed numbers supporting the picture below are provided in Appendix 1. Due to the comparative size, the operator figures are shown in the second picture.



Licensing Statistics from 1994 to date

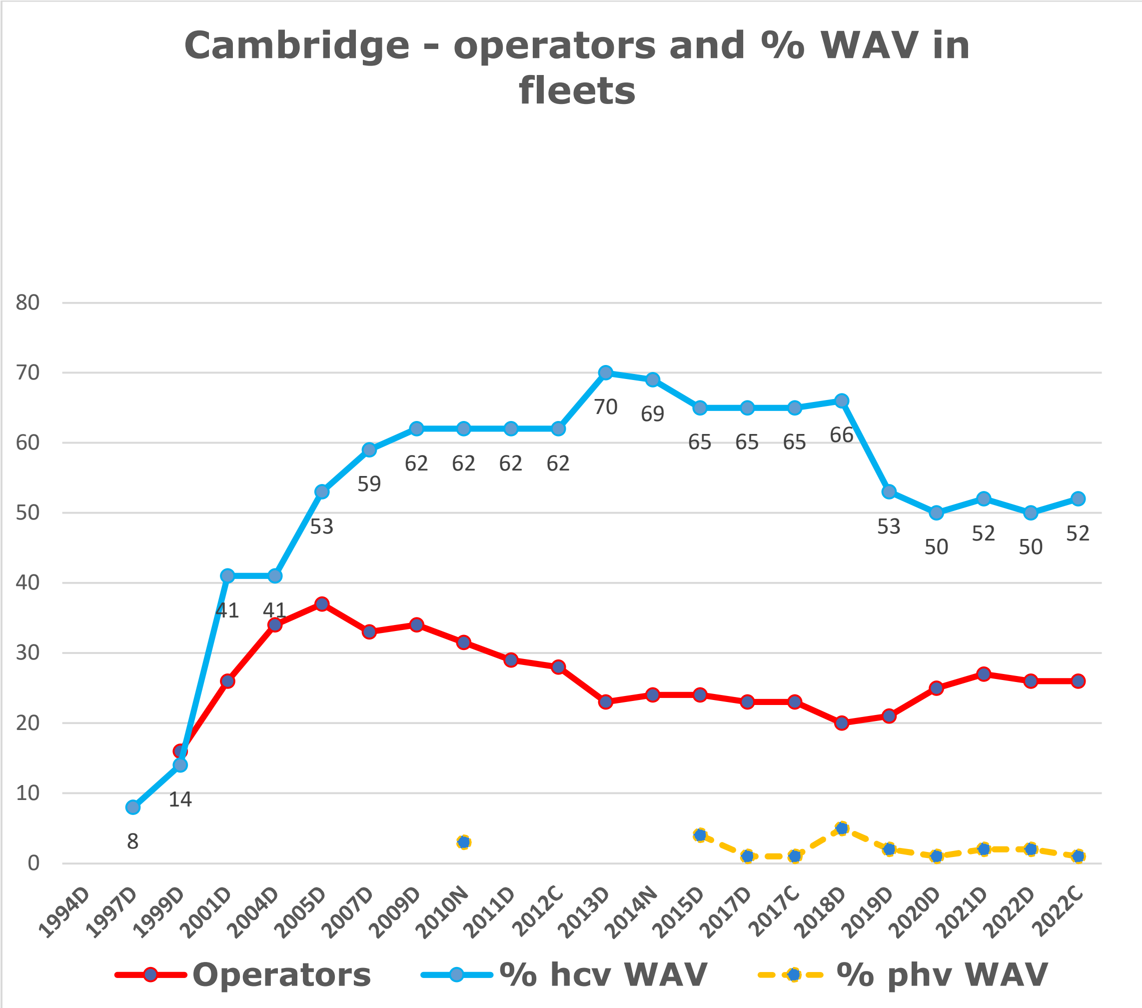
The graph above demonstrates the growth of hackney carriages in the area of some 173% since the start of formal DfT records in 1994. However, most of this growth was up to 2011, after which there was a drop in numbers, with a plateau reached not long after sustained until the impact of the pandemic. At that point, numbers fell 7% although there has been some recovery since, back to around 2014 levels.

Private hire vehicles are just 27% of the level they were in 1999. A high proportion of the reduction appears to be transfers to hackney carriage during the period of no limit on numbers, although numbers were growing from 2007 to 2012, after which they have gently declined to the current level. The pandemic saw one year of larger decline, and they are now less than 100 in number. There is also an element in the decline accounted for by many working for South Cambridgeshire and operating in the City although it is hard to attribute the split between moving to hackney carriage and to other licensing areas. What is clear is that Cambridge City registered private hire vehicles are a very small part of the total licensed vehicle fleet of the City itself, and even less so when the active fleet servicing the City (including other authority vehicles) is considered.

Whilst this apparently mirrors hackney carriage growth, the impact of some vehicles transferring to out-of-town operation may also have had some impact, particularly with many vehicles operating under South Cambridgeshire licensing. The graph also clearly shows that, in terms of Cambridge City licensed vehicles, hackney carriage are dominant, and outnumber private hire by more than three to one. However, as already noted a lot of vehicles have over time tended to work in the City but have South Cambridgeshire licences (partly reflecting the fact that a lot of trips from that hinterland are in any event to Cambridge, and partly reflecting different licensing conditions).

In terms of driver numbers, the transfer of vehicles to hackney carriage saw a similar transfer of drivers. However, more recently, dual driver badges have been issued and most have transferred across to these. The latest Council statistics suggest 534 drivers exist for 403 vehicles across the total licensed vehicle fleet of the City, suggesting a good proportion of potential for vehicle sharing by drivers. Just seven of these drivers remain only able to drive either hackney carriage or private hire.

Information is also available from these sources to show how the level of wheel chair accessible vehicles (WAV) has varied. It must be noted that in most cases the values for the private hire side tend to be much more approximate than those on the hackney carriage side, as there is no option to mandate for private hire being wheel chair accessible. In some areas, to strengthen the ability of the public to differentiate between the two parts of the licensed vehicle trade, licensing authorities might not allow any WAV in the private hire fleet at all.



Operator numbers and levels of WAV provision in the fleet

For Cambridge City based vehicles, almost all wheel chair accessible are those within the hackney carriage fleet. The present level of 52% is much lower than that at the peak (70%) but is still a very high value for a mixed fleet, although this has predominantly been achieved by the period when all new hackney carriages had to be wheel chair accessible. There are a handful of similar vehicles in the private hire fleet, but this proportion has reduced more recently to just a single vehicle.

Operator numbers have tended to be relatively stable over some time. Numbers grew marginally from 2018 to a level retained since.

In terms of 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%.

Cambridge is therefore at a much higher level with its current 52% 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. Taken in context, if all was equal, people in Cambridge would tend to find every other hackney carriage was WAV style.

We understand that 121 vehicle plate numbers would retain grandfather rights to be saloon style. However, of these, there are now only 110 licensed and the other 11 plates have therefore lost their protected status given that they do not exist per se.

There is a further complication within the current Cambridge operation in that the station rank requires a supplementary permit. We have been advised that there are 170 such permit holders, or 55% of the fleet. It is understood that the bulk of the 110 grandfather rights saloon vehicles have station permits and tend to focus operation at the station. This means a higher proportion of WAV style vehicles will tend to be found in the city centre. Our full survey found 20% WAV in the station vehicles (was 32% in last survey) but 54% of the St Andrew’s Street vehicles WAV (was 78%); with the value for the station higher in the November test (26%), but up to 80% at St Andrew’s Street.

Reviews of Limit Policy

Cambridge City undertakes regular review of its policy to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers in line with the BPG. There had been surveys in at least 1992, 1995 and 1999, with the limit removed in favour of new vehicles having to be wheel chair accessible in 2001. Further surveys were carried out in 2012 and 2014, the latter which led to re-application of the limit in January 2015. A further survey was carried out in 2017, in which no unmet demand of any significance was observed and the decision was therefore made to retain the limit. There were plans to review limit in 2020, however due to the Covid-19 pandemic it was put on hold as it was not an appropriate time to complete.

