Taunton Deane Borough Council

Licensing Committee – 20th September 2017

Hackney Carriages in Taunton Deane

This matter is the responsibility of Executive Councillor Patrick Berry

Report Author: John Rendell, Licensing Manager

1 Executive Summary

1.1 Members are asked to consider whether or not to limit the number of hackney carriages licensed by this authority.

2 Recommendations

2.1 That members take one of the following steps, as they think fit:

a) Exercise this authority's power under section 137 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (as amended by section 16 of the Transport Act 1975) and adopt a policy whereby no further hackney carriage vehicle licences will be issued except where a further unmet demand survey is carried out and it is established that there is significant unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages;

b) Continue to issue hackney carriage vehicle licences where valid applications are made. This is the report author's preferred course of action for reasons explained later in this report in the report.

3 Risk Assessment (if appropriate)

Risk Matrix

Description	Likelihood	Impact	Overall
If new policy adopted: Lack of availability of hackney carriages in parts of the district, particularly outer lying villages	3	2	6
If new policy adopted: Restrict competition, new business start-ups and business expansion	5	3	15
If new policy adopted: Legal challenge to decision	3	3	9
If new policy adopted: Increase cost of using taxis	1	2	1
If new policy adopted: Reduce pollution in Taunton Deane	2	3	6
If new policy adopted: Reduce congestion in Taunton Deane	2	2	4

If new policy adopted: Increase workload of Licensing service and therefore, increase of fees charged to taxi proprietors	5	2	10
If status quo maintained: Risk to public safety due to unsafe taxi driving and parking in Taunton town centre on Friday and Saturday nights	3	4	12

Risk Scoring Matrix

Likelihood	5	Almost Certain	Low (5)	Medium (10)	High (15)	Very High (20)	Very High (25)
	4	Likely	Low (4)	Medium (8)	Medium (12)	High (16)	Very High (20)
	3	Possible	Low (3)	Low (6)	Medium (9)	Medium (12)	High (15)
	2	Unlikely	Low (2)	Low (4)	Low (6)	Medium (8)	Medium (10)
	1	Rare	Low (1)	Low (2)	Low (3)	Low (4)	Low (5)
			1	2	3	4	5
			Negligible	Minor	Moderate	Major	Catastrophic
			Impact				

Likelihood of risk occurring	**Indicator**	**Description (chance of occurrence)**
1. Very Unlikely	May occur in exceptional circumstances	< 10%
2. Slight	Is unlikely to, but could occur at some time	10 – 25%
3. Feasible	Fairly likely to occur at same time	25 – 50%
4. Likely	Likely to occur within the next 1-2 years, or occurs occasionally	50 – 75%
5. Very Likely	Regular occurrence (daily / weekly / monthly)	> 75%

4 Background and Full details of the Report

<u>Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles</u>

4.1 The Town Police Clauses Act 1847 gave local authorities the power to license hackney carriages to operate in their district.

4.2 A hackney carriage or ‘taxi’ as they are now more commonly known, can be categorised as a vehicle which:

a) Has eight or less passenger seats;

b) Is provided, for hire or reward, with the services of a driver;

c) Can ply for hire e.g. waits on a taxi rank for a fare; can be hailed by members of the public e.g. waved down; and carries out pre-booked fares.

4.3 Local authorities can also license private hire vehicles. These are vehicles that meet the criteria described at a) and b) above but can only undertake pre-booked fares.

Power to limit the number of hackney carriages in a district

4.4 Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 gives local authorities the power to limit the number of hackney carriages it licenses to operate in its district. It allows a local authority to refuse to grant a hackney carriage vehicle licence for the purposes of limiting the number of vehicles, providing the authority is ‘satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet.

4.5 It has become standard practice that local authorities carry out ‘unmet demand’ surveys where they are considering whether to limit the number of hackney carriages, in order to justify exercising the above mentioned powers.

4.6 Unlike with hackney carriages, a local authority cannot refuse to grant a private hire vehicle licence for the purposes of limiting the number of private hire vehicles.

Office of Fair Trading report

4.7 The Office of Fair Trading (OFT) conducted a market study of hackney carriage and private hire licensing in 2003. It looked at quantity restrictions on hackney carriages specifically.

4.8 In the report, a full copy of which is attached at **Appendix 1,** they concluded that quantity restrictions did not ultimately serve the public as they resulted in:

- people waiting longer for taxis
- people often having to use less suitable transportation as an alternative to taxis;
- shortage premiums on taxi vehicle licences;
- councils maintaining long waiting lists for those wanting to acquire a hackney carriage vehicle licences.

4.9 The OFT recommended repealing section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 so that local authorities could no longer maintain quantity restrictions but this particular recommendation was not acted upon.

Government guidance on hackney carriage quantity restrictions

4.10 The Department for Transport (DfT) published its ‘Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance’ in March 2010, attached at **Appendix 2.**

4.11 At paragraph 47 of the document, the DfT state that they regard local authorities not having restrictions on the numbers of hackney carriages as being ‘best practice’. They go on to state that ‘where restrictions are imposed, the Department would urge that the matter should be regularly reconsidered and ‘that the that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public…’.

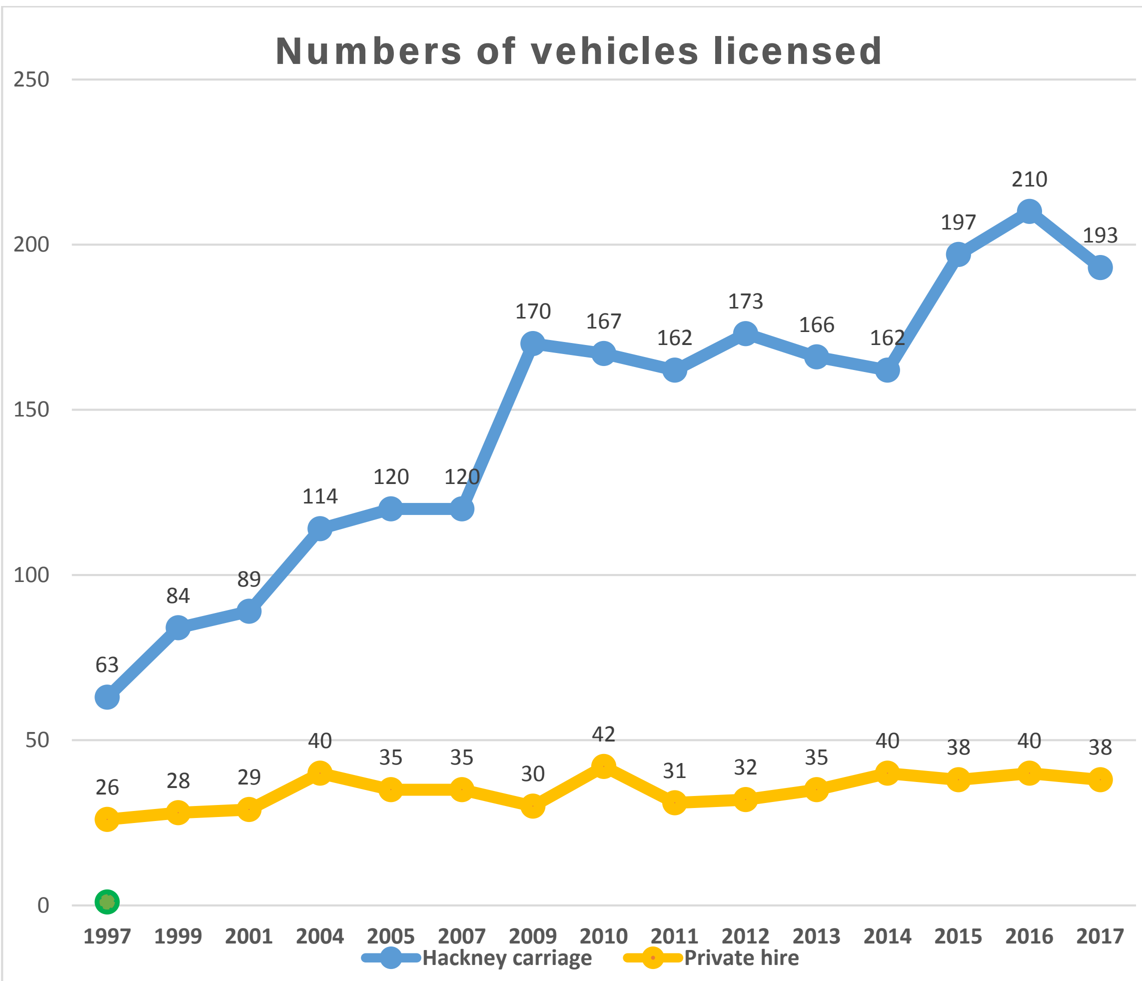
4.12 Where local authorities do take the view that a quantity restriction can be justified in principle, the guidance recommends that surveys are carried out to determine the level at which a restriction or limit should be set and then every three years after, to ‘respond to any challenge to the satisfaction of a court.' It goes on to identify seven key points which each survey should address.

4.13 Within Annex A of the document, the DfT identify a number of 'Useful questions when assessing quantity controls of taxi licences'. It has been the aim to address these questions through the course of this report.

Hackney carriages in Taunton Deane

4.14 Up until 1998, Taunton Deane Borough Council had exercised its power under section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 and had limited the number of hackney carriages licensed to 63. In 1998, this restriction was lifted and the Council simultaneously introduced a policy requiring any new hackney carriages to be capable of carrying wheelchairs.

4.15 Below is an adapted version of a graph which appears in **Appendix 2** (an Unmet Demand Survey – further detail at paragraph 4.25). It shows the number of vehicles licensed by the Council between 1997 (prior to the restriction on hackney carriages being lifted) and 2016.



4.16 The increase in hackney carriage numbers since around 2007 and economic austerity in recent years has been noticeable in Taunton town centre especially. The effect on Taunton's largest taxi rank at Corporation Street (popular due to its proximity to the centre of town) is that it is often over capacity at peak times, with vehicles queuing on double yellow lines (infringing parking regulations) and a cycle lane, as the drivers wait for space to become available. At weekends, seen as the busiest time for taxis, the queue of vehicles can stretch as far as Mecca Bingo Hall. This has caused friction, on occasions, between drivers and the County Councils Civil Enforcement Officers who enforce the parking regulations. There have also been occasional complaints from members of the public.

4.17 For the last five or possibly more years, some hackney carriage drivers have taken to forming their own ‘unofficial’ taxi ranks in Taunton town centre on Friday and Saturday nights. These unofficial ranks have become established at Bridge Street, as it meets The Bridge and on North Street; directly outside of two of the towns busiest night time venues but on parts of the highway where parking regulations exist. Licensing Officers raised this issue with the Police early on and it was agreed to take a pragmatic approach initially and allow the forming of the ranks to alleviate the pressure on Corporation Street rank. It is more recently however that the Police have become more concerned about the unofficial ranks due to standard of driving witnessed; in particular the way some drivers perform U-turns at speed whilst members of the public cross the road.

<u>Licensing of hackney carriages by local authorities in Somerset and further afield</u>

4.18 None of the local authorities in Somerset currently limit the numbers of hackney carriages they licence. The same can also be said of North Somerset, Bath & North East Somerset, Mid Devon and Exeter City councils.

4.19 Bristol City Council appears to be the nearest example of a local authority which does limit the number of hackney carriages, having imposed a limit of 795 in February 2017. 749. This decision was emissions and air pollution led, having been made alongside other changes to their hackney carriage licensing policy, which included introducing a requirement for new vehicles to be ultra-low emission.

<u>Views expressed by the hackney carriage trade</u>

4.20 In September 2010, the Licensing service established the ‘Taxi Driver Forum’ (commonly referred to as the ‘Taxi Forum’ but now known as the ‘Taxi and Private Hire Trade Forum’) in order to provide licensed drivers and operators with a platform in which to meet with officers to discuss various issues pertaining to the trade and licensing regime.

4.21 At the second meeting of the forum, in February 2011, driver Martin Jones requested the Council stop issuing any more hackney carriage vehicle licences on the grounds that there were too many and requested the Council carry out an unmet demand survey. Not all the drivers at the meeting agreed with Mr Jones’ proposal, stating that it would prevent their businesses growing and the then Licensing Manager dismissed the proposal, advising the market should be allowed to dictate the number of vehicles operating in the district.

4.22 Since that meeting of the forum in 2011, members of the licensing service noted general discontent from various drivers and operators with regard to the number of hackney carriages licensed, particular that there are ‘too many’. However the issue was not discussed at any meetings of the forum until June 2015. A special meeting of the forum was called at that time amid underperformance of the licensing service, concerns about the growing number of licensed drivers resident and operating in the Bristol area and increasing dissatisfaction amongst the taxi trade. Those in attendance were asked to identify any concerns they had and suggest ways that the service could improve. Concerns regarding the underperformance of the service and its impact on the time taken to issue driver and vehicle licences dominated the feedback provided but limiting the number of hackney carriages was also a popular suggestion.

4.23 In the months after the forum in June 2015, the then Licensing Manager left the organisation (to be replaced by the current manager) and additional staff were recruited, meaning that concerns about the performance of the service and its ability to process licence applications were able to be addressed, albeit improvement was steady over a number of months. In addition, a policy was introduced which enabled officers to begin reducing the number of Bristol based drivers.

4.24 With steps being taken to improve the performance of the service, when the next meeting of the forum took place in September 2015, members of the trade were asked for their views on the limiting the number of hackney carriages, as this had been one of the other popular suggestions made at the last meeting. As in February 2011, opinion was mixed and a consensus could not be reached. Officers were asked to provide statistics on the numbers of licensed drivers and vehicles and the matter was deferred until the next meeting in October 2015. A the meeting in October, trade representatives had differing views on whether to limit vehicle numbers but when asked to vote, the majority of drivers were in favour of officers presenting a report on the matter at the next available meeting of the Licensing Committee.

<u>Commission of the unmet demand survey</u>

4.25 For the Licensing Committee to consider whether hackney carriage numbers could be limited, it would first, as described at paragraph 4.4, need to be satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand in the district. In order to evidence the level of demand the Licensing Manager first proposed the commissioning of an unmet demand survey at the meeting of the Committee on the 2nd of March 2016. It was proposed that the survey be paid for, in part, with an earmarked reserve of the Licensing service budget, with the rest needing to be recovered through future vehicle licence application fees. Members of the Licensing Committee resolved to approve that recommendation.

4.26 Once approval had been received, requests for quotes were made to three separate specialist transport consultants, identified by the Licensing Manager (all of whom had undertaken unmet demand surveys for other local authorities). Actual quotes were forthcoming from two of the companies. The successful bid, offering the best value for money, was made by CTS Traffic and Transportation Limited (herein referred to as CTS).

4.27 The Licensing Manager met with Ian Millership of CTS on the 21st of September 2016 to discuss the terms of the survey and visit Taunton's taxi rank locations.

4.28 It was agreed that, broadly speaking, the survey would involve the videoing of taxi ranks in Taunton and Wellington (using cameras fitted to street furniture e.g. lamp posts), an on street pedestrian survey, licensed driver survey and consultation to key stakeholders (in line with the DfT best practice guidance). It was agreed that the videoing of ranks would take place at the end of September, over the course of Friday and Saturday nights when the ranks are known to be at their busiest and during school term time, to ensure a fair and representative picture of activity would be recorded.

<u>The unmet demand survey results</u>

4.29 The survey was undertaken, as agreed and the final unmet demand survey report, attached at **Appendix 3**, was published by CTS on the 27th of February 2017 and subsequently shared with licensed drivers.

4.30 The primary result from the survey is that the level of unmet demand for hackney carriages in Taunton Deane is not significant; it is in fact well below the standard value that is used when measuring demand; meaning that the Council could satisfy section 16 of the Transport Act 1985.

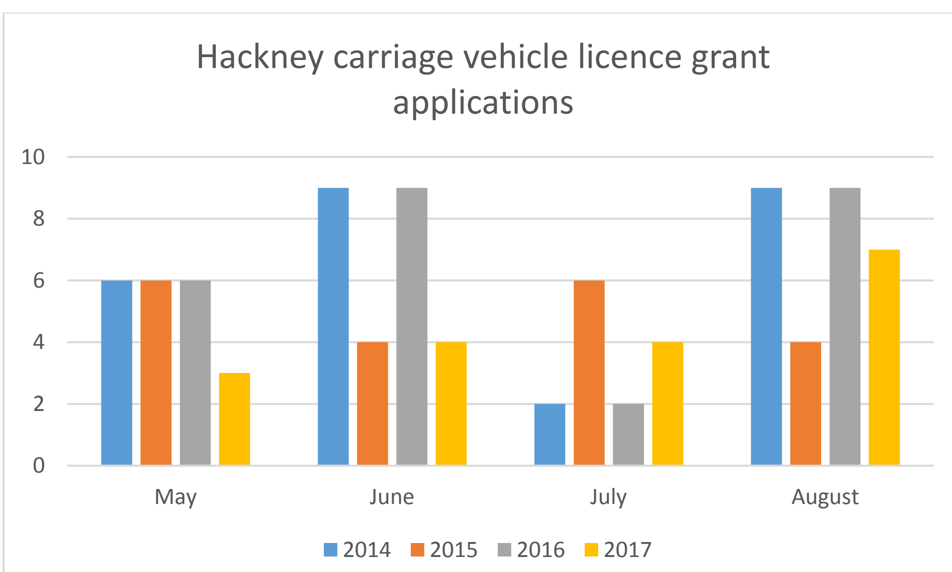
Response to the unmet demand survey & request for a moratorium

4.31 It wasn't until the taxi and private hire trade forum held on the 18th of May 2017 that licensed drivers were given the opportunity to fully discuss the results of the survey with officers.

4.32 Feedback given at the meeting was, on the whole, negative. Some questioned the validity of the survey; specifically, the methods used to collect the data as there had not been any visible collection of information or videoing. Others questioned whether the exercise had been an effective use of the Licensing service's income. What was clear at was that there were still a significant share of drivers in favour of limiting hackney carriage numbers but others vehemently opposed to the concept.

4.33 A request was made on behalf of Taunton Taxi Association, by its spokesperson, by Mr Bob Colclough, for a moratorium; an immediate halt to the issuing of licences to new hackney carriages. The concern held by the Association was that some operators would rush to license new vehicles due to the fact that the council might soon limit the number of hackney carriage, some doing so only to later capitalise on the premium the plate would then command. No decision was made in relation to the moratorium at that meeting of the forum as it was explained the Licensing Manager would need to discuss the proposal with the Chair of the Licensing Committee and also seek the view of the Councils legal advisor. It was subsequently decided that the Council would not implement a moratorium on the grounds that the Licensing Committee would need to decide whether a limit on hackney carriages should be imposed; be that temporary or permanent; and that this would happen when the committee would be presented with all of the necessary information at its meeting on the 23rd of August (since rearranged).

4.34 The graph below shows that the concerns raised by the trade association have not been realised; that there has not been a dramatic increase in vehicle applications and that, when compared with the three previous years, application numbers are broadly the same.

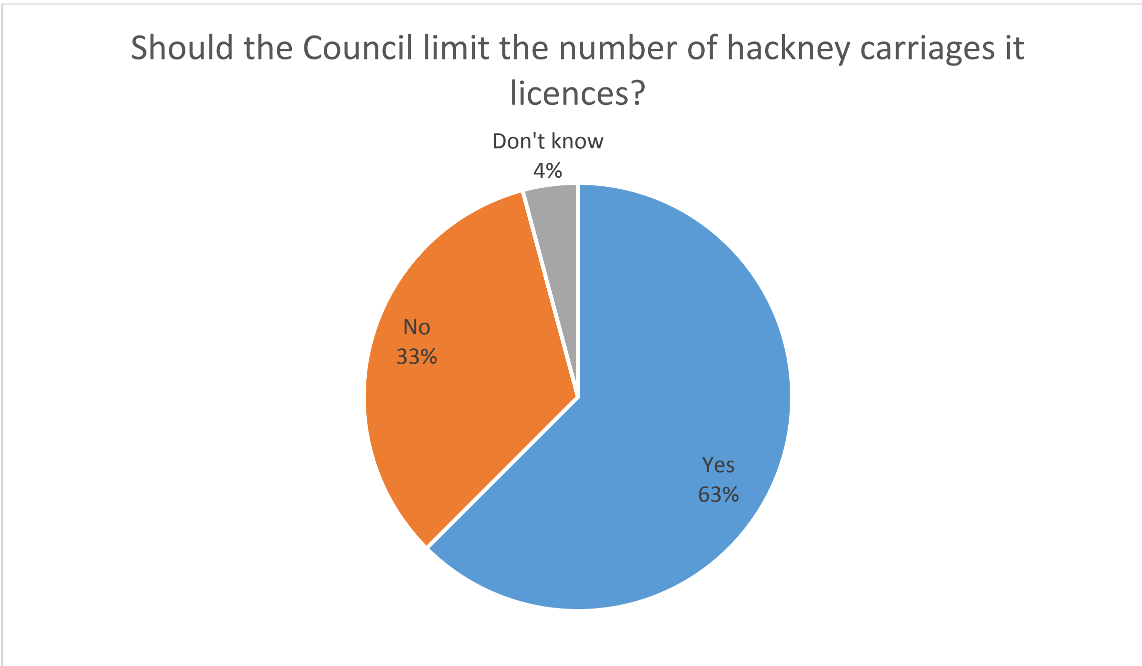


Consultation with licensed drivers

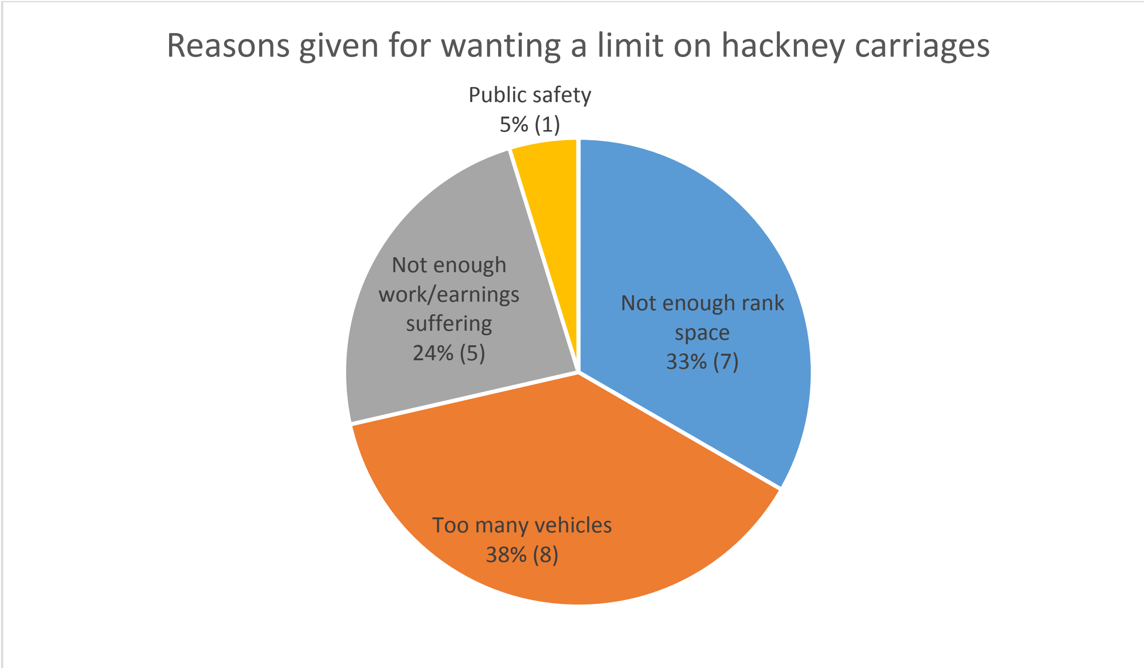
4.35 On the 26th of June, all licensed drivers were sent a consultation letter, inviting them to say whether or not the Council should limit hackney carriage numbers (or say if they didn't know) and give reasons for their answer.

4.36 Of the 253 drivers sent letters, 24 responded (9.5%). Full detail of the responses are attached at **Appendix 4.**

4.37 Of the 24 who responded, 63% (15) said 'yes'; the council should limit hackney carriage numbers. 33% (8) said 'no' and 4% (1) didn't know.



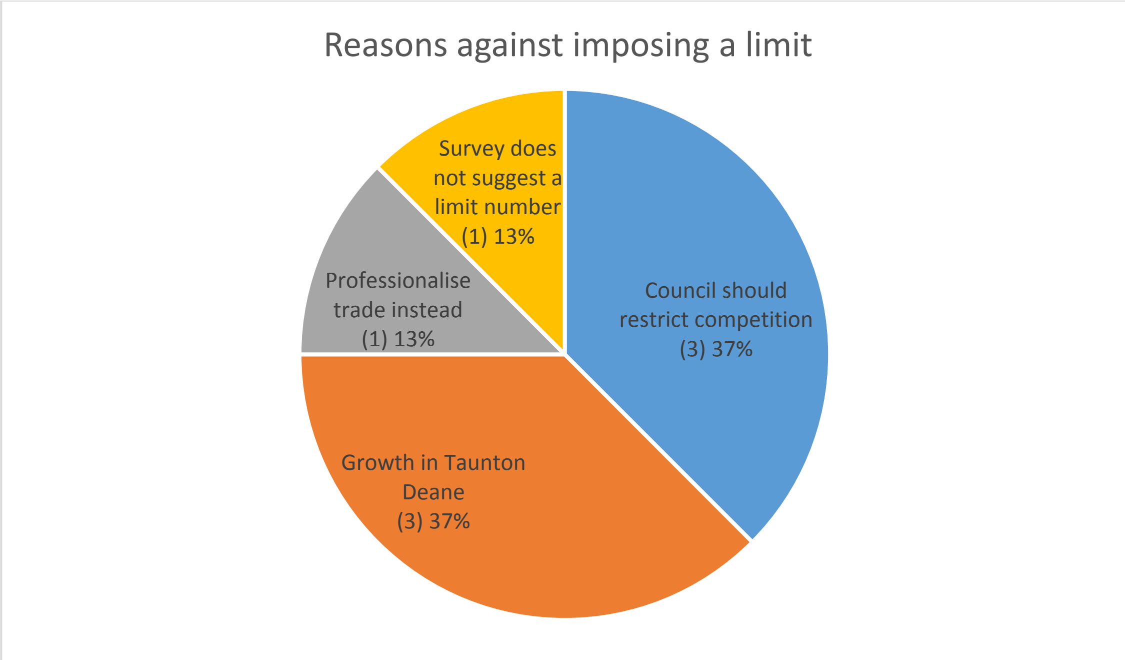
4.38 53% (8) of those who said a limit should be imposed, either said there were enough taxis already or too many, as a reason to support of their answer. 47% (7) mentioned a lack of taxi rank space. 40% (6) mentioned there being a lack of work/reduction to their income. 7% (1) expressed concern over the risk to public safety with there being so many vehicles plying for hire on Fridays and Saturdays in Taunton. 20% (3) offered no comment at all.



4.39 Whilst it can be said that imposing a hackney carriage limit could improve a licensed driver/proprietor's ability to earn a living, as with many of the arguments put forward in support of a hackney carriage limit (including those received in response to the public consultation, detailed later in this report), a limit does not necessarily result in a reduction of competition. The reason for this is due to survey report and because it does not propose a limit number, nor is there any indication of what of the optimum number of vehicles to meet the current level of demand is. Were this authority to adopt a limit, it could only reasonably justify a cap on hackney carriage numbers as they stand. It would be unlawful for this authority to reduce the current number of hackney carriages by removing licences from proprietors. A reduction in vehicle numbers would only be possible if a limit were imposed and time was allowed for natural wastage; proprietors to leave the market and not be replaced. Even in such a situation, this authority would need to review the limit at least every three years (in line with the DfT guidance) to ensure that no significant unmet demand developed in that time.

4.40 Taxi rank capacity and provision was a popular reason for imposing a limit and has been a gripe amongst the hackney carriage trade for some time. As explained at paragraphs 4.13 and 4.14, the current number of hackney carriages and habits of drivers is causing some issues, being congestion at the largest and most central rank in Taunton and the formation of unofficial ranks outside of two of the towns busiest night time venues. Unfortunately, rank provision is not within the gift of the Licensing Authority, instead being the responsibility of Somerset County Council Highways. Officers have, historically, relayed concerns and calls for addition rank space, from the trade, to Highways, but without joy. As explained above, limiting hackney carriage numbers will not necessarily result in a reduction of hackney carriages and therefore may not solve the current issues. That being said, it is interesting that, in response to the survey by CTS and consultation they carried out with 'key stakeholders', that a County Council Highways representative has suggested there may be some merit in formalising the unofficial ranks. The Licensing Manager agrees that this would be worth investigating further. Of course, it should be remembered that, as per paragraph 4.2, hackney carriages are not limited to picking up fares from taxi ranks, as they can be hailed in the street but perhaps most importantly, can be pre-booked by a variety of means; such as by phone, email, online and as many do now, social media sites like Facebook or indeed phone apps. So there are other ways for operators to promote their businesses and do well in the market.

4.41 38% (3) of those who said a limit should not be imposed, made reference to competition; either that competition was positive for the trade or the Council should not restrict competition. 38% (3) made reference to future growth in the Taunton Deane area. 13% (1) gave no reason to support their not being a limit.



4.42 It is clear that, were a quantity restriction imposed, that competition and business growth would be restricted and this is reflected in the consultation responses. By refusing to grant further hackney carriage licences, businesses would not be able to grow their vehicle fleets without turning to private hire vehicles, which do not offer the same flexibility or by purchasing already licensed vehicles from other proprietors. Furthermore, anyone looking to enter the market as an independent operator, would not be able to do so and would be forced to work for other operators. This would clearly be an uneven playing field for businesses.

