



Southampton – Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey
August 2018



Executive Summary

This study has been conducted by LVSA on behalf of Southampton City Council.

Hackney Carriages are regulated by local authorities. The Department for Transport has developed guidance documentation entitled TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE. The guidance addresses a wide range of licensing considerations and issues and provides recommendations on good practice. Within the licensing aspects considered, is the choice of whether to implement and maintain a restriction in the quantity of Hackney Carriages licences.

Within the guidance, the Department for Transport recommend that if a Licensing Authority should seek to retain a quantity restriction, then a survey should be carried out to establish if there is any unmet demand for Hackney Carriages. The minimum interval between successive surveys is recommended to be no more than three years.

If the result of an unmet demand survey should demonstrate that there is evidence of significant unmet demand, the recommended actions for a licensing authority may be to either raise the limit on Hackney Carriage numbers to an appropriate level, or to remove the limit all together.

If the result of an unmet demand survey should demonstrate that there is no evidence of unmet demand, then a third choice of action becomes available to the licensing authority, which is to keep the cap in place at the same level.

A licensing authority may choose at any time, to raise or remove a limit on Hackney Carriage numbers, but in order to retain or impose a limit; good practice guidance suggests that an unmet demand survey is required and that the result shows that there is no evidence of unmet demand.

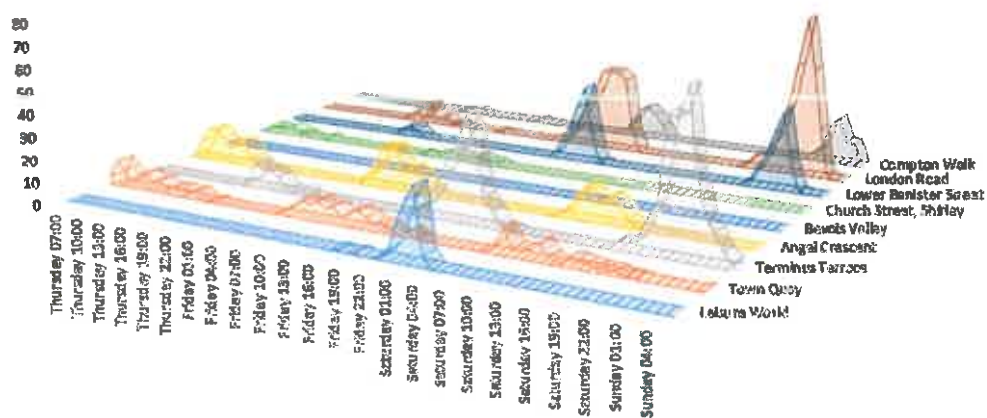
This study is intended to fulfil the requirements of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act and to address the questions raised in the Department for Transport (DfT) 2010 Best Practice Guidance.

Surveys were undertaken at taxi ranks in Southampton, for three days, from the morning of Thursday 22nd March 2018 to the morning of the following Sunday 25th March 2018, 72 hours later. The volume of passengers and hackney carriages was recorded, together with Hackney Carriage waiting times and wait times for any queuing passengers.

The busiest rank was at Southampton Central Railway Station, there are two ranks at the Railway Station, one either side. The rank on the Western Esplanade side was the busiest rank in Southampton, with respect to the total number of hires. The busiest hour in terms of hires observed across all ranks, was during the hour beginning 01:00 on Sunday morning, with 253 hires observed during that hour. The busiest hours at individual ranks were the hour beginning 01:00 hours on Sunday morning at the London Road rank, with 73 hires during that hour and the hour beginning 01:00 hours on Sunday morning at the Terminus Terrace rank, with 71 hires during that hour

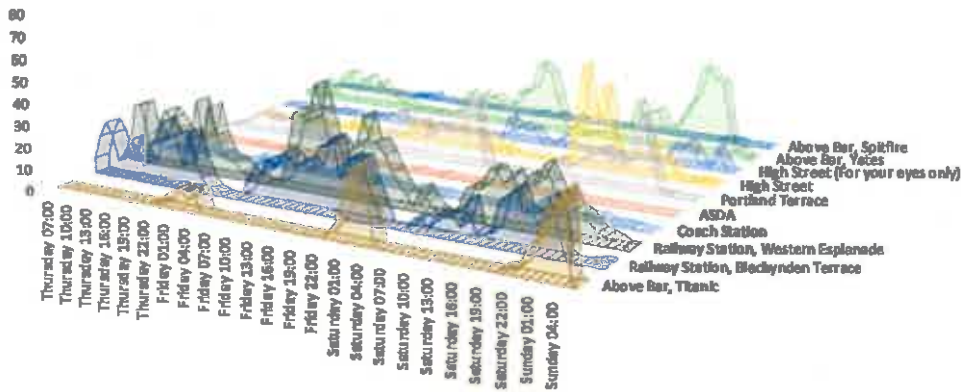
The volume of hires are summarised in the following two figures. There were a total of 6,555 hires observed over the three days of observation.