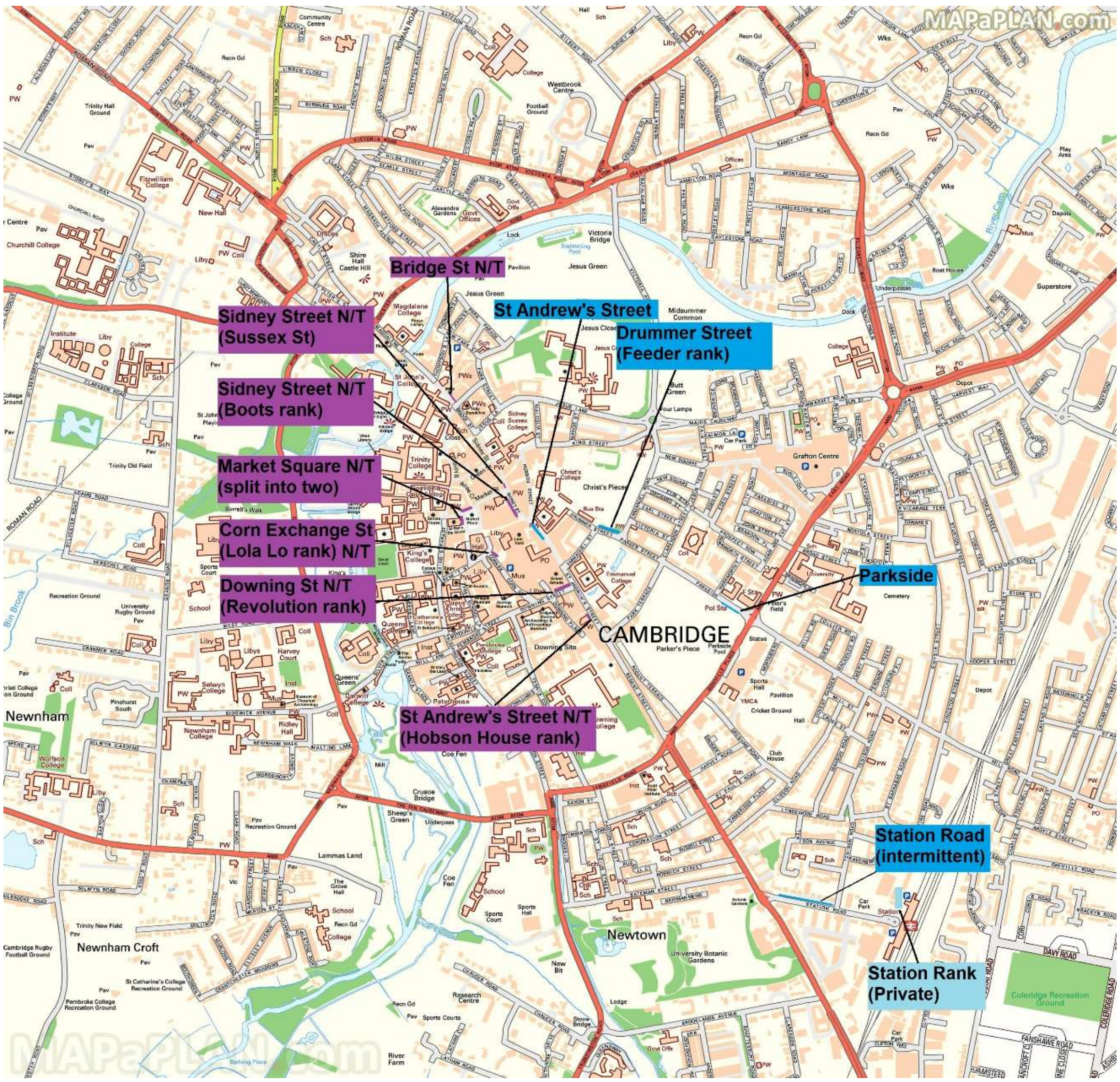
Ironically the figures seem to suggest that the period between the first thoughts about reintroducing a limit and the actual final application of this led to about at 10% higher level of hackney carriages during that period – immediately before which numbers had reduced from their peak.

3 Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)

As already recorded in Chapter 2, control of provision of on-street ranks in Cambridge City is principally under the auspices of the County Council who has overall highway powers for the full City area.

Our rank methodology involves a current review both in advance of submitting our proposal to undertake this hackney carriage demand survey and at the study inception meeting, together with site visits where considered necessary. This provides a valid and appropriate sample of rank coverage which is important to feed the numeric evaluation of the level of unmet demand, and its significance (see discussion in Chapter 7).

A map of ranks, provided by the Council, is below:



In terms of change since the last survey, there has been little real change. The former Station Road rank no longer exists and the new station arrangements are now well-established.

Other ranks remain the same as they were, with the feeder system for St Andrew's Street main rank still supplemented by drivers using mobile phone messaging to move between this rank and the main location due to reduced trust in the call-on system.

Those in the central area are night only given the full daytime pedestrian system. The ranks added in 2017 remain in place although neither the new Corn Exchange rank nor the St Andrew's Street Hobson House rank saw any usage in our surveys at this time.

The trade refers to key ranks using a colour code:
- Yellow – St Andrews Street / Christ's College rank
- Red – Drummer Street feeder
- White – Parkside
- Black – station.

Variation in demand

The council were keen to understand how demand varied over time at key ranks. The only way to undertake this is by observation of activity at each rank for sample periods of time. It was agreed this time to undertake the main survey of rank operation during June with a supplementary 72-hour observation of the three busiest ranks once University students had returned and were established (in November). The 2017 survey saw two 48-hour observations in June and the main rank work in October.

Station Rank

This rank is directly outside the pedestrian exit from the station. It is slightly further away from the exit / entrance than it used to be, but still provides around 14 direct spaces in two lanes on a paved brick surface. There is a canopy to provide some passenger shelter from rain provided in the middle of the rank. The area also has a drop-off and pick-up area for other vehicles further away from the station, and then a single lane exit from the full area. Pick up is from the passenger side, though being a separate rank, would safely allow loading from both sides, with plenty of space for ramps. Additional vehicles at busy times can wait in the station car park to feed through to the rank.

Access to and from Station Road towards the city centre is along Tenison Road and Great Northern Road. Buses have priority at the Tenison Road / Station Road junction meaning that vehicles leaving the station have to give way to buses from the station together with a small amount of other vehicles.

St Andrew's Street and feeder

This main council provided rank gives six to seven spaces just south of the junction with Sidney Street right at the start of the pedestrianised area of the main city centre. The rank is located on the western side of this one-way northbound road. Loading is from the passenger side, with driver side loading dangerous due to the passing traffic, including many buses. Although the pavement is wide, pedestrian volumes may cause issues when loading wheel chairs.

The rank has a feeder site with nine spaces in Drummer Street, just near the bus station. The main rank has optical detectors linked to a sign at Drummer Street which should change to confirm spaces are available, to reduce over-ranking and the obstruction to through traffic this might cause at the main location. Drummer Street loading, if used, is from the driver side. The location also has public toilets meaning it can act as a rest rank at times.

We were advised that issues with the call-on system mean that drivers using this rank tend to use a text service to confirm available spaces rather than trusting the call-on system. This also allows for vehicles arriving directly along St Andrew's Street rather than passing via Drummer Street. Some passengers do take vehicles from the feeder rank. The provision for further excess vehicles along Emmanuel Road did not return.

Parkside

This rank is a five-space location on the southern side of this one-way road, just north of the long-distance coach stops for Cambridge. Vehicles load from the passenger side of the vehicle, with any driver side loading being dangerous due to passing traffic. There would be plenty of space for wheel chair loading although this would block the pavement at the time of use, although there is no fence and parkland to the immediate rear. It is also now one of the locations of the electric charging points.

Sidney Street, near Sussex Street

This night-time rank, formally available from 1900 to 0700 only, is on the western side of the street between Market Street and Sussex Street. The highway is brick tiled at this point so any attempt at painting markings would be futile, even if legally possible. The location is marked on two low bollards at either end of the two spaces provided. There is no other signage or any pedestrian guidance to the location, with the only real advertising being vehicles sitting there.

Sidney Street is one way northbound and only accessible between 16:00 and 10:00. Loading from either side would be possible given the slow speeds, although usage of wheel chair ramps could be difficult given the overall narrowness of both pavement and street.

Sidney Street, near Petty Cury (Boots rank)

This location is directly outside the Boots store just north of Petty Cury. It is again on the western side of the one-way northbound road although this location has a wider road and pavement than the rank above. Again, it is only marked by signs on low bollards at either end, with brick paving again making any other marking very difficult. This is also subject to the restriction of no access from 10:00 to 16:00.

Market Square

This area is also within the pedestrianised area only accessible to vehicles between 16:00 and 10:00. The Square surrounds the market stalls. There are two sections of rank, both available 19:00 to 06:00 only. Both have five spaces. The western side rank is near to Great St Mary's Church and with tarmac road surface does have clear road markings. It is a clearway at other times, but loading is allowed from 16:00 to 19:00 and 06:00 to 10:00. However, the rank often tends to have one space taken up by large waste bins used for the market. Loading would be possible from either side, although the passenger side pavement is relatively narrow. This rank is marked 'taxi rank covered by CCTV'.

The section of rank on the northern edge has signs and small bollard signs but with brick tiled paving no road markings. It is in a layby although the pavement here is much wider, and again loading would be possible from either side of the vehicle given the very low traffic speeds and volumes here. For this survey, this section of rank tends to be the head of the rank used at most available times whilst the western edge rank tends to be a feeder principally used only when the main rank is full of vehicles.

Bridge Street

This rank is located in the pedestrian zone of this Street, with access allowed for buses, taxis and vehicles needing to get to properties in Bridge Street South. This is not part of the central area pedestrianisation and does not have as stringent access arrangements. The road is one-way northbound, and the rank is on the eastern side of the road. This means that passengers need to enter from the driver's side, although passenger side loading is possible but with caution given the passage of buses. It is located in a layby which has four spaces, but signing only on small bollards.

St Andrew’s Street, Baptist Church (Hobson House rank)

This rank has clear larger street sign marking but again being on brick paving, no road markings. The site can also be used for loading 07:00 to 10:00 and 16:00 to 19:00 and for disabled badge parking between 10:00 and 16:00. Passenger loading is from the passenger side with a relatively wide pavement nearby. Further, driver side loading would be unsafe given the volume of buses passing immediately adjacent to the rank.

Unlike many other ranks, the adjacent road is two-way, albeit bus and taxi only southbound, so vehicles could service it from the driver side heading southbound.

Downing Street (Revolution rank, John Lewis)

This rank has five spaces which take over from the bus stop at this location between 22:00 and 06:00. The rank is well-signed but road markings only define the bus stop and not the use as a taxi rank. Pedestrian loading would be from the passenger side. The John Lewis building overhang effectively provides shelter at this location, the only council rank to have such a facility. Observations suggest that lighting at this location may be an issue.

Corn Exchange St (Lola Lo rank)

This 2017 introduced rank is a two-space location in a lay-by right at the northern end of this one-way street, near to an exit from the nearby shopping centre. The passengers must enter from the drivers’ side given the road layout. Passenger side loading would be possible given the slow other traffic speeds, but wheel chair loading here would be disruptive to other traffic. The rank operates from 19:00 to 07:00 only every day and is otherwise a loading bay.

Access from this location follows the one-way route out to Wheeler Street, Bene’t Street and Trumpington Street, so can be fairly lengthy possibly suggesting the likelihood of vehicles waiting here could be quite low.

Rank observations

There were two elements to the rank observation programme. The wider, all-rank coverage was undertaken from 10:00 on Thursday 17th June 2022 until 11:59 on Sunday 19th June. This was marginally extended from the previous coverage to meet current needs for robust data sampling. The three busiest ranks at St Andrew’s Street, the private rail station location and the main Market Square location were observed during November over a period running from Thursday 10th November at 06:00 through to 05:59 on Sunday 13th November in all three locations. The former survey provided 335 hours of observations across the ranks in the City, including several lesser used locations (plus further coverage of some locations when ranks were not in operation).