4.43 Three of those who responded to the survey cited future growth in Taunton Deane as a reason not to impose a quantity restriction. As above, it is a true the such a restriction would prevent businesses, and the trade in general, growing to meet future demand at the same rate as population in the area increases. To maintain a quantity restriction, this authority would have to be satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand and were this not the case, further vehicles would have to be licensed but this would be tied to a three year or less, cycle of unmet demand surveys. This would clearly be costly to this authority in terms of administration and to the trade financially, who would have to cover the cost through their hackney carriage licence fees.

4.44 As Mr Mike Davis has observed and as explained at paragraph 4.37, the survey does not identify a level at which hackney carriages should be limited and this is problematic. However this does not prevent the authority imposing a limit, as section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 simply requires that the authority is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand.

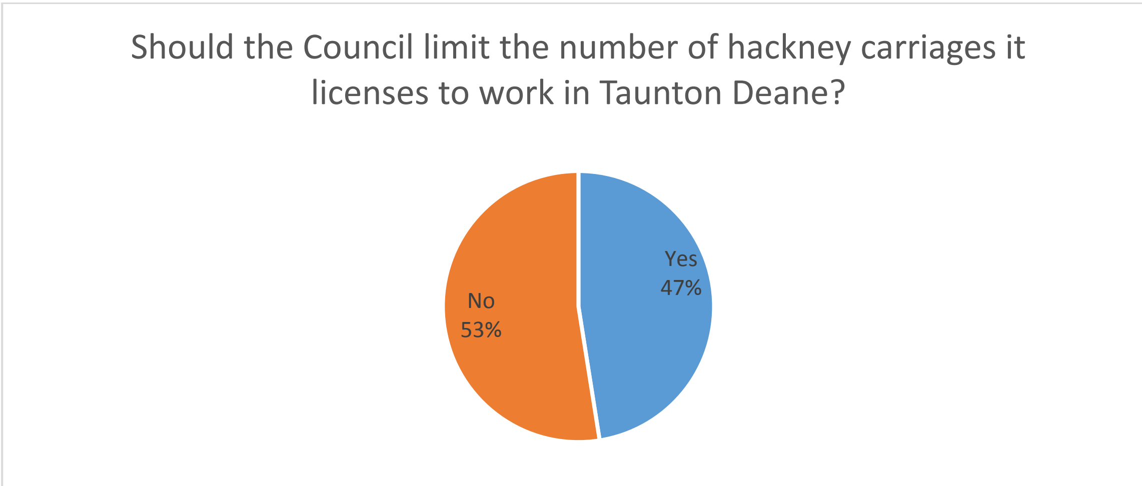
<u>Public consultation</u>

4.45 The public were invited to voice their opinion on the matter between the 11th of July and

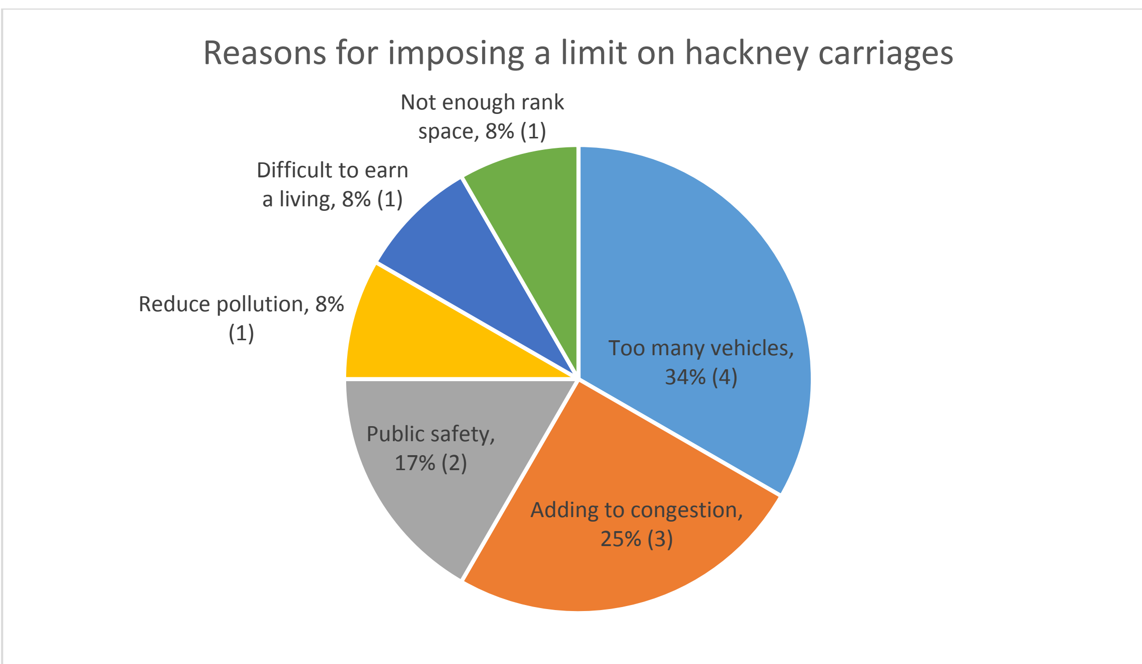
14th August, either by completing a survey online or by completing a form, available at the Council offices or via post and email, if necessary. The consultation was publicised in a press release in the Somerset County Gazette newspaper, on their website, along with the Councils website and social media accounts.

4.46 40 responses were received, full details of which are attached at **Appendix 5.** This included comments from residents, businesses, the Police, ex-taxi drivers.

4.47 In response to whether a limit should be imposed, 47.5% (19) said 'yes', a limit should be imposed and 52.5% (21) said 'no' .



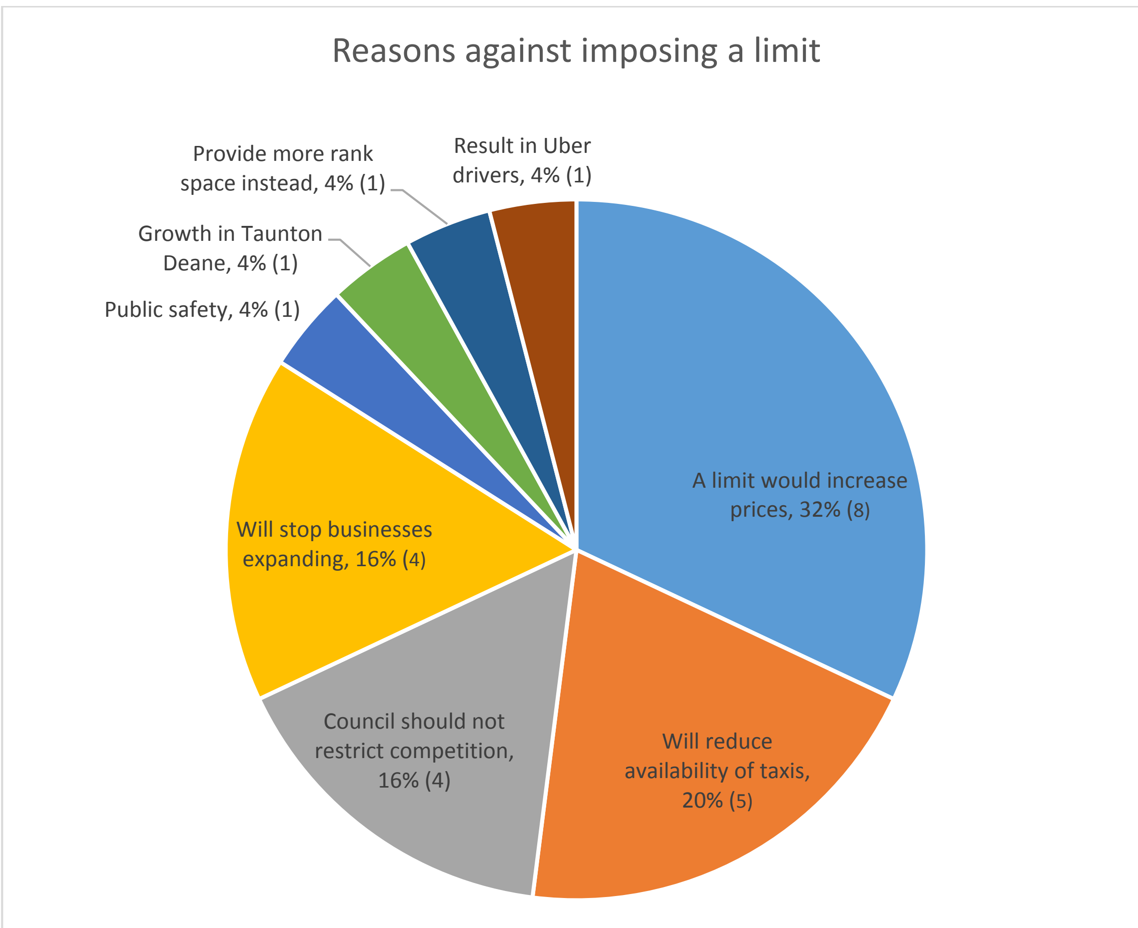
4.48 Those who responded in favour of a limit, gave various reasons, as categorised and shown in the chart below:



4.49 Amongst those in favour of a limit was PC Andy Beake; Taunton town centre beat officer for Avon and Somerset Constabulary. As with one of the responders to the driver consultation, he highlights concerns he has over the current situation in Taunton; specifically the impact of there not being enough rank space which is that certain drivers are taking to parking outside of Taunton's busiest night spots (which includes 'Zinc' nightclub at 4 Bridge Street, Taunton, who also responded to say they were in favour of a limit) putting pedestrians and other road users at risk in the process. He suggests that less taxis will make Taunton safer. Whilst this may be true, it is important to again highlight that even if a limit were imposed, the Council could not remove licences from already licensed vehicles, so the number of hackney carriages would stay the same, at least in the short to medium term and may not ever reduce, dependant on future demand. In addition, it is possible and indeed likely, given the current situation, that some drivers would continue to park outside of busy night spots, rather than wait to use town ranks. Thus one cannot guarantee that limiting numbers is will have the effect PC Beake desires; at least not for some years; and instead may need to be addressed, as mentioned earlier, by discussing the potential for more rank space with Somerset County Council Highways or by other means.

4.50 Limiting hackney carriage numbers to reduce congestion and pollution are other compelling arguments. Were a limit imposed, it could help to manage the number of licensed vehicles at a level that meets demand but is not excessive, thereby removing unnecessary vehicles from adding to congestion and pollution in the district.

4.51 Those who responded against a limit, gave various reasons, as shown in the chart below:



4.52 Almost a third of those against a limit that responded, were concerned by the potential for it to lead to an increase in hackney carriage fares/prices. Each local authority sets its own maximum hackney carriage fares, having first consulted with drivers and members of the public. Drivers have discretion to charge whatever they wish beneath the maximum. Those set by Taunton Deane Borough Council and last changed in November 2010, are attached at **Appendix 6.** Whilst it is easy to understand why members of the public might be concerned by prices rising as a result of a limit and therefore reduction in competition, the reality is that prices cannot increase without a separate consultation exercise and decision by the Licensing Committee. The most recent suggestion to increase the maximum fares was made by an operator at the last meeting of the Taxi Forum on the 18th of May but received no support from other members of the trade and has not been taken any further. It is possible that, if a quantity restriction were introduced, drivers who are competitive and charge less than the maximum fare, may move to the maximum rate, meaning some users may notice a small difference.

4.53 A fifth of people believed a limit would lead to a reduction in the availability of hackney carriages. As stated earlier in this report, this authority can only limit hackney carriages it if it is satisfied there is no significant demand. So in theory, were a limit imposed and there were demand for hackney carriages which wasn't met, a further survey or surveys in future would identify this and lead to the release of more vehicle licences, thus meeting demand.

4.54 Rather oddly, there were responses to the public consultation made by at least three known hackney carriage drivers/operators (Sheila Thomas, Lee Slatter and Taunton Taxi Services). All three cited restricting competition and business growth as reasons supporting their view.

4.55 It is interesting that a perceptive member of the public recognised that limiting hackney carriage numbers may lead to more private hire vehicles; specifically that this may provide an opportunity for the company Uber, which uses a phone app to find its customers private hire vehicles, to expand into Taunton Deane. Whether there is the sufficient demand for Uber to move in Taunton Deane remains to be seen, as the company currently tends to only operate in cities and large towns.

Observations

4.56 Both the OFT and DfT have taken the view that quantity restrictions should be avoided.

4.57 It is a concern of the Licensing service that, by limiting the number of hackney carriages and therefore reducing competition, the standards of vehicles and service will, in some sections of the trade, suffer. That being said, many drivers have complained that in recent years and as competition has become fierce, standards have dropped as some operators cut corners to make ends meet. The service was more active with evening inspections of hackney carriages in 2016 and did observe extremes between the standards of upkeep of vehicles; some kept clean, tidy and in general excellent condition and others dirty, damaged and poorly maintained. So it is recognised that the reports of the drivers held some truth, however it could be argued that, due to infrequent inspections, the standard had been allowed to drop. Over the course of 2016, a general improvement was noticed.

4.58 The Licensing Manager is concerned that implementing and maintaining a quantity restriction would result in a significant amount of administration for this authority, when the market can more or less, as it does now, dictate the size of the fleet. The DfT guidance recommends that, where quantity restrictions are maintained, unmet demand surveys are carried out every three years or less. Of course, where significant unmet demand is evidenced, further licences can be issued and a decision would then need to be made as to how licences are allocated to interested parties; whether on a 'first come, first served' basis, by inviting operators to enter a chance draw or by other means and whether a waiting list should be maintained. None are straight forward. Whilst all these costs incurred can be recovered from hackney carriage proprietors through the application fees they pay, it must be remembered that around a third of

Recommendations

4.59 The Licensing Manager recognises there are compelling arguments for restricting hackney carriage numbers in Taunton Deane but does not believe it is in the interests of the public to adopt such a policy.

4.60 The Licensing Manager also believes such a policy would, as explained at section 5 of this report, fundamentally go against one of the Councils key themes which is to supporting new businesses and help existing ones to grow. A quantity restriction would not be a level playing field for those currently in or seeking to join, the hackney carriage industry.

5 Links to Corporate Aims / Priorities

5.1 ‘Support business start-ups and expansion within the Deane’ is a strand of ‘Key Theme 2: Business and Enterprise’ within the Councils corporate strategy document.

5.2 Were members to resolve to impose a quantity restriction, this would remove opportunities for people to start their own businesses in the taxi sector and would also significantly limit taxi business growth.

5.3 Maintaining the status quo provides equal opportunities to new and existing businesses to succeed in the current market and expand, where there are opportunities currently or alongside growth in the district.

6 Finance / Resource Implications

6.1 Broadly speaking, the Licensing Authority can recover all reasonable costs of the processes associated with the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire drivers, vehicles and operators, but cannot make a profit.

6.2 The full cost of the unmet demand survey was £7,650 (including VAT), £3,640 of which was met by an earmarked reserve in the ring fenced taxi licensing budget. The remaining £4,010 is to be recovered over the next three financial years, spread across hackney carriage licence grant and renewal application fees. This is likely to mean an additional £7 on top of current application fees (£149 for a grant and £148 for a renewal), excluding any other additional factors, although more detailed fee calculations will be carried out.

6.3 Clearly, were members to resolve to implement a quantity restriction, further unmet demand surveys would have to be carried out and there would be additional administration for this authority, all at further expense to hackney carriage operators. Such costs cannot be apportioned to applications for driver, private hire vehicle or private hire operator licences as they would be untouched by such a policy.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 As explained earlier in the report, the Council has the power to limit numbers of hackney carriages if it is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for their services. The unmet demand survey at Appendix 3 established that there is no significant unmet demand and that the Council could justify a quantity restriction.

Although it is accepted that this matter has divided opinion, to a degree, within the taxi community and that there is likely to be discontent whichever option members of the committee resolve, it is believed that imposing a limit is more likely to lead to litigation due to the restricting of competition and additional financial burden it would place on businesses (by virtue of further surveys and increases to licence application fees to cover the costs).

8 Environmental Impact Implications

8.1 As highlighted at paragraph 4.48, a hackney carriage limit may help to manage pollution form hackney carriage vehicle emissions, by preventing vehicles being licensed to operate in the district where there is not demand to warrant them. At present, the optimum number of hackney carriages, to meet demand, is not known and it is difficult to predict at what point, were a limit introduced, that the number of vehicles would drop to a natural level, if indeed there are more vehicles than there is demand at present.

9 Safeguarding and/or Community Safety Implications

9.1 Through effective regulation of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers, confidence in a safe public transport regime can be maintained aiding its continued use by vulnerable members of the community to support independent living.

10 Equality and Diversity Implications

10.1 Both of the options provided at paragraph 2.1 would have the same effect on those that share a protected characteristic, within the definitions of the Equality Act 2010, and those who do not.

11 Social Value Implications

11.1 The proposals within this reports do not directly involve the procurement of services and therefore there are no social value implications.

12 Partnership Implications

12.1 The Police and Highways Authority were included within the ‘key stakeholder consultation’ part of the survey but there is certainly scope for further discussions to be held with both partner organisations with a view to tackling issues associated with the taxi ranks and whether there is possibility to formalise the unofficial rank on Bridge Street, Taunton.

13 Health and Wellbeing Implications

13.1 Through effective regulation of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles and drivers, confidence in a safe public transport regime can be maintained aiding its continued use by residents to support independent living.

13.2 Limiting the number of hackney carriages may reduce their availability in the more remote parts of the district, thereby impacting on the ability for people in rural communities to live independently. That is except where there is good availability of private hire vehicles or other forms of public transport.

14 Asset Management Implications

14.1 This report does not relate to nor impact on any of the Councils assets.

15 Consultation Implications (if any)

15.1 There has been extensive consultation with the hackney carriage trade prior to the writing of this report and also consultation with members of the public.

16 Scrutiny Comments / Recommendation(s)

16.1 The purpose of the Licensing Committee is to act for the Council in respect of licensing and registration functions. The Committee's powers include the power to discharge the licensing functions on behalf of the licensing authority, outside of the usual democratic process.

Democratic Path:

- **Scrutiny / Corporate Governance or Audit Committees – No**
- **Cabinet/Executive – No**
- **Full Council – No**

Reporting Frequency : X Once only ☐ Ad-hoc ☐ Quarterly

☐ Twice-yearly ☐ Annually

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Contact Officers

Name	John Rendell
Direct Dial	01823 356343
Email	j.rendell@tauntondeane.gov.uk

OFFICE OF FAIR TRADING

The regulation of licensed taxi and PHV services in the UK

November 2003

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CONTENTS

1 SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Introduction

1.1 This market study has looked at the regulatory framework affecting licensed taxis and private hire vehicles (PHVs).

Background

1.2 There are two types of vehicle that operate in this market:

- licensed taxis can ply for hire on the streets or at ranks and can also be pre-booked, generally over the telephone
- PHVs, on the other hand, cannot ply for hire but can only be pre-booked.

1.3 The licensed taxi and PHV services market in the UK is large and growing with an annual turnover of at least £2.2 billion.[1] Turnover has risen 43 per cent in real terms since 1994, although it has fallen slightly in the last couple of years.

1.4 Taxis provide an important service for the public generally and especially those on lower incomes who are most reliant on them. On average, people in the lowest 20 per cent of incomes use taxis and PHVs 40 per cent more often than those in the highest 20 per cent. Adults living in households without a car made 30 trips a year on average compared with nine for those in households with a car.[2]

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[1] National Statistics, *Consumer Trends, Quarter 1 2003*. This is the expenditure of UK households in 2002. Spending on taxis by business and tourists are excluded. This figure is therefore an under-estimate of the true size of the UK taxi and PHV market.
[2] Department for Transport: Travel by taxi and PHV in GB, January 2003. All the figures refer to the years 1999-2001.

1.5 Approximately 8.6 million people in the UK are disabled, and it is estimated that five per cent of these use a wheelchair at least some of the time.[3] Taxis and PHVs are used more frequently by disabled people (67 per cent more) than non disabled people.[4] The same survey also concluded that disabled people find taxis and PHVs the easiest mode of transport to use because of their flexibility.

The regulatory framework

1.6 The licensed taxi and PHV market is highly regulated. The regulations are generally applied by local licensing authorities (LAs). The application of the regulations varies from area to area but falls into three broad categories:

- **quantity regulation** – LAs can limit the supply of taxis by imposing a cap on the number of licences for taxi vehicles. Some LAs do this; others do not. These regulations do not apply to PHVs
- **quality and safety regulation** – LAs also regulate quality in terms of service, safety and technical efficiency, both for taxis and for PHVs
- **fare regulation** – LAs can regulate the fares charged by taxis by specifying either a mandatory or a maximum fare. Again, these regulations do not apply to PHVs.

Summary of findings

1.7 In summary, we have concluded that the overall quality of taxi services could be enhanced by reforming elements of the regulatory framework. While some aspects of regulation are entirely sound, other aspects can be **improved,** and in particular quantity regulation should be **removed**.

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[3] Grundy, E., Ahlburg, D., Ali, M., Breeze, E. and Sloggett, A. (1999), Disability in Great Britain: Results from the 1996/97 Disability Follow-Up to the Family Resources Survey, DSS Research Report 94 and the Employers Forum on Disability. The figure for the number of disabled people in the UK represents those aged 16 – 75 in Great Britain and is based on a definition of disability derived from the World Health Organisation: 'the inability, due to impairment, to perform activities in typical and personally desired ways in society'. The 8.6 million figure roughly equates to those who would be covered by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The five per cent figure is commonly used by disability commentators although there is no reliable data on UK wheelchair users.

[4] Attitudes of Disabled People to Public Transport, MORI 2002, undertaken for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

- **quantity regulation** – limiting the number of taxis reduces availability and lowers the quality of service to the public. These restrictions should therefore be lifted
- **quality and safety regulation** – there are compelling reasons to regulate to safeguard driver and vehicle standards. But there are questions about whether quality regulation always achieves its goals proportionately
- **fare regulation** – there are sound reasons to regulate taxi fares, for example, to protect consumers in vulnerable situations. But there could be greater freedom for beneficial price competition below regulated fare caps.

The benefits to consumers

1.8 Acting on our recommendations will benefit consumers by:

- putting more taxis on the road – removing quantity restrictions could increase the number of taxis in affected areas by 30 per cent
- making journeys safer – removing quantity restrictions and increasing the number of licensed taxis will reduce the need for illegal taxis where neither the driver or vehicle have been subject to appropriate quality and safety checks. Last year around 1.8 million people used an illegal taxi, exposing themselves to potentially serious safety risks
- reducing passenger waiting times – removing quantity restrictions will save an overall 2.5 million hours across the UK
- creating more choice – removing quantity restrictions could put an extra 15,000 taxis on the road. This will substantially increase peoples' choice of transport modes when deciding how to reach their destination
- promoting best practice in LAs' application of quality and safety controls to ensure the needs of local people are met and that individuals and businesses are not deterred from supplying taxi services
- protecting people in vulnerable situations from overcharging, while encouraging the benefits of fare competition.

Quantity regulation

1.9 Forty-five per cent of UK LAs restrict the number of taxi vehicle licences granted. This represents 52 per cent of all licensed taxis in the UK outside London. The majority of LAs applying quantity controls are urban (72 per cent of urban LAs have quantity controls while only 18 per cent of rural authorities do so).

1.10 LAs without quantity controls have on average 30 per cent more taxis per head of population than those that do not. This is true for both urban and rural LAs.

1.11 Because a large number of LAs control taxi numbers and a large number do not, there is rich evidence to compare the experience of the public in each situation. From our analysis of the evidence we have concluded that these quantity controls are detrimental to consumers. They mean that consumers have limited access to services they desire, and the regulations also impede potential new entrants wanting to set up a taxi business.

1.12 Consumers suffer through:

- **reduced availability of taxis** - quantity controls, on average, reduce the number of taxi vehicles by about 25 per cent and in some cases by much more than that. For example, since removing quantity controls Sheffield now has 52 per cent more taxis
- **increased waiting times** - quantity controls increase the amount of time that people have to wait for a taxi. Overall, our research shows that restricting quantities increases average waiting times. At certain times of day, such as peak times, waiting times increase on average 10 per cent
- **reduced choice** – the lower availability of taxis in LAs with quantity controls reduces transport options for consumers. These consumers use other forms of transport to make their journey
- **reduced safety** – a shortage of licensed taxis on the streets, especially during the evening, encourages the use of illegal taxis, potentially exposing consumers to serious safety threats.[5] This is a significant

[5] In our survey people were asked if they had used an illegal taxi in the last year. An illegal taxi is a totally unlicensed vehicle.

problem. We estimate that approximately 1.8 million people have taken an illegal taxi at least once in the past 12 months.[6] Limited supply of taxis can also contribute to difficulties faced by the police in clearing city centres or public places in the evenings.

1.13 Quantity regulations also restrict those wanting to set up a taxi business from entering the market to meet the demands of consumers. They do this by:

- **creating a premium on taxi licences** – in areas where licences are limited in number they have themselves become valuable commodities typically ranging from £12,000 to £50,000. This creates a sizeable entry barrier
- **delaying market entry** – areas with quantity controls have a waiting list for people wanting to set up taxi businesses. In some areas the number of people on the waiting list exceeds the number of licences already in circulation, indicating that there are more people wanting to enter the market than are currently serving it.

1.14 Overall therefore these quantity restrictions serve neither consumers nor potential entrants. There is no clear rationale for maintaining these regulations.[7] We have nonetheless explored potential rationales which have been put forward to justify the regulation, and found none to be convincing.

1.15 The main arguments which could be offered in favour of quantity controls are:

- that there is no excess demand for taxis. **We reject this as our research shows that demand is there but is not being met**
- that they ensure the quality and safety of the fleet in terms of vehicles and drivers. **We believe that effective quality regulation, rather than restricting taxi numbers, is the reliable way to ensure this**

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[6] TNS: Taxis and PHV Omnibus Consumer Survey 2003 (annexe K). Our survey recorded that 57 per cent of adults use taxis each year and seven per cent of them had used an illegal taxi in the last year. The total number of adults who have used an illegal taxi is therefore 0.57 multiplied by 45,435,000 (the number of adults in the UK) multiplied by 0.07 = 1.8 million.

[7] The origins of quantity controls date back to Royal Proclamations by Charles I in the 1630s. Controls were introduced in London following complaints about hackney carriages causing street congestion and petitions by the Company of Watermen who feared that this new form of hired transport would deprive them of their livelihoods.

- that they ensure a supply of taxis outside peak times. **We reject this as our study shows that when quantity controls are removed taxi supply increases across all times of day, and**
- that they can be used by LAs to control congestion and pollution levels and encourage public transport use. **Our view is that applying quantity controls will not achieve these aims and that there are more effective ways of meeting these goals.**

1.16 **We therefore recommend that the legislative provisions allowing licensing authorities to impose quantity controls should be repealed. In the meantime, we recommend that LAs with quantity controls remove them.**

Quality and safety regulation

1.17 All LAs that license taxis and PHVs apply quality and safety controls. These cover:

- **vehicles** – regulations can specify the type of vehicle (it may have to be wheelchair accessible); age limits on vehicles (a maximum age is stipulated in 45 per cent of LAs – the average limit is nine years); vehicle testing at regular intervals (this is required in 90 per cent of LAs, mostly six monthly); vehicle identification (mainly relating to the provision of a roof sign); fitting of taximeters (this is required in 93 per cent of LAs); specification of minimum engine size (this occurs in 48 per cent of authorities).[8] Twenty-five per cent of LAs apply the same quality conditions to PHVs although, for the majority, vehicle conditions are less onerous than for taxis and mainly concern the basic characteristics of the vehicle and its roadworthiness
- **drivers** – regulations can include a criminal record check (required by all LAs); a medical examination (this is required by 95 per cent of LAs); a geographical knowledge test (this is required by 60 per cent of authorities, although they vary greatly in scope); minimum driver age limits (56 per cent of LAs require drivers to be 21 or over). There are fewer differences between licence conditions for taxi and PHV drivers and around 56 per cent of LAs operate a dual licensing scheme, covering both

[8] OFT Survey of Licensing Authorities 2002 (annexe B).

- **operators** – for PHV operators only. Generally this only involves a criminal record check though other conditions can be attached (e.g. on the type of premises used).

1.18 We believe that there is a strong case for regulating quality and safety both for taxis and PHVs. First, consumers cannot judge certain standards such as the safety of the vehicle and the competence of the driver when getting into a taxi or PHV. These regulations therefore provide essential protection for consumers. Secondly, taxi services can have a role to play in broader social welfare policy such as ensuring greater accessibility or environmental improvements and LAs should consequently be able to apply quality and safety regulations to suit their needs.

1.19 Nonetheless, it is important that these regulations are applied in a proportionate manner. Our analysis has highlighted substantial variation across LAs. An example of this is the application by some LAs of the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness (MCF) which set out detailed specifications for taxi vehicles such as a maximum turning circle, a maximum step height and wheelchair accessibility to certain specifications. These were written expressly to meet the needs of London but have been adopted by other LAs so that they cover 44 per cent of taxi vehicles in the UK. Only certain models of vehicle currently meet these requirements. These are significantly more expensive than the saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles allowed by many LAs. There is a danger that the additional cost of MCF compliant vehicles may raise prices and deter entry to the market thus limiting supply and leading to a poorer service for consumers.

1.20 We believe that local quality and safety regulation should match local requirements and think that LAs, when deciding on quality specifications for vehicles, should consider the needs of consumers and the effect of the proposed specifications on the availability of taxis and PHVs. LAs should try to ensure that any quality and safety specifications set do not go beyond what is required to achieve this policy aim.