Total Hackney Carriages Departing With Passengers - Part 1





Total Hackney Carriages Departing With Passengers - Part 2



There were 580 passengers who had to wait for Hackney Carriages to arrive at the ranks. Incidences of passenger queuing were spread throughout the period observed and spread over most of the taxi ranks. Occasions when passengers had to wait for a Hackney Carriage to arrive at a rank were generally isolated events rather than continuous periods of queuing. A total of 10,206 passengers were observed departing the ranks in Hackney Carriages, over the three days surveyed. This equates to 5.7% of passengers had to wait for Hackney Carriages to arrive at ranks. The normal situation was that Hackney Carriages were observed waiting for passengers to arrive at the ranks.

Volumes at the ranks are summarised in the following table as totals over the three days of observation.

All 3 days					
Rank location	Total taxis departing the ranks empty	Total taxis departing the ranks with passengers	Total taxis departing the ranks	Total passengers departing the ranks	Average passengers per taxi
Total for all locations	967	6555	7522	10206	1.6
Leisure World	17	88	105	156	1.8
Town Quay	57	225	282	365	1.6
Terminus Terrace	83	575	658	1007	1.8
Angel Crescent	19	272	291	352	1.3
Bevois Valley	1	0	1	0	0.0
Church Street, Shirley	31	45	76	55	1.2
Lower Banister Street	20	216	236	349	1.6
London Road	46	532	578	878	1.7
Compton Walk	25	133	158	235	1.8
Above Bar, Titanic	15	282	297	490	1.7
Railway Station, Blechynden T	22	981	1003	1398	1.4
Railway Station, Western Espla	295	1188	1483	1694	1.4
Coach Station	60	106	166	179	1.7
ASDA	34	10	44	16	1.6
Portland Terrace	59	582	641	981	1.7
High Street	34	380	414	573	1.5
High Street (For your eyes only)	68	119	187	189	1.6
Above Bar, Yates	74	807	881	1267	1.6
Above Bar, Spitfire	7	14	21	22	1.6

Some Hackney Carriages left the ranks empty. It may be the case that many of these empty departures may have been responding to bookings made through booking circuits or direct calls to the driver. Feedback from the trade supports this view. It is also likely that some of the empty departures were by drivers who had waited at a rank with no hires and then decided to move on to another rank to wait.

Consultation feedback suggests that some Hackney Carriages work with / for Private Hire operators, as well as undertaking rank hire work.

Public consultation was undertaken through questionnaire surveys conducted on street and an online questionnaire. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken with minority group representatives, local businesses, hotels, licensed premises, visitor attractions, the police transport providers and officers of Southampton Council.

The consultation feedback indicated that:

- There were few perceived issues with the availability of Hackney Carriages.
- The Hackney Carriage fleet in Southampton is generally well regarded. However, there was consistent feedback from the trade that some new

drivers have poor language skills and some have poor knowledge of routes and locations.

- Representatives of elderly, disabled and mobility impaired passengers raised no issues. Availability of accessible vehicles for wheel chair users and mobility impaired users appears to have improved in recent years.
- The storage capacity of some ranks is often insufficient to accommodate all of the hackney carriages waiting for fares.

Observations

Some individuals own multiple Hackney Carriage vehicle licences and rent these licensed vehicles to drivers for a weekly fee. Some of the drivers interviewed or who returned survey forms, resented the ownership of licensed vehicles by non-drivers. However, some felt that the availability of vehicles or plates to rent offered a low capital option for entry into the trade.

A significant proportion of licensed vehicle drivers indicated that they had been physically or verbally attacked in the previous year. This was despite the fact that all vehicles were fitted with CCTV systems.

There has been no growth in demand for Hackney Carriages since the last survey was undertaken. Indeed, a like for like comparison of survey data suggests a moderate decline in demand.

Unmet need assessment

Data from the taxi rank surveys was used, together with any indication from the public consultation surveys of frustration with non-availability of Hackney Carriages, to calculate an Index of Significant Unmet Demand (ISUD). The ISUD index value calculated from the survey results was 5.6. A value of less than 80 is normally taken as an indicator that there is no significant unmet demand. Whilst the ISUD value is a strong indicator, it should not be taken in isolation as the only valid evidence. Further evidence from stakeholder and public consultation indicated that there were normally sufficient Hackney Carriages available to satisfy demand.

Future requirements

There is an adequate supply of Hackney Carriages currently and this is likely to be enough to cater for more than 3 years. No additional licences would be necessary to cater for growth in demand over the next three years.

Conclusions and recommendations

The primary purpose of this study was to determine whether there is evidence of significant unmet demand. The evidence gathered suggests that there is no significant unmet demand.

It is recommended that there is no need to increase the number of Hackney Carriage licences at the present time, to meet the needs of the travelling public.