High level review of rank operations

In the order of 770 hours of video footage were obtained at rank locations in Cambridge during the main survey. All these hours were 'quick-watched' to identify hours when the ranks were:

- Busy (three or more licensed vehicles or passenger groups in any hour)
- Quiet (licensed vehicle or passenger activity for one or two vehicles or passengers in any hour)
- Unused – no hackney carriage or passenger activity in an hour
- Parked in by private vehicles for most of the hour
- Parked in by private vehicles but with hackney carriage activity adjacent
- Main rank busy but feeder unused

Where a rank was not legally in operation, any licensed vehicle activity was also noted in the first two categories but otherwise those hours were excluded (some 39% of the total hours collected). Of the remaining hours, 43% were busy, 9% quiet, 2% parked in but still seeing hackney carriage activity adjacent or in remaining rank spaces, 3% seeing the main rank busy but the feeder quiet, (i.e. total of 57% seeing some hackney carriage activity), 9% simply parked in and 34% unused though legally available.

Considering the overview, Corn Exchange Street is either unused or parked in by non-licensed vehicles. The St Andrews Street (church) rank is also either unused or parked in (but to a lesser extent than Corn Exchange Street). The only other rank seeing significant parked vehicle issues is the Downing Street rank. This is fully parked in on Thursday evenings, but sees no hackney carriage usage at that time. Both Friday and Saturday nights into the next mornings see significant parking but also usage by hackney carriages at this location. The Parkside rank saw some, but generally very little, usage.

Both Sidney Street ranks see usage, with the Boots rank seeing more usage, and in some cases ahead of the time the rank is formally available. Both tend to cease being used around 04:00 with the Superdrug location tending to start later than the Boots location albeit with lesser demand in those periods. The Market Hill ranks tend to see around 4 hours used on the Thursday evening / Friday morning but are then busy for most available hours Friday/Saturday and Saturday/Sunday. On both nights the main rank is used from 18:00 onwards, an hour earlier than formally available.

Bridge Street rank was quiet or unused on the Thursday but busiest once legally active Friday evening to midnight, with the main usage for just the first two hours on the Saturday and then quiet to 02:00 then unused.

The St Andrews Street rank and feeder, and station, all saw some quiet and unused hours but were generally busy the bulk of the time.

Rank usage – weekly estimates

In order to set the observed rank usage in context, the June full survey programme results were used to estimate typical weekly usage of hackney carriages by rank in Cambridge at this time. The table below also compares these results to the June surveys for the two top ranks, and to the previous (2017 and 2012) survey data results. The table below is listed in order of the rank with highest usage from the full 2022 estimates first (irrespective of if the rank is private or otherwise). Values shown are estimated weekly passengers at each location.

Rank	2022	2017	2017, June-based		2012
	Flow	Flow	Flow	%	Flow
Railway Station (private)	13,389(63)	13,263(49/63)	21,445	59(71)	14,145 (45)
St Andrew's Street	4,694(22)	7,668(28/37)	8,908	24(29)	12,290(38)
Market Square	947(4.5)	3,307(12)			586(2)
Bridge St	619(2.9)	431(2)			462(1)
Drummer St	582(2.7)	965(4)			91(0.0)
Sidney St, Superdrug	255(1.2)	540(2)			3,000(9)
Sidney St, Boots	462(2.2)	0			1,200(4)
Market Square Feeder	128(0.6)				
Downing St	123(0.6)	569(2)			n/a
Parkside	6(0.03)	244(1)			302(1)
St Andrew's St Church	Unused	32(0.0)			Not covered
Corn Exchange St	Unused	4(0.0)			n/a
Total	***21,204***	***27,023***			***32,076***
Comparison to previous	***-22%***	***-16%***			

The table demonstrates how dominant the railway station rank is in the overall picture. In the full rank survey, it now takes some 63% of all passengers (increased from the 49% of 2017 despite changes to rail usage). St Andrew's Street follows second, but with just 22% of the total level of passengers. Market Square is the next with 4.5% (12% 2017). Between them they account for 85% of all passengers (this excludes the smaller proportion leaving directly from Drummer Street). This is an increase from the 77% for the two in 2017, suggesting a greater focus now on the top two ranks.

No other rank is estimated to see more than 950 total passengers in a week in this survey. The third busiest rank remains Market Square although its usage level has reduced strongly from 2017. Current estimated demand is 4.5% from the main rank and 0.6% from the feeder (in 2017 this was 12% of the total and some 3,300 passengers).

As expected, some passengers do take vehicles from the feeder rank in Drummer St which is near the bus station and several bus stops, amounting to some 2.7% of estimated 2022 typical trade from ranks (was 4% in 2017).

For the current survey, all other ranks see 2.9% or less of the total and both St Andrews Street Church and the Corn Exchange rank saw no activity during our sampling of activity. The Parkside rank was also hardly used, seeing just six estimated passengers.

The fourth busiest rank had actually increased usage, Bridge Street. For this survey it saw just over 600 passengers (2.9% of the total), compared to 431 and 2% in 2017. The Drummer Street feeder provided 2.7% (was 4%), Sidney St Boots 2.2%, Sidney St Superdrug 1.2%, Market Square Feeder 0.6% and Downing Street 0.6%. Both Downing Street and Sidney Street Superdrug were reduced levels of usage compared to 2017. However, in 2017 there was no observed usage of the Sidney Street Boots rank.

Overall, total estimated weekly patronage based on the full June survey was 21,204 passengers, some 22% down on 2017, with that level being 16% down on the 2012 levels (both being five year periods this comparison is therefore a similar one).

The three busiest ranks were re-surveyed over a 72-hour period in November to identify potential impact of students being back in the City. This survey covered the station, St Andrew's Street (including its Drummer Street feeder) and the main rank at Market Street. The total estimated weekly patronage from these three locations was 9% lower than the June values. This confirms that the June data is a more robust test of unmet demand given it has higher overall demand levels.

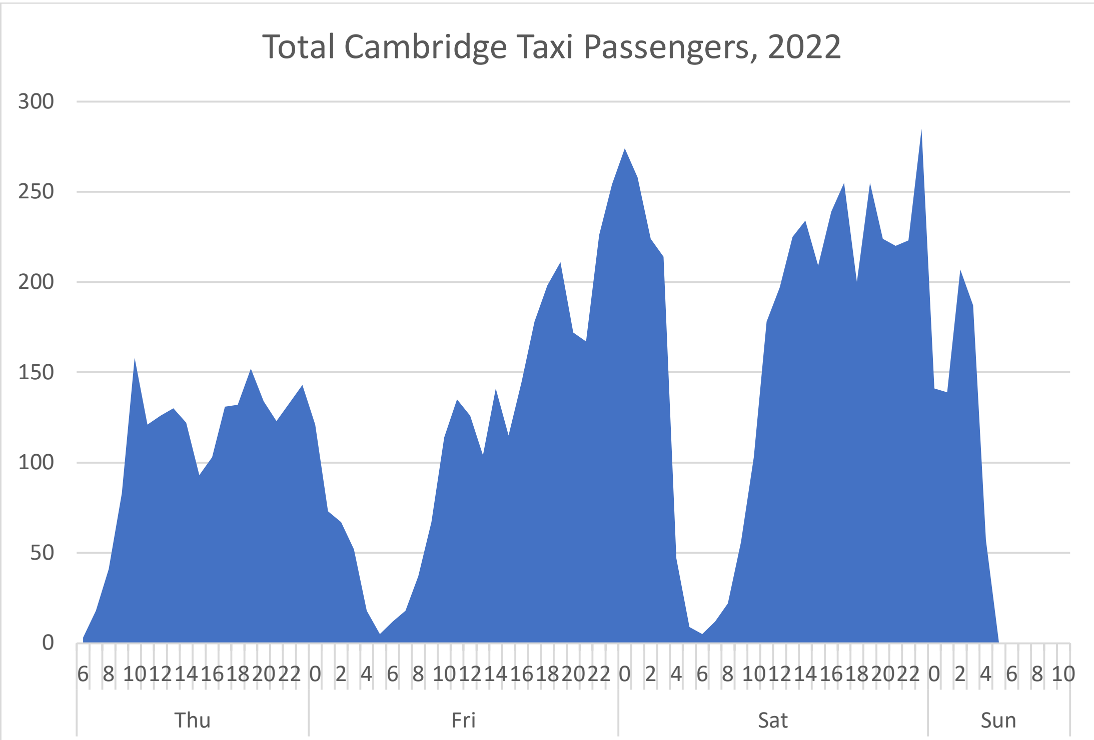
However, the overall figures mask a distinct change in the pattern of data – with the station rank 20% down and St Andrew's Street up 14%, Drummer St up 10% and Market Street up 9%. This is reasonable, with more activity in town and less people arriving. This reduces the dominance of the station from 68% within these three locations to 61% in November.

Reviewing the daily data also shows a change in pattern, with the station 21% down on the Thursday but 41% down Friday and 44% down on the Saturday. St Andrews Street and Market Street saw reduced Thursday and Friday flows but strongly increased Saturday flows (54% and 45% respectively). The November dates were 10-12 November which were away from rail strike days during that month (although 10th may have been impacted after the 9th being a strike day). This does not, however, explain the lower Friday or Saturday flows at the station.

Having set the context, the following section provide more detail on the current usage of ranks in Cambridge, as well as discussing operation of each rank in more detail to paint a clearer picture of usage by time of day and rank.

Overview of ranks from direct observations

Graphs were produced to compare the data collected in a visual manner. The first graph shows the overall results of the June wider survey but for total passengers over the surveyed days.



This graph shows how demand increases from Thursday to Friday (51%) and Saturday (12%) although the difference between the last two days is not as great. In each case the 'day' covers 06:00 one morning to 05:59 on the next day. Apart from the 05:00 hour on the Sunday, there were passenger flows at one or other rank in Cambridge in all hours from 06:00 Thursday onwards.