1.21 **We therefore recommend that the Department for Transport promote and disseminate local best practice in applying quality and safety regulations involving the Scottish Executive and the Department of the Environment (NI) in this process. The purpose of this would be to assist LAs to apply standard quality and safety attributes in a proportionate manner.**

1.22 In applying quality and safety regulation LAs should carefully consider the needs of disabled consumers. Part V of the Disability Discrimination Act

1995 (DDA95), which has yet to be implemented, is intended to help ensure that disabled people, including those who wish to remain in their wheelchairs, can get into and out of, and travel in, licensed taxis in safety and reasonable comfort. The Department for Transport (DfT) has recently announced its proposals and timetable for implementing the taxi accessibility requirements in Part V DDA95. [9] Prior to implementation, the power to regulate taxis and PHVs in a way that meets the needs of disabled passengers remains with LAs. Our research has shown large differences in the way LAs address disability issues with regard to taxis. A minority of LAs require their taxis to be wheelchair accessible and an even smaller number require taxi drivers to undergo disability awareness training.

1.23 Those LAs which have required vehicles to be wheelchair accessible have primarily followed the specifications laid down by the MCF. These vehicles, however, are not necessarily the most accessible for those with impaired mobility who do not use a wheelchair.

1.24 In setting quality and safety controls LAs should closely consult with disability groups to ensure their needs are correctly recognised.

1.25 We also note that if quantity restrictions apply to vehicles suitable for disabled passengers, those restrictions may be particularly detrimental to disabled groups.

Fare regulation

1.26 Approximately 95 per cent of LAs regulate fares for taxis.[10] The extent of regulation varies across the country. In England and Wales, according to case law, fares set by LAs are maximum fares. The exception to this is London where a mandatory tariff is set.[11] In Scotland too the fares fixed under legislation are maximum rates. In Northern Ireland the LA has the power to set both maximum and minimum fares, although in practice these are set at the same level, creating a mandatory tariff.

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[9] These regulations will not apply to PHVs.

[10] The five per cent that do not are rural or semi rural with most of the work coming from telephone bookings.

[11] Although taxis are allowed to depart from this tariff on occasion, for example if a passenger has had their money stolen. This judgement must be made on a case by case basis. There is no blanket discretion.

1.27 There is a strong case for regulating the maximum level of fares for taxis in order to protect the interests of consumers. The way that taxi services are purchased on the street or at ranks can put consumers in a weak position, and setting maximum fare levels is justified in order:

- **to address a lack of price competition** – when hiring from ranks or on the street consumers cannot shop around for the best price. They are unlikely to turn down a taxi because it is too expensive as they face uncertainty over how long they must wait for the next taxi to pass and how much it will cost when it arrives
- **to protect vulnerable consumers** – certain consumers are likely to be in a particularly weak bargaining position when they hire a taxi on the street or at a rank rather than pre-booking a taxi or PHV. For example, disabled passengers may be less able to take alternative forms of transport, and tourists may not be sufficiently well informed, or have the necessary linguistic skill, to negotiate the fare.

1.28 We have balanced these arguments against the costs of regulation; in particular the potential difficulties in setting fares at the correct levels, and the inflexibility created by regulation, but have concluded that there remains a good case for retaining these regulations.

1.29 We note, however, that the rationale for fare regulation for taxis points to fare caps – i.e. fixed fares being the maximum that can be charged.

1.30 **We recommend that throughout the UK LAs should only set fare tariffs which represent the maximum that can be charged, and not set fixed or minimum fares. It should be made clear to consumers that they are able to negotiate on fares, for example, when ordering a taxi over the telephone. We also recommend that, where possible, LAs actively facilitate more price competition in the market, particularly in the rank and hail sectors of the market.**

2 INTRODUCTION

Introduction

2.1 This market study, which was launched on 21 August 2002, has been carried out under section 2 of the Fair Trading Act 1973 and, since they came into force this year, similar duties contained in the Enterprise Act 2002. The study was undertaken as part of our remit to look at regulations and their impact on a particular market and whether any changes should be recommended.

2.2 We looked at:

- the nature and structure of the taxi and PHV market
- the regulatory framework and the impact the existing regulations have on the market for taxis and PHVs, and
- the effectiveness of competition in the market.

2.3 In carrying out this study we:

- consulted key stakeholders within the taxi and PHV market including taxi driver groups and manufacturers of taxi vehicles
- consulted with groups representing users of taxi services including consumer groups, disability groups and groups representing older people
- consulted with the Department for Transport, the devolved administrations, licensing authorities including the Public Carriage Office, and the Local Government Association
- carried out surveys of licensing authorities and consumers, and
- commissioned research into the impact of taxi licensing regulations at local authority level together with an international study looking at taxi licensing in other countries.

2.4 Throughout this report reference is made to 'taxis' and 'PHVs' – private hire vehicles. By taxis we mean vehicles that are licensed to ply for hire on the street or at ranks and can also be booked in advance. PHVs must be pre-booked and cannot ply for hire. While our original remit was to look at the regulations applying to taxis we broadened the terms of reference of our study to include PHVs due to the interrelated nature of the services provided (for example, some firms provide both taxi and PHV services).

2.5 The following chapters provide background to the UK taxi and PHV market, outline the evidence and the market problems we found and propose remedies where we think they are appropriate. At the end of this volume we have included a glossary and list of acronyms, together with our bibliography and references.

2.6 Details of our methodology, research and relevant legislation can be found in the annexes to this report. The studies we commissioned are the responsibility of the authors concerned and any views expressed in them are those of the authors and not necessarily of the OFT. The views of the OFT are expressed in this report, which has been written with the benefit of having seen these studies.

3 THE UK TAXI AND PHV SERVICES MARKET

Introduction

3.1 This chapter explains the UK taxi and PHV services market to provide background to our study. Section 1 sets out the scope of our study, section 2 looks at the market and section 3 looks at the existing legal framework for taxis and PHVs. Chapters 4 to 7 look more closely at the impact of particular categories of licensing legislation on the UK market for taxi and PHV services.

Section 1: the scope of our study

3.2 The taxi and PHV services market in the UK is large and growing with an annual turnover of at least £2.2 billion.[12] Turnover has risen 43 per cent in real terms since 1994, although turnover has fallen slightly in the last couple of years. Almost 60 per cent of people use a taxi or PHV at least once a year. We make, on average, 12 trips per person per year. Taxi and PHV use is also greatest amongst people in low income groups. Those with incomes in the lowest 20 per cent make around 50 per cent more trips than across the population as a whole.[13]

3.3 This study looks at taxis and PHVs and the regulations surrounding them. We have considered both taxis and PHVs because the two offer comparable services.

3.4 Taxis and PHVs are vehicles that can be licensed to carry a maximum of eight passengers. We have not considered the regulations relating to buses, referred to in legislation[14] as 'public service vehicles'.[15] These fall into a separate regulatory regime which is outside the remit of our study.

3.5 In our research we have looked at how the regulations governing taxis and PHVs within LAs across the UK affect the supply of taxi services to consumers. Our intention throughout has been to review the existing

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[12] National Statistics, *Consumer Trends, Quarter 1 2003*. This is the expenditure of UK households in 2002. Spending on taxis by business and tourists are excluded. This figure is therefore an under-estimate of the true size of the UK taxi and PHV services market.

[13] Department for Transport: Travel by taxi and PHV in GB, January 2003. All the figures refer to the years 1999-2001.

[14] The Public Passengers Vehicles Act 1981.

[15] These are distinct from public service vehicles (PSVs) as defined by legislation in Northern Ireland. In Northern Ireland PSVs include taxis which are within the scope of our study.

regulatory structure, with our focus being on the benefits and burdens that regulation can create – in this case for LAs, the industry and consumers. Where burdens have been imposed, we have examined them to see what impact they have on the operation of the market. Our aim has been to establish whether or not the regulations give rise to an unnecessarily detrimental impact on competition and consumers.

Section 2: market overview

Taxi and PHV usage

3.6 Taxis and PHVs are the fastest growing transport sector in the UK. The use of taxis and PHVs in the UK has increased by over 350 per cent in the last 25 years. The average person now travels 61 miles by taxi or PHV each year.[16] Private car usage has increased by 61 per cent over the same 25 year period. There has been a more modest increase in rail travel and a fall in the distance travelled by local bus.

3.7 Table 3.1 shows taxi and PHV journeys per year broken down by age and sex. As can be seen, between 1999 and 2001, taxi and PHV use averaged 12 trips per person. Around 60 per cent of people reported using a taxi or a PHV at least once a year. Women use taxi and PHV services marginally more than men: 11 per cent of men and 13 per cent of women said they used a taxi or PHV at least once a week.

TABLE 3.1: AVERAGE TAXI AND PHV JOURNEYS PER YEAR BY AGE AND SEX: 1999/2001

	<16	**16-20**	**21-29**	**30-59**	**60-69**	**70+**	**All ages**
Male	6	19	19	10	6	7	10
Female	6	36	29	13	7	16	14
All	6	28	24	12	7	12	12

Source: Department for Transport, Travel by taxi and PHV in GB, January 2003

[16] Department for Transport: Travel by taxi and PHV in GB, January 2003.

3.8 People in low income groups make most trips. On average, people in the lowest 20 per cent of incomes make 17 trips by taxi or PHV a year compared with 12 in the highest 20 per cent. Adults living in households without a car made 30 trips a year on average compared with nine for those in households with a car.

3.9 Taxi and PHV services are used mainly on the weekend with 18 per cent of trips on Fridays, 21 per cent on Saturdays and 13 per cent on Sundays. Patterns of use vary by the day of the week. Weekdays have peaks of trips starting from eight to nine a.m. (six per cent of the day's trips), trips starting from three to four p.m. (eight per cent) and trips starting from 11 p.m. to midnight (eight per cent).[17]

Spending on taxi and PHV services

3.10 Expenditure on taxi and PHV services by households in the UK was £2.2 billion in 2002.[18] Spending increased rapidly in the late 90s (by as much as 18 per cent in 1997) but has fallen in the last two years. The 2002 figure remains 43 per cent higher in real terms than that recorded in 1994.

3.11 Expenditure was greatest in London (almost 70 per cent higher per household than the UK as whole).[19] The other areas with above-average expenditure are generally in the UK regions with the lowest household incomes. Households in the North West, North East, Northern Ireland and Scotland all spend more than the UK average on taxis and PHVs.

The taxi and PHV services market

3.12 Taxis are allowed to ply for hire on the street or at ranks and to make pre-booked journeys. PHVs can only be pre-booked (usually by telephone). Around 30 per cent of all journeys are from a rank, 10 per cent are hailed on the street and 60 per cent are pre-booked.[20] Unfortunately, this data source does not separate taxi and PHV journeys in the telephone segment of the market but the figures for rank and hail

[17] Department for Transport: Travel by taxi and PHV in GB, January 2003.
[18] National Statistics, *Consumer Trends, Quarter 1 2003*. This is the expenditure of UK households. Spending on taxis by business and tourists are excluded. This figure is therefore an under-estimate of the true size of the taxi and PHV market.
[19] National Statistics, *Family Spending*, 2001-02.
[20] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets – Consumer Survey, July 2003 (annexe A).

show that taxis account for at least 40 per cent of all journeys made by taxi and PHV.

3.13 There are around 75,500 licensed taxi vehicles in the UK with 20,700 in London alone.[21] There are almost twice as many licensed taxi drivers (146,100) as vehicles. The ratio of drivers to vehicles is considerably higher outside London. There are two main reasons why there are more drivers than taxis. First, in LAs that impose quantity restrictions not all licensed drivers can get a taxi vehicle licence and drivers will use taxis owned by other licence holders. The second reason is that drivers will often share the costs of running a taxi.

3.14 There are an estimated 105,000 PHVs, 18,000 private hire operators and 157,000 PHV drivers.[22] Again, shared use of vehicles or PHV operators renting vehicles to drivers accounts for the difference between numbers of drivers and vehicles.

3.15 The number of licensed taxi vehicles has increased roughly in line with the higher usage observed over time. In 2002, there were around 50 per cent more licensed taxi vehicles than there were ten years ago.[23]

Section 3: an overview of the current legal framework

3.16 The UK taxi and PHV services market is highly regulated. Annexe A provides a detailed description of the legislation surrounding taxi and PHV licensing. The following is a brief overview of the relevant legislation and how it is applied.

Geographical areas

3.17 There are four distinct geographical areas for the licensing of taxis and PHVs in the UK: London; England and Wales outside London; Scotland; and Northern Ireland. All allow for the licensing of vehicles and drivers.

3.18 England (including London), Wales and Scotland operate a two tier licensing system. There is a legal distinction between a taxi and a PHV in

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[21] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).

[22] Note that PHVs in London are not yet fully licensed and this UK-wide figure is an estimate based on the ratio of drivers to vehicles outside London.

[23] Department for Transport: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales, 2001 – 2002.The increase is a combination of increasing numbers of taxis in LAs without quantity controls, more LAs removing quantity controls and the limited release of licences in LAs with quantity controls.

these parts of the UK and both forms of vehicle are subject to a separate licensing regime. Taxis are licensed to 'ply for hire' whereas PHVs are not. This means that taxis can pick up passengers from the street or at a taxi rank and make a contract there and then to carry a passenger, whereas PHVs can only pick up passengers who have pre-arranged a journey by making a booking either by telephone or at an operator's office. Taxis may also accept pre-arranged bookings.

3.19 In Northern Ireland there is a single licensing regime that applies to all 'public service vehicles', which includes vehicles used for public and private hire and buses. However, there are two main types of vehicle licence in the taxi and private hire sector: a 'public hire taxi licence'[24] and a 'private hire taxi licence'. A 'public hire taxi' is permitted to ply for hire in the same way as a licensed taxi in the rest of the UK. A 'private hire taxi' offers the same services as a PHV in the rest of the UK. There are additional byelaws to allow conditions to be attached to public hire licences in the City of Belfast only.

3.20 In practice, the distinction between the two types of 'taxi' in Northern Ireland has the same effect as the distinction between taxis and PHVs in the rest of the UK. For simplicity, where appropriate, references to taxis in this report should be read as including Northern Irish public hire taxis and references to PHVs should be taken to include Northern Irish private hire taxis.

Types of licence

3.21 For taxis there are two types of licence: a vehicle licence and a driver's licence. The vehicle licence is issued to the owner of the taxi, and in England and Wales outside London it can be transferred to a new owner on the sale or other transfer of the vehicle, as long as the new owner's name is registered with the LA[25]. In London, Scotland and Northern Ireland such transfer is not permitted save in exceptional circumstances,

[24] There are two categories of public hire licence: one for operating within the City of Belfast (a Belfast Public Hire licence); and one for operating outside Belfast only (a Restricted Public Hire licence).

[25] This was established in the case of **Weymouth BC ex p. Teletax (Weymouth) Ltd** [1947] 1 All ER 779.

but vehicle licences still change hands by other mechanisms.[26] There is no separate requirement for an operator's licence to be held by the person that runs a taxi business. Furthermore, the owner of a taxi vehicle and the licensed driver can be separate people.

3.22 For PHVs, in England (including London) and Wales there are three types of licence: a vehicle licence, a driver's licence and an operator's licence. The operator is the person that accepts bookings and with whom the customer makes a contract for carriage. The actual services can be provided either by licensed PHV owners who are also licensed drivers or by licensed drivers who rent a licensed vehicle. Consequently the operator may be a different person from the driver.

3.23 In Scotland and Northern Ireland there are two kinds of PHV licence: a vehicle licence and a driver's licence. There is no requirement for a PHV operator's licence.

Levels of regulation

3.24 In England and Wales outside London and in Scotland there are two levels of regulation: primary enabling legislation grants LAs licensing powers subject to certain conditions; LAs then set more detailed requirements in byelaws and/or licence conditions. In England outside London the LAs are district councils and unitary councils. In Wales they are county councils and county borough councils, and in Scotland they are councils. For simplicity this report refers throughout to LAs rather than to local authorities of a particular type.

3.25 In London, separate statutes contain the main provisions relating to taxis, and detailed licensing conditions are set out in London Cab Orders issued by Transport for London (TfL), which is the LA.[27] A PHV licensing regime was introduced in London in 1998.[28] Regulations under this Act have been put in place which set out detailed licensing conditions.

3.26 In Northern Ireland, the licensing regime is set out in Orders and Regulations that apply only in Northern Ireland. Licensing is carried out centrally by the Department of the Environment.

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[26] For example by using a company as the licence holder for the vehicle, or through negotiation with the LA.
[27] Transport for London is the integrated body responsible for London's transport system.
[28] By the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.

Categories of regulation

3.27 There are three broad categories of regulation applying to the UK market for taxi and PHV services: quantity regulation, quality and safety regulation and fare regulation.

Quantity regulation

3.28 Quantity regulation applies to taxi vehicle licences. It does not apply to taxi driver's licences or to any of the three kinds of PHV licence. The application of quantity controls across the geographic areas in the UK is as follows:

- **England and Wales outside London** – LAs can, but do not have to, limit the number of taxi licences they issue.[29] Fifty-five per cent of LAs (accounting for 51 per cent of taxi vehicles) do not use quantity controls.[30] If an LA wishes to limit the number of taxis in its area, it must satisfy itself that there is 'no significant demand for the services of [taxis within its licensing area] which is unmet'.[31] To meet this requirement, those district councils that limit taxi numbers carry out 'unmet demand surveys'. The law does not place any requirements on LAs wishing to remove limits on taxi numbers – they are free to do so at any time.
- **London** – there is no quantity restriction of taxis as TfL does not have any express power to limit the number of taxi vehicle licences.
- **Scotland** – under primary legislation,' the grant of a taxi licence may be refused by a licensing authority for the purpose of limiting the number of taxis in respect of which licences are granted by them if, but only if, they are satisfied that there is no significant demand for taxis in their area which is unmet'.[32] Forty-six per cent of LAs (accounting for 35 per cent of taxi vehicles) do not restrict the

[29] Under section 37 Town Police Clauses Act 1847 as amended by section 16 Transport Act 1985.

[30] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B). This is a reduction from about 74 per cent in 1985. Goe, GA (1986), 'The taxi and hire care industry in GB in 1985', Transport and Road Research Laboratory Research Report 68.

[31] Section 37 Town Police Clauses Act 1847 as amended by section 16 Transport Act 1985.

[32] Under section 10(3) Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 as amended by the Transport Act 1985.

number of taxis in their area. These are predominantly rural authorities.

- **Northern Ireland** – there is no quantity regulation of taxis, as the Department of the Environment does not have the power to refuse taxi vehicle licences in order to restrict taxi numbers.

Quality and safety regulation

3.29 Quality and safety regulation applies to drivers (both of taxis and PHVs), to vehicles (both taxis and PHVs) and to PHV operators.

3.30 For drivers:

- **England and Wales outside London** – LAs may only license taxi drivers[33] and PHV drivers[34] on condition that they are satisfied that applicants are 'fit and proper' and that they have held a valid driving licence for at least twelve months. LAs set their own conditions of 'fitness'. These commonly include holding valid insurance, satisfying a criminal records check and any age and health requirements).
- **London** – TfL can (and does) prescribe conditions for the granting of taxi driver's licences.[35] Applicants must satisfy TfL that they are 'of good character and fit to act as a cab driver'.[36] TfL is in the process of introducing PHV licensing in London.[37] PHV driver licensing began in April 2003, but is in a transitional phase. TfL is required to grant a PHV driver's licence if the applicant is over the age of 21, has held a driving licence for at least three years and 'is a fit and proper person to hold a London PHV driver's licence';[38] TfL may set out further licensing conditions in administrative rules.
- **Scotland** – LAs can only grant taxi and PHV driver's licences to applicants who have held a driving licence for at least 12 months, and may require applicants to submit to medical examinations. For taxi driver's licences, LAs can require tests of knowledge and other matters relating to the operation of a taxi. [39]

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[33] Under section 46 Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and section 59 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
[34] Under section 51 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
[35] Under section 8 Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869.
[36] Paragraph 25, London Cab Order 1934.
[37] Under the Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.
[38] Under section 13(2) Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.
[39] Under section 13 Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

- **Northern Ireland** – the Department of the Environment must not license drivers of taxis and PHVs unless they have held a driving licence for at least 12 months and are 'fit and proper'[40]. Under separate regulations applicants must submit medical certificates and the Department of the Environment can refuse a licence if the applicant is not 'of good character.'[41]

3.31 For vehicles:

- **England and Wales outside London** – LAs may attach to the grant of a taxi vehicle licence such conditions as they consider 'reasonably necessary'.[42] For PHVs, LAs are required not to grant a licence unless they are satisfied that the vehicle is suitable in type, size and design for use as a PHV, is not of such design and appearance as to lead any person to believe that it is a taxi, is in suitable mechanical condition, safe, and comfortable and covered by a suitable insurance policy. [43]
- **London** – TfL can (and does) prescribe conditions for the grant of taxi vehicle licences.[44] TfL can refuse a taxi vehicle licence if the applicant fails to satisfy TfL that his vehicle conforms to the conditions of fitness set by TfL[45], known colloquially as the 'Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness'. Licensing of PHV vehicles in London has not yet begun, but TfL plan to introduce it in early 2004. When it does, TfL will be able to refuse a licence on the grounds relating to vehicle design, vehicle condition, and valid insurance. [46] The detail of the licensing framework for PHV vehicles is still being developed by TfL.
- **Scotland** – LAs must license taxi and PHV vehicles if they are satisfied that they are of suitable design, safe and covered by a suitable insurance policy. [47]

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[40] Under article 79A(3) Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.
[41] The Public Service Vehicles Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985.
[42] Under section 47 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act also allows district councils to regulate how taxis ' are to be furnished or provided' by byelaw.
[43] Section 48 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
[44] Under section 6 Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869.
[45] Under paragraph 7(3) of the London Cab Order 1934.
[46] Section 7(2) Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.
[47] Under section 10 Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

- **Northern Ireland** – the Department of the Environment must license taxi and PHV vehicles.[48] There are statutory requirements relating to the fitness, equipping and use of the vehicles.[49]

3.32 For operators:

- **England and Wales outside London** – PHV operators must be 'fit and proper', and LAs can attach to the grant of a licence 'such conditions as they may consider reasonably necessary'. [50]
- **London** – prior to granting a PHV operator's licence TfL must be satisfied that the applicant is a 'fit and proper person' to hold the licence.[51] There are further licensing conditions set by regulation, relating e.g. to insurance and previous convictions. [52]
- **In Scotland and Northern Ireland** – there is no power to licence PHV operators.

Fare regulation

3.33 All four regimes allow fares to be regulated:

- **England and Wales outside London** – LAs are empowered to set fares for taxis, but not for PHVs;[53] According to case law, the fares set by LAs in this way are maximum fares – it is open to taxi drivers to set lower rates if they wish. [54]
- **London** – TfL can, with the Mayor's approval, fix rates and fares for taxis by means of a London Cab Order. [55]
- **Scotland** – LAs must fix and review scales for the fares and other charges in connection with the hire of a taxi. [56]

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[48] Under article 60 Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.
[49] The Public Service Vehicles Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1985 and the Public Service Vehicles (Conditions of Fitness, Equipment and Use) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995.
[50] Under section 55 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
[51] Under section 3(3) Private Hire Vehicles (London) Act 1998.
[52] Under the Private Hire Vehicles (London) (Operators' Licences) Regulations 2000.
[53] Section 68 Town Police Clauses Act 1847 empowers district councils to use byelaws to fix fares for taxis by time and/or distance. Section 65 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act empowers district councils that have adopted its provisions to fix rates or fares on a time and/or distance basis, and all other charges in connection with the hire of a vehicle, by means of a table of fares.
[54] **R v Liverpool City Council ex p. Curzon Limited** 12 November 1993 CO/1338/91 QBD, unreported.
[55] Section 9 Metropolitan Public Carriage Act 1869.
[56] Under section 17(2) Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

- **Northern Ireland** – the Department of the Environment can make byelaws to fix the maximum and minimum fares to be charged by taxi and PHV drivers for passengers and luggage.[57] Byelaws only fix fares for taxis in Belfast.

[57] Under section 65 of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

4 REVIEW OF QUANTITY REGULATION

Introduction and summary

4.1 This chapter examines the effect that quantity controls have on the supply of taxi services. PHVs are not subject to quantity controls anywhere in the UK. Taxis are. Our analysis therefore looks only at taxis.

4.2 The historical origin of quantity controls lie in Royal Proclamations by Charles I in the 1630s.[58] One of the purposes of these proclamations was to restrict the number of hackney carriages in London following complaints that they caused street congestion and petitions by the Company of Watermen who feared that this new form of hired transport would deprive them of their livelihoods.[59]

4.3 Quantity controls on taxis in England and Wales currently have their basis in the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and were likely introduced as a form of traffic restraint – to avoid streets becoming congested by coaches and horses. As amended by the Transport Act 1985 they allow LAs in England and Wales outside London to limit the number of taxi vehicle licences issued. In Scotland, the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 gives LAs equivalent powers. Neither TfL in London nor the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland has powers to restrict the number of taxi vehicle licences issued.

4.4 A fuller explanation of the legislation surrounding taxi and PHV licensing is at annexe A.

4.5 To assess the effect of the regulation we have looked at the impact quantity controls have on consumers. At present, 45 per cent of UK LAs restrict the number of taxi vehicle licences granted.[60] In carrying out our assessment we have, therefore, been able to compare taxi services in areas with and without restrictions. We have also been able to study the experience of LAs that have removed quantity controls and to examine international examples where regulations have been liberalised.

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[58] The first of these was 'A Proclamation for the restraint of excessive carriages to the destruction of the High Wayes' [1 November 1635], Proclamations, II Chronological Series, Charles I. [1625 – 1649].

[59]Pratt, E., A. *A History of Inland Transport and Communication in England*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co ltd. London, 1912.

[60] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).

4.6 The research we commissioned to aid us in this assessment is at annexes C, D, H, I, J and K.

4.7 In summary we have found that, all other things being equal, applying quantity controls has the following effects on the supply of taxis:

- there are fewer taxis per head of the population
- people wait longer for taxis
- people often have to use less suitable transportation as an alternative to taxis. This has safety implications
- a shortage premium on taxi vehicle licences is often created, and
- waiting lists to acquire a taxi vehicle licence can be long.

4.8 This has led us to conclude that quantity controls do not serve the best interests of consumers. They restrict them from securing the services they want and also impede those wanting to become taxi drivers from doing so.

4.9 **We therefore recommend that the legislative provisions allowing licensing authorities to impose quantity controls should be repealed. In the meantime, we recommend that licensing authorities with quantity controls remove them.**

4.10 This chapter looks at these issues in more detail. Section 1 looks at the extent to which quantity controls are currently applied. Section 2 examines the effect quantity controls have on supply. Section 3 looks at the effect quantity controls have on the users of taxis, section 4 looks at the effect on suppliers of taxi services, and section 5 looks at some of the arguments put forward in favour of quantity controls. Section 6 gives our conclusions and recommendations.

Section 1: the application of quantity controls

Who applies quantity controls?

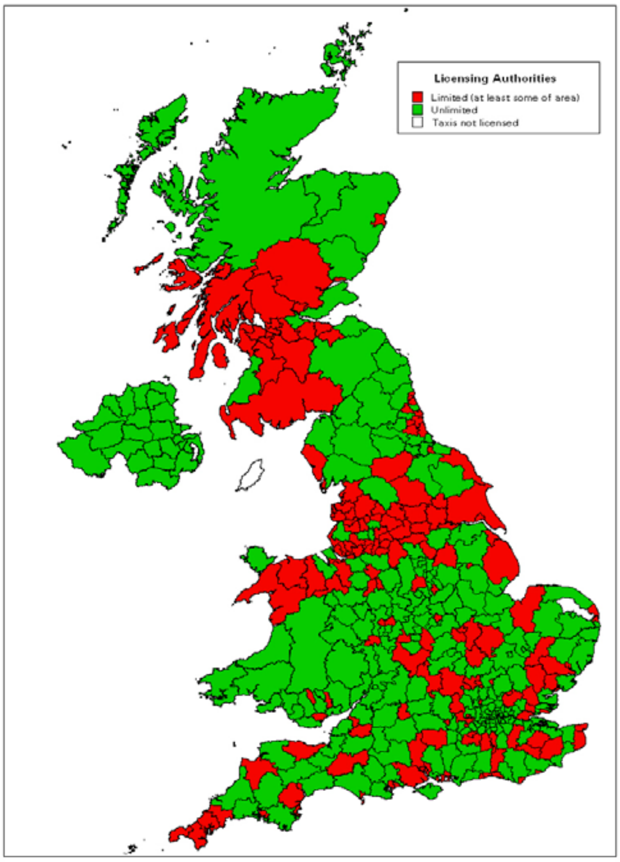
4.11 In England and Wales outside London and in Scotland the decision whether or not to restrict taxi numbers is taken by the local LA, and practice varies considerably across the country. The breakdown of the proportion of LAs applying quantity controls in urban, rural and mixed urban and rural areas is set out at table 4.1. The geographical distribution of these LAs is shown at figure 4.1.

TABLE 4.1: PERCENTAGE OF LAS WITH QUANTITY CONTROLS, BY TYPE, 2002

	Urban	Rural	Mixed	Total
Unrestricted	28	82	53	**55**
Restricted	72	18	47	**45**
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

Source: OFT, Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B)

FIGURE 4.1: DISTRIBUTION OF QUANTITY RESTRICTIONS ON TAXI VEHICLE NUMBERS IN UK LICENSING AUTHORITIES[61]



[61] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B); Department for Transport, Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales 2001-02, June 2003.

4.12 At present, 45 per cent of UK LAs restrict the number of taxi vehicle licences granted. This represents 52 per cent of all licensed taxis in the UK outside London.[62] The majority of LAs applying quantity controls are urban: 72 per cent apply quantity controls compared to only 18 per cent of rural LAs. There are no clear systematic regional differences in the proportion of LAs that apply quantity controls.