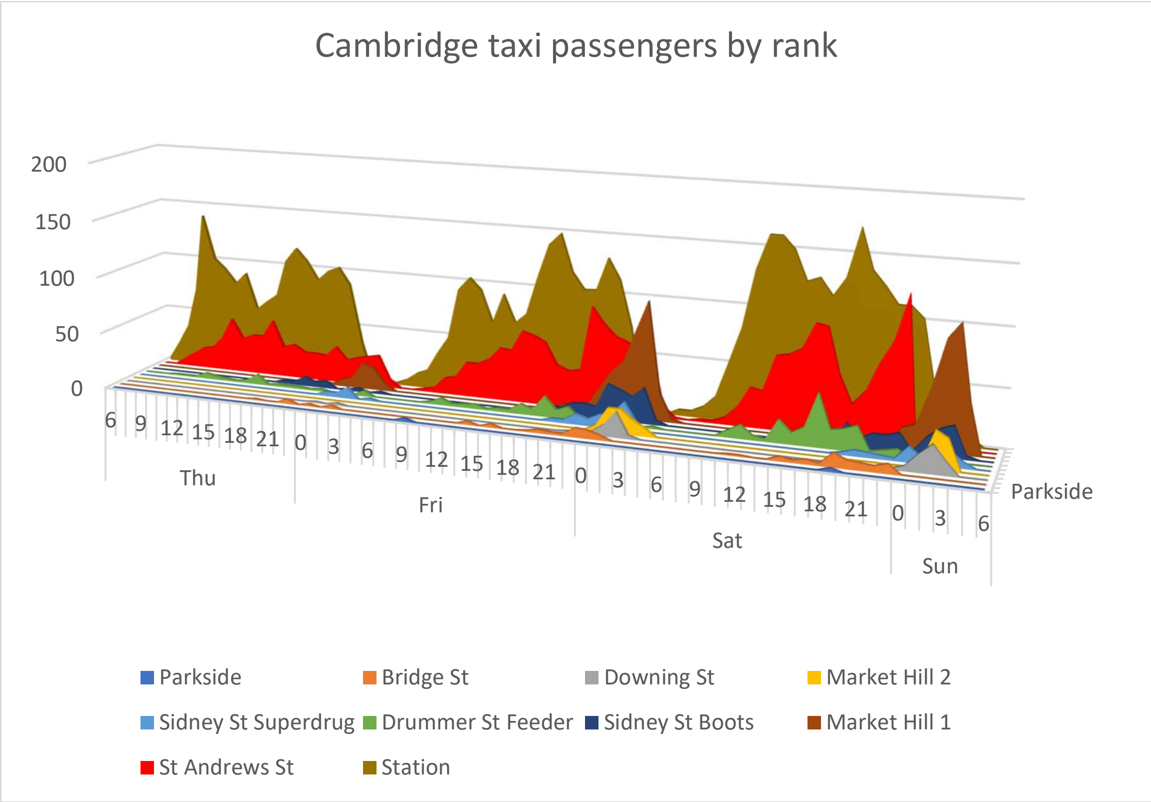
The peak flow was the 23:00 hour on the Saturday, followed by the next peak hour being the midnight hour following Friday night. Interestingly, flows were 200 passengers or more for every hour from the 22:00 Friday to the 03:00 Saturday morning, but then also from 13:00 on the Saturday through to the 23:00 hour, after which flows dropped significantly.

The average flow over the 72 hours observed was 133 passengers with Thursday 95, Friday 144 and Saturday 161, not far different overall. Thursday daytime flows tended to be higher than those on Friday, but Saturday's were higher leading up to the high levels from lunch time onwards.

This demand profile does not appear to be peaky at all and sees relatively good levels of sustained demand through the period observed.

Flows by day and rank

A graph was produced showing demand by rank and hours.



This demonstrates graphically the general dominance of the station rank followed by the St Andrew's Street rank. This is very similar to 2017. On all days there is a clear morning peak at the station rank although the Saturday tends to see this level growing through the morning. Flows at the station taper off towards the end of main rail service operation.

St Andrews Street tends to be fairly equal throughout Thursday but has a more peaked profile on Fridays and even more peaked on the Saturday. The Market Hill ranks see usage late evening / early mornings on all three days with the Friday and Saturdays appearing similar and much more prominent than the Thursday. The Drummer Street feeder seems to find favour more on the Saturday. Downing Street is used Fridays and Saturdays with Bridge Street operating at lower volumes but for longer periods.

Vehicle activity levels at ranks

The full database of all vehicle and passenger movements at or near the taxi ranks was inspected. 23,429 different records of activity were obtained over the 72 hours at all ranks. 71% of these records were of vehicle movements either arriving or departing the location. Of these, 88% were hackney carriage movements. 4% were local private hire vehicles, 3% private cars, 2% goods vehicles and 2% out of town taxis.

45% of all the observations of vehicle movements were at the station rank, followed by 20% at St Andrews Street, 13% at the Drummer Street feeder and 9% at Market Hill. The two Sidney Street locations accounted for some 8% of total movements.

The level of hackney carriages observed by rank location varied from 32% to 96% of all movements. The three values nearest to 100% were for the ranks that were best designed to exclude other vehicles – the Station, St Andrews Street and the Drummer Street feeder. Bridge Street and Downing Street saw the lowest proportion of hackney carriages, with the balance at Downing Street made up of private hire and private cars whilst most extraneous vehicles at Bridge Street were local private hire vehicles with some goods vehicles and some private cars.

Levels of WAV style hackney carriage activity

Over all 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.

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.

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.

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.

Active hackney carriages

Information was gathered during the main survey of the level of vehicles active on the Saturday of the June survey. Over 550 different vehicle observations were obtained during five separate 2-hour sample periods near to the two main active rank locations (remarkably exactly the same number of observations as in the previous survey).

A total of 565 different vehicle observations were obtained. The observations were first matched against the current plate lists for hackney carriage and private hire for Cambridge City Council and for South Cambridgeshire. A total of 280 (271 in previous survey) legitimate hackney carriage and 19 (18) legitimate City Council private hire plates were observed.

The remaining 266 (276) plates were assumed to be out of town vehicles. 182 were found to be South Cambridgeshire (136 different plates) with 13 (6 plates) potentially Wolverhampton and 71 vehicles for whom it could not be verified who they belonged to or if they were typographical errors.

Considering the legitimate Cambridge hackney carriages, this survey found the observations represented 15% of the available plates for both observations at the station. In the previous survey a similar pair of periods saw 41% and 45% of the fleet respectively. This is a large reduction. For St Andrews Street, the proportion of the hackney carriage fleet seen was 16% early afternoon (31% last time), 13% early evening (55%) and 10% early hours (59%). This is again a significant reduction in active plates and also shows what we are now finding to be typical, reduced levels of plate activity in less preferable operating times, i.e. late nights.

During the course of our sample observations, we observed 51% (74%) in the previous survey) of the current hackney carriage fleet. As noted above, this is a significant reduction suggesting many vehicles still not active since the pandemic.

In terms of vehicles focussing on one location, of the observations, 34% (10% last time) of vehicles were only observed at the station, 45% (30%) only at St Andrew's Street, and the remaining 12% (60%) were observed passing both locations. If this proportion applies to the full fleet, this suggests no more than 102 vehicles only service the station, whilst there are 170 permit holders at present, suggesting our sample saw about 60% of these.

4 General public views

It is very important that the views of people within the area are obtained about the service provided by hackney carriage and private hire. A key element which these surveys seek to discover is specifically if people have given up waiting for hackney carriages at ranks (the most readily available measure of latent demand). This element was added following a court ruling and is the most recent addition to the basket of elements that comprise the index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD), see further later.

However, the opportunity is also taken with these surveys to identify the overall usage and views of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles within the study area, and to give chance for people to identify current issues and factors which may encourage them to use licensed vehicles more. This also acts as a validation on rank activity observations, what drivers have said and also other evidence received.

Such surveys can also be key in identifying variation of demand for licensed vehicles across an area, particularly if there are significant areas of potential demand without ranks, albeit in the context that many areas do not have places apart from their central area with sufficient demand to justify hackney carriages waiting at ranks.

These surveys tend to be undertaken during the daytime period when more people are available, and when survey staff safety can be guaranteed. Further, interviews with groups of people or with those affected by alcohol consumption may not necessarily provide accurate responses, despite the potential value in speaking with people more likely to use hackney carriages at times of higher demand and then more likely unmet demand. Where possible, extension of interviews to the early evening may capture some of this group, as well as some studies where careful choice of night samples can be undertaken.

Our basic methodology requires a sample size of at least 200 to ensure stable responses. Trained and experienced interviewers are also important as this ensures respondents are guided through the questions carefully and consistently. A minimum sample of 50 interviews is generally possible by a trained interviewer in a day meaning that sample sizes are best incremented by 50, usually if there is targeting of a specific area or group (eg of students, or a sub-centre), although conclusions from these separate samples can only be indicative taken alone.

It is normal practice to compare the resulting gender and age structure to the latest available local and national census proportions to identify if the sample has become biased in any way.

For this survey, the census suggests an even split between males and females. The full sample matched this exactly (last time we saw about 6% more males than in the census value for the area. The census split for the interviewable ages saw 38% in the 15-29 younger group, 39% in the mid group (30-54) and 23% for those above (a relatively youthful profile). For this survey, there was an almost equal response between the census and our sample for the middle group, but under representation for the younger group compared to the older by around 22%. This could increase hackney carriage usage against private hire and particularly against apps.

Last time the 31-55 age group was overrepresented by 14% at the expense of the other two groups, with 11% less of the lower age bracket and 3% less of the older bracket. This will make some difference between the two samples but this should not be a major issue.

More recently, general public views have been enlisted from the use of council citizens' panels although the issue with these is that return numbers cannot be guaranteed. The other issue is that the structure of the sample responding cannot be guaranteed either, and it is also true that those on the panel have chosen to be there such that they may tend to be people willing to have stronger opinions than the general public randomly approached.

Finally, some recent surveys have placed an electronic copy of the questionnaire on their web site to allow interested persons to respond, although again there needs to be an element of care with such results as people choosing to take part may have a vested interest.

For this survey, some 276 people were interviewed in the streets of Cambridge. Some 48% (18% last time) were interviewed near to the railway station, with the remainder in the shopping streets of the City Centre. As already noted, 22% of interviews were undertaken in mid-October once students had returned (all in city centre).

Interviewees were asked if they had used a licensed vehicle in the Cambridge City area in the last three months. In total, 74% said they had (as in the previous survey). This time there was no real difference between the station and central area samples, in the previous survey the central area value was much higher at 87%, with just 14% of those interviewed near the station saying they had used a licensed vehicle.

31% of the total said those trips were only by hackney carriage, 26% were only by private hire and 17% by either form of licensed vehicle. Interestingly the share by private hire at the station was lower at 19% compared to 32% usage of private hire by the central area interviewees.

All were asked how often they used a licensed vehicle in the Cambridge area and all provided frequencies (including some saying 'never'). When weighted by the level of frequency, the city centre sample made 1.9 (2.8 last time) licensed vehicle trips per person per month. The station value was lower at 1.1 (0.6), with the overall value for the survey being 1.5 (2.4) trips per month. This suggests less frequent usage of licensed vehicles compared to the last survey. The proportion saying 'never' was 14% (19% city, 10% station).

When people were asked in regard to frequency of hackney carriage trips, these values reduced to 1.6 (1.3) for the city centre, 0.7 (0.5) for the station and 1.2 overall (same as last time). Interestingly, this suggests that some 62% of station trips made are most likely by hackney carriage – counter to the response about recent usage. The value for the city centre sample suggests 85% using hackney carriages with the overall value 77%, a high proportion.

People told us how they normally obtained a licensed vehicle in the Cambridge City area. 47% (37% last time) of respondents said from a rank. The proportion at 51% was higher for the station sample and lower for the city centre (43%). Comparing with the usage statistics that are the opposite way round between the station and central area and generally higher this suggests frequency of hackney carriage trips is higher than those for private hire.

A further 2% (4% last time) said they hailed although this was all people in the central area, with none saying they hailed at the station (4% for city centre sample). Overall 41% (47%) used a telephone, 1% (6%) a direct free phone, one person (2% last time) booked on line and a further 8% (up from 1%) used an app. The level of app usage was twice as high in the station sample as for the central area sample, 10% compared to 5% perhaps helping to explain the differences with private hire usage noted earlier (it appears many more at the station will use an app on arrival).

Just nine different companies were named by those saying who they used when they booked licensed vehicles by phone (11 in the last survey). 48% (54% last time) of respondents named at least one company. This time just one person named three companies (15% last time), 18% provided two (19% last time, with 81% just naming one company.

From the total number of responses, the top company gained 59% (51% last time) of all mentions (this was the same company as in the last survey). Their proportion at the station was 80% (86%) of all mentions for those interviewed there. The next three largest companies obtained 13%, 8% and 8% (compared to 21% and 16% last time). The remaining companies gained 6%, 3%, 2%, 1% and 1%. The second company last time was now fifth, and the third company last time was not mentioned at all this time.

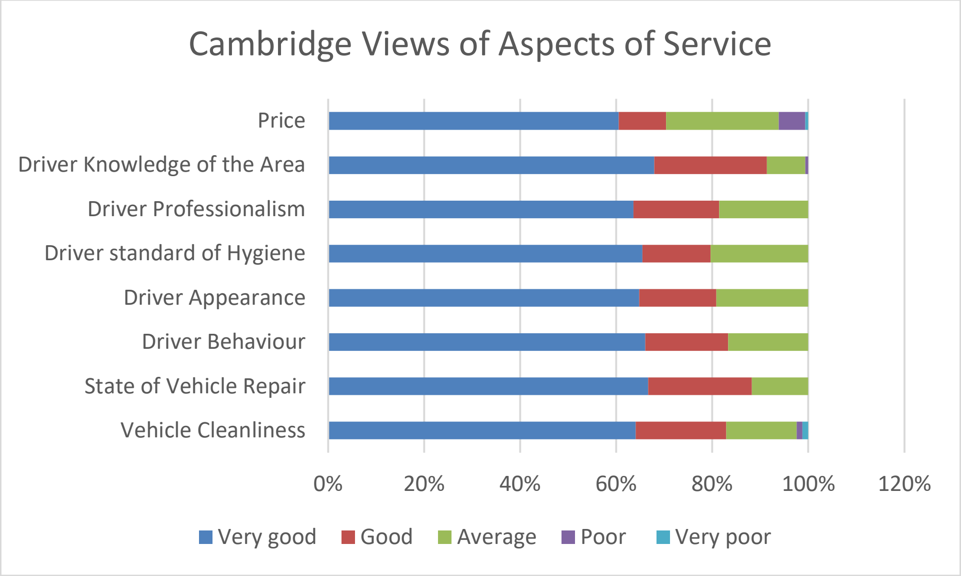
The second company this time had risen from 2% to 13% and was an app-based company. Neither of the next two companies, each with 8% of mentions, were mentioned at all previously. This, along with the high value of single company mentions, does suggest agglomeration has occurred and a reduction in the main competition although there are now more companies with scores between six and eight % now.

In terms of ranks people were aware of, just seven (22 last time) different names were provided. These represented four active ranks and one rank no longer existing. Three names were given for Drummer Street (Cambridge Bus Station and Emmanuel Street were the other two). This is a much clearer and focussed knowledge of ranks than in the previous survey.

The top rank mentioned was the station, with 70% of overall mentions (unsurprisingly 92% of the mentions by station interviewees). Overall 15% mentioned Drummer Street (none at station), St Andrews Street was third with 13% (24% in the central interviews and 2% at the station) and 3% mentioned Market Square (interestingly all by station interviewees). These results suggest many travelling into the City from the station by hackney carriage do not readily know where ranks are for their return, or possibly that most rail station hackney carriage trips are not centre-focussed so central rank knowledge is not relevant or focussed on night demand given they were the only ones quoting Market Square, albeit at a low share).

54% (73% last time) of those responding said that they used the ranks which they had mentioned, a high level of actual stated usage albeit less than previously. There was a marginal difference between the station, where 45% said they did not use it and the three names for Drummer Street (where 47% said they did use it), with a third of those naming Market Square saying they used it (but only six people quote this). The person aware of Station Road said they did not use it.

People were asked their views of various aspects of the service provided to them when using local licensed vehicles. The graph below provides the results:



All aspects of the service score at least 60% or more as 'very good'. All but vehicle cleanliness, driver knowledge of the area and price have no score less than average. Driver knowledge has a small 'poor' score whilst vehicle cleanliness has a small 'poor' and a slightly larger 'very poor'. As is nationally usual, price sees the lowest good, a moderate average a noticeable poor and an element of very poor score. Overall, this is an excellent score for the current Cambridge service provided.

Driver knowledge scores the highest level for very good, followed by state of vehicle repair and driver behaviour. This is all very encouraging and needs to be communicated to the full trade and taken advantage of for marketing purposes.

Interviewees were asked what would encourage them either to use hackney carriages or to use them more. 75% said 'if they were more affordable'. The next largest percentage said 'driver quality' or 'more hackney carriages at a rank or to hail' (both 6% each). Just two people (less than 2%) said 'nothing'.

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.

For this survey, people told us if they had ever given up waiting at ranks for a hackney carriage. Ten initially said they had given up waiting at a rank. Four said at the station, one at St Andrew’s Street and all others were station interviewees but did not say where they had given up – we have assumed at the station. If it is assumed all that said no and all those who did not answer had no issue the latent demand (rank) value is 4.9% of people or 1.049 for all ranks, reduced to 0.49% for non-station related ranks (1.0049). For the station the value is 1.0439 or 4.39%. This compares to 1.07, 1.05 and 1.02 respectively for the last survey, with increased latent demand at the station but strongly reduced for other ranks.

The small number who had given up told us what they did in that situation to get where they wanted to go. 40% walked away and hailed away from the rank location, 30% made a booking and 20% caught a bus.

A very high 89% said they felt there were enough hackney carriages in the Cambridge area at this time. This question was answered by 56% of those interviewed.

People were asked about matters related to COVID impact on use of licensed vehicles in the area. In terms of how current use of licensed vehicles had changed to pre-COVID 49% said they used hackney carriages about the same and 38% said similarly for private hire. 2% said they used hackney carriages more but 7% said less (net loss of 5%) whereas the values for private hire were both 2% suggesting no net gain or loss.

Looking forward, 49% expected to use hackney carriages the same and 37% private hire. 6% expected to use hackney carriages more but 4% said less (net gain 2%) with 4% more and none less for private hire, a net gain of 4%. Overall this suggests continuing increase in use of private hire services but continued loss of hackney carriage since pre-COVID (the national trend).

78% lived in the area, although this varied with 90% of central Cambridge respondents doing so and just 61% of those interviewed at the station, as might be expected.

5 Key stakeholder consultation

The following key stakeholders were contacted in line with the recommendations of the BPG:

- Supermarkets
- Hotels
- Pubwatch / individual pubs / night clubs
- Other entertainment venues
- Restaurants
- Hospitals
- Police
- Disability representatives
- Rail operators
- Other council contacts within all relevant local councils

Comments received have been aggregated below to provide an overall appreciation of the situation at the time of this survey. In some cases there are very specific comments from one stakeholder but we have tried to maintain their confidentiality as far as is possible. The comments provided in the remainder of this Chapter are the views of those consulted, and not that of the authors of this report.

Our information was obtained by telephone, email, letter or face to face meeting as appropriate. The list contacted includes those suggested by the Council, those drawn from previous similar surveys, and from general internet trawls for information. Our target stakeholders are as far as possible drawn from across the entire licensing area to ensure the review covers the full area and not just specific parts or areas.

For the sake of clarity, we cover key stakeholders from the public side separately to those from the licensed vehicle trade element, whose views are summarized separately in the following Chapter.

Where the statistical analyses in Chapter 2 demonstrate low levels of wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) provision, an increased emphasis will be given to the issue in terms of the focus of stakeholders but also in specific efforts to contact disabled users and their representatives. We are now finding this is best done through council-issued requests as those with disabilities tend to prefer to speak with officials rather than unknown independent surveys which they tend not to trust or believe to have their interests at heart.