Unmet demand studies

4.13 If LAs are to refuse to issue further taxi licences they must first go through a process aimed at establishing that there is no 'significant demand that is unmet'.[63] They generally do this by carrying out an 'unmet demand' survey, on average every two to four years. The survey mainly involves observation at ranks of the demand for taxis, carried out over a representative period. If a survey suggests an unmet demand then the LA must issue the number of plates that the survey deems is required to meet the shortfall.

4.14 As a part of this study we have had access to data from a number of these surveys. We have also commissioned two similar surveys of our own to aid our analysis.[64]

Section 2: the effect of quantity controls on the supply of taxis

4.15 This section looks at the impact that quantity controls have on the supply of taxis and the relationship between taxi and PHV numbers as a result of these controls.

Taxi provision per head of population

4.16 Areas with quantity controls generally have significantly fewer taxis than those without.

4.17 Table 4.2 compares taxi and PHV provision per 1000 head of the population broken down into different types of LA.

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[62] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).
[63] Under section 16 Transport Act 1985.
[64] OXERA: Modelling the Effects of Taxi Regulation (annexe H).

TABLE 4.2: AVERAGE NUMBER OF TAXIS AND PHVS PER 1,000 OF THE POPULATION

		Restrictions on taxi numbers		
Type of LA		**Unrestricted**	**Restricted**	**Total**
All	Taxis	1.22	0.94	1.08
	PHVS	1.01	2.01	1.46
	All vehicles	2.21	2.93	2.53
	Ratio PHVs to Taxis	**0.83**	**2.14**	**1.35**
Urban	Taxis	1.51	1.14	1.23
	PHVS	1.43	2.42	2.17
	All vehicles	2.94	3.52	3.38
	Ratio PHVs to Taxis	**0.95**	**2.12**	**1.76**
Rural	Taxis	1.09	1.00	1.05
	PHVS	0.66	0.93	0.73
	All vehicles	1.71	1.93	1.75
	Ratio PHVs to Taxis	**0.61**	**0.93**	**0.72**
Mixed	Taxis	1.25	0.75	1.01
	PHVS	1.22	1.90	1.52
	All vehicles	2.47	2.65	2.53
	Ratio PHVs to Taxis	**0.98**	**2.53**	**1.5**
London	**Taxis**	**2.88**	**-**	**2.88**

Source: OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B)

Note: The number of taxis and PHVs per head does not sum exactly to the total number of vehicles because a small number of LAs did not provide data for both taxis and PHVs.

4.18 LAs without quantity controls have on average 30 per cent more taxis per head of population. This is true both for urban and rural LAs. In LAs with quantity controls the shortfall in taxi services gives rise to increased provision of PHVs. For example, Leeds (an authority with quantity controls) has 402 taxi vehicles but around 3,000 PHVs whilst Liverpool (now restricted but effectively de-restricted for many years) has 1,417 taxis but only 900 PHVs.[65] The reason behind the higher proportion of PHVs is that where taxi numbers are artificially limited and demand outstrips supply, PHVs come in to fill part of the gap. However, because PHVs cannot ply for hire in the street they cannot substitute for all taxi services.

4.19 The finding that quantity controls reduce the supply of taxis is strongly supported by the more detailed case studies, looking at areas over time which have removed quantity controls. For example, in the four years since the removal of quantity controls, Cambridge's licensed taxi fleet has grown by 46 per cent and Sheffield's has grown by 52 per cent. This has been accompanied by a drop in PHV numbers of around 25 and 20 per cent respectively.

4.20 Waiting lists for taxi vehicle licences are generally made up of licensed PHV owners or drivers and licensed taxi drivers who do not yet have a vehicle licence.[66] Removing quantity controls generally stimulates members of the PHV trade to move over to driving taxis. This can often mean that there is only a small increase in the total fleet of licensed taxis and PHVs when taxi limits are lifted. For example, although the number of taxis in Bristol increased by over 150 per cent following removal of quantity controls, the combined fleet of taxis and PHVs increased by only four per cent.[67] The total number of vehicles in Cambridge and Sheffield

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[65] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets – Case Study Analysis, July 2003 (annexe D).

[66] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B). Around two thirds of those on a waiting list for vehicle licences already hold a taxi driver licence, 44 per cent hold a PHV vehicle licence and 53 per cent hold a PHV driver licence – note that some hold both PHV vehicle and driver licences.

[67] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets – Case Study Analysis, July 2003 (annexe D).

following de-restriction also barely changed. As PHVs are more limited than taxis in the service they offer, the overall service to consumers improves, particularly in plying for hire.[68] This is examined in the next section.

Section 3: the effect of quantity controls on the users of taxis

4.21 Fewer taxis per head of population can impact consumers in a number of ways. In particular:

- those wanting to take taxis have to wait longer for the service
- it restricts choice and may force consumers into taking alternative, less suitable, modes of transport
- it increases public safety concerns.

Passenger waiting times

4.22 Consumers facing restricted supply of taxis in quantity controlled areas might, instead of opting for alternative modes of transport, find themselves having to wait longer for a taxi.

4.23 Waiting times are affected by a number of factors in addition to regulation, such as time of day, population density, and overall economic activity. In order to separate out the impact of quantity controls on waiting times we commissioned a study of waiting times to take account of these factors.[69]

4.24 Data on average passenger delay from consumer surveys and an indicator of excess demand from on-street unmet demand surveys were used as measures of waiting time. [70] The quantitative analysis made allowance for the circumstances in which the taxi was hired, such as the time of day and whether it was booked by phone or hailed in the street, and the socio-demographics (economic activity and population age and density) of the LA.

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[68] It should be noted that whilst there is a short term decrease in PHVs serving the telephone booking market the number often begins to rise again within a relatively short time. In Dublin, following the removal of quantity controls, PHV numbers dropped initially but were back to almost pre-deregulation levels within two years whilst taxi numbers steadily increased.

[69] OXERA: Modelling the Effects of Taxi Regulation (annexe H).

[70] The excess demand indicator shows the proportion of hours (across all major ranks in the LA) for which more than two people were waiting for a taxi in any one hour.

Analysis of waiting times

4.25 The central finding of this research, which accords with common sense, is that consumers wait longer for taxis in LAs with quantity controls. It also found that the stricter the entry control the higher the waiting time (some LAs with quantity controls issue a small number of licences each year while others may not issue a single licence for many years).

4.26 A straight comparison of waiting times in quantity controlled and uncontrolled areas, aimed at providing background on taxi usage, found that waiting times in restricted areas were 30 per cent lower than in unrestricted areas.[71] Further analysis by us indicated that this was largely explained by the fact that quantity controlled areas tended to be urban, rather than by the existence of quantity controls per se.[72]

4.27 So the straight comparison has to be adjusted statistically. The result was that, all other things being equal, in areas without quantity controls waiting times were between two and seven per cent lower than in those areas with quantity controls. At peak times the reduction in waiting time is even greater (10 per cent). These reductions, when considered in terms of the total number of journeys made each year, are considerable. A five per cent fall in waiting times amounts to around 2.5 million hours saved each year by UK consumers.[73] This gain does not include the gains of those who were deterred from waiting, in the expectation of not finding a taxi, in the first place.

Case studies

4.28 In addition to the econometric research, we also looked in detail at two LAs, Sheffield and Cambridge, where we conducted two new unmet demand studies. These LAs have recently removed quantity controls. We compared the results of the new studies with existing unmet demand

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[71] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets – Consumer Survey (annexe C). At ranks only.

[72] The data from quantity controlled LAs was also based on a small sample number – only six out of 58 LAs sampled had no quantity controls. The waiting times in one of these LAs, Worcester, based on consumer self reported times, were extremely large, despite contradictory evidence from a rank based study and from the local licensing officer.

[73] This number is obtained by applying the reduction in waiting time to the average passenger delay in restricted areas from the Halcrow consumer surveys (7.52 minutes) times the number of trips per person per year from the National Travel Survey (12) times the UK population living in LAs with quantity controls (25.5 million).

studies for these areas that had been carried out when the limits were still in place. This enabled useful comparisons of waiting times and customer satisfaction before and after removing quantity controls.

4.29 In Sheffield, removing quantity controls led to the number of taxis rising from 300 in 1998 to 457 in 2003. This resulted in a drop in passenger waiting times. The proportion of people waiting over five minutes for a taxi at ranks fell from 27 percent in 1998 to nine per cent in 2003. The overall average waiting time fell from 1.47 minutes to 1.23 minutes over the same period. Although this is a small decrease for individual journeys, if we take it across all journeys from ranks it equates to 4,420 hours of saved waiting time per year.[74]

4.30 In Cambridge, where the number of taxis increased from 147 in 1999 to 215 in 2003, passenger delay also decreased. The proportion of people waiting over five minutes at a rank for a taxi fell from 20 per cent in 1999 to six per cent in 2003. In 2003 the average passenger delay fell to 1.67 minutes from 2.29 minutes in the 1999 study. This equates to over 6,300 saved hours.[75]

Reduced choice

4.31 If there are fewer taxis available, consumer choice is restricted as to the type of transport they can use. Consumers who otherwise would have taken a taxi may have to opt for other, less preferred and less suitable, modes of transport.[76] Removing quantity restrictions could put an extra 15,000 taxis on the road.[77]

4.32 In a survey conducted by our consultants 15 per cent of consumers in all LAs said high waiting times were the main reason for not using taxis or PHVs.[78] This suggests that, were waiting times to drop, consumers who do not currently use taxis or PHVs would begin to. This was the case in

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[74] Calculated by taking the number of weekly passenger departures from ranks (21,250) observed by the 2003 Halcrow unmet demand survey.

[75] Some caution should be noted with regard to the results from the Cambridge survey since the 2003 exercise was conducted outside of University term time and a considerably lower number of journeys were observed.

[76] Aside from direct consumer detriment it may be argued that there are issues relating to the environment and traffic congestion. These are discussed later in the chapter.

[77] Estimated by calculating how many more taxi vehicles there would be if the number of taxis per head in authorities with quantity controls rose to the same level as those without numerical limits (as measured by the OFT Survey of Licensing Authorities, 2002 (see annexe B).

[78] OXERA: Consumer Survey Report, September 2003 (annexe I).

Sheffield where removal of quantity controls resulted in the numbers of passenger journeys from ranks increasing by eight per cent after de-restriction and waiting times dropping by 16 per cent (the number of taxis rose by 34 per cent).

4.33 Our case studies have shown that following the removal of quantity controls there has been a change in consumers' preferred use of taxis and PHVs. In particular, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion of passengers hailing a taxi in the street as opposed to ordering it by telephone. The proportion of respondents hailing taxis in the street increased from seven per cent to 44 per cent in Sheffield and from nine per cent to 30 per cent in Cambridge. The proportion pre-ordering taxis by telephone fell substantially and rank usage increased.

TABLE 4.3: METHOD OF TAXI AND PHV HIRE FOR LAST TRIP

	Sheffield		**Cambridge**	
	1998	**2003**	**1999**	**2003**
Hail in street	7%	44%	9%	30%
Rank	34%	20%	27%	37%
Telephone	59%	36%	64%	33%
All	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Halcrow, Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets - Case Study, table 4.5 (annexe D)

4.34 Overall, therefore, the case studies strongly support the proposition that consumers value and use the greater choice opened up by removing quantity controls.

Consumer safety

4.35 Restricting the supply of licensed taxis raises issues of public safety. As a part of our study we have spoken to and received submissions from several UK police authorities. Anecdotal evidence from some of these authorities suggest that a shortage of safe transport, particularly taxis available to ply for hire from the street or ranks, during the late evening contributes to difficulties faced by police in clearing city centres or public places. [79] The inability to clear these areas can be a contributory factor to violence and public disorder.

4.36 Licensing officers, police authorities and the taxi trade press that we have spoken to have also highlighted concerns about the safety issues surrounding consumers' use of illegal taxis and PHVs that are not licensed to ply for hire, especially during evening peak times. [80] When there is a lack of available taxis consumers have tended to use alternative methods to make their journey and this can include illegal taxis. We conducted a survey which showed that seven per cent of consumers who had taken some form of taxi or PHV in the last 12 months had used an illegal taxi or a PHV not licensed to ply for hire at least once.[81] This equates to approximately 1.8 million people per year.[82]

4.37 A large number of people are therefore placing themselves in danger from drivers who may not have undergone a police check and vehicles that may be unsafe.

4.38 Some consumers have also said that they have used PHVs which have been illegally plying for hire where a taxi was unavailable. PHVs illegally plying for hire invalidate their insurance, limiting means of redress in the event of an accident. Again, this creates a consumer protection problem.

4.39 We believe that the availability of more taxis, and strong enforcement of the licensing regulations, would help address these issues.

Section 4: the impact of quantity regulation on the supply side

4.40 Quantity controls also constrain individuals or businesses wishing to enter the market to serve consumers. Two sources of evidence from areas where quantity restrictions apply point to this conclusion: firstly, the unofficial premium value attached to taxi vehicle licences when taxi vehicles are sold; and secondly, the waiting lists for taxi vehicle licences. We now consider each of these in turn.

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[79] Lothian and Borders Police, Transport Operational Command Unit of the Metropolitan Police, Northumbria Police and Sussex Police.

[80] By illegal taxis we mean vehicles that are completely unlicensed.

[81] TNS: Taxi and PHV Omnibus Consumer Survey 2003 (annexe K).

[82] TNS: Taxis and PHV Omnibus consumer Survey 2003 (annexe K). Our survey recorded that 57 per cent of adults use taxis each year. The total number of adults who have used an illegal taxi is therefore 0.57 multiplied by 45,435,000 (the number of adults in the UK) multiplied by 0.07 = 1.8 million.

Taxi vehicle licence shortage premiums

4.41 As a result of their limited supply in areas where quantity restrictions apply, taxi vehicle licences have acquired an unofficial 'street' value when licensed taxi vehicles are sold. This value is unrelated to the administrative fee charged by the LA to cover the cost of issuing the licence – a fee which averages £170 for the initial application and £65 for renewals[83]. If taxi proprietors are willing to pay a premium to enter the market, this suggests that they consider that they can make sufficiently high profits to justify the shortage premium, whether because there is a ready supply of consumers waiting for services or because LAs have to set fares at a higher rate to reduce high waiting times. The precise level of the vehicle licence shortage premium is determined by a range of factors but the key one is quantity control.

4.42 Shortage premiums exist in spite of a free PHV market as PHVs cannot serve the rank and hail market. Premiums should only exist in areas where quantity restrictions apply in England and Wales outside London and in Scotland.

4.43 In our survey of UK licensing authorities we asked LAs to estimate the value of vehicle licence shortage premiums. The average estimated licence shortage premium (where it exists) for a licensed vehicle is around £16,500 (in addition to the cost of the taxi itself). The estimated values obtained are as high as £50,000 in Woking and Wycombe and £40,000 in Crawley, but more generally 50 per cent of estimated vehicle licence shortage premiums are between £7,500 and £25,000.[84]

4.44 It should be noted that these premiums are paid through private transactions between taxi proprietors and taxi drivers or others wishing to purchase a vehicle with its vehicle licence. The LA does not charge or receive the premium price when issuing a vehicle licence.

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[83] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).

[84] Halcrow: Valuation of Hackney Carriage Licence Figures, July 2003 (annexe E). Documentary evidence of the exact size of premiums is seldom available because these are private transactions. However licensing officers are reasonably confident of their estimates due to their close working proximity with the taxi trade.

Taxi vehicle licence waiting list

4.45 In half of the LAs with quantity controls, individuals applying for a taxi vehicle licence are placed on a waiting list and have to wait until they reach the top of the list before getting a licence (although some LAs have a ballot system to prevent taxi vehicle licences from being concentrated in the hands of one or two large fleet owners).[85] They remain on this waiting list until either more licences are issued or they are able to purchase a licensed taxi from someone leaving the trade. Some LAs, for example Woking, do not maintain a waiting list since they do not intend to issue new licences in the foreseeable future.

4.46 In LAs that apply quantity controls and have a waiting list there are, on average, 78 people waiting for taxi vehicle licences. In 10 per cent of LAs the number waiting for a vehicle licence exceeds the number of licences currently in circulation (table 4.4 shows the longest waiting lists by LA).

TABLE 4.4: LONGEST WAITING LISTS FOR VEHICLE LICENCES BY UK LOCAL AUTHORITY

Local Authority	Number of Licensed Taxis	Applicants on waiting list for a Taxi Vehicle Licence
Manchester	814	750
Dundee	507	400
Hull	170	376
Sunderland	284	279
Watford	63	205
Stoke	89	200
Crawley	79	170

Source: OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B)

4.47 Almost all applicants on the waiting list are currently part of the licensed taxi or private hire trade. About two thirds of those on waiting lists for taxi vehicle licences already hold a taxi driver licence, 44 per cent hold a PHV vehicle licence and 53 per cent hold a PHV driver licence.[86]

[85] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).
[86] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).

Section 5: arguments in favour of quantity controls

4.48 Our conclusion is that there is a strong case for removal of quantity controls. On the basis of the evidence, service to consumers is poorer with quantity controls . These controls stop consumers getting the service they prefer and they also stop potential entry by firms wishing to provide those services.

4.49 There is no clear economic rationale for quantity controls which appear to have been introduced in the 1630s primarily to prevent street congestion.

4.50 Notwithstanding this, in the course of this study we have come across a number of arguments which could potentially be put in favour of quantity controls. These are discussed below.

There is no significant unmet demand

4.51 One argument which has been put to us is that unmet demand tests ensure that quantity controls do not result in under supply to the market. We do not accept this argument for three reasons:

- it is not an argument to justify quantity controls, but one which says, at most, that they do not have a detrimental effect. If it cannot be shown that quantity controls serve a useful purpose the presumption should be that they are unnecessary
- our evidence shows that, despite unmet demand tests, there is considerable unmet demand
- we have looked carefully at unmet demand studies as part of our research, and do not consider that they accurately measure unmet demand for taxis.

4.52 Unmet demand studies do not properly assess latent demand (i.e. the passengers who would choose to go by taxi if more were available or waiting times were lower). Fifteen per cent of consumers in all LAs said high waiting times were the main reason for not using taxis or PHVs. In Sheffield, removal of quantity controls resulted in the numbers of passenger journeys from ranks increasing by eight per cent as the number of taxis increased by 34 per cent and waiting times dropped by 16 per cent.

4.53 Unmet demand studies focus heavily on unmet demand at ranks. They do not measure actual waiting times, or demand, from consumers hailing taxis in the street (some survey evidence attempts to do this by asking consumers to report from memory how long they waited for a taxi on the street, but more reliable observational data is not collected). Our study of both Sheffield and Cambridge LAs showed that after quantity controls were removed the proportion of passengers hailing a taxi in the street increased substantially.

Maintaining the quality of service

4.54 It is argued that without any limit on the quantity of vehicle licences the quality of both taxi vehicles and drivers will fall. Therefore consumers will receive a poorer quality of service.

4.55 As regards vehicles, the argument is that a rise in taxi numbers will cause vehicle quality to fall as the only proprietors to survive would be those which run lower quality vehicles and skimp on maintenance at the expense of safety. With drivers, although removing quantity controls may lead to more entry into the profession it is felt that it might also lead to more exit if there is an oversupply of taxis, leading to the loss of experienced drivers.

4.56 We reject these arguments on the basis that quality specifications and quantity limits are regulated separately. Given this, if quality controls are maintained, there is no evidence to show, and no reason to suppose, that the removal of quantity restrictions impact on quality. Our discussion of quality regulation is in chapter 5.

4.57 Our international study has shown that following the simultaneous removal of quantity **and** quality controls, fleet quality sometimes decreases as a consequence. Sweden is a prime example of this. It removed both quantity and quality regulations and saw a sharp rise in the number of taxis on the road, both substandard vehicles and those that would have previously met quality requirements. In 1995 the authorities reintroduced quality requirements and teams to enforce them which led to a plateau in taxi numbers and an increase in the quality of vehicles within the fleet. The Swedish experience shows risks of simultaneous quality and quantity de-restriction but not of quantity de-restriction alone.

4.58 In the UK a number of LAs have removed quantity controls while concurrently increasing fleet quality. When Cambridge removed quantity controls it introduced more stringent controls on age of vehicles and accessibility and saw overall quality of vehicles improve. Birmingham introduced wheelchair accessible vehicles and increased tightness on emission controls while removing quantity controls.

4.59 Neither does controlling the number of taxi vehicles guarantee driver experience or knowledge of the local area. LAs can manage driver quality directly through setting particular requirements for driver licensing, for example a geographical knowledge test appropriate to the locality.

4.60 In any event, and not only after the removal of quantity controls, the key to maintaining quality in the market is to ensure that both driver and vehicle (and PHV operators) are subject to sound quality controls that are backed up by robust enforcement.

4.61 The cost savings from removing the apparatus of quantity control (including unmet demand surveys) can boost the resources that LAs may have available for the enforcement of quality controls.

To ensure an adequate supply of taxis

4.62 Another potential argument is that, if drivers are unable to earn enough from taxi work, operators will take on other jobs and only undertake taxi work at evenings and weekends, when it is most profitable, leading to a lack of availability of taxis outside these periods.

4.63 Our analysis leads us to reject this argument, as does the experience of LAs that have de-restricted. When quantity controls are removed taxi supply increases. The evidence on waiting times shows that availability increases at all times of day. In any event it would run counter to common sense for the lifting of quantity controls to result in less supply.

To prevent drivers working longer hours

4.64 It is argued that increasing the number of taxis may lead to a fall in the revenue of drivers. Drivers must therefore work longer hours to maintain the same income which may have public safety implications.

4.65 The key argument here is that drivers may put themselves and passengers at risk if they work excessively long hours. In fact there is no statistically significant difference, when allowing for the type of LA, in the number of taxi accidents between areas where no quantity controls exist and areas where they do (see table 4.6).[87]

[87] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B). This is the number of taxi road traffic accidents involving personal injury, as a proportion of total accidents in LAs, including a correction for whether the licensing authority is urban or rural.

TABLE 4.6: TAXI ACCIDENTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF ALL ROAD TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS, 2001

	Restriction		
	Unrestricted	**Restricted**	**Total**
Type of LA:	**(%)**	**(%)**	**(%)**
Urban	2.4	2.8	**2.7**
Rural	0.9	0.6	**0.8**
Mixed	1.3	1.4	**1.4**
London	2.5	-	**2.5**
Total	**1.3**	**1.9**	**1.6**

Source: OFT analysis of Department for Transport Road Traffic Data (annexe B)

4.66 While there is no clear evidence of a problem in the UK this has been a concern in some international markets and a number of measures have been put into place specifically to prevent drivers working excessive hours following the removal of quantity controls.[88] For example, New Zealand controls driver rest periods through the use of a log book. In Sweden, the authorities log driver hours with an on-board computer.

4.67 It should also be noted that the Working Time Regulations 1998[89] apply to employed taxi and PHV drivers (who are classed as 'mobile workers') and impose a limit of an average working week of 48 hours (unless drivers agree to work longer) and adequate rest periods. These rules do not apply to self-employed taxi and PHV drivers.

4.68 To conclude, we do not consider that maintaining quality controls to protect drivers' incomes and hours of working is a valid argument on the facts. There are, in any case, alternative regulatory methods of preventing drivers working excessive hours to ensure driver and passenger safety.

[88] TOI: Impact of Taxi Market Regulation, an International Comparison, May 2003 (annexe J).
[89] S.I. 1998/1833, as amended by the Working Time (Amendment) Regulations 2003 to implement Council Directive 2000/34/EC (OJ No. L195, 1.8.20000, p.41).

To prevent overcrowding at ranks

4.69 Where the amount of rank space provided is limited, it is argued that removing quantity controls would lead to rank overcrowding and illegal parking. This could especially be the case in urban centres or LAs where the market is centred on focal points such as railway stations and when little space is available for expansion.

4.70 There is limited evidence to indicate that overcrowding has been a problem in LAs after the removal of quantity controls. Our case studies, however, show that where this is an issue, the market often adjusts with a smaller proportion of taxis waiting at ranks and a greater proportion plying for hire on the street or expanding to serve different areas. In Bristol, after the removal of quantity controls, it was noted that taxis were serving more residential areas which had previously not had any service.

4.71 While we accept that potential rank overcrowding is an issue for LAs without quantity controls, in our view it can be managed. For example new ranks or temporary ranks to cover weekend and evening peaks may be created. Marshals could also be used at peak times to help speed up traffic flow.

To reduce traffic congestion, air pollution and encourage public transport use

4.72 Another set of arguments is that limiting the supply of taxis encourages use of public transport, and reduces congestion and air pollution.

4.73 Again we do not find these arguments supportable:

- our consumer research shows that if consumers are unable to get a taxi, they will generally not switch to public transport, nor to environmentally friendly and congestion reducing modes of transport, but would tend instead to use their car
- congestion and pollution caused by motor vehicles is a huge problem of which taxis are only a small part. These problems are already dealt with directly through fuel taxation and through initiatives such as congestion charging and pedestrianisation of city centres. Since taxis are often used in conjunction with other public transport (for example at the start and end of train journeys) or at times when other public transport is not available, restricting taxis could even decrease other public transport use.

4.74 Our evidence and analysis suggest that limiting taxi numbers will not effectively address these issues.

To protect licence shortage premiums

4.75 Past experience in the UK and elsewhere has shown that when quantity restrictions are removed in an area, the privately traded value of shortage premiums on taxi vehicle licences falls away. Vehicle licences become readily available provided that applicants and their vehicles meet quality and safety conditions, and the unofficial scarcity value that previously existed in the licence (over and above the licence fees charged by the LAs to cover administrative costs, and the value of the vehicle) disappears. In practice this means that taxi vehicle licence holders who privately purchased a licensed taxi before quantity restrictions were lifted cannot recoup the cost of the licence shortage premium when they sell their licensed taxis after the quantity restrictions have been lifted[90]. As noted in paragraph 4.43 above, in the UK the average licence shortage premium in areas where quantity restrictions apply is estimated at £16,500.

4.76 It is argued that lifting quantity restrictions is unfair on those licence holders who have paid a licence shortage premium to enter the taxi market during times when quantity restrictions were in place, as they bear the burden of being unable to recoup this cost when they exit the market.

4.77 We have considered this view and conclude that protection of taxi vehicle licence shortage premiums does not justify retaining quantity controls. In economic terms the premium value attached to vehicle licences in quantity restricted areas is an artificial one, created by the constraints on the market caused by regulation. The premium value does not relate to any effort of the licence holder to improve service levels and quality, and therefore the licence holder has not 'earned' it. Moreover, it is unofficial – it is unrecognised by statute, and legal ownership of the licence, and the licence plates attached to the taxi vehicle, remains at all times with the LA that issued them.

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[90] This issue will not arise for licence holders who were licensed directly by the LA prior to the lifting of quantity restrictions, rather than purchasing a licence with a licensed vehicle and having the licence holder details changed. Direct licensees will not have paid any shortage premium to acquire the licence.

4.78 Since section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 came into force on 6 January 1986, LAs in England and Wales outside London and in Scotland have been permitted to restrict taxi licence quantities only if they reasonably consider that there is no significant unmet demand for taxis within their areas. LAs may lift quantity restrictions whether or not there is unmet demand for taxis, and must lift quantity restrictions (whether permanently or temporarily) if there is significant unmet demand. In 1985 the Department of Transport, the Scottish Development Department and the Welsh Office suggested [91] that LAs should consider lifting quantity restrictions. As we have already noted, quantity restrictions are now only in place in 45 per cent of UK LAs, and several LAs have lifted quantity restrictions since the Transport Act 1985 came into force. Taxi licence holders in areas where quantity restrictions apply have therefore been aware for some time that these could be lifted at any time by their LA.

4.79 In our view the protection of certain taxi licence holders from a one off loss of rental value that could lawfully occur under existing legislation does not justify maintaining the market inefficiencies caused by taxi licence quantity restrictions.

4.80 It has been suggested in the past[92] that if quantity restrictions are lifted, this should be phased in to offer some protection for existing licence holders enjoying licence shortage premiums in areas where quantity restrictions apply. We considered this as a possibility and rejected it on the basis that:

- phasing in does not address the competition problems in the market place quickly enough

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[91] In a 4 December 1985 joint circular on the Transport Act 1985, the Department of Transport, the Scottish Development Department and the Welsh Office stated: 'District councils may wish to review their policy on the control of taxi numbers in the light of [section 16 Transport Act 1985]. Limitation of taxi numbers can have many undesirable effects – an insufficiency of taxis, either generally or at particular times or in particular places; insufficient competition between the providers of taxi services, to the detriment of their customers; and prices for the transfer of taxi licences from one person to another which imply an artificial restriction of supply.' Circular3/85 Department of Transport, Circular 32/85 Scottish Development Department, Circular 64/85 Welsh Office, paragraph 27.

[92] See, e.g. the Fourth Report of the House of Commons Transport Committee on Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles, Volume I, Report and Minutes of Proceedings, Session 1993-94, 30 March 1994, paragraph 140.

- there is no economic justification for quantity controls or licence shortage premiums, and it is more appropriate to remove them altogether than to allow them to continue in a modified form
- it will be difficult for LAs to carry out a fair selection of new licensees when limited numbers of new licences are issued during the phasing in period.

4.81 We are aware of an unsuccessful legal challenge[93] brought by an individual taxi licence holder who suffered loss of the value of the licence shortage premium he had paid to acquire his licensed taxi when his LA deregulated quantity controls.[94] We believe that the long term benefit to society of lifting quantity restrictions, in terms of lower waiting times, improved safety and lower costs of market entry, outweigh the short term interests of existing taxi licence holders in maintaining the artificial value of taxi licences. In reaching this conclusion, our function has been to report primarily on the competition effects of taxi regulation and its effect on the welfare of consumers of taxi services. We have not considered the social welfare effects of lifting quantity restrictions on particular licence holders or classes of licence holder. When deciding whether to follow our recommendation, Government will no doubt weigh in the balance any social welfare issues for particular licence holders or classes of licence holder that come to light in any consultation that may be held.

Section 6: conclusion and recommendations

4.82 Comparing licensing areas with quantity restrictions with those without, we conclude that quantity controls have a clear detrimental impact on the public which shows up in the following ways:

- shifting consumers onto less preferred and/or suitable modes of transport
- increasing waiting times
- compromising public safety.

4.83 We have found no cogent rationale for quantity controls to balance against these detriments. Nonetheless, we have examined a number of

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[93] **R (Royden) v Metropolitan Borough of Wirral** [2002] EWHC 2484. This was a challenge, in part, under Article 1 of the First Protocol to the European Convention on Fundamental Rights and Freedoms.

[94] Further information on this case and on the basis of the challenge is set out in Annex A.

arguments which have been advanced in the course of our study. We find each of these arguments to be unsupported by the evidence and/or outweighed by the clear benefits of de-restriction.

4.84 In our view, the existence of quantity controls causes consumer detriment and does not address any problems in the market that cannot be more effectively addressed by other means. We therefore conclude that the removal of quantity controls will benefit consumers, particularly through the higher availability of taxis and lower waiting times. In our view, the best service to consumers will be achieved by enabling consumer demand, rather than regulations, to determine a level of taxi service supply that meets the needs of the public.

Recommendation based on this assessment

4.85 **We therefore recommend that the legislative provisions allowing licensing authorities to impose quantity controls should be repealed. In the meantime, we recommend that LAs with quantity controls remove them.**

5 REVIEW OF QUALITY AND SAFETY REGULATION

Introduction

5.1 This chapter reviews the regulations relating to quality and safety controls. LAs have the power to regulate quality and safety in relation to the issue of taxi vehicle and driver licences and PHV vehicle, driver and operator licences.

5.2 In addition, the implementation of section 32 of the DDA95 will impose further quality regulation by requiring disabled access to certain licensed taxi vehicles.

5.3 To assess the impact of quality and safety regulations we have:

- looked at the rationale behind quality and safety controls and the protection they afford consumers
- looked at the effect quality and safety controls have in practice
- looked at what consumers expect in the way of quality and safety
- consulted with groups representing older people and the disabled and considered the particular needs of these consumers.

5.4 We have found that consumers value quality and safety controls for vehicles and drivers which address matters that are difficult for them to judge when hiring a taxi (e.g. the technical safety of the vehicle and the competence of the driver). Quality and safety controls are considered necessary to ensure passenger safety and security. Our central conclusion is, therefore, that quality and safety controls should be maintained and effectively enforced.

5.5 However, it is important that quality and safety requirements are applied proportionately to avoid unnecessary barriers to competition. In this regard we have some concerns about the inconsistent application of quality and safety specifications by LAs. We believe that local regulation should match local requirements and when deciding quality and safety specifications, LAs should consider the needs of consumers and the effect of the proposed specifications on the availability of taxis and PHVs. LAs should try to ensure that any quality and safety specifications set do not go beyond what is required to achieve this policy aim.

5.6 For example, the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness (MCF), where applied by an LA, set detailed vehicle specifications such as a maximum turning circle, a maximum step height and wheelchair accessibility to certain specifications. The MCF were written expressly to meet the needs of

London but have been adopted by other LAs so that they cover 44 per cent of taxi vehicles in the UK.[95] Only certain models of vehicle currently meet these requirements. These are significantly more expensive than the saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles allowed by many LAs. There is a danger that the additional cost of MCF compliant vehicles may raise prices and deter entry to the market thus limiting supply and leading to a poorer service for consumers.

5.7 Our view is that the appropriateness of quality and safety controls in the UK taxi and PHV services market is best decided at the local level. LAs would be better placed to decide on proportionate levels of quality and safety control if they had access to more information about common experience and best practice.

5.8 **We therefore recommend that the Department for Transport promote and disseminate local best practice in applying quality and safety regulations involving the Scottish Executive and the Department of the Environment (NI) in this process. The purpose of this would be to assist LAs to apply standard quality and safety attributes in a proportionate manner.**

5.9 In applying quality and safety regulation LAs should carefully consider the needs of disabled consumers. Part V of the DDA95, which has yet to be implemented, is intended to help ensure that disabled people, including those who wish to remain in their wheelchairs, can get into and out of, and travel in, licensed taxis in safety and reasonable comfort. The DfT has recently announced its proposals and timetable for implementing the taxi accessibility requirements in Part V DDA95.[96] Prior to implementation, the power to regulate taxis and PHV in a way that meets the needs of disabled passengers remains with LAs. Our research has shown large differences in the way LAs address disability issues with regard to taxis. A minority of LAs require their taxis to be wheelchair accessible and an even smaller number require taxi drivers to undergo some form of disability awareness training.

5.10 Those LAs which have required taxis to be wheelchair accessible have primarily followed the specifications laid down by the MCF. These

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[95] OFT Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).
[96] These regulations will not apply to PHVs.

vehicles, however, are not necessarily the most accessible for those with impaired mobility not needing a wheelchair.

5.11 In setting quality and safety controls LAs should closely consult with disability groups to ensure their needs are correctly recognised.

5.12 We would also note that if quantity restrictions apply to vehicles suitable for disabled passengers, then those restrictions may be particularly detrimental to the supply of taxis to disabled people.

5.13 The rest of this chapter looks at these issues and the background to our recommendation in more detail. Section 1 looks at the rationale behind quality and safety regulations, section 2 looks at existing quality and safety regulations, section 3 assesses the impact of quality and safety regulations, section 4 looks at issues surrounding disabled access to taxi services and the potential impact of the DDA95 and section 5 gives our conclusions.

Section 1: why regulate quality and safety?

The aims of quality regulation

5.14 In the 1993 Green Paper[97] the Department for Transport (DfT) stated that any regulation relating to taxis and PHVs needed to be justified against one or more of four specific objectives:

- **the safety and security of passengers, drivers and others on the road** - it is not unreasonable for passengers to expect the vehicles in which they travel to be safe and for the driver be competent and a fit and proper person to hold a licence. In addition to these basic safety requirements, LAs may also wish to impose regulations to improve the quality of service provided to the travelling public, for example stipulations on the size and design of the vehicle
- **consumer protection** – many of these important aspects of safety and security cannot be judged by passengers when hiring a taxi or PHV. Regulations ensure that consumers are protected
- **accessibility** – especially for those with impaired mobility (including those disabled passengers who use and wish to remain in their wheelchairs) so as to ensure they can get into and out of, and travel

[97] Department for Transport: Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles: A Consultation Paper on the Future of taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Services in England and Wales, 1993.

in, taxis in reasonable safety and comfort. Without quality regulations vehicle licence holders and applicants may not choose to purchase wheelchair accessible vehicles because they are unable to derive extra income to compensate them for their additional investment

- **environmental protection** – to control emissions. It may be possible to reduce these through specific methods such as fitting oxidation catalysts or converting taxis to run on LPG, but, given the general improvements in fuel efficiency in cars over time, levels of taxi vehicle emissions are most often controlled through limits on vehicle age.

The rationale for quality regulation

5.15 The public care a great deal about the quality of service provided to them. Our survey showed that passengers rate the quality and safety of the driver and vehicle as the most important features of service ahead of the fare they are charged.[98]

5.16 When hiring a taxi or PHV passengers are unable to judge important aspects of the quality of either cars or drivers and must, in effect, take them on trust. For example, on entering a taxi (except in limited cases) a passenger is unlikely to be in a position to establish the roadworthiness of the vehicle or whether the driver has valid insurance or, indeed, a criminal record.

5.17 In a market with no quality regulation and where the level of repeat business is not high, the fact that passengers cannot determine many aspects of quality and safety could create the incentive and the opportunity for operators or drivers to skimp on quality and safety, particularly if acquiring a particular level of quality and safety involves extra cost. An example of this is geographical knowledge of an area. When hiring a taxi or a PHV consumers are unable to judge whether a driver has a good geographical knowledge or not. A driver must often pay to obtain this knowledge by studying for and taking knowledge tests. In a situation where passengers cannot immediately determine the level of a driver's knowledge a driver might decide not to incur the costs of training. Thus consumers would be worse off.

[98] OXERA: Consumer Survey Report (annexe I).

5.18 We believe that there are strong reasons for regulating quality and safety to ensure that these important, but usually imperceptible, standards are maintained.

Section 2: existing quality and safety controls

Regulatory powers of licensing authorities

5.19 Quality and safety controls apply to taxi vehicle and driver licences, and to PHV vehicle, driver and operator licences. Aspects of quality that are regulated generally fall within the areas of service, safety and technical efficiency. Fuller details on the regulatory controls are given at annexe A.

5.20 LAs have considerable regulatory flexibility in applying quality and safety controls and this flexibility is reflected in the differing levels of control in different LAs. Even so, our research has shown common areas of regulation (although the strictness of the regulation can vary from LA to LA). The rest of this section looks at the application of quality and safety controls to taxi vehicles and drivers and to PHV vehicles, drivers and operators.

Quality regulation of the licensed taxi trade

Vehicles

5.21 Our study has shown that the following quality and safety controls are commonly applied to vehicles:

- **age limits** – a maximum age is stipulated in 45 per cent of LAs that responded to our survey – the average limit is nine years [99]
- **vehicle testing at regular intervals** – this is required in 90 per cent of LAs, mostly six monthly
- **vehicle identification** – mainly relating to the provision of a roof sign for taxis
- **fitting of taximeters** – this is required for taxis in 93 per cent of LAs
- **specification of minimum engine size** – this occurs in 50 per cent of LAs.

5.22 Twelve per cent of LAs (covering approximately 44 per cent of all taxis) stipulate that all licensed taxi vehicles in their area should comply with

[99] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).

the MCF.[100] The conditions prescribe, for example, wheelchair access, a turning circle of 7.62 metres, a partition separating passenger from driver, a maximum step height, door height and a maximum width and height of the vehicles. Only two manufacturers currently produce vehicles that meet all these specifications.

5.23 Fourteen per cent of LAs (covering approximately 50 per cent of taxis) have a fully wheelchair accessible taxi fleet. The appropriateness of a vehicle for use as a wheelchair accessible taxi tends to be judged at a local level on a case by case basis. There are companies operating in the UK that specialise in adapting vehicles to operate as licensed taxis. All are wheelchair accessible though none meet all the provisions for the MCF. They do, however, supply vehicles in those LAs that have not adopted the MCF or have not required all the provisions of the MCF to be met.

Drivers

5.24 There is a duty on LAs[101] only to grant licences to drivers who are 'fit and proper'. As with vehicles, whilst there are considerable variations in application, there are a number of common regulations imposed on licensed taxi drivers including:

- **a criminal record check** – required by all LAs that license taxis
- **a medical examination** – required by 94 per cent of LAs
- **a topographical knowledge test** – required by 60 per cent of LAs, although they vary greatly in scope
- **minimum driver age limits** – 56 per cent of LAs require drivers to be 21 or over.

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[100] Department for Transport: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales, 2001-02

[101] This is the case for LAs in England and Wales outside London and in Northern Ireland. In London, TfL has a **power**, rather than a duty, not to license applicants if it is not satisfied that they are 'of good character and fit to act as cab drivers' (under paragraph 25 London Cab Order 1934). In Scotland, LAs can require tests of knowledge and other matters relating to the operation of taxis.

Quality regulation of the private hire trade

Vehicles

5.25 The vehicle standards applied by LAs in the private hire trade are generally less onerous than for taxis. Having said this, 25 per cent of (predominantly rural) LAs apply quality conditions for PHVs that are similar to those for taxis (with the exception of signage – the difference between taxis and PHVs must be visibly apparent).

5.26 The conditions attached to PHVs generally concern the basic characteristics of the vehicle (e.g. that it should have four doors) and its roadworthiness. As with licensed taxi vehicles, around half of LAs have an age limit for PHVs.[102]

Drivers

5.27 There are fewer differences between the taxi and PHV driver licensing regimes, with around 56 per cent of LAs in England and Wales having a dual licensing scheme - albeit often with different topographical knowledge tests - for taxi and PHV drivers.[103] A dual licensing scheme either means that there is one licence which entitles the holder to drive both a taxi and PHV or that there are separate licences but the conditions, apart from a knowledge test, are identical.

5.28 Knowledge tests are required for PHV drivers in 48 per cent of LAs, compared with 60 per cent for taxi drivers. Where the test is mandatory for both taxi and PHV drivers, the required level of knowledge is higher for taxi drivers in 22 per cent of LAs and the same for taxi drivers and PHV drivers in the remaining 78 per cent of authorities. All LAs require taxi and PHV drivers to undergo criminal record checks.

Operators

5.29 The granting of an operator's licence in England and Wales (operator's licences do not exist in Scotland and Northern Ireland) is conditional on the applicant being a fit and proper person to hold a licence. This generally includes a criminal record check.

5.30 Other requirements LAs commonly place on the licence holder include detailed requirements for maintaining records of journeys booked and

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[102] NATPHLEO: Taxi Regulation in England, 2000
[103] Department for Transport :Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales, 2001-2

vehicles used, proof of planning permission and radio transmission licences where appropriate and, in the case of operators who invite the public to make bookings in person, that the operator's premises are suitable for carrying out a private hire business.

Section 3: assessment of the current system

5.31 As mentioned above, a key rationale for quality regulation is the safety and security of passengers, drivers and others on the road. Our research suggests that quality and safety controls are generally working well in this regard though it is important they are supported by effective enforcement. While we have some anecdotal evidence of individual failings we have no systematic evidence that taxi or PHV vehicles are unsafe or that drivers do not undergo police checks when licences are issued.

5.32 However, it is important that quality and safety controls are applied in a proportionate manner. Our study has highlighted substantial variation across LAs. In some LAs potential drivers may face a topographical knowledge test, an enhanced driving test and regular health checks. In other LAs any or all of these may not apply. For vehicles, differing age limits are allowed, depending upon the LA. These sorts of variations can easily occur in neighbouring authorities. For example, the maximum age for re-licensing a taxi in East Hertfordshire is 15 years. In North Hertfordshire it is seven years.

5.33 While we believe that local regulation should match local needs there is a question over whether quality and safety controls are striking the right balance between consumer protection and the costs incurred in satisfying the quality and safety requirements.

5.34 An example of this is the MCF. As mentioned above, these were written expressly to meet the needs of London but have been adopted by other LAs so that they cover 44 per cent of taxi vehicles in the UK. Only certain models of vehicle currently meet these requirements. These are significantly more expensive than the saloon cars and wheelchair accessible vehicles allowed by many LAs.[104] There is a danger that the

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[104] For example, a new London-style black cab costs approximately £28000 while a modest new four-door saloon costs between £8000 and £14000.

additional cost of MCF compliant vehicles may raise prices and deter entry to the market thus limiting supply and leading to a poorer service for consumers.

5.35 An example where the requirements set are possibly too low are topographical knowledge tests. Results from our consumer survey indicate that passengers in taxis and PHVs consider it important that their driver has a good geographical knowledge of the area,[105] yet a knowledge test forms part of the licence procedure in only 60 per cent of LAs for taxi drivers[106] and 52 per cent of LAs for PHV drivers.[107]

Section 4: disabled access to taxis and phv services

5.36 This section looks at the issues surrounding disabled access to taxi and PHV services and the impact that quality regulation can have in this area.

Access for disabled people

Taxi usage by disabled people

5.37 Taxis and PHVs are used more frequently by disabled people (67 per cent more) than non-disabled people, according to a MORI survey.[108] The same survey also concluded that disabled people find taxis and PHVs the easiest mode of transport to use because of their flexibility. However serious problems remain for some disabled people.[109]

5.38 Approximately 8.6 million people in the UK are disabled,[110] and it has been estimated that five per cent of these use a wheelchair some of the time.[111]

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[105] OXERA: Consumer Survey Report, September 2003 (annexe I).
[106] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).
[107] NATPHLEO: Taxi Regulation in England, 2000.
[108] Attitudes of Disabled People to Public Transport, MORI 2002, undertaken for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.
[109] In using the term 'disabled' we have taken the meaning as given in section 33 of the DDA95 which defines a disabled person as someone with 'a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.'
[110] Aged 16 – 75 in Great Britain. Source: Grundy, E., Ahlburg, D., Ali, M., Breeze, E. and Sloggett, A. (1999), Disability in Great Britain: Results from the 1996/97 Disability Follow-Up to the Family Resources Survey, DSS Research Report 94. This figure is based on a definition of disability derived from the World Health Organisation, as 'the inability, due to an impairment, to perform activities in typical and personally desired ways in society'. The 8.6 million figure roughly equates to those who would be covered by the DDA95.
[111] There is no reliable data on UK wheelchair users, though the Employers Forum on Disability estimate that five per cent of disabled people use a wheelchair some of the time.

5.39 Across the UK the provision of taxis and PHVs for disabled people varies between LAs with the rural areas having the lowest level of provision. Where provision is made, some LAs will subsidise journeys made by disabled people who meet certain criteria. This can have the effect of increasing taxi and PHV demand and usage.

5.40 The DfT is encouraging LAs to develop their own accessibility policies. At the end of 2002, six per cent of LAs required taxi drivers to undergo disability awareness training[112] and 14 per cent of LAs required their licensed taxis to be wheelchair accessible.[113] LAs that require all their taxi fleet to be wheelchair accessible primarily follow the specifications laid down by the MCF and tend to be in urban areas.

How disabled people use taxis and PHV services

5.41 Disabilities vary and what is an accessible vehicle to one person may not be to another. In relation to travel a disabled person's preferred mode of transport may not be just a preference but the only way to get from A to B. Access to a particular type of taxi or a PHV vehicle might be the only means of getting on with daily life.

5.42 There is a limited amount of data available on the preferred method of taxi travel for disabled persons. However, a survey from Brighton and Hove shows that, for those who expressed a preference, 53 per cent of disabled people prefer to use saloon cars rather than wheelchair accessible taxis (see Table 5.1).[114]

TABLE 5.1: DISABLED PEOPLE'S VEHICLE PREFERENCE FOR TAXI JOURNEYS IN BRIGHTON AND HOVE

	%
Wheelchair accessible cab	22
Saloon car	53
No preference	25
Total	**100**

[112] Department for Transport: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales 2001-2, 2003
[113] OFT: Statistical Analysis 2002 (annexe B).
[114] Table 4, page 8, Vehicle Preference for Taxi journeys. Taxi Users: Their views in Brighton and Hove, Geraldine Petterson, June 1999.

5.43 As disabled consumers have different needs, several vehicle types are needed to satisfy varied requirements.

5.44 Disabled consumers use taxi and PHV services differently when compared to the UK population as a whole. Disabled people are more likely to use these services for the essential activities of life. Where they can afford to do so, the research from Brighton and Hove suggests that 80 per cent of disabled people will use taxi and PHV services for shopping or to attend medical appointments.[115] This is in contrast to usage patterns for the UK population as a whole. These show that the most common purpose of their last taxi or PHV trip was for leisure reasons (50 per cent) while only 21 per cent last used a taxi or PHV for shopping and seven per cent last used a taxi or PHV to attend medical appointments.[116]

Views of disability groups

5.45 According to a MORI survey on a range of public transport services, disabled people were very satisfied with the services provided by taxis and PHVs. This could be due to the personal service that some disabled people receive from local taxi/ PHV firms. [117]

5.46 The MORI survey indicated that disabled people had less satisfaction with the quality of services provided by local councils. The Disability Rights Commission advises that LAs do not give sufficient consideration to the diverse needs of disabled passengers. Disability groups hope that implementation of the DDA95 will give LAs a national benchmark against which to set accessibility requirements for taxi services for their disabled population.

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[115] Table 2, page 5, Respondents' Use of Taxis. Taxi Users: Their views in Brighton and Hove, Geraldine Petterson, June 1999.

[116] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets – Consumer Survey, July 2003 (annexe C)

[117] Attitudes of Disabled People to Public Transport, MORI 2002, undertaken for the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee.

5.47 RADAR, an umbrella organisation representing 450 disability groups, has stated that disabled people require good workable regulations from the DDA95 to achieve a nationwide transport network. In relation to taxi services this means regulations that allow for personal choice according to an individual's needs. RADAR only see this being possible if a range of vehicle types can co-exist under the DDA95, each vehicle type complying with one aspect of the DfT regulations, meeting the needs of specific disabilities.[118]

5.48 Because of the usage patterns of taxis and PHVs by disabled people, disability groups view both taxis and PHVs as public transport. However, as PHVs are not licensed for immediate hire they are not covered in Part V of the DDA95. When pre-booking a journey disabled consumers may specify what type of vehicle they wish to travel in, but along with other consumers they may have no way of knowing if their journey will ultimately be in a licensed taxi or a PHV.

5.49 There are also concerns amongst disability groups that the goals of Part V DDA95 could be jeopardised if taxi and PHV drivers are not required to have general disability awareness training and specific training in how to use vehicle wheelchair ramps and secure wheelchairs.

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA95)

5.50 Section 32 of the DDA95, in part V of the Act, gives the Government power to make taxi accessibility regulations. These provisions have not yet been implemented, but their purpose is to help ensure that disabled people have the same flexibility and choice in their use of taxis as the rest of the travelling public. Under section 32 of the DDA95 PHVs will not have to be wheelchair accessible.

5.51 The DfT has recently announced its proposals and timetable for implementing the taxi accessibility requirements in Part V DDA95. It plans to start by applying the taxi accessibility regulations only to a listed number of 'first phase' LAs. The intention is to target those areas where accessible taxis will make the biggest impact on meeting the needs of disabled people and where the additional cost will not have a major effect. The proposed time scale is to introduce the DDA95 regulations in

[118] RADAR plans to survey its members' taxi and PHV preferences in the spring of 2004.

these areas over a 10 year period from 2010 to 2020. LAs in the 'first phase' have been selected because they meet one or more of the following criteria:

- a LA population of at least 120,000 people
- a major transport interchange
- a major tourist attraction, or
- an existing mandatory policy resulting in 100 per cent accessible vehicles.[119]

5.52 LAs not meeting any of the above would not be subject to DDA95 in the first instance though the DfT intends to issue voluntary guidance to these LAs on establishing an appropriate mix of vehicles and on vehicle design. How these LAs introduce accessible vehicles will then be monitored by the DfT to see if the guidance is effective. The DfT will then decide whether to extend the taxi accessibility regulations to these LAs. The DfT intend to publicly consult on these proposals for England and Wales. DDA95 implementation in Scotland and Northern Ireland is a devolved matter so they will carry out their own separate consultations on implementation.[120]

Impact of the DDA95

5.53 Fourteen per cent of LAs, covering approximately 50 per cent of taxis, currently have a fully wheelchair accessible fleet. However, the implementation of the DDA95 will impact on the licensed taxi fleets of all LAs. All taxis in LAs in the 'first phase' will need to meet the vehicle specifications for wheelchair accessible taxis that will be set out in the proposed regulations, and all LAs outside the 'first phase' will need to consider the proposed DfT voluntary guidance.

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[119] A LA stipulating that its taxis meet the Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness.

[120] Subject to the current arrangements during the suspense of devolution in Northern Ireland

Section 5: conclusions

5.54 We believe that there is a strong case for regulating quality and safety both for taxis and PHVs for the following reasons:

- consumers cannot judge certain standards such as the safety of the vehicle and the competence of the driver when getting into a taxi or PHV. Quality and safety regulation provides essential protection to consumers
- taxi services have a role to play in broader social welfare policy such as helping to ensure greater vehicle accessibility or improving environmental protection, and LAs should consequently be able to apply such regulations to suit their needs.

5.55 We therefore conclude that quality and safety controls should be maintained and should be supported by effective enforcement. Quality and safety controls are only one aspect of taxi and PHV regulation and it is important that these controls work effectively with the rest of the regulatory system. This is particularly important if LAs remove quantity controls on taxis. International experience has shown that the simultaneous removal of quantity and quality controls can sometimes reduce fleet quality. In the UK, certain LAs that have removed quantity controls have also raised vehicle specifications.[121]

5.56 That said, it is important that quality and safety requirements are applied in a proportionate manner. Our analysis has highlighted substantial variation across LAs.

5.57 We believe that local regulation should match local requirements but think that LAs, when deciding on quality and safety specifications, should consider the needs of consumers and the effect of the proposed specifications on the availability of taxis and PHVs. LAs should try to ensure that any quality and safety specifications set do not go beyond what is required to achieve this policy aim.

5.58 Our view is that the appropriateness of quality and safety controls in the UK taxi and PHV services market is best decided at the local level. LAs would be better placed to decide on proportionate levels of quality and

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[121] This is discussed in more detail in paragraphs 4.54 to 4.61.

safety control if they had access to more information about common experience and best practice.

5.59 **We therefore recommend that the Department for Transport promote and disseminate local best practice in applying quality and safety regulations involving the Scottish Executive and the Department of the Environment (NI) in this process. The purpose of this would be to assist LAs to apply standard quality and safety attributes in a proportionate manner.**

5.60 In applying quality regulation LAs should carefully consider the needs of disabled consumers. Requirements in the future DDA95 regulations on taxi accessibility will form part of the quality controls that some LAs will have to apply to taxis. For those LAs outside the 'first phase' DfT guidance will give assistance in providing an accessible taxi fleet. At present there are large differences in the way LAs address disability issues with regard to taxis, so in addition to following DfT guidance, we would like to see them consult with local disability groups before introducing changes in vehicle specification.

6 REVIEW OF FARE REGULATION

Introduction and summary

6.1 This chapter reviews the regulation of taxi fares. To assess the impact of fare regulation we:

- looked at the rationale behind fare regulation and the protection it affords consumers
- considered the impact that fixing fares has on the market for taxis
- took into account the experiences of international markets that have deregulated fares.

6.2 The research we commissioned to inform this assessment is at annexes D and J.

6.3 We have found that, whilst there are some arguments for removing fare regulation, the case for retaining controls is much stronger. The nature of the rank and hail sector of the taxi market makes it almost impossible for consumers to exercise choice on price as it is very difficult to shop around. Deregulating fares may therefore lead to higher prices. This is particularly important, for example for disabled consumers (who may not have access to alternative forms of transport), for those concerned about their safety (for example if they are catching a taxi late at night), or for those who do not know the local area. In these and other instances, fare regulation protects consumers from being overcharged.

6.4 However, there are measures that could be taken to introduce further competition on price into the market.

6.5 **We recommend that throughout the UK LAs should only set fare tariffs which represent the maximum that can be charged, and not set fixed or minimum fares. It should be made clear to consumers that they are able to negotiate on fares, for example, when ordering a taxi over the telephone. We also recommend that, where possible, LAs actively facilitate more price competition in the market, particularly in the rank and hail sectors of the market.**

6.6 This chapter looks at these issues and the background to the recommendations in more detail. Section 1 looks at the background to fare setting in the UK. Section 2 deals with the effects of these regulations on the market. Section 3 assesses a number of different approaches to fare regulation and section 4 gives our conclusions and recommendations.

Section 1: background to fare setting

6.7 LAs can regulate fares for taxis but not for PHVs. Ninety-five per cent of LAs that responded to our survey regulate fares.

6.8 In England, Scotland and Wales outside of London fares set by LAs represent the maximum that can be charged[122]. This allows taxis to compete on price by offering lower fares to consumers. However only 25 per cent of those LAs responding to our survey make this clear on their fare tariff cards. In London, a mandatory tariff is set which does not allow taxis to give discounts to consumers on a regular basis.[123] In Northern Ireland the LA has the power to set both maximum and minimum fares, although in practice these are set at the same level, creating a mandatory tariff.

6.9 In those authorities where fares are set by the LA, taxis tend to use taximeters to measure the distance and/or time involved in a journey. This is often required by the LA as a licensing condition.[124] In England and Wales outside London PHVs may also use taximeters, but LAs cannot require them to do so. However, if they choose to use taximeters, these must be tested and approved by or on behalf of the relevant LA. There is no clear pattern of taximeter use by PHVs. Our survey of LAs found that in some cases the majority of PHVs have taximeters fitted whilst in others no PHVs have taximeters fitted.

6.10 LAs have no powers to set PHV fares.[125] Fares are set by individual firms or may be negotiated directly with customers. Our survey of LAs found no clear relationship between taxi fares and PHV fares. In some areas licensing officers report that PHV fares are significantly lower than taxi

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[122] This was established in the case of **R v Liverpool City Council ex p. Curzon Limited** 12 November 1993 CO/1338/91 QBD, unreported.

[123] Although they are allowed to depart from this tariff on occasion, e.g. if a passenger has had their money stolen. This judgement must be made on a case by case basis. There is no blanket discretion.

[124] This is not always the case. For example in Dumfries and Galloway the fare is calculated based on the distance shown by taxi's mileometer rather than using a taximeter.

[125] Apart from the Department of the Environment in Northern Ireland, which may set fares for PHVs as well as taxis but in practice does not do so.

fares, whilst in other areas it is common for PHVs to have taximeters fitted and to charge the same fares as taxis.

Fare regulation in practice

6.11 The process for setting taxi fares differs between LAs. Statistics from the DfT show that in 35 per cent of authorities surveyed, the fare tariff is revised following requests from the taxi trade, and in 65 per cent the fare is revised on a regular basis, in most cases yearly.[126]

6.12 The decision-making process for changing fare levels also differs widely. In London, a formula for fare increases has been established, based on changes to driver and vehicle costs. Outside London the standard process in many areas is for representatives of the taxi trade to put forward a proposed fare increase to the local council's licensing committee, which is then either approved or rejected. The law requires that any change to the fare tariff must be published in a local newspaper and deposited for inspection at the council offices for a minimum of 14 days. This allows members of the public to complain if they are unhappy with the proposed change. Some licensing authorities go further than this and directly consult with the public through focus groups and citizens' panels to get their views about taxi fares.[127]

6.13 Table 6.1 illustrates the wide variety of different taxi tariffs throughout the UK.

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[126] Department for Transport: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles in England and Wales, 2001-2002.
[127] For example this practice occurs in Bristol, where a citizens' panel was consulted about the current level of taxi fares.