Given the general low current response to key stakeholder requests, we also set up a form which was distribute by email and other electronic methods. The overall response was very low. Many acknowledged receipt of their opportunity to respond but provided nothing further.

Supermarkets
No responses were received

Hotels
One guest house told us they had used and recommended one local company for over 25 years and had never received a single complaint. Their quote was 'always reliable always on time'. No others responded.

Public houses
One pub responded to inform us they had not had any feedback about licensed vehicles, either positive or negative. No others responded.

Night clubs
No responses were received

Restaurants
No responses were received

Hospitals
No comment was made by the hospitals in the area.

Police
One response was received from the police (see below for summary)

Disability
One response was received from disability representatives (see below for summary)

The overall response from the two respondents noted above confirmed that both were aware of those they represented who used local licensed vehicles. One said people got licensed vehicles using their own phones, the other asked them to book vehicles for them. Both were aware of ranks. One group had received no complaints, the other had. The police told us they often were asked to book licensed vehicles for people leaving a custody location. They used a range of firms, and never received any complaint about the service provided, although they said that the nature of the usage may mean people don't really want to interact with the police any further having left.

The disabled representative told us that they found the existing licensed vehicle stock had many inaccessible features (but did not explain further). A key concern was where drivers were not willing to provide appropriate assistance to customers with disabilities needing help.

Rail and other transport operators
Neither the rail station operator or other local transport operators had any comment.

Nationally available information regarding passenger throughput at the station has just been updated to cover up to the end of March 2022. This shows that Cambridge is now the 37th largest used station on the English, Welsh and Scottish rail network, with some 6.9m trips per year entries and exits for the last available year, ending March 2022. The last pre-pandemic year saw 11.6m and the year between then and now just 2.3m.

Assuming 52 weeks in a year and halving the total passengers to get those leaving the station suggests around 66,400 persons per week might leave Cambridge station. Using the estimate weekly 13,389 hackney carriage passengers observed for a typical week suggests around 20% of people arriving at the station leave by hackney carriage from the rank. With others leaving by private hire this suggests licensed vehicles are very important to the station operation. Other contacts within the City might be able to compare this to levels of bus, cycle, walk and car departures.

Other Council contacts

No other council contacts made any response.

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6 Trade stakeholder views

The BPG encourages all studies to include 'all those involved in the trade'. There are a number of different ways felt to be valid in meeting this requirement, partly dependent on what the licensing authority feel is reasonable and possible given the specifics of those involved in the trade in their area.

The most direct and least costly route is to obtain comment from trade representatives. This can be undertaken by email, phone call or face to face meeting by the consultant undertaking the study. In some cases to ensure validity of the work being undertaken it may be best for the consultation to occur after the main work has been undertaken. This avoids anyone being able to claim that the survey work was influenced by any change in behavior.

Most current studies tend to issue a letter and questionnaire to all hackney carriage and private hire owners, drivers and operators. This is best issued by the council on behalf of the independent consultant. Usual return is now using an on-line form of the questionnaire, with the option of postal return still being provided, albeit in some cases without use of a freepost return. Returns can be encouraged by email or direct contact via representatives. Some authorities cover private hire by issuing the letter and questionnaire to operators seeking they pass them on when drivers book on or off, or via vehicle data head communications.

In all cases, we believe it is essential we document the method used clearly and measure response levels. For this survey, a copy of the letter and questionnaire were passed to the Council who issued them to 516 dual licence drivers in early August 2022. A six-week response time was given, closing on 12 September 2022. A total of 167 responses were received. This is a very high 32% response rate, excellent for this kind of survey, and even higher than the 22% response from 2017.

The information received was checked to identify any duplicate entries, of which there did not appear to be any, although there were two duplicated badge numbers, which were assumed to be an error and the returns counted as legitimate on inspection.

The vast majority, 92% of respondents said that the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. 3% said they worked in the trade part time but had other sources of income. 2% worked in the trade part time with no additional source of income. One driver was not working and did not intend to return. Another four (2%) were not working at the time of the questionnaire but planned to return when demand increased.

All told us the kinds of vehicle they drove. 78% said they drove hackney carriage, 17% both hackney carriage and private hire and 5% just private hire.

Drivers were asked which trade group they were associated with. 61% said they were not affiliated with any group. 22% were with one group and 7% with another. 6% named a company as who they were affiliated to, with a small number giving other answers including a Union.

On average, respondents had 15 (12 in 2017) years' service in the Cambridge city licensed vehicle trade, although quoted years ranged from one to 48 (45 in 2017). This is counter to national trends where as people retire experience tends to be lost.

The most frequently worked number of days was six (42%, was 31% in 2017) but followed by five days (34%, was 30%) and seven days (16%, was 26%). The only other significant number of days worked was four (5% (was 10% 2017)) with 1% (2%) saying two days and 3% (1%) saying three.

In terms of hours, the average was 46 (marginally less than the 47 of 2017). The maximum quoted was 96 hours with 6% of all quoted hours being 70 or more. This suggests marginally shorter working weeks at this point in time, but clearly shows people are working less days.

89% (79% in 2017) said they owned their own vehicle whilst 10% (16% in 2017) said someone else also drove their vehicle. 29% of those now not sharing their vehicle said this had changed since COVID, i.e. there has been a reduction in vehicle sharing. It also confirms that many that have left the industry were those finding it easiest to leave, i.e. those without the commitment of a vehicle.

60% said they accepted pre-bookings with 81% being via a company. Just 4% said via various apps.

Drivers were asked the ranks they served most frequently. Many gave more than one response. Of the total responses, 27% said St Andrew's Street, 26% the station, 17% 'city centre' and 11% Drummer Street. Market Square was quoted 6% of times, Parkside for 5% and Sidney Street for 3%.

A moderate number told us the issues that affected their choice of shift. From all the responses, the most frequent response, with 26% was working to suit family commitments (up from 22% last time), 11% avoiding heavy traffic (down from 32%), 7% avoiding difficult customers (up from 2% last time), 4% around school contracts and 3% for 'preference'. Again this tends to confirm the reduction in days drivers need to work.

93% felt there were enough hackney carriages in Cambridge at the present time.

Respondents were asked how they felt having a limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers benefitted the public. Most of those suggested it prevented over-ranking and brought benefits in terms of reduced pollution from extra vehicles. Some pointed out it kept the trade viable and working hours reduced. Some felt there was no benefit, including some private hire and a few hackney drivers who wanted to own their own vehicle and no longer rent (although admitting they would then work hours they preferred not the current ones, which perversely would lead to worse service overall not better).

One private hire driver wanted a hackney carriage plate so he could then meet the current requests he has to turn down from people waiting long times at the station. He did not seem aware he would also need a supplementary permit. This does however reiterate what we are seeing that there has been a major decline in service for the station.

Many other comments were provided. Many said the key issue was the out-of-town plates that were active. Some were critical that demand surveys were of no value but that direct discussion with trade representatives by the licensing officers would be more beneficial and lead to more direct actions. There was a clear misunderstanding that officers were able to take direct action to solve some issues they saw, such as stopping out-of-town activity.

Respondents were asked how often they got wheel chair customers from the rank, bookings and contracts. The most frequent response was 37% for ranks, 43% for bookings and 20% for contracts on a monthly basis. Next most frequent (18%, 24% and 20% respectively) was weekly, with yearly (15/17/20) and daily (14%, 7% and 20%). For all but the daily category, all booking scores were higher than for rank- or contract-based service. Daily customers were obtained by 14% of hackney carriage, 7% of private hire and a fifth of the contract respondents.

For those getting customers seeking to transfer from a chair, the monthly value was highest in all cases, but highest for contracts (50%), then for hackney carriage (35%), then private hire (28%). Daily only accounted for 5-6% of respondents.

Respondents told us 49% of them were aware of drivers that had given up working in the industry due to COVID impacts. 56% said they were aware of between one and five; 23% between six and ten and 13% 16-20. One quoted 40 and another 50 people they were aware of.

20% felt the number of rank trips was about the same. However, 33% felt 25-74% less and 23% 1-24% less and 6% 75-100% less (total of 62%). However, 11% felt there were 25-74% more with 5% 1-24% more and 2% 75-100% more (18%). This suggests generally people felt there were less trips from ranks now.

For bookings, 29% felt there were about the same level of trips with the next largest share 21% for 1-24% less. Overall 46% felt less and 25% more suggesting bookings had suffered less than rank-based work.

Comments were provided how people felt the pandemic had affected their trade. Whilst many simply said it had been bad or difficult, others suggested reduction in work by various large amounts. Some said they had not worked for months or even years, whilst a smaller number had not worked as they or members of their family were vulnerable to COVID. Some pointed out there had been more recent improvements.

When asked about how drivers felt about the future, there was a lot more variation. Many were pessimistic whilst others had some level of hope. One driver said the reduced number of drivers was helping them do better whilst another asked for limited private hire vehicle numbers. Several said there was need for more ranks and opportunity for all to service the station without any extra permit. A few suggested need to keep vehicles longer to help with viability. Several said they needed more drivers to help their business grow (presumably private hire operators). Concern about the up-front cost of moving to sustainable vehicles was also mentioned.

One person understood that some issues – particularly the out-of-town vehicles – was not something the local licensing could easily act upon but others were not as sympathetic and thought there could be some action taken, but did not explain what. Some feared the power of larger multi-area companies. Some felt more drivers were being driven away from Cambridge by increased standards being applied within the City. It was clear there was a lot of thought about the future but also some levels of expectation of change that could not be met.

72 took time to use the other comments option. Nearly all these comments reiterated or repeated points already made. Concerns about out-of-town vehicles and lack of apparent expected enforcement against them was regularly repeated. Some either renting or driving private hire wanted their own hackney carriage plates so they could choose more lucrative opportunities they did not feel were presented to them when renting.

Several offered the opportunity for the Council to speak directly with them and a few repeated their concern that a survey was irrelevant. Some wanted more rank space. Many repeated comments there were too many hackney carriages and that generally work was trending towards private hire and use of apps.