TABLE 6.1: MOST EXPENSIVE AND LEAST EXPENSIVE TAXI FARES BY LICENSING AUTHORITY:

Most expensive			**Least expensive**		
1	Luton (Airport)	£6.00	1	Hartlepool	£2.70
2	Vale of White Horse	£5.30	2	Alnwick	£2.80
	Epsom & Ewell	£5.20		Bolsover	£2.80
	Hertsmere	£5.20	3	North East Derbyshire	£2.90
	London	£5.20		North Lanarkshire	£2.90
3	Caradon	£5.10	4	Berwick on Tweed	£3.00
4	Adur	£5.00		Sedgefield	£3.00
	Brighton & Hove	£5.00		Warrington	£3.00
	Maidstone	£5.00	5	Blaenau Gwent	£3.10
	Sevenoaks	£5.00		Inverclyde	£3.10
	Tunbridge Wells	£5.00		North Tyneside	£3.10
				Thanet (Broadstairs)	£3.10

Source: Private Hire and Taxi Monthly, November 2003, based on a standard two mile daytime journey (The average UK fare is £3.93).

6.14 The level of fares in each area is likely to depend on a number of local factors including the bargaining power of the taxi trade, the affluence of taxi users in the area and the costs of providing taxi services. There is no obvious geographical pattern to explain the above results. We also have no evidence to suggest that fare levels differ between LAs with or without quantity controls.

Section 2: regulating taxi fares for on-street and rank hiring

6.15 This section sets out the rationale for fare regulation for rank and hail. In doing so we present theoretical and empirical evidence that underlies the rationale.

6.16 The legislation governing PHVs prevents them from plying for hire on the street or at ranks, so this section relates only to taxis.

Do taxi fares need to be regulated?

6.17 Fare regulation is intended to protect consumers from overcharging by taxis. In the 1993 Green Paper on taxis, the DfT stated that ' the control of taxi fares is justifiable, if at all, only because the consumer of taxi services at ranks or in the street is in a peculiarly weak position, cannot shop around, and is very vulnerable to overcharging' .[128]

6.18 There are two main arguments given in support of fare regulation:

- the structure of the market and the way it operates provides little incentive for price competition between licensed taxi drivers
- to protect vulnerable consumers.

Lack of competition in the market

6.19 The way taxis are hired from the street and from ranks results in situations where there is little consumer pressure for taxis to compete on price.

6.20 Consumers hailing taxis from the street face high and uncertain search costs. Shopping around is not a realistic option. If they choose to turn down a taxi because it is too expensive the waiting time until the next taxi arrives is uncertain, as is the relative price and quality of the next taxi compared to the current one. Moreover, consumers cannot return to the original taxi if they cannot find a cheaper option. The first taxi that the consumer hails effectively makes a 'take it or leave it' offer, which the consumer has to assess with very limited information.[129]

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[128] Department for Transport: Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles: A Consultation Paper on the Future of taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Services in England and Wales, 1993

[129] See Diamond, P. (1971). ' A model of price adjustment' , Journal of Economic Theory 3, p156-168. and Shreiber, C. (1975), ' The economic reasons for price and entry regulation of taxi cabs' , Journal of Transport Economics and Policy 9, p268-279.

6.21 Similarly, when consumers hire taxis from taxi ranks they are generally required to take the first cab from the rank. On many ranks this is convention rather than necessity and could be changed, but on some ranks there is simply no room for taxis to pull out from the middle of the rank. Again there is no scope for consumer choice, and so no incentive for taxis to compete on price.

6.22 For price competition to occur, taxis need to be able to signal to consumers that they are cheaper and customers need to be able to exercise choice over which taxi they use. As described above, customers hiring taxis from ranks or in the street are usually not able to exercise choice. In contrast, when booking a taxi over the telephone consumers are often in a better position to shop around and find the best price.

6.23 Price competition is more likely to occur in situations where firm reputation and repeat business are important. For firms operating in the telephone booking sector the chance of repeat business is higher and taxi firms are able to increase future sales by lowering prices. In this situation price competition is more likely to occur.

6.24 Where firms operate in both the phone sector and the hail and rank sector, price competition in the phone booked sector can in theory translate into lower prices in the hail and rank sectors. This may occur where a firm has a recognisable brand and competition in the phone booked sector keeps prices low. Any temptation on the part of firms to increase prices in the hail and rank sector would be tempered by the risk of losing the low price reputation gained in the phone booking sector. However this effect is likely to be limited and there is no empirical evidence to support the theoretical argument.

6.25 Overall, the combination of the inherent nature of the on-street taxi service, the first in first out rule at ranks, high search costs and the weak bargaining position of consumers means that taxis operating at ranks and on the street are not constrained by the competitive forces which result from consumers shopping around. As a result there is an incentive to charge high prices in the absence of some form of fare regulation. Where taxis are booked by telephone the scope for consumers to shop around helps to constrain the prices taxis can charge.

Consumer protection

6.26 Fare regulation is particularly important for consumers in a vulnerable position where they are more susceptible to overcharging.

6.27 First, consumers such as disabled and older people are likely to be in an even weaker bargaining position than other consumers because they are less able to take alternative forms of transport. This means they may be liable to get charged even more than other consumers if fares were not regulated.

6.28 This problem also applies to consumers in particular vulnerable situations. For example, those trying to catch a taxi late at night who may be concerned about their personal safety will be in a particularly weak bargaining position and could be charged a high price by an unscrupulous taxi.

6.29 The second problem is that some consumers will simply be less well informed than others about the price of taxi services and alternatives to taxis and so will be in a weak bargaining position over the fare. Tourists are a good example of this type of poorly informed consumer.

6.30 In the absence of fare regulation, there is no mechanism that will prevent consumers in vulnerable situations being charged excessively for using taxis services.

What happens when fares are deregulated?

6.31 Ninety-five per cent of UK LAs responding to our survey who licence taxis also regulate taxi fares, so domestic evidence on fare deregulation is limited. There is some anecdotal evidence from those authorities that do not regulate fares which suggests that consumers are not being charged excessively for taxi services. However, these authorities are mainly in rural or semi-rural areas with the vast majority of work coming from telephone bookings. As explained above, this might have the effect of encouraging price competition.

6.32 There is some evidence on the effects of fare deregulation from countries and cities around the world that have deregulated taxi fares. The results of these deregulations are mixed and depend on a number of factors. These include local circumstances such as the structure of the taxi market, the level at which the fare was set prior to deregulation, and other regulatory changes that accompanied fare deregulation. For this reason, the results of fare deregulation outside the UK can only provide an indication of the potential outcomes from taxi fare deregulation in the UK rather than a definitive answer.

6.33 The following, taken from our international study shows what happened in five countries that deregulated fares.[130] The effects of fare deregulation varied considerably between the five countries. In some cases deregulation has been a success whilst in others fare regulation has been re-introduced. This lack of a strong evidential base in support of fare deregulation is an important result in itself.

Sweden

6.34 Taxi fares were deregulated in Sweden in1990. Fares increased initially in real terms but have since increased in line with inflation. The deregulation of fares coincided with the introduction of a 25 per cent value added tax on fares. The introduction of this tax distorted the immediate effect of price deregulation as a high proportion of the tax increase would have been passed on from taxi firms to consumers, so it is not clear whether the subsequent price increases were due to price deregulation or tax. In the years following price deregulation, fare increases have been smallest in large cities and greatest in rural areas. This may reflect a lack of competition in rural areas or simply higher costs associated with taxi provision in these areas which have been passed on directly to consumers.

6.35 Strict rules govern the information on fares that Swedish taxis must display. These include displaying the price of a standard 15 minute trip of 10km on the inside of the vehicle and also on the outside of the vehicle in lettering that is visible at least two metres away.

6.36 To encourage price competition between taxis, different ranks charge different fares and consumers can choose between ranks on the basis of their preferences about waiting times, fares and quality of vehicle.

[130] TOI: The Impact of taxi market regulation - An international comparison (annexe J).

New Zealand

6.37 In New Zealand taxi fares were deregulated in 1989. Fares have fallen in real terms in larger cities (by 15 to 25 per cent) while the results in smaller towns were ambiguous. The law requires that maximum fares must be registered with the Secretary of Transport and calibrated on the compulsory taxi meter. Individual taxis are free to set their own fares below this maximum. The fare must be displayed on the inside and outside of the vehicle.

Norway

6.38 Uniquely, taxi fares have been deregulated in some larger cities without any accompanying removal of entry controls. Where fares have been deregulated they have increased. Unlike Sweden and New Zealand fare deregulation has not been accompanied by strict rules about providing information on fares to consumers.

The Netherlands

6.39 In the Netherlands, since 2000, regulated fares instead of being fixed, have been set at maximum levels. Fares have risen. This is because the licensing authority has increased the maximum fare. Our study shows that there is some evidence of price competition occurring, based on reports of some taxis charging less than the maximum fare.

The United States

6.40 During the 1970s and 1980s, a number of US cities deregulated almost all aspects of their taxi services including fares. Following deregulation, fares increased in real terms in almost all cases and fare controls were subsequently re-introduced. Fare increases for street and rank hiring were greater than fare increases in the telephone booking sector. The effect was particularly clear in terms of increased fares at airport ranks.

6.41 It is not possible to draw overall conclusions from these international examples. It is clear that fare deregulation has in some cases led to increases in fares. However, it appears that strict requirements on fare setting and providing information to consumers may have contributed to the relative success of fare deregulation in New Zealand.

Potential problems of taxi fare regulation

6.42 Notwithstanding the benefits of fare regulation, it needs to be recognised that fixing fares at a particular level can cause problems in the way that the market works.

6.43 LAs have very limited information about the taxi market on which to base their fare setting decisions. In many areas of the UK, the taxi industry is highly fragmented so gathering information from firms difficult. If LAs set fares too low, this may lead to long queues of consumers waiting for taxis. If fares are set too high, this may lead to long queues of taxis waiting at ranks or cruising the streets looking for work.

6.44 Setting fixed taxi fares also reduces the scope for price changes to act as a signal for matching supply with demand as happens in a normal competitive market. Where fares are fixed rather than set as a maximum, the limited potential for taxi firms to compete on fares is removed completely. In the hail and rank sectors, price competition is likely to be very limited, but in others there is more scope for competition to occur. Examples are ranks that do not require the consumer to take the first taxi on the rank or areas where lots of cruising taxis make search costs lower.[131]

6.45 Furthermore, if taxis were allowed to charge higher fares at times of peak demand this would encourage more taxis to operate at these times. This would benefit consumers by reducing waiting times during periods of peak demand. LAs can help to reduce waiting times to some extent by setting peak and off-peak fare tariffs that encourage a greater supply of taxis at peak times and less at off peak times. Anecdotal evidence on this point comes from London where the Public Carriage Office and representatives of the Licensed Taxi Drivers Association have told us that recent increases in the fares tariff at night have encouraged more taxis onto the streets at these busy periods.

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[131] Halcrow: Impact of Taxi Regulation on Taxi Markets – Case Study (annexe D). For example, in Worcester passengers are not required to take the first cab from the rank. However there was no evidence that this leads to price competition among taxis.

Section 4: assessment of approaches to fare regulation

6.46 In arriving at our recommendations on fare regulation we considered the likely effects that would arise from different degrees of fare deregulation.

Full fare deregulation

6.47 A full fare deregulation option, where consumers negotiate fares with drivers, was rejected due to competition and consumer protection problems in the hailing and rank sectors as outlined above.

Partial fare deregulation

6.48 Another option considered was partial fare deregulation, which would involve taxi firms setting their own maximum fare tariffs and keeping maximum fares at that level for an obligatory minimum period. Firms would be required to display a standard sample fare so that it is visible outside the taxi. Partial fare deregulation has occurred in Sweden and in New Zealand. The strict rules on how companies set and display their fares protect vulnerable consumers from being over-charged.

6.49 Partial deregulation is only likely to be a success in areas where price signalling can be effective and where consumers can actually exercise choice (for example by not being forced to select the first taxi in a rank).

6.50 There are likely to be implementation problems with partial deregulation. For example if the law requires that all taxis display a standard sample fare for a three mile journey on the outside of the vehicle so that potential passengers can compare prices, taxis can set their tariffs so that the fare for a three mile journey is low but the fare for other journeys is higher. Consumers are therefore still faced with uncompetitive high fares for longer journeys. These problems could be overcome, but at a cost of making the information presented more complex and therefore less easy for consumers to understand.

6.51 For these reasons we do not recommend partial fare deregulation for the UK taxi market.

Setting the fare as a maximum

6.52 A third option is for LAs to continue setting fares, but instead of setting a mandatory fare that all taxis must charge, the fare should become a maximum and taxis could choose to charge below this maximum.[132] This will facilitate price competition in the limited number of circumstances where consumers are able to exercise choice. As described above, these include ranks that do not require customers to take the first cab on the rank and areas with a lot of cruising taxis where search costs are lower.

6.53 In its 1993 Green Paper on taxi licensing, the DfT concluded that all taxi fares should be set as a maximum rather than a mandatory tariff and that this should be made clear to consumers. The current situation, where not all LAs make it clear in their tariff that the fare is a maximum, is confusing for consumers and is likely to reduce price competition. Only 25 per cent of the LAs that responded to our survey publish a fare tariff that clearly states the metered fare is a maximum – in the other 75 per cent there is no mention of the fact that taxis can charge less than the published tariff.

6.54 A potential argument for not allowing taxis to set prices below the published fare is to prevent price competition driving out competition in terms of quality or safety. However evidence from the PHV sector does not support this argument. In the PHV sector prices are not regulated and a wide variety of fare levels and quality levels co-exist, from high-priced chauffeur-driven executive cars to cheaper discount cabs that simply meet the minimum standards required by law. Furthermore, we consider that quality and safety are best controlled directly, through the setting of minimum standards that taxis and drivers must meet.

Section 5: conclusion and recomendations

6.55 There are arguments both in favour of and against fare regulation for taxis. The nature of the market means that consumers, particularly vulnerable consumers, derive greater benefit from the existence of fare regulation. Fare regulation protects consumers.

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[132] This is theoretically already possible in the UK except for London and Northern Ireland.

6.56 UK LAs should continue to regulate taxi fares. However, there are some measures that can be undertaken to improve competition in the licensed taxi market whilst retaining the benefits to consumers of fare regulation.

Recommendations based on this assessment

6.57 **We recommend that throughout the UK LAs should only set fare tariffs which represent the maximum that can be charged, and not set fixed or minimum fares. It should be made clear to consumers that they are able to negotiate on fares, for example, when ordering a taxi over the telephone. We also recommend that, where possible, LAs actively facilitate more price competition in the market, particularly in the rank and hail sectors of the market.**

6.58 It is for LAs to decide how this might occur. One method used in other countries involved taxis displaying their fare in the window or the outside of the cab, either in terms of the price for a standardised trip, or a percentage discount off the metered fare.

7 FURTHER ISSUES THAT IMPACT ON THE MARKET

Introduction and summary

7.1 While our study has focused on the impact of quantity, quality and safety and fare regulation in the UK taxi and PHV market we have also come across issues that, while they fall outside this remit are still affected by central or local government regulation and merit discussion.

Cross border hiring

7.2 Taxis can take passengers from within their licensed area to other LAs but cannot accept bookings for passengers or ply for hire outside the area in which they are licensed. PHVs can take passengers from any point to any other providing the PHV driver, vehicle and operator are licensed in the same area. We believe that the current position on cross border hiring adversely affects consumers and drivers to a limited extent but accept that local licensing and enforcement procedures make cross border hiring difficult to implement.

7.3 We note the DfT's intention to clarify/simplify the position on PHV cross border hiring via a Regulatory Reform Order (RRO) and suggest that further thought be given to the position of taxis in this area.

Zoning within one licensing authority

7.4 Around five per cent of LAs are divided into two or more licensing zones. These zones exist due to various local authority reorganisations. LAs do not have the power to create or merge zones only (with Secretary of State approval) to remove them completely. Zoning increases the number of cross border hiring problems. It also prevents the supply of LAs in one LA where quantity controls are in operation from responding to changes in demand throughout the day or over time.

7.5 We note the proposed DfT RRO which will remove the requirement for LAs to obtain Secretary of State approval to remove zones. We believe that LAs would bring greater clarity to the market if they remove zoning within their districts.

Single tier licensing

7.6 While we accept that there are arguments in favour of a single licensing regime, the UK two tier system of taxis and PHVs seems to work well in terms of offering choice to the consumer, particularly disabled and older passengers who require a range of vehicles to suit their individual needs. The current two tier system also allows some competition within the telephone sector and between the street/rank and telephone markets. Therefore we do not advocate moving to single tier licensing at this time. The main drawbacks of the two tier system are that consumers can find it hard to tell the difference between taxis and PHVs and where taxis cannot, or will not, fulfil periods of peak demand PHVs may be tempted to fill the gap by illegally plying for hire. We think that this problem will be reduced with the removal of quantity controls for taxis.

Taxi manufacturing/adapting industry

7.7 This industry will be affected by the implementation of Part V of the DDA95. Manufacturers wishing to produce wheelchair accessible vehicles for LAs requiring accessible taxis under DDA95 regulations, will have to meet DfT specifications for such vehicles. As the timetable for DDA95 implementation has slipped there has been an impact on the industry's R&D, and the buying decisions of those wishing to acquire a taxi. We welcome the DfT's recent announcement on the proposals and timetable for implementing the taxi provisions in the DDA95 by 2020 for LAs meeting the DfT's 'first phase' criteria.

7.8 The rest of this chapter looks at these issues in more detail. Section 1 looks at existing government policy for taxis, section 2 looks at the cross border hiring issue, section 3 at zoning, section 4 at the arguments for single tier licensing and section 5 at issues affecting taxi vehicle manufacturers and adaptors.

Section 1: government policy

The Department for Transport

1993 Green Paper – Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

7.9 The last DfT policy document on taxis and PHVs was the 1993 Green Paper, 'Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles'. Although the paper was not a statement of DfT intentions it does give some indication of its views through discussion on a number of topics. These included the view that numerical limits on taxis vehicles should be removed, that there should be no age limits on vehicles, that minimum age and experience for drivers should be standardised across the country, and that zoning within LAs should be removed. On many of the key issues raised in the Green Paper, including the issue of numerical limits on vehicles, little action has been taken following the consultation. The exception is the issue of PHV licensing in London, where significant progress has been made since the Green Paper.

7.10 Subsequent documents issued by the DfT have either been more general, in terms of overarching transport policy which do not specifically refer to taxis or PHVs (for example 'Transport 2010 – The 10 Year Plan') or have related specifically to the DDA95.

1998 White Paper - A New Deal for Transport a Better Deal for Everyone

7.11 This White Paper views taxis as an important part of an integrated public transport system, filling the gaps in the broader transport system. LAs are asked to consider taxis in their local transport plans. The other main issue highlighted for LAs is that they should use their taxi and licensing powers to ensure that taxis and PHVs in their district are safe, comfortable, properly insured and available when and where required.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995

7.12 In 1997 the DfT consulted on wheelchair accessible vehicle specifications for implementation of the taxi provisions of DDA95.[133] The DfT has now announced a variation to its 1997 proposals and has confirmed that the implementation period for the DDA95 will run from 2010 to 2020 for those LAs meeting its 'first phase' criteria. LAs not

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[133] Department for Transport: Disability Discrimination Act 1995, The Government's Proposals for Taxis, 1997

meeting this criteria will be issued with voluntary guidance on the vehicle mix and design parameters that they should consider. The DfT will monitor implementation of this guidance before deciding whether to apply the DDA95 taxi accessibility regulations throughout England and Wales. Scotland and Northern Ireland will carry out separate implementation.

Regulatory reform

7.13 The Government's Action Plan 2002 contains a number of proposals to use the streamlined order-making procedure in the Regulatory Reform Act 2001 to amend burdensome primary legislation. The DfT have put forward four actions affecting taxi and PHV regulation (in England and Wales outside London) for completion by Regulatory Reform Order. These are:

- to remove the need for Secretary of State approval for local authority resolutions to amalgamate taxi zones
- to standardise driver and operator licence duration
- to remove local authority powers to restrict taxi licence numbers in their area
- to clarify/simplify the position on PHV hirings across the borders of different licensing authorities.

7.14 As can be seen, the findings of our report agree that these represent areas of concern which we recommend addressing. To date no action has been taken to implement these proposals.

Devolved administrations

7.15 The implementation of DDA95 regulations relating to accessible vehicle specifications is a devolved matter for Scotland and Northern Ireland. They will be holding their own separate consultations on regulation implementation.[134]

7.16 Licensing legislation is also a devolved matter for Scotland and Northern Ireland. Both have recently taken policy initiatives which impact on taxi licensing.

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[134] Subject to the current arrangements during the suspense of devolution in Northern Ireland

Scotland

7.17 In 2002 the Scottish Ministers set up an independent task group to review the adequacy of licensing provisions contained in the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 including the provisions relating to taxis and private hire cars (equivalent to PHVs). The Task Group will be reporting to Scottish Ministers shortly.

Northern Ireland

7.18 In 2003 the Northern Ireland Office undertook a review of taxi regulation in Northern Ireland. The objective of the review is to examine the principles, mechanisms and practices of the present system. This is with the aim of making recommendations to create an effective and equitable regulatory framework to promote road and public safety and fair competition. Final proposals are expected in late 2003.

Section 2: cross border hiring

7.19 A taxi is permitted to take passengers from within the area in which it is licensed to anywhere in the country. Taxis can also, theoretically at least, be hired in the area in which they are licensed to go from anywhere to anywhere in the country. However, the taxi vehicles cannot ply for hire at a rank or in the street outside their own licensing areas. For PHVs the rules are less strict. PHV firms can advertise and supply services anywhere in the country as long as the drivers vehicles and operator are all licensed by the same LA and the operator takes bookings from an office within the area of the LA where it is licensed. It remains unlawful, however, for a PHV operator to take a booking at premises outside the licensed area.

7.20 In practice, it is of course more likely that a taxi will be hired to take a passenger to a neighbouring LA, but will not be able to accept a fare that wishes to go from the neighbouring LA into the LA in which the taxi is licensed. Arguably, this has an adverse effect on consumers' freedom to hire taxis and taxis' ability to meet consumer demand.

7.21 We recognise that there are strong arguments for restricting the ability of taxis to offer services outside of the area in which they are licensed. Local regulations with regard to quality standards, topographical knowledge and fare levels could be different and enforcement of these conditions by licensing officers would be difficult if cross border hiring was allowed.

7.22 Furthermore, there could be problems with drivers abusing the system by registering in an area with low quality standards and then working full time in an area with higher quality standards.

7.23 We note the proposal by the DfT in the Government's 2002 Regulatory Reform Action Plan to clarify/simplify the position on PHV hirings across the borders of different LAs. We would like to see further thought given to simplifying the position for taxis as well.

Section 3: zoning within one licensing authority

7.24 In around five per cent of LAs the licensing area is divided into two or more zones. These zones exist as a result of various local government reorganisations. If a new authority comprised part of two or more post-reorganisation districts then each of those constituent parts constituted a zone for the purposes of taxi licensing. The LA can overcome this by seeking Secretary of State approval for an extension resolution under the Local Government Act 1972 but the only action that an LA can take is to remove all zones or accept the situation as it is. LAs do not have the power to create zones or to merge individual zones – unless merging zones has the effect of removing all zones.

7.25 Since these zones are licensing districts in their own right, they increase the number of cross border problems and again restrict supply from better meeting demand. Some authorities have argued that the removal of zones would mean that drivers would concentrate on those, primarily urban, areas where they can make most profit to the detriment of the, primarily rural, areas where demand is lower. This argument, given an absence of quantity control, does not stand up. Demand in rural areas is unlikely to reduce because zones are removed and if taxis found it was profitable to serve a particular area with zoning, it will be profitable afterwards. If some taxis did migrate to urban areas then others would take their place.

7.26 Under current legislation LAs are permitted to remove all licensing zones with approval of the Secretary of State for Transport. This regulation is due to be amended by an RRO which will enable LAs to amalgamate licensing zones without seeking approval from the Secretary of State.[135]

[135] Cabinet Office: Regulatory Reform. The Government's Action Plan 2002.

7.27 We note the intention of the DfT to remove the legislative requirement for LAs to seek permission from the Secretary of State before amalgamating licensing zones. We think that LAs will bring greater clarity to the market if they remove zoning within their districts.

Section 4: Single tier and two tier licensing

7.28 Most of the countries examined during the course of our study do not differentiate between licensing those to undertake traditional taxi rank and hail work and those providing PHV type services booked in advance. The UK has a two tier system, where legislation makes for separate licensing requirements for taxis and PHVs.

7.29 We have considered, during the course of this study, whether a single tier licensing system would be appropriate for the UK market. There are advantages to a single licensing system. It is easier for passengers to understand and it can be simpler for LAs to administer and enforce. However, we have concluded that, for the present, the existing two tier system should be retained.

7.30 The two tier system can cause difficulties. The public often do not find it easy to tell the difference between taxis and PHVs and many consider them both to be taxis. Around a third of consumers surveyed during the course of unmet demand surveys[136] believe that both taxis and PHVs are allowed to pick up in the streets and at ranks. Of those who said that certain vehicles could not pick up in the street, only 58 per cent could actually demonstrate an understanding of the differences between taxis and PHVs.

7.31 In addition, some LAs have a problem with illegal plying for hire, particularly during the late-night peak periods. Sometimes the vehicles involved are licensed PHVs illegally plying for hire. The terms of insurance cover for PHVs mean that any passengers picked up by a PHV in the street without a prior booking arrangement may not be covered by the driver's insurance in the event of an accident. Although it is an offence to ply for hire without a taxi licence under section 45 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, police do not often seek to charge the offender. This is, in part, because in the interests of public order the police would rather see the streets cleared than prevent unlicensed plying for hire. Quantity

[136] Halcrow: Impact of Regulation on Taxi Markets - Consumer Survey (annexe C)

restrictions on the number of taxi vehicle licences can increase the extent of this problem.

7.32 However, in other respects the two tier system works well. It allows regulations to be targeted at the parts of the market where they are needed, without distorting the market in sectors where such regulation is unnecessary. Separate regulations for vehicles that only work in the phone-booked sector of the market, where competition and consumer protection issues are less of a problem, allows these vehicles to be subject to only minimal regulation. In contrast, taxis plying on the street and at ranks, where there is more need to protect consumers, are subject to much tighter regulations.

7.33 There is a clear difference in the characteristics of the telephone sector and the rank/hail sector. The former is generally served by PHVs although taxis do also operate, and the latter is served exclusively by taxis. The differing characteristics of these two services were the primary reason for the two tier system of taxi licensing that is now in place.

7.34 The two tier system also ensures some degree of choice for the consumer, in terms of vehicle type. This is particularly important for disabled and older consumers who will often require a particular type of vehicle, which is not necessarily the traditional, wheelchair accessible black cab. The system also allows some competition and choice on both quality and price in the telephone market and, to a lesser extent, between the rank/hail and telephone markets.

7.35 On balance, we believe there are good reasons for maintaining the two tier approach. We therefore do not advocate a move to a single tier licensing system.

Section 5: Taxi manufacturers and adaptors

7.36 A number of companies in the UK manufacture and/or supply taxi vehicles. As each LA has different vehicle licensing specifications, most of these models do not meet every authority's requirements. Accordingly most of the manufacturers/suppliers are not able to compete on a national level but instead the boundary of their UK market is set by local vehicle licensing conditions.

7.37 The structure of the market for the manufacturing of taxi vehicles has been influenced by wheelchair-accessibility requirements and by vehicles being produced to meet the MCF, set and administered by the Public

Carriage Office. The taxi vehicle supply industry can be split in two groups of companies. One group make purpose built taxis to meet the MCF. These vehicles look like the traditional perception of a 'London Black Cab'. The other group of companies produce vehicles adapted from multi-person vehicles for wheelchair access. These converted vehicles meet European 'M1' safety standards but do not meet all the requirements of the MCF.

7.38 Both types of vehicle, whether purpose built or converted, are accessible to those who wish to remain in their wheelchair whilst travelling. As disabled people have a range of different requirements it is important that there is a range of taxi vehicles that are able to meet their varied needs.

7.39 The technical specifications of vehicles from both groups of manufacturers will be affected by the implementation of Part V of the DDA95 which will require all taxis to meet certain specifications, including wheelchair accessibility. The DfT is working on the technical specifications that these vehicles will have to adhere to. The DfT has confirmed that the implementation period for the taxi provisions in Part V DDA95 will run from 2010 to 2020 for those LA's meeting its 'first phase' criteria in England and Wales. LAs not meeting these criteria will be issued with voluntary guidance on the vehicle mix and design parameters they should consider applying. The effectiveness of this guidance will be monitored by the DfT before deciding whether DDA95 taxi accessibility regulations should be extended to all LAs in England and Wales. The DfT's proposals will be subject to a full public consultation. DDA95 implementation in Scotland and Northern Ireland is a devolved matter so they will carry out their own separate consultations on taxi accessibility regulations.

7.40 We believe that the recent DfT announcement on how it intends to implement the taxi provisions in DDA95 will reduce the uncertainty experienced by the taxi manufacturing industry. This uncertainty has impacted on the manufacturers' long term research and development and the decisions of those wishing to buy a taxi.

7.41 In addition, the implementation of the DDA95 taxi accessibility vehicle specifications will provide a national benchmark for LAs when considering access for disabled travellers. The vehicles currently being manufactured as taxis are able to meet a range of the needs of the disabled traveller but, at present, their utilisation within each LA varies according to local policy and taxi licensing conditions.

8 GLOSSARY

Cross border hiring

The act of booking a taxi outside of its licensed area of operation.

Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA95)

Government legislation. Regulations under section 32 in Part V of the DDA95 can set out specifications for a taxi vehicle to ensure the vehicle is accessible for disabled people.

Fare regulation

Regulations that give licensing authorities the power to regulate the fares that licensed taxis charge (but not private hire vehicles). This is done by setting a tariff mandatory (fixed) or maximum fare, or a tariff of maximum and minimum fares.

Hailing

The act by a passenger of flagging down a taxi in the street (private hire vehicles cannot be hailed).

Illegal taxi

A totally unlicensed vehicle being used to ply for hire.

Latent demand

For the purposes of this report we define latent demand as the situation where consumers in areas with quantity controls are discouraged from using taxis by long waiting times and so do even bother to queue for a taxi. This type of demand is hidden because it does not present itself in the form of long queues but it is nonetheless an important source of unmet demand.

Licence shortage premium value

The value that can be obtained when selling a licensed taxi in an area where the licensing authority restricts the quantities of licensed taxis. This value is over and above both the administrative fees charged by licensing authorities that issue and renew the licence and the value of an unlicensed vehicle. The licence shortage premium reflects the value of the licence in areas where quantity restrictions apply.

Licensing authority (LA)

A local authority insofar as it is empowered to issue and regulate licences.

Mandatory fare

A fare tariff set by LAs for taxis which should always be applied.

Maximum fare

A ceiling fare tariff set by LAs for taxis which represents the maximum that can be charged but allows the taxi driver to charge less.

Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness (MCF)

Taxis safety and quality requirements devised by the Public Carriage Office for London.

Operator

A person who is licensed to operate a private hire business by taking bookings for private hire vehicles.

Phone booked sector/ pre-booked sector

A market sector in which vehicles are pre-booked over the phone. This sector includes both private hire vehicles and taxis.

Plying for hire

The action of searching for a passenger on the street or at a taxi rank.

Private hire vehicle (PHV)

A vehicle which is licensed to carry up to eight passengers who have pre-booked but which is not licensed to ply for hire.

Quality regulation

Regulation by LAs of the quality and safety of PHV and taxi owners, drivers, vehicles and in the case of PHVs, operators.

Quantity regulation

Regulation by LAs of the number of taxi (but not PHV) vehicle licences in issue within their licensing areas.

Single tier licensing

A licensing system in which all vehicles are licensed both to ply for hire and to carry passengers who have pre-booked. In a single tier system there is no distinction between taxis and PHVs.

Taxi

A licensed vehicle which can ply for hire and take pre booked fares.

Taxi proprietor

A taxi owner.

Taximeter

An appliance attached to the tachometer in a taxi or PHV vehicle that is used to calculate the total fare for a journey based upon a fare tariff set by reference to time and/or distance.

Two tier licensing

A licensing system in which some vehicles and drivers are licensed only to carry pre-booked passengers and some which are licensed to carry pre-booked passenger and to ply for hire. In the UK this results in two forms of licensed hire vehicle: a taxi and a PHV.

Unmet demand survey

A survey which measures patent unmet demand by observing how long passengers wait for taxis. Often the survey will make some attempt to also capture latent demand through consumer surveys but these are unable to establish the true extent of latent demand.

Wheelchair accessible vehicle

A vehicle which is designed to be accessible to those needing a wheelchair.

Zoning

Where a licensing authority licenses taxis to operate only in a limited are, or zone within the total licensing area. A taxi licensed for one zone cannot lawfully ply for hire outside of that zone.

Acronyms

DDA95 - The Disability Discrimination Act 1995

DfT - Department for Transport

LA - Licensing Authority

LPG - Liquid Petroleum Gas

MCF - Metropolitan Conditions of Fitness

NATPHLEO - National Association of Taxi and Private Hire Licensing and Enforcement Officers

PCO - Public Carriage Office

PHV - Private hire vehicle

RADAR - The Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation

R & D - Research and development

TfL - Transport for London

TNS - Taylor Nelson Sofres plc

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Department for Transport

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING:

BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

March 2010

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

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INTRODUCTION

1. The Department first issued Best Practice Guidance in October 2006 to assist those local authorities in England and Wales that have responsibility for the regulation of the taxi and private hire vehicle (PHV) trades.

2. It is clear that many licensing authorities considered their licensing policies in the context of the Guidance. That is most encouraging.

3. However, in order to keep our Guidance relevant and up to date, we embarked on a revision. We took account of feedback from the initial version and we consulted stakeholders in producing this revised version.

4. The key premise remains the same - it is for individual licensing authorities to reach their own decisions both on overall policies and on individual licensing matters, in the light of their own views of the relevant considerations. This Guidance is intended to assist licensing authorities but it is only guidance and decisions on any matters remain a matter for the authority concerned.

5. We have not introduced changes simply for the sake of it. Accordingly, the bulk of the Guidance is unchanged. What we have done is focus on issues involving a new policy (for example trailing the introduction of the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups legislation); or where we consider that the advice could be elaborated (eg enforcement); or where progress has been made since October 2006 (eg the stretched limousine guidance note has now been published).

THE ROLE OF TAXIS AND PHVs

6. Taxis (more formally known as hackney carriages) and PHVs (or minicabs as some of them are known) play an important part in local transport. In 2008, the average person made 11 trips in taxis or private hire vehicles. Taxis and PHVs are used by all social groups; low-income young women (amongst whom car ownership is low) are one of the largest groups of users.

7. Taxis and PHVs are also increasingly used in innovative ways - for example as taxi-buses - to provide innovative local transport services (see paras 92-95)

THE ROLE OF LICENSING: POLICY JUSTIFICATION

8. The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public. Local licensing authorities will also be aware that the public should have reasonable access to taxi and PHV services, because of the part they play in local transport provision. Licensing requirements which are unduly stringent will tend unreasonably to restrict the supply of taxi and PHV services, by putting up the cost of operation or otherwise restricting entry to the trade. Local licensing authorities should recognise that too restrictive an approach can work against the public interest – and can, indeed, have safety implications.

9. For example, it is clearly important that somebody using a taxi or PHV to go home alone late at night should be confident that the driver does not have a criminal record for assault and that the vehicle is safe. But on the other hand, if the supply of taxis or PHVs has been unduly constrained by onerous licensing conditions, then that person's safety might be put at risk by having to wait on late-night streets for a taxi or PHV to arrive; he or she might even be tempted to enter an unlicensed vehicle with an unlicensed driver illegally plying for hire.

10. Local licensing authorities will, therefore, want to be sure that each of their various licensing requirements is in proportion to the risk it aims to address; or, to put it another way, whether the cost of a requirement in terms of its effect on the availability of transport to the public is at least matched by the benefit to the public, for example through increased safety. This is not to propose that a detailed, quantitative, cost-benefit assessment should be made in each case; but it is to urge local licensing authorities to look carefully at the costs – financial or otherwise – imposed by each of their licensing policies. It is suggested they should ask themselves whether those costs are really commensurate with the benefits a policy is meant to achieve.

SCOPE OF THE GUIDANCE

11. This guidance deliberately does not seek to cover the whole range of possible licensing requirements. Instead it seeks to concentrate only on those issues that have caused difficulty in the past or that seem of particular significance. Nor for the most part does the guidance seek to set out the law on taxi and PHV licensing, which for England and Wales contains many complexities. Local licensing authorities will appreciate that it is for them to seek their own legal advice.

CONSULTATION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

12. It is good practice for local authorities to consult about any significant proposed changes in licensing rules. Such consultation should include not only the taxi and PHV trades but also groups likely to be the trades' customers. Examples are groups representing disabled people, or Chambers of Commerce, organisations with a wider transport interest (eg the Campaign for Better Transport and other transport providers), womens' groups or local traders.

ACCESSIBILITY

13. The Minister of State for Transport has now announced the way forward on accessibility for taxis and PHVs. His statement can be viewed on the Department's web-site at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/press/speechesstatements/statements/accesstotaxis. The Department will be taking forward demonstration schemes in three local authority areas to research the needs of people with disabilities in order to produce guidance about the most appropriate provision. In the meantime, the Department recognises that some local licensing authorities will want to make progress on enhancing accessible taxi provision and the guidance outlined below constitutes the Department's advice on how this might be achieved in advance of the comprehensive and dedicated guidance which will arise from the demonstration schemes.

14. Different accessibility considerations apply between taxis and PHVs. Taxis can be hired on the spot, in the street or at a rank, by the customer dealing directly with a driver. PHVs can only be booked through an operator. It is important that a disabled person should be able to hire a taxi on the spot with the minimum delay or inconvenience, and having accessible taxis available helps to make that possible. For PHVs, it may be more appropriate for a local authority to license any type of saloon car, noting that some PHV operators offer accessible vehicles in their fleet. The Department has produced a leaflet on the ergonomic requirements for accessible taxis that is available from: http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/taxis/pubs/research

15. The Department is aware that, in some cases, taxi drivers are reluctant to pick up disabled people. This may be because drivers are unsure about how to deal with disabled people, they believe it will take longer for disabled people to get in and out of the taxi and so they may lose other fares, or they are unsure about insurance arrangements if anything goes wrong. It should be remembered that this is no excuse for refusing to pick up disabled people and that the taxi industry has a duty to provide a service to disabled people in the same way as it provides a service to any other passenger. Licensing authorities should do what they can to work with operators, drivers and trade bodies in their area to improve drivers' awareness of the needs of disabled people, encourage them to overcome any reluctance or bad practice, and to improve their abilities and confidence. Local licensing authorities should also encourage their drivers to undertake disability awareness training, perhaps as part of the course mentioned in the training section of this guidance that is available through Go-Skills.

16. In relation to enforcement, licensing authorities will know that section 36 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA) was partially commenced by enactment of the Local Transport Act 2008. The duties contained in this section of the DDA apply only to those vehicles deemed accessible by the local authority being used on "taxibus" services. This applies to both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles.

17. Section 36 imposes certain duties on drivers of "taxibuses" to provide assistance to people in wheelchairs, to carry them in safety and not to charge extra for doing so. Failure to abide by these duties could lead to prosecution through a Magistrates' court and a maximum fine of £1,000.

18. Local authorities can take action against non-taxibus drivers who do not abide by their duties under section 36 of the DDA (see below). This could involve for example using licence conditions to implement training requirements or, ultimately, powers to suspend or revoke licences. Some local authorities use points systems and will take certain enforcement actions should drivers accumulate a certain number of points

19. There are plans to modify section 36 of the DDA. The Local Transport Act 2008 applied the duties to assist disabled passengers to drivers of taxis and PHVs whilst being used to provide local services. The Equality Bill which is currently on its passage through Parliament would extend the duties to drivers of taxis and PHVs whilst operating conventional services using wheelchair accessible vehicles. Licensing authorities will be informed if the change is enacted and Regulations will have to be made to deal with exemptions from the duties for drivers who are unable, on medical grounds to fulfil the duties.

Duties to carry assistance dogs

20. Since 31 March 2001, licensed taxi drivers in England and Wales have been under a duty (under section 37 of the DDA) to carry guide, hearing and other prescribed assistance dogs in their taxis without additional charge. Drivers who have a medical condition that is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to their licensing authority for an exemption from the duty on medical grounds. Any other driver who fails to comply with the duty could be prosecuted through a Magistrates' court and is liable to a fine of up to £1,000. Similar duties covering PHV operators and drivers have been in force since 31 March 2004.

21. Enforcement of this duty is the responsibility of local licensing authorities. It is therefore for authorities to decide whether breaches should be pursued through the courts or considered as part of the licensing enforcement regime, having regard to guidance issued by the Department.
http://www.dft.gov.uk/transportforyou/access/taxis/pubs/taxis/carriageofassistancedogsinta6154?page=2

Duties under the Part 3 of the DDA

22. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the DDA 1995 and lifted the exemption in Part 3 of that Act for operators of transport vehicles. Regulations applying Part 3 to vehicles used to provide public transport services, including taxis and PHVs, hire services and breakdown services came into force on 4 December 2006. Taxi drivers now have a duty to ensure disabled people are not discriminated against or treated less favourably. In order to meet these new duties, licensing authorities are required to review any practices, policies and procedures that make it impossible or unreasonably difficult for a disabled person to use their services.

23. The Disability Rights Commission, before it was incorporated into the Equality and Human Rights Commission, produced a Code of Practice to explain the Part 3 duties for the transport industry; this is available at http://www.equalityhumanrights.com/uploaded_files/code_of_practice_provision_and_use_of_transport_vehicles_dda.pdf. There is an expectation that Part 3 duties also now demand new skills and training; this is available through GoSkills, the sector skills council for road passenger transport. Go-Skills has also produced a DVD about assisting disabled passengers. Further details are provided in the training section of this guidance.

24. Local Authorities may wish to consider how to use available courses to reinforce the duties drivers are required to discharge under section 3 of DDA, and also to promote customer service standards for example through GoSkills.

25. In addition recognition has been made of a requirement of basic skills prior to undertaking any formal training. On-line tools are available to assess this requirement prior to undertaking formal training.

VEHICLES

Specification Of Vehicle Types That May Be Licensed

26. The legislation gives local authorities a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicle that they can license as taxis or PHVs. Some authorities specify conditions that in practice can only be met by purpose-built vehicles but the majority license a range of vehicles.

27. Normally, the best practice is for local licensing authorities to adopt the principle of specifying as many different types of vehicle as possible. Indeed, local authorities might usefully set down a range of general criteria, leaving it open to the taxi and PHV trades to put forward vehicles of their own choice which can be shown to meet those criteria. In that way there can be flexibility for new vehicle types to be readily taken into account.

28. It is suggested that local licensing authorities should give very careful consideration to a policy which automatically rules out particular types of vehicle or prescribes only one type or a small number of types of vehicle. For example, the Department believes authorities should be particularly cautious about specifying only purpose-built taxis, with the strict constraint on supply that that implies. But of course the purpose-built vehicles are amongst those which a local authority could be expected to license. Similarly, it may be too restrictive to automatically rule out considering Multi-Purpose Vehicles, or to license them for fewer passengers than their seating capacity (provided of course that the capacity of the vehicle is not more than eight passengers).

29. The owners and drivers of vehicles may want to make appropriate adaptations to their vehicles to help improve the personal security of the drivers. Licensing authorities should look favourably on such adaptations, but, as mentioned in paragraph 35 below, they may wish to ensure that modifications are present when the vehicle is tested and not made after the testing stage.

Tinted windows

30. The minimum light transmission for glass in front of, and to the side of, the driver is 70%. Vehicles may be manufactured with glass that is darker than this fitted to windows rearward of the driver, especially in estate and people carrier style vehicles. When licensing vehicles, authorities should be mindful of this as well as the large costs and inconvenience associated with changing glass that conforms to both Type Approval and Construction and Use Regulations.

Imported vehicles: type approval (see also “stretched limousines”, paras 40-44 below)

31. It may be that from time to time a local authority will be asked to license as a taxi or PHV a vehicle that has been imported independently (that is, by somebody other than the manufacturer). Such a vehicle might meet the local authority’s criteria for licensing, but the local authority may nonetheless be uncertain about the wider rules for foreign vehicles being used in the UK. Such vehicles will be subject to the ‘type approval’ rules. For

passenger cars up to 10 years old at the time of first GB registration, this means meeting the technical standards of either:

- a European Whole Vehicle Type approval;
- a British National Type approval; or
- a Individual Vehicle Approval.

Most registration certificates issued since late 1998 should indicate the approval status of the vehicle. The technical standards applied (and the safety and environmental risks covered) under each of the above are proportionate to the number of vehicles entering service. Further information about these requirements and the procedures for licensing and registering imported vehicles can be seen at www.businesslink.gov.uk/vehicleapprovalschemes

Vehicle Testing

32. There is considerable variation between local licensing authorities on vehicle testing, including the related question of age limits. The following can be regarded as best practice:

- Frequency Of Tests. The legal requirement is that all taxis should be subject to an MOT test or its equivalent once a year. For PHVs the requirement is for an annual test after the vehicle is three years old. An annual test for licensed vehicles of whatever age (that is, including vehicles that are less than three years old) seems appropriate in most cases, unless local conditions suggest that more frequent tests are necessary. However, more frequent tests may be appropriate for older vehicles (see 'age limits' below). Local licensing authorities may wish to note that a review carried out by the National Society for Cleaner Air in 2005 found that taxis were more likely than other vehicles to fail an emissions test. This finding, perhaps suggests that emissions testing should be carried out on ad hoc basis and more frequently than the full vehicle test.

- Criteria For Tests. Similarly, for mechanical matters it seems appropriate to apply the same criteria as those for the MOT test to taxis and PHVs*. The MOT test on vehicles first used after 31 March 1987 includes checking of all seat belts. However, taxis and PHVs provide a service to the public, so it is also appropriate to set criteria for the internal condition of the vehicle, though these should not be unreasonably onerous.

  *A manual outlining the method of testing and reasons for failure of all MOT tested items can be obtained from the Stationary Office see http:www.tsoshop.co.uk/bookstore.asp?FO=1159966&Action=Book&From=SearchResults&ProductID=0115525726

- Age Limits. It is perfectly possible for an older vehicle to be in good condition. So the setting of an age limit beyond which a local authority will not license vehicles may be arbitrary and inappropriate. But a greater frequency of testing may be appropriate for older vehicles - for example, twice-yearly tests for vehicles more than five years old.

- Number Of Testing Stations. There is sometimes criticism that local authorities provide only one testing centre for their area (which may be geographically extensive). So it is good practice for local authorities to consider having more than one testing station. There could be an advantage in contracting out the testing work, and to different garages. In that way the licensing authority can benefit from competition in costs. (The Vehicle Operators and Standards Agency – VOSA – may be able to assist where there are local difficulties in provision of testing stations.)

33. The Technical Officer Group of the Public Authority Transport Network has produced Best Practice Guidance which focuses on national inspection standards for taxis and PHVs. Local licensing authorities might find it helpful to refer to the testing standards set out in this guidance in carrying out their licensing responsibilities. The PATN can be accessed via the Freight Transport Association.

Personal security

34. The personal security of taxi and PHV drivers and staff needs to be considered. The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 requires local authorities and others to consider crime and disorder reduction while exercising all of their duties. Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships are also required to invite public transport providers and operators to participate in the partnerships. Research has shown that anti-social behaviour and crime affects taxi and PHV drivers and control centre staff. It is therefore important that the personal security of these people is considered.

35. The owners and drivers of vehicles will often want to install security measures to protect the driver. Local licensing authorities may not want to insist on such measures, on the grounds that they are best left to the judgement of the owners and drivers themselves. But it is good practice for licensing authorities to look sympathetically on - or actively to encourage - their installation. They could include a screen between driver and passengers, or CCTV. Care however should be taken that security measures within the vehicle do not impede a disabled passenger's ability to communicate with the driver. In addition, licensing authorities may wish to ensure that such modifications are present when the vehicle is tested and not made after the testing stage.

36. There is extensive information on the use of CCTV, including as part of measures to reduce crime, on the Home Office website (e.g. http://scienceandresearch.homeoffice.gov.uk/hosdb/cctv-imaging-technology/CCTV-and-imaging-publications) and on the Information Commission's Office website (www.ico.gov.uk). CCTV can be both a deterrent to would-be trouble makers and be a source of evidence in the case of disputes between drivers and passengers and other incidents. There is a variety of funding sources being used for the implementation of security measures for example, from community safety partnerships, local authorities and drivers themselves.

37. Other security measures include guidance, talks by the local police and conflict avoidance training. The Department has recently issued guidance for taxi and PHV drivers to help them improve their personal security. These can be accessed on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/crime/taxiphv/.

In order to emphasise the reciprocal aspect of the taxi/PHV service, licensing authorities might consider drawing up signs or notices which set out not only what passengers can expect from drivers, but also what drivers can expect from passengers who use their service. Annex B contains two samples which are included for illustrative purposes but local authorities are encouraged to formulate their own, in the light of local conditions and circumstances. Licensing authorities may want to encourage the taxi and PHV trades to build good links with the local police force, including participation in any Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

Vehicle Identification

38. Members of the public can often confuse PHVs with taxis, failing to realise that PHVs are not available for immediate hire and that a PHV driver cannot be hailed. So it is important to distinguish between the two types of vehicle. Possible approaches might be:

- a licence condition that prohibits PHVs from displaying any identification at all apart from the local authority licence plate or disc. The licence plate is a helpful indicator of licensed status and, as such, it helps identification if licence plates are displayed on the front as well as the rear of vehicles. However, requiring some additional clearer form of identification can be seen as best practice. This is for two reasons: firstly, to ensure a more positive statement that the vehicle cannot be hired immediately through the driver; and secondly because it is quite reasonable, and in the interests of the travelling public, for a PHV operator to be able to state on the vehicle the contact details for hiring;

- a licence condition which requires a sign on the vehicle in a specified form. This will often be a sign of a specified size and shape which identifies the operator (with a telephone number for bookings) and the local licensing authority, and which also has some words such as ‘pre-booked only’. This approach seems the best practice; it identifies the vehicle as private hire and helps to avoid confusion with a taxi, but also gives useful information to the public wishing to make a booking. It is good practice for vehicle identification for PHVs to include the contact details of the operator.

- Another approach, possibly in conjunction with the previous option, is a requirement for a roof-mounted, permanently illuminated sign with words such as ‘pre-booked only’. But it can be argued that any roof-mounted sign, however unambiguous its words, is liable to create confusion with a taxi. So roof-mounted signs on PHVs are not seen as best practice.

Environmental Considerations

39. Local licensing authorities, in discussion with those responsible for environmental health issues, will wish to consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental policies that the local authority may have adopted. This will be of particular importance in designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs), Local authorities may, for example, wish to consider setting vehicle emissions standards for taxis and PHVs. However, local authorities would need to carefully and thoroughly

assess the impact of introducing such a policy; for example, the effect on the supply of taxis and PHVs in the area would be an important consideration in deciding the standards, if any, to be set. They should also bear in mind the need to ensure that the benefits of any policies outweigh the costs (in whatever form).

Stretched Limousines

40. Local licensing authorities are sometimes asked to license stretched limousines as PHVs. It is suggested that local authorities should approach such requests on the basis that these vehicles – where they have fewer than nine passenger seats - have a legitimate role to play in the private hire trade, meeting a public demand. Indeed, the Department's view is that it is not a legitimate course of action for licensing authorities to adopt policies that exclude limousines as a matter of principle and that any authorities which do adopt such practices are leaving themselves open to legal challenge. A policy of excluding limousines creates an unacceptable risk to the travelling public, as it would inevitably lead to higher levels of unlawful operation. Public safety considerations are best supported by policies that allow respectable, safe operators to obtain licences on the same basis as other private hire vehicle operators. The Department has now issued guidance on the licensing arrangements for stretched limousines. This can be accessed on the Department's web-site at http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/taxis/stretchlimousines.pdf.

41. The limousine guidance makes it clear that most operations are likely to fall within the PHV licensing category and not into the small bus category. VOSA will be advising limousine owners that if they intend to provide a private hire service then they should go to the local authority for PHV licences. The Department would expect licensing authorities to assess applications on their merits; and, as necessary, to be proactive in ascertaining whether any limousine operators might already be providing an unlicensed service within their district.

42. Imported stretched limousines were historically checked for compliance with regulations under the Single Vehicle Approval (SVA) inspection regime before they were registered. This is now the Individual Vehicle Approval (IVA) scheme. The IVA test verifies that the converted vehicle is built to certain safety and environmental standards. A licensing authority might wish to confirm that an imported vehicle was indeed tested by VOSA for IVA before being registered and licensed (taxed) by DVLA. This can be done either by checking the V5C (Registration Certificate) of the vehicle, which may refer to IVA under the "Special Note" section; or by writing to VOSA, Ellipse, Padley Road, Swansea, SA1 8AN, including details of the vehicle's make and model, registration number and VIN number.

43. Stretched limousines which clearly have more than 8 passenger seats should not of course be licensed as PHVs because they are outside the licensing regime for PHVs. However, under some circumstances the SVA regime accepted vehicles with space for more than 8 passengers, particularly where the precise number of passenger seats was hard to determine. In these circumstances, if the vehicle had obtained an SVA certificate, the authority should consider the case on its merits in deciding whether to license the vehicle under the strict condition that the vehicle will not be used to carry more than 8 passengers, bearing in mind that refusal may encourage illegal private hire operation.

44. Many councils are concerned that the size of limousines prevents them being tested in conventional MoT garages. If there is not a suitable MoT testing station in the area then it would be possible to test the vehicle at the local VOSA test stations. The local enforcement office may be able to advise (contact details on http://www.vosa.gov.uk).

QUANTITY RESTRICTIONS OF TAXI LICENCES OUTSIDE LONDON

45. The present legal provision on quantity restrictions for taxis outside London is set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a taxi licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed taxis 'if, but only if, the [local licensing authority] is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet'.

46. Local licensing authorities will be aware that, in the event of a challenge to a decision to refuse a licence, the local authority concerned would have to establish that it had, reasonably, been satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand.

47. Most local licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions; the Department regards that as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed, the Department would urge that the matter should be regularly reconsidered. The Department further urges that the issue to be addressed first in each reconsideration is whether the restrictions should continue at all. It is suggested that the matter should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public - that is to say, the people who use taxi services. What benefits or disadvantages arise for them as a result of the continuation of controls; and what benefits or disadvantages would result for the public if the controls were removed? Is there evidence that removal of the controls would result in a deterioration in the amount or quality of taxi service provision?

48. In most cases where quantity restrictions are imposed, vehicle licence plates command a premium, often of tens of thousands of pounds. This indicates that there are people who want to enter the taxi market and provide a service to the public, but who are being prevented from doing so by the quantity restrictions. This seems very hard to justify.

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

50. As to the conduct of the survey, the Department's letter of 16 June 2004 set out a range of considerations. But key points are:

- **the length of time that would-be customers have to wait at ranks**. However, this alone is an inadequate indicator of demand; also taken into account should be…

- **waiting times for street hailings and for telephone bookings**. But waiting times at ranks or elsewhere do not in themselves satisfactorily resolve the question of unmet demand. It is also desirable to address…

- **latent demand**, for example people who have responded to long waiting times by not even trying to travel by taxi. This can be assessed by surveys of people who do not use taxis, perhaps using stated preference survey techniques.

- **peaked demand**. It is sometimes argued that delays associated only with peaks in demand (such as morning and evening rush hours, or pub closing times) are not 'significant' for the purpose of the Transport Act 1985. The Department does not share that view. Since the peaks in demand are by definition the most popular times for consumers to use taxis, it can be strongly argued that unmet demand at these times should not be ignored. Local authorities might wish to consider when the peaks occur and who is being disadvantaged through restrictions on provision of taxi services.

- **consultation**. As well as statistical surveys, assessment of quantity restrictions should include consultation with all those concerned, including user groups (which should include groups representing people with disabilities, and people such as students or women), the police, hoteliers, operators of pubs and clubs and visitor attractions, and providers of other transport modes (such as train operators, who want taxis available to take passengers to and from stations);

- **publication**. All the evidence gathered in a survey should be published, together with an explanation of what conclusions have been drawn from it and why. If quantity restrictions are to be continued, their benefits to consumers and the reason for the particular level at which the number is set should be set out.

- **financing of surveys**. It is not good practice for surveys to be paid for by the local taxi trade (except through general revenues from licence fees). To do so can call in question the impartiality and objectivity of the survey process.

51. Quite apart from the requirement of the 1985 Act, the Department's letter of 16 June 2004 asked all local licensing authorities that operate quantity restrictions to review their policy and justify it publicly by 31 March 2005 and at least every three years thereafter. The Department also expects the justification for any policy of quantity restrictions to be included in the Local Transport Plan process. A recommended list of questions for local authorities to address when considering quantity controls was attached to the Department's letter. (The questions are listed in Annex A to this Guidance.)

TAXI FARES

52. Local licensing authorities have the power to set taxi fares for journeys within their area, and most do so. (There is no power to set PHV fares.) Fare scales should be designed with a view to practicality. The Department sees it as good practice to review the fare scales at regular intervals, including any graduation of the fare scale by time of day or day of the week. Authorities may wish to consider adopting a simple formula for

deciding on fare revisions as this will increase understanding and improve the transparency of the process. The Department also suggests that in reviewing fares authorities should pay particular regard to the needs of the travelling public, with reference both to what it is reasonable to expect people to pay but also to the need to give taxi drivers sufficient incentive to provide a service when it is needed. There may well be a case for higher fares at times of higher demand.

53. Taxi fares are a maximum, and in principle are open to downward negotiation between passenger and driver. It is not good practice to encourage such negotiations at ranks, or for on-street hailings; there would be risks of confusion and security problems. But local licensing authorities can usefully make it clear that published fares are a maximum, especially in the context of telephone bookings, where the customer benefits from competition. There is more likely to be a choice of taxi operators for telephone bookings, and there is scope for differentiation of services to the customer's advantage (for example, lower fares off-peak or for pensioners).

54. There is a case for allowing any taxi operators who wish to do so to make it clear – perhaps by advertising on the vehicle – that they charge less than the maximum fare; publicity such as '5% below the metered fare' might be an example.

DRIVERS

Duration Of Licences

55. It is obviously important for safety reasons that drivers should be licensed. But it is not necessarily good practice to require licences to be renewed annually. That can impose an undue burden on drivers and licensing authorities alike. Three years is the legal maximum period and is in general the best approach. One argument against 3-year licences has been that a criminal offence may be committed, and not notified, during the duration of the licence. But this can of course also be the case during the duration of a shorter licence. In relation to this, authorities will wish to note that the Home Office in April 2006 issued revised guidance for police forces on the Notifiable Occupations Scheme. Paragraphs 62-65 below provide further information about this scheme.

56. However, an annual licence may be preferred by some drivers. That may be because they have plans to move to a different job or a different area, or because they cannot easily pay the fee for a three-year licence, if it is larger than the fee for an annual one. So it can be good practice to offer drivers the choice of an annual licence or a three-year licence.