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7 Evaluation of unmet demand and its significance

It is first important to define our specific view about what constitutes unmet demand. Our definition is when a person turns up at a hackney carriage rank and finds there is no vehicle there available for immediate hire. This normally leads to a queue of people building up, some of who may walk off (taken to be latent demand), whilst others will wait till a vehicle collects them. Later passengers may well arrive when there are vehicles there, but because of the queue will not obtain a vehicle immediately.

There are other instances where queues of passengers can be observed at hackney carriage ranks. This can occur when the level of demand is such that it takes longer for vehicles to move up to waiting passengers than passengers can board and move away. This often occurs at railway stations, but can also occur at other ranks where high levels of passenger arrivals occur. We do not consider this is unmet demand, but geometric delay and although we note this, it is not counted towards unmet demand being significant.

The industry standard index of the significance of unmet demand (ISUD) was initiated at the time of the introduction of section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act as a numeric and consistent way of evaluating unmet demand and its significance. The ISUD methodology was initially developed by a university and then adopted by one of the leading consultant groups undertaking the surveys made necessary to enable authorities to retain their limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers. The index has been developed and deepened over time to take into account various court challenges. It has now become accepted as the industry standard test of if identified unmet demand is significant.

The index is a statistical guide derived to evaluate if observed unmet demand is in fact significant. However, its basis is that early tests using first principles identified based on a moderate sample suggested that the level of index of 80 was the cut-off above which the index was in fact significant, and that unmet demand therefore was such that action was needed in terms of additional issue of plates to reduce the demand below this level, or a complete change of policy if it was felt appropriate. This level has been accepted as part of the industry standard. However, the index is not a strict determinant and care is needed in providing the input samples as well as interpreting the result provided. However, the index has various components which can also be used to understand what is happening in the rank-based and overall licensed vehicle market.

For clarification, unmet demand almost certainly exists in each and every area where hackney carriages operate. What is important from the point of view of policies limiting vehicle numbers is if the overall level of unmet demand identified can be counted as significant. The rule of thumb, accepted as an industry standard, is that a value below 80 means there is unmet demand, but it is not significant. A value of 80 or more means the index has identified unmet demand, and that it is significant to the degree that consideration should be given to at least increasing the current level of the limit, if not revising the policy per se. However, none of this is statutory or fixed and despite the apparent preciseness of the index and the cut-off level, final judgement remains with the committee who are required to be certain there is no unmet demand which is significant when they retain a limit policy.

ISUD draws from several different parts of the study data. Each separate component of the index is designed to capture a part of the operation of the demand for hackney carriages and reflect this numerically. Whilst the principal inputs are from the rank surveys, the measure of latent demand comes from the public on-street surveys, and any final decision about if identified unmet demand is significant, or in fact about the value of continuing the current policy of restricting vehicle numbers, must be taken fully in the context of a careful balance of all the evidence gathered during the survey process.

The present ISUD calculation has two components which both could be zero. In the case that either are zero, the overall index result is zero, which means they clearly demonstrate there is no unmet demand which is significant, even if other values are high. This does not deny unmet demand, just makes it clear that the level cannot be counted as significant under the ISUD definition of significance of unmet demand.

The first component which can be zero is the proportion of daytime hours where people are observed to have to wait for a hackney carriage to arrive. The level of wait used is ANY average wait at all within any hour. The industry definition of these hours varies, the main index user counts from 10:00 to 18:00 (i.e. eight hours ending at 17:59). The present index is clear that unmet demand cannot be significant if there are no such hours. The only rider on this component is that the sample of hours collected must include a fair element of such hours, and that if the value is non-zero, review of the potential effect of a wider sample needs to be considered.

The other component which could be zero is the test identifying the proportion of passengers which are travelling in any hour when the average passenger wait in that hour is greater than one minute.

If both of these components are non-zero, then the remaining components of the index come into play. These are the peakiness factor, the seasonality factor, average passenger delay, and the latent demand factor.

Average passenger delay is the total amount of time waited by all passengers in the sample, divided by the total number of passengers observed who entered hackney carriages.

The seasonality factor allows for the undertaking of rank survey work in periods which are not typical, although guidance is that such periods should normally be avoided if possible particularly as the impact of seasons may not just be on the level of passenger demand, but may also impact on the level of supply. This is particularly true in regard to if surveys are undertaken when schools are active or not.

Periods when schools are not active can lead to more hackney carriage vehicles being available whilst they are not required for school contract work. Such periods can also reduce hackney carriage demand with people away on holiday from the area. Generally, use of hackney carriages is higher in December in the run-up to Christmas, but much lower in January, February and the parts of July and August when more people are likely to be on holiday. The factor tends to range from 0.8 for December to 1.2 for January / February.

There can be special cases where summer demand needs to be covered, although high peaks for tourist traffic use of hackney carriages tend not to be so dominant at the current time, apart from in a few key tourist authorities.

The peakiness factor is generally either 1 (level demand generally) or 0.5 (demand has a high peak at one point during the week). This is used to allow for the difficulty of any transport system being able to meet high levels of peaking. It is rarely possible or practicable for example for any public transport system, or any road capacity, to be provided to cover a few hours a week.

The latent demand factor was added following a court case. It comes from asking people in the on-street questionnaires if they have ever given up waiting for a hackney carriage at a rank in any part of the area. This factor generally only affects the level of the index as it only ranges from 1.0 (no-one has given up) to 2.0 (everyone says they have). It is also important to check that people are quoting legitimate hackney carriage rank waits as some, despite careful questioning, quote giving up waiting at home, which must be for a private hire vehicle (even if in hackney carriage guise as there are few private homes with taxi ranks outside).

The ISUD index is the result of multiplying each of the components together and benchmarking this against the cut-off value of 80. Changes in the individual components of the index can also be illustrative. For example, the growth of daytime hour queueing can be an earlier sign of unmet demand developing than might be apparent from the proportion of people experiencing a queue particularly as the former element is based on any wait and not just that averaging over a minute. The change to a peaky demand profile can tend towards reducing the potential for unmet demand to be significant.

Finally, any ISUD value must be interpreted in the light of the sample used to feed it, as well as completely in the context of all other information gathered. Generally, the guide of the index will tend not to be overturned in regard to significant unmet demand being identified, but this cannot be assumed to be the case – the index is a guide and a part of the evidence.

The table below shows each component of the index over recent surveys to keep the values in context. The focus of this study is the performance of the service at this point in time, but the context is very important in order to understand the direction of travel of the levels of service over time.

Survey Date	2022		2017		
	June only		October only		
Element	Co only	All ranks	Co only	All ranks	All data
Average passenger delay (mins)	0.22	0.9	0.067	0.067	0.267
Off peak level of delay	23.21	36.11	25	25	29.55
General incidence of delay	6.96	30.47	1.36	0.66	9.29
Peakiness of Demand	1	1	1	1	1
Seasonal Factor	1	1	1	1	1
Latent demand	1.0049	1.049	1.05	1.07	1.07
Overall index of unmet demand	35.16	1039	2.4	1.18	78.3

Note: overall index taken from detailed calculation in model, not rounded nos. above

The latent demand factor taken from the on-street interviews for the full survey is 1.049 (as in many other places, less than the previous survey value). When focussed only on those giving up at the station, the value for the station itself is 1.0439 (up from 1.02). For council ranks only, therefore excluding the station, the value is then reduced to 1.0049 (was 1.05). This latter value is the one which should be used to test council only rank performance.

For this survey, inspection of the overall profile of demand suggests that there are a number of peaks at different times, such that demand for the area cannot be considered to be peaky at this time. This has the effect of meaning the overall index of significance of unmet demand remains at the calculated level rather than being reduced by the influence of issues related to having to meet a key peak in demand. This remains true for this latest survey so that the value remains at 1.

Data was collected in both June and November at the two main ranks. However, the station rank is a private rank, and were unmet demand here to be found to be contributing to the significance of the overall unmet demand, this could not be counted towards the need for extra plates as the Council cannot influence the extra requirements which reduce supply at that location.

We undertook a test using the industry standard ISUD calculation based on the full set of June rank data. This saw average passenger delay just under a minute (0.9 minutes), off peak delay index over 36, general delay index over 30 resulting in a very high level of estimated unmet demand at 1039. However, as already noted, the station rank is subject to a further restriction not controllable by the council, limiting the fleet available there much more strongly.

Removing the performance of the station rank from the evaluation provides strong reductions in overall average passenger delay to 0.22 minutes, some reduction in the off peak index to 23, a strong reduction in the general delay index to just under 7 and a resulting index of significance of unmet demand at 35.16, well below the cut off value of 80 which would be counted as suggesting unmet demand was significant.

This is a more representative value for use by the council in reviewing its limit policy and covers the operation in the City which the council has full control over and therefore confirms that for council-provided and controlled locations there is unmet demand, but it is not significant.

This level of index means that the limit policy can be retained without any need to issue any further licences and can see the current level of licences held at the present value.

It is interesting to note that for the last survey, the results found better performance at the station rank even with its additional limit; this time station service levels have worsened and latent demand there has also reflected this. Though there should be strong concern regarding the poor performance of the station rank compared to other city ranks, there is little the Council can actually do given that the permit situation is out of their control.

However, it is also true that the permit cannot fully be held responsible given better service has been seen in previous years even with that in place. Further discussion of the overall issues regarding this are discussed below drawing in other evidence such as that from the plate review.

It is possible that those focussing on trying to reduce costs may no longer be willing to invest the fee for the station usage. Or it could be long term impacts from the strong reduction in station demand that meant drivers had to seek custom elsewhere particularly given there was one full year with demand half the current level which itself is only back to 60% of the pre-pandemic level. There are suggestions that rail demand might only return to at best 90% of its former level, with a different spread and focus against peak hours and towards off-peak travel.

8 Summary, synthesis and study conclusions

This Hackney carriage demand survey on behalf of Cambridge City has been undertaken following the guidance of the BPG and other recent case history regarding unmet demand and its significance. This chapter first summarises each chapter in turn, and then draws together a synthesis, firstly in terms of demand and if and how any unmet demand is significant in terms of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act, and secondly in terms of how currently developing Cambridge policies might be taken forward.

Background and context

This survey was undertaken by LVSA based on the Council Brief and our proposal of April 2022 as confirmed and developed at our June 2022 inception meeting. On street interviews were in August and mid-October, rank observations principally in June but with supplementary tests at the three main ranks undertaken in November, drivers were consulted in July / August, with key stakeholders contacted throughout the survey period.

Cambridge City has a growing population and is also influenced strongly by the surrounding neighbouring South Cambridgeshire hinterland. Both cycling and rail commuting make the transport background of the City relatively unique. The picture is further influenced strongly by pro-sustainable transport policies supported by a long term pedestrianisation of the central core, and a developing busway rapid transit. In due course this may be supported by possible light rail developments. Since the last survey, the full service from the Thameslink expansion has arrived and other developments have occurred, although rail patronage for the latest available information remains only at 60% of what it was pre-pandemic. This presently increases licensed vehicle use significantly since the station is a moderate distance from the central core and many other key destinations.

The City remains part of the wider Cambridgeshire County, whose Transport Strategy for Cambridge and South Cambridgeshire (TSCSC) seeks to develop the integrated transport network with strategic transport policy to 2036 and aspirations to 2050. This is now being taken forward by the Greater Cambridge Partnership. As is usual, these higher level documents make very little mention of licensed vehicle services apart from use for demand responsive transport in rural areas, but also now including aims to increase the sustainability of vehicle propulsion methods. The County are the main provider of rank infrastructure in terms of regulation orders although there is significant involvement by the City in determining overall need and passing this to the County for implementation.

GCP has a Future Network Map 2030 focussing on four corridors. The City is also seeking reduced emission from licensed vehicles and has supported this since the last survey by taxi (licensed vehicle) only charging points. It was also agreed to allow 50 WAV plates to be traded in for electric vehicles to encourage growth in this provision.

In terms of the licensed vehicle fleet, most hackney carriage growth was up to 2011, after which there was a drop. There was some growth in the run up to the application of a limit on vehicle numbers, after which numbers have remained stable. The unlimited hackney carriage policy led to a strong decline in private hire vehicle numbers (although some such vehicles also moved to South Cambridgeshire), with present numbers 44% of the peak level, and continuing to decline (probably now with transfer to other out of town licences). The pandemic saw a drop in hackney carriage vehicle numbers of 7% but this has now reversed although levels remain below the peak value (327 in 2017).

The apparent fleet mix sees Cambridge City having a hackney carriage dominated fleet, although this is tempered by many private hire being out of town based. At the time of the survey, the private hire fleet was 27% of its peak level and under 100.

Most drivers are now able to drive either hackney carriage or private hire vehicles, though a few single use driver badges remain on both sides. Current driver levels suggest potential for high levels of vehicle sharing by drivers with some 534 drivers for 403 vehicles (a third more drivers than vehicles).

Most wheel chair accessible licensed vehicles are within the hackney carriage fleet, with present levels being lower than the peak of 70% reached briefly in 2013. The present level is 52%, whilst the level in the private hire fleet is small and at the time of the survey was one vehicle. Much of the current level of WAV results from the need for all new hackney carriages to be wheel chair accessible, though further growth would be hard with the present grandfather rights provided to the first 121 vehicles (now reduced to 110), though this proportion suggests a few are choosing to be WAV style. The station permit numbers are now slightly higher at 170 (was 167 in previous survey).

Regular review of the limit policy and level of vehicles occurs, although there was a gap in surveys brought about by the pandemic, increasing the current gap to five years.

Rank observations

Since the last survey, ranks have been stable although the Station Road rank has now gone altogether. The 2017 introduced Corn Exchange Rank still sees no usage. A high level review of rank operation found 34% of available rank hours unused with 9% of the same total blocked by parked vehicles. 43% of these hours saw the relevant ranks busy. The unused hours were focussed on ranks seeing little if any use overall (Corn Exchange Street, St Andrews Street Church and Parkside). The main location with issue with parked vehicles impacting on hackney carriage usage (and pedestrian safety) is Downing Street.

Our main rank observations were in June with the busiest three ranks seeing repeat observation in early November testing the impact of the full return of students to the City.

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%).

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).

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.

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 but this excludes the abuse out of the main survey hours at several locations which would see that proportion increase.

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, our view is that demand in Cambridge at this time cannot be considered to be ‘peaky’ as there are no significant spikes observed in our information. This paragraph is the same as in 2017, which given the major changes implied by the pandemic is encouraging.

The proportion of the observed hackney carriages that were WAV was 20% at the station but 54% at St Andrews Street and higher at both Market Hill and Downing Street, but that may relate to use of the capacity of the larger WAV style vehicles rather than need for their WAV capability. Eleven people were observed using wheel chairs, six at the Station, three at St Andrews Street and one each at Boots and Bridge Street.

Sample fleet activity levels on the Saturday of the main survey identified 51% (was 74% in 2017) of the hackney carriage fleet active. St Andrew’s Street saw reducing levels of vehicles servicing it as time moved on (from 16% to 13% to 10%, compared to 23% to 44% in 2017, confirming the thought that less people are now servicing later night demand). The station tended to see more similar levels of vehicles in each time period, with 15% now compared to a range of 30-34% in 2017. This latter statistic partly explains the poorer service noted at the station but does not relate to the number of permits, which have slightly increased.

An estimate based on the observations suggested perhaps just over 100 vehicles servicing the station rank of the 170 permits held. These statistics showed nearly a third of all plates observed were seen only at the station (up from 10% last time), with 45% of plates only seen near St Andrews Street (again up from last time). The level of vehicles servicing both ranks was strongly reduced suggesting people focussing more on the main rank they serviced.

We also found that the bulk of the non-Cambridge vehicles observed in our plate observations (near but not at ranks) were South Cambridgeshire (68% of the out-of-town), with a small number of potentially Wolverhampton plates.

On street public views

276 people were interviewed in the streets of the City (as in 2017), but with 48% (18% last time) near the railway station. 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.

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, an encouraging level. 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.

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.

People were aware of four active ranks. This time the station got most mentions (70%) followed by Drummer Street (three names, but totalling 15%), St Andrews Street (13%, less that 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.

The review of service perception found an excellent score with most reponses focussing on service being 'very good'. As is normal around the country, price was the worst performing, with some 'very poor' scores but not as serious as often might be the case. Top scores are for driver knowledge, state of vehicle repair and driver behaviour. These performances are well-worth marketing to the public.

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%, which is encouraging.

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.

Latent demand values this time focussed 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 (provided later) showing station levels of service have reduced.

89% of the public responding to the question (56%) said they thought there were enough hackney carriages in Cambridge at this time.

With reference to COVID people suggested little overall change, perhaps small increases for both in the future and a slight reduction of hackney carriage between pre-COVID and now. Most people focussed on saying they would use both types of vehicle about the same amount.

Key stakeholder views

As expected, there was very little response with 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.

Trade views

A very high 32% of all dual drivers sent letters responded to our invitation – excellent for this kind of survey and even exceeding the 22% response from 2017.

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.

78% of respondents were drivers of hackney carriages, 17% both kinds of vehicle and 5% only private hire.

In terms of alliances, 22% of respondents were with one trade group, 7% with another, 6% with a company and 61% without any formal allegiances.

Evidence suggested those responding had increased their years of service, which is counter to national trends showing people have retired. However, 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).

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).

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.

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.

With respect to COVID nearly half were aware of people that had left the industry as a result. The overall view was less trips from ranks now although there was a very wide range of opinion. It was suggested bookings had suffered less than rank work. Many told us they had not worked for very long periods during the pandemic. Future views were again quite wide and ranged from pessimistic to optimistic. Many sought more ranks and some were concerned about the extra cost of sustainable vehicles.

Other comments mainly reiterated points already made but also focussed on concern over out-of-town vehicles and need for enforcement.

Formal evaluation of significance of unmet demand

For this survey, an initial test 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) and saw average passenger delay just 0.22 minutes, and much improved levels of overall general incidence of delay.

Synthesis

Whilst the impacts of the pandemic have changed much of the industry from the survey five years ago, there are a lot of matters and general statistics that have remained remarkably similar. Overall patronage is reduced, but by not much more than in the previous five year period. The appreciation of the fleet has increased strongly which is confirmed by the reduction of general rank latent demand levels. For all ranks but the station, the overall conclusion regarding unmet demand is that it is not significant at this point in time.

We estimated that 20% of station passengers leave the station in hackney carriages from the rank. However, since the last survey various pointers suggest the level of service to that rank has worsened significantly. This may relate partly to the extra permit not under council control, although on paper those numbers have actually increased. However, the plate observations, the rank results and the increase in passenger latent demand all demonstrate there is an issue with less vehicles overall servicing the station for less time than they previously did.

There are hints that some with disabilities have issues with the kinds of vehicle available. This is unusual given the range that exists and the fact that in essence on a level playing field every other vehicle should be a WAV style one. It suggests need for 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. The apparent fact that wheel chair and assistance-requiring trips are almost certainly a small proportion of journeys does not help keep people acquainted with practice.

10 Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence gathered in this Hackney carriage demand survey for Cambridge City, our key conclusion is that there is no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent which is significant at this point in time in the Cambridge City licensing area. The committee is therefore able to retain the current policy limiting vehicle numbers, and also retain the limit at its current level. This decision could be defended if necessary.

There is strong value in making known to the public that the survey has found that people in general well appreciate the licensed vehicle service that is provided. Further, knowledge of ranks does appear to have improved but there is always value in ensuring active ranks are clearly promoted in as many ways as possible to both the Cambridge population but also to those visiting the City.

Concerns about service at the station need to be better identified and understood possibly by the Council licensing speaking with the trade about what they consider the issues might be. It could be that since the survey matters have improved as more drivers return to active service but it is important to understand quickly real issues and deal with them particularly given that most visitors to the City arrive by train and have their view of the City informed strongly by their experience of arrival.

In terms of disability, more work is needed to better match customer and trade expectations and delivery.