Acceptance of driving licences from other EU member states

57. Sections 51 and 59 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 as enacted stated that an applicant for a taxi or private hire vehicle (PHV) driver's licence must have held a full ordinary GB driving licence for at least 12 months in order to be granted a taxi or PHV driver's licence. This requirement has subsequently been amended since the 1976 Act was passed. The Driving Licences (Community Driving Licence) Regulations 1996 (SI 1996 No 1974) amended sections 51 and 59 of the 1976 Act to allow full driving licences issued by EEA states to count towards the qualification

requirements for the grant of taxi and PHV driver's licences. Since that time, a number of central and eastern European states have joined the EU and the EEA and the Department takes the view that drivers from the Accession States are eligible to acquire a taxi or PHV driver's licence under the 1976 Act if they have held an ordinary driving licence for 12 months which was issued by an acceding State (see section 99A(i) of the Road Traffic Act 1988). To complete the picture, the Deregulation (Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles) Order 1998 (SI 1998 No 1946) gave equal recognition to Northern Ireland driving licences for the purposes of taxi and PHV driver licensing under the 1976 Act (see section 109(i) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, as amended).

Criminal Record Checks

58. A criminal record check is an important safety measure particularly for those working closely with children and the vulnerable. Taxi and PHV drivers can be subject to a Standard Disclosure (and for those working in "Regulated Activity" to an Enhanced Disclosure) through the Criminal Records Bureau. Both levels of Disclosure include details of spent and unspent convictions, cautions reprimands and final warnings. An Enhanced Disclosure may also include any other information held in police records that is considered relevant by the police, for example, details of minor offences, non-conviction information on the Police National Computer such as Fixed Penalty Notices and, in some cases, allegations. An Enhanced Disclosure is for those working in Regulated Activity[1].and the Government has produced guidance in relation to this and the new "Vetting and Barring Scheme" which is available at www.isa-gov.org.uk/default.aspx?page=402. [*The Department will issue further advice as the new SVG scheme develops*.]

59. In considering an individual's criminal record, local licensing authorities will want to consider each case on its merits, but they should take a particularly cautious view of any offences involving violence, and especially sexual attack. In order to achieve consistency, and thus avoid the risk of successful legal challenge, local authorities will doubtless want to have a clear policy for the consideration of criminal records, for example the number of years they will require to have elapsed since the commission of particular kinds of offences before they will grant a licence.

60. Local licensing authorities will also want to have a policy on background checks for applicants from elsewhere in the EU and other overseas countries. One approach is to require a certificate of good conduct authenticated by the relevant embassy. The Criminal Records Bureau website (www.crb.gov.uk) gives information about obtaining certificates of good conduct, or similar documents, from a number of countries.

61. It would seem best practice for Criminal Records Bureau disclosures to be sought when a licence is first applied for and then every three years, even if a licence is renewed annually, provided drivers are obliged to report all new convictions and cautions to the licensing authority.

1 "Regulated Activity" is defined in The Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 2009

Notifiable Occupations Scheme

62. Under this Scheme, when an individual comes to the notice of the police and identifies their occupation as a taxi or PHV driver, the police are requested to notify the appropriate local licensing authority of convictions and any other relevant information that indicates that a person poses a risk to public safety. Most notifications will be made once an individual is convicted however, if there is a sufficient risk, the police will notify the authority immediately.

63. In the absence of a national licensing body for taxi and PHV drivers, notifications are made to the local licensing authority identified on the licence or following interview. However, it is expected that all licensing authorities work together should they ascertain that an individual is operating under a different authority or with a fraudulent licence.

64. The police may occasionally notify licensing authorities of offences committed abroad by an individual however it may not be possible to provide full information.

65. The Notifiable Occupations Scheme is described in Home Office Circular 6/2006 which is available at http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/CommitteeDocs/Committees/Licensing/20070710/3%20yr%20licences-update%20on%20hants%20constab%20procedures%20re%20Home%20office%20circ%206;2006-%20Appendix%202.pdf. Further information can also be obtained from the Criminal Records Team, Joint Public Protection Information Unit, Fifth Floor, Fry Building, 2 Marsham Street, London SW1P 4DF; e-mail Samuel.Wray@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk.

Immigration checks

66. The Department considers it appropriate for licensing authorities to check on an applicant's right to work before granting a taxi or PHV driver's licence. It is important to note that a Criminal Records Bureau check is not a Right to Work check and any enquires about the immigration status of an individual should be addressed to the Border and Immigration Agency. Further information can be found at www.bia.homeoffice.gov.uk/employingmigrants. More generally, the Border and Immigration Agency's Employers' Helpline (0845 010 6677) can be used by licensing staff to obtain general guidance on immigration documentation, although this Helpline is not able to advise on individual cases. The authority can obtain case specific immigration status information, including whether a licensing applicant is permitted to work or details of work restrictions, from the Evidence and Enquiry Unit, Floor 12, Lunar House, Wellesley Road, Croydon CR9 2BY . Further details on the procedures involved can be obtained by contacting the Unit (020 8196 3011).

Medical fitness

67. It is clearly good practice for medical checks to be made on each driver before the initial grant of a licence and thereafter for each renewal. There is general recognition that it is appropriate for taxi/PHV drivers to have more stringent medical standards than those applicable to normal car drivers because:

- they carry members of the general public who have expectations of a safe journey;
- they are on the road for longer hours than most car drivers; and
- they may have to assist disabled passengers and handle luggage.

68. It is common for licensing authorities to apply the “Group 2” medical standards – applied by DVLA to the licensing of lorry and bus drivers – to taxi and PHV drivers. This seems best practice. The Group 2 standards preclude the licensing of drivers with insulin treated diabetes. However, exceptional arrangements do exist for drivers with insulin treated diabetes, who can meet a series of medical criteria, to obtain a licence to drive category C1 vehicles (ie 3500-7500 kgs lorries); the position is summarised at Annex C to the Guidance. It is suggested that the best practice is to apply the C1 standards to taxi and PHV drivers with insulin treated diabetes.

Age Limits

69. It does not seem necessary to set a maximum age limit for drivers provided that regular medical checks are made. Nor do minimum age limits, beyond the statutory periods for holding a full driver licence, seem appropriate. Applicants should be assessed on their merits.

Driving Proficiency

70. Many local authorities rely on the standard car driving licence as evidence of driving proficiency. Others require some further driving test to be taken. Local authorities will want to consider carefully whether this produces benefits which are commensurate with the costs involved for would-be drivers, the costs being in terms of both money and broader obstacles to entry to the trade. However, they will note that the Driving Standards Agency provides a driving assessment specifically designed for taxis.

Language proficiency

71. Authorities may also wish to consider whether an applicant would have any problems in communicating with customers because of language difficulties.

Other training

72. Whilst the Department has no plans to make training courses or qualifications mandatory, there may well be advantage in encouraging drivers to obtain one of the nationally-recognised vocational qualifications for the taxi and PHV trades. These will cover customer care, including how best to meet the needs of people with disabilities. More information about these qualifications can be obtained from *GoSkills*, the Sector Skills Council for Passenger Transport. *GoSkills* is working on a project funded by the Department to raise standards in the industry and *GoSkills* whilst not a direct training provider, can guide and support licensing authorities through its regional network of Regional Managers.

73. Some licensing authorities have already established training initiatives and others are being developed; it is seen as important to do this in consultation with the local taxi and PHV trades. Training can cover customer care, including how best to meet the needs of people with disabilities and other sections of the community, and also topics such as the relevant legislation, road safety, the use of maps and GPS, the handling of emergencies, and how to defuse difficult situations and manage conflict. Training may also be considered for applicants to enable them to reach an appropriate standard of comprehension, literacy and numeracy. Authorities may wish to note that nationally recognised qualifications and training programmes sometimes have advantages over purely local arrangements (for example, in that the qualification will be more widely recognised).

Contact details are:

GoSkills, Concorde House, Trinity Park, Solihull, Birmingham, B37 7UQ.

Tel: 0121-635-5520
Fax: 0121-635-5521

Website: www.goskills.org
e-mail: info@goskills.org

74. It is also relevant to consider driver training in the context of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games which will take place at a number of venues across the country. One of the key aims of the Games is to “change the experience disabled people have when using public transport during the Games and to leave a legacy of more accessible transport”. The Games provide a unique opportunity for taxi/PHV drivers to demonstrate their disability awareness training, and to ensure all passengers experience the highest quality of service.

Topographical Knowledge

75. Taxi drivers need a good working knowledge of the area for which they are licensed, because taxis can be hired immediately, directly with the driver, at ranks or on the street. So most licensing authorities require would-be taxi-drivers to pass a test of local topographical knowledge as a pre-requisite to the first grant of a licence (though the stringency of the test should reflect the complexity or otherwise of the local geography, in accordance with the principle of ensuring that barriers to entry are not unnecessarily high).

76. However, PHVs are not legally available for immediate hiring in the same way as taxis. To hire a PHV the would-be passenger has to go through an operator, so the driver will have an opportunity to check the details of a route before starting a journey. So it may be unnecessarily burdensome to require a would-be PHV driver to pass the same ‘knowledge’ test as a taxi driver, though it may be thought appropriate to test candidates’ ability to read a map and their knowledge of key places such as main roads and railway stations. The Department is aware of circumstances where, as a result of the repeal of the PHV contract exemption, some people who drive children on school contracts are being deterred from continuing to do so on account of overly burdensome topographical

tests. Local authorities should bear this in mind when assessing applicants' suitability for PHV licences.

PHV OPERATORS

77. The objective in licensing PHV operators is, again, the safety of the public, who will be using operators' premises and vehicles and drivers arranged through them.

Criminal Record Checks

78. PHV operators (as opposed to PHV drivers) are not exceptions to the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974, so Standard or Enhanced disclosures cannot be required as a condition of grant of an operator's licence. But a Basic Disclosure, which will provide details of unspent convictions only**,** could be seen as appropriate, after such a system has been introduced by the Criminal Records Bureau. No firm date for introduction has yet been set; however, a feasibility study has been completed; the Criminal Records Bureau is undertaking further work in this regard. Overseas applicants may be required to provide a certificate of good conduct from the relevant embassy if they have not been long in this country. Local licensing authorities may want to require a reference, covering for example the applicant's financial record, as well as the checks outlined above.

Record Keeping

79. It is good practice to require operators to keep records of each booking, including the name of the passenger, the destination, the name of the driver, the number of the vehicle and any fare quoted at the time of booking. This information will enable the passenger to be traced if this becomes necessary and should improve driver security and facilitate enforcement**.** It is suggested that 6 months is generally appropriate as the length of time that records should be kept.

Insurance

80 It is appropriate for a licensing authority to check that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public.

Licence Duration

81. A requirement for annual licence renewal does not seem necessary or appropriate for PHV operators, whose involvement with the public is less direct than a driver (who will be alone with passengers). Indeed, a licence period of five years may well be appropriate in the average case. Although the authority may wish to offer operators the option of a licence for a shorter period if requested.

Repeal of the PHV contract exemption

82. Section 53 of the Road Safety Act 2006 repealed the exemption from PHV licensing for vehicles which were used on contracts lasting not less than seven days. The change came into effect in January 2008. A similar change was introduced in respect of London in March 2008. As a result of this change, local licensing authorities are considering a range of vehicles and services in the context of PHV licensing which they had not previously licensed because of the contract exemption.

83. The Department produced a guidance note in November 2007 to assist local licensing authorities, and other stakeholders, in deciding which vehicles should be licensed in the PHV regime and which vehicles fell outside the PHV definition. The note stressed that it was a matter for local licensing authorities to make decisions in the first instance and that, ultimately, the courts were responsible for interpreting the law. However, the guidance was published as a way of assisting people who needed to consider these issues. A copy of the guidance note can be found on the Department's web-site at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/taxis/rsa06privatehirevehicles As a result of a recent report on the impact of the repeal of the PHV contract exemption, the Department will be revising its guidance note to offer a more definite view about which vehicles should be licensed as PHVs. The report is also on the Department’s web-site at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/taxis/phvcontractexemption/.

ENFORCEMENT

84. Well-directed enforcement activity by the local licensing authority benefits not only the public but also the responsible people in the taxi and PHV trades. Indeed, it could be argued that the safety of the public depends upon licensing authorities having an effective enforcement mechanism in place. This includes actively seeking out those operators who are evading the licensing system, not just licensing those who come forward seeking the appropriate licences. The resources devoted by licensing authorities to enforcement will vary according to local circumstances, including for example any difficulties with touting by unlicensed drivers and vehicles (a problem in some urban areas). Local authorities will also wish to liaise closely with the police. Multi-agency enforcement exercises (involving, for example, the Benefits Agency) have proved beneficial in some areas.

85. Local licensing authorities often use enforcement staff to check a range of licensed activities (such as market traders) as well as the taxi and PHV trades, to make the best use of staff time. But it is desirable to ensure that taxi and PHV enforcement effort is at least partly directed to the late-night period, when problems such as touting tend most often to arise. In formulating policies to deal with taxi touts, local licensing authorities might wish to be aware that the Sentencing Guidelines Council have, for the first time, included guidance about taxi touting in their latest Guidelines for Magistrates. The Guidelines, which came into effect in August 2008, can be accessed through the SGC’s web-site - www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk.

86. Some local licensing authorities employ taxi marshals in busy city centres where there are lots of hirings, again perhaps late at night, to help taxi drivers picking up, and would-be passengers queuing for taxis.

87. As part of enforcement, local licensing authorities will often make spot checks, which can lead to their suspending or revoking licences. They will wish to consider carefully which power should best be used for this purpose. They will note, among other things, that section 60 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 provides a right of appeal for the licence-holder, whereas section 68, which is also sometimes used, does not; this can complicate any challenge by the licence-holder.

88. Section 52 of the Road Safety Act 2006 amended the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 such that local authorities can now suspend or revoke a taxi or PHV driver's licence with immediate effect on safety grounds. It should be stressed that this power can only be used where safety is the principal reason for suspending or revoking and where the risk justifies such an approach. It is expected that in the majority of cases drivers will continue to work pending appeal and that this power will be used in one-off cases. But the key point is that the law says that the power must be used in cases which can be justified in terms of safety***.*** The Department is not proposing to issue any specific guidance on this issue, preferring to leave it to the discretion of licensing authorities as to when the power should be used.

TAXI ZONES

89. The areas of some local licensing authorities are divided into two or more zones for taxi licensing purposes. Drivers may be licensed to ply for hire in one zone only. Zones may exist for historical reasons, perhaps because of local authority boundary changes.

90. The Department recommends the abolition of zones. That is chiefly for the benefit of the travelling public. Zoning tends to diminish the supply of taxis and the scope for customer choice - for example, if fifty taxis were licensed overall by a local authority, but with only twenty five of them entitled to ply for hire in each of two zones. It can be confusing and frustrating for people wishing to hire a taxi to find that a vehicle licensed by the relevant local authority is nonetheless unable to pick them up (unless pre-booked) because they are in the wrong part of the local authority area. Abolition of zones can also reduce costs for the local authority, for example through simpler administration and enforcement. It can also promote fuel efficiency, because taxis can pick up a passenger anywhere in the local authority area, rather than having to return empty to their licensed zone after dropping a passenger in another zone.

91. It should be noted that the Government has now made a Legislative Reform Order which removed the need for the Secretary of State to approve amalgamation resolutions made by local licensing authorities The Legislative Reform (Local Authority Consent Requirements)(England and Wales) Order 2008 came into force in October 2008. Although these resolutions no longer require the approval of the Secretary of State, the statutory procedure for making them – in paragraph 25 of schedule 14 to the Local Government Act 1972- remains the same.

FLEXIBLE TRANSPORT SERVICES

92. It is possible for taxis and PHVs to provide flexible transport services in a number of different ways. Such services can play a valuable role in meeting a range of transport

needs, especially in rural areas – though potentially in many other places as well. In recent years there has been a significant increase in the provision of flexible services, due partly to the availability of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant and Rural Bus Challenge Support from the Department.

93. The Department encourages local licensing authorities, as a matter of best practice, to play their part in promoting flexible services, so as to increase the availability of transport to the travelling public. This can be done partly by drawing the possibilities to the attention of taxi and PHV trade. It also should be borne in mind that vehicles with a higher seating capacity than the vehicles typically licensed as taxis (for example those with 6, 7 or 8 passenger seats) may be used for flexible services and should be considered for licensing in this context.

94. The main legal provisions under which flexible services can be operated are:

- **Shared taxis and PHVs – advance bookings (section 11, Transport Act 1985)**: licensed taxis and PHVs can provide a service at separate fares for up to eight passengers sharing the vehicle. The operator takes the initiative to match up passengers who book in advance and agree to share the vehicle at separate fares (lower than for a single hiring). An example could be passengers being picked up at home to go to a shopping centre, or returning from the shops to their homes. The operator benefits through increased passenger loadings and total revenues.

- **Shared taxis – immediate hirings (section 10, Transport Act 1985)**: such a scheme is at the initiative of the local licensing authority, which can set up schemes whereby licensed taxis (not PHVs) can be hired at separate fares by up to eight people from ranks or other places that have been designated by the authority. (The authority is required to set up such a scheme if holders of 10% or more of the taxi licences in the area ask for one.) The passengers pay only part of the metered fare, for example in going home after a trip to the local town, and without pre-booking, but the driver receives more than the metered fare.

- **Taxibuses (section 12, Transport Act 1985)**: owners of licensed taxis can apply to the Traffic Commissioner for a ‘restricted public service vehicle (PSV) operator licence’. The taxi owner can then use the vehicle to run a bus service for up to eight passengers. The route must be registered with the Traffic Commissioner and must have at least one stopping place in the area of the local authority that licensed the taxi, though it can go beyond it. The bus service will be eligible for Bus Service Operators Grant (subject to certain conditions) and taxibuses can be used for local authority subsidised bus services. The travelling public have another transport opportunity opened for them, and taxi owners have another business opportunity***.*** The Local Transport Act 2008 contains a provision which allows the owners of PHVs to acquire a special PSV operator licence and register a route with the traffic commissioner***.*** A dedicated leaflet has been sent to licensing authorities to distribute to PHV owners in their area alerting them to this new provision.

95. The Department is very keen to encourage the use of these types of services. More details can be found in the Department’s publication ‘Flexible Transport Services’ which can be accessed at:.
http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/regional/buses/bol/flexibletransportservices

LOCAL TRANSPORT PLANS

96. The Transport Act 2000 as amended by the Transport Act 2008, requires local transport authorities in England outside London to produce and maintain a Local Transport Plan (LTP), having regard to any guidance issued by the Secretary of State. The latest guidance published in July 2009 will cover the next round of LTPs from 2011. LTPs set out the authority's local transport strategies and policies for transport in their area, and an implementation programme. 82 LTPs covering all of England outside London have been produced and cover the period up to 2011. From 2011 local authorities will have greater freedom to prepare their LTPs to align with wider local objectives.

97. All modes of transport including taxi and PHV services have a valuable part to play in overall transport provision, and so local licensing authorities have an input to delivering the LTPs. The key policy themes for such services could be availability and accessibility. LTPs can cover:

- quantity controls, if any, and plans for their review;
- licensing conditions, with a view to safety but also to good supply of taxi and PHV services;
- fares;
- on-street availability, especially through provision of taxi ranks;
- vehicle accessibility for people with disabilities;
- encouragement of flexible services.

Annex A

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Useful questions when assessing quantity controls of taxi licences

- Have you considered the Government's view that quantity controls should be removed unless a specific case that such controls benefit the consumer can be made?

Questions relating to the policy of controlling numbers

- Have you recently reviewed the need for your policy of quantity controls?
- What form did the review of your policy of quantity controls take?
- Who was involved in the review?
- What decision was reached about retaining or removing quantity controls?
- Are you satisfied that your policy justifies restricting entry to the trade?
- Are you satisfied that quantity controls do not:
  - reduce the availability of taxis;
  - increase waiting times for consumers;
  - reduce choice and safety for consumers?
- What special circumstances justify retention of quantity controls?
- How does your policy benefit consumers, particularly in remote rural areas?
- How does your policy benefit the trade?
- If you have a local accessibility policy, how does this fit with restricting taxi licences?

Questions relating to setting the number of taxi licences

- When last did you assess unmet demand?
- How is your taxi limit assessed?
- Have you considered latent demand, ie potential consumers who would use taxis if more were available, but currently do not?
- Are you satisfied that your limit is set at the correct level?
- How does the need for adequate taxi ranks affect your policy of quantity controls?

Questions relating to consultation and other public transport service provision

- When consulting, have you included etc
  - all those working in the market;
  - consumer and passenger (including disabled) groups;
  - groups which represent those passengers with special needs;
  - local interest groups, eg hospitals or visitor attractions;
  - the police;
  - a wide range of transport stakeholders eg rail/bus/coach providers and traffic managers?
- Do you receive representations about taxi availability?
- What is the level of service currently available to consumers (including other public transport modes)?

Annex B

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Notice for taxi passengers - what you can expect from the taxi trade and what the taxi trade can expect from you

The driver will:

- ***Drive with due care and courtesy towards the passenger and other road users.***
- ***Use the meter within the licensed area, unless the passenger has agreed to hire by time.***
- ***If using the meter, not start the meter until the passenger is seated in the vehicle.***
- ***If travelling outside the licensed area, agree the fare in advance. If no fare has been negotiated in advance for a journey going beyond the licensing area then the driver must adhere to the meter.***
- ***Take the most time-efficient route, bearing in mind likely traffic problems and known diversions, and explain any diversion from the most direct route.***

The passenger will:

- ***Treat the vehicle and driver with respect and obey any notices (e.g. in relation to eating in the vehicle).***
- ***Ensure they have enough money to pay the fare before travelling. If wishing to pay by credit card or to stop on route to use a cash machine, check with the driver before setting off.***
- ***Be aware of the fare on the meter and make the driver aware if it is approaching the limit of their financial resources.***
- ***Be aware that the driver is likely to be restricted by traffic regulations in relation to where s/he can stop the vehicle.***

Notice for PHV passengers - what you can expect from the PHV trade and what the PHV trade can expect from you

<u>The driver will:</u>

- ***Ensure that the passenger has pre-booked and agrees the fare before setting off.***

- ***Drive with due care and courtesy towards the passenger and other road users.***

- ***Take the most time-efficient route, bearing in mind likely traffic problems and known diversions, and explain any diversion from the most direct route.***

<u>The passenger will:</u>

- ***Treat the vehicle and driver with respect and obey any notices (eg. in relation to eating in the vehicle).***

- ***Ensure they have enough money to pay the fare before travelling. If wishing to pay by credit card or to stop on route to use a cash machine, check with the driver before setting off.***

- ***Be aware that the driver is likely to be restricted by traffic regulations in relation to where s/he can stop the vehicle.***

TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE LICENSING: BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

Assessing applicants for a taxi or PHV driver licence in accordance with C1 standard

Exceptional circumstances under which DVLA will consider granting licences for vehicles over 3.5 tonnes or with more than 8 passenger seats.

Insulin treated diabetes is a legal bar to driving these vehicles. The exceptional arrangements that were introduced in September 1998 were only in respect of drivers who were employed to drive small lorries between 3.5 tonnes and 7.5 tonnes (category C1). The arrangements mean that those with good diabetic control and who have no significant complications can be treated as "exceptional cases" and may have their application for a licence for category C1 considered. The criteria are

- To have been taking insulin for at least 4 weeks;
- Not to have suffered an episode of hypoglycaemia requiring the assistance of another person whilst driving in the last 12 months;
- To attend an examination by a hospital consultant specialising in the treatment of diabetes at intervals of not more than 12 months and to provide a report from such a consultant in support of the application which confirms a history of responsible diabetic control with a minimal risk of incapacity due to hypoglycaemia;
- To provide evidence of at least twice daily blood glucose monitoring at times when C1 vehicles are being driven (those that have not held C1 entitlement in the preceding 12 months may provide evidence of blood glucose monitoring while driving other vehicles);
- To have no other condition which would render the driver a danger when driving C1 vehicles; and
- To sign an undertaking to comply with the directions of the doctor(s) treating the diabetes and to report immediately to DVLA any significant change in condition.

Appendix 3

TRAFFIC + TRANSPORTATION

Unmet demand survey

Taunton Deane
Borough Council
February 2017

Executive Summary

This Hackney carriage survey has been undertaken on behalf of Taunton Deane Borough Council following the guidance of the April 2010 DfT Best Practice Guidance document, and all relevant case history in regard to unmet demand. This study has been undertaken against the background that the authority does not currently have any limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers, and has not applied its powers to do so since 1998. However, this was replaced with a quality restriction in terms of any new vehicles since that time having to be wheel chair accessible, albeit to a wide range of styles.

This study was undertaken by CTS Traffic and Transportation, beginning with appointment on 13 September 2016. After inception on 21 September, rank video observations occurred in late September, on street interviews with pedestrians occurred in early November, trade opinions were obtained by an all-trade survey during October, with key stakeholders consulted during the full study period. This report was reviewed by the client during January 2017.

The authority plans to merge with another nearby authority but will still retain its present relationship with Somerset, who therefore have transport and other policy powers whilst licensing remains at the Taunton Deane council level. Initial hackney carriage growth saw vehicle numbers almost triple, though they were stable between 2009 and 2014. The last two years have seen 29% growth. Hackney carriages are now 84% of the entire licensed vehicle fleet, with many private hire companies only operating hackney carriages. 63% of the hackney carriages are wheel chair accessible (WAV), with 5% of the private hire fleet similar vehicle types. The make-up of the hackney carriage fleet sees 28% saloon, 9% saloon which were WAV but have gained the medical exemption, 11% side loading WAV and 52% rear loading WAV.

Though one company is dominant, there is also a healthy level of competition across the area. 56% of the WAV hackney carriage fleet are on radio circuits although 40% of all hackney carriages remain as independent owner drivers. Overall vehicle provision is second highest in Somerset and North Devon, but the lowest level of private hire. In essence, the area is almost operating with a single tier of vehicles, with private hire only generally covering niche markets.

Rank abuse was observed as 9% of our total vehicle observations at or near ranks, the bulk being private cars using them to park. Corporation Street sees 61% of all estimated average weekly passenger demand. Taunton Station (private rank) gains 19%, followed by the informal North Street location, 12%. All others see 5% or less of weekly passenger demand.

Overall demand for hackney carriages at ranks is however low, with an average of just 16 vehicle departures per hour for Saturday, and less on the Friday. This is backed up by on-street interviews which found 31% had used a licensed vehicle in the last three months, with usage levels producing just 1.1 trips per person per licensed vehicle per month. This reduces to 0.6 for hackney carriages, although this is a high proportion of the total, and representative of the almost 'one tier' nature of the authority licensed vehicle service.

In Wellington, people were less aware of hackney carriages even though the industry structure means they are almost certainly using them.

People were satisfied with overall rank provision, overall service provided, and vehicle availability. Latent demand was low at just 1.6%. In terms of demand for vehicle types, people needing an adapted vehicle appeared to prefer non WAV types (ie the mix of rear loaders is probably appropriate).

All key stakeholders were happy with the service and the police felt there were enough vehicles. Night customers were particularly well looked after. Unusually, county highways responded to our request for comment and were supportive of possibly formalizing one of the informal ranks.

Trade responses were only from hackney carriage and showed a typical working week, with some periods with no vehicle cover when there was no demand. Only a few responded thinking there should be a limit – though it was two thirds of the nine responding to that question specifically.

The industry standard index of significance of unmet demand was just 2.5, well below the cut-off of 80 that would see this being considered to be significant. There is therefore some unmet demand, but it is far from significant, and were a limit to be applied, it could be defended.

Overall, high car ownership correlates with low usage of licensed vehicles. People are satisfied with the service provided but there is little that would increase its use. There is some issue that people know ranks, but not specifically what to call them, and also that some are not sure what a hackney carriage is, even though most will use one even if they phone a company for it. The two current company liveries will colour peoples' views of what a licensed vehicle is.

Most of those with disabilities – and all we heard from in this survey – obtained appropriate vehicles by phone. There did not seem to be any issue with the current dominance of rear loading WAV, although it is possible that more use of ranks by people needing WAV might occur if the side loading vehicles were more apparent to people, though it is hard to prove this.

Overall demand in the area for licensed vehicles is very low, albeit seeing the hackney carriage element almost dominant and towards being a 'one tier' style system. Adding a limit to the numbers of hackney carriages would almost certainly encourage any growth towards the private hire side. There is, however, limited evidence of the impact of their being too many hackney carriages in terms of behavior issues related by the police, but these are not anywhere near as serious as we have seen in other authorities.

Whilst the councilors are able to apply a limit and defend this if applied, we would not recommend this way forward at this point in time. However, great care is needed with any further transfer of WAV to saloon by exemption, particularly for side-loading WAV whose level needs to be maintained.

Thought about an explanatory leaflet of what hackney carriages are, and where active ranks are, would be of benefit.

Contents

1 General introduction and background

Taunton Deane Borough Council 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 does not currently have any limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles licensed. 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. Taunton Deane had limited hackney carriage vehicle numbers but their restriction was removed in 1998 in favour of a policy requiring all new hackney carriages to be wheel chair accessible (of a wide variety of vehicles)(quality control).

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". In the case of Taunton Deane the aim is to understand if a policy of limiting vehicle numbers by quantity control could be introduced or not, and if so what the benefits would be.

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 conclusion 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.

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 authorities due to some court cases in Scotland taking interpretation of the duty of the licensing authority further than is usual in England and Wales.

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 hailings 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), and 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). There remains no confirmation of any timetable for instigating either the remainder of the Equality Act or the Law Commission recommendations.

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, and who otherwise see passengers not insured for their journey.

2 Local background and context

Key dates for this Hackney carriage survey for Taunton Deane Borough Council are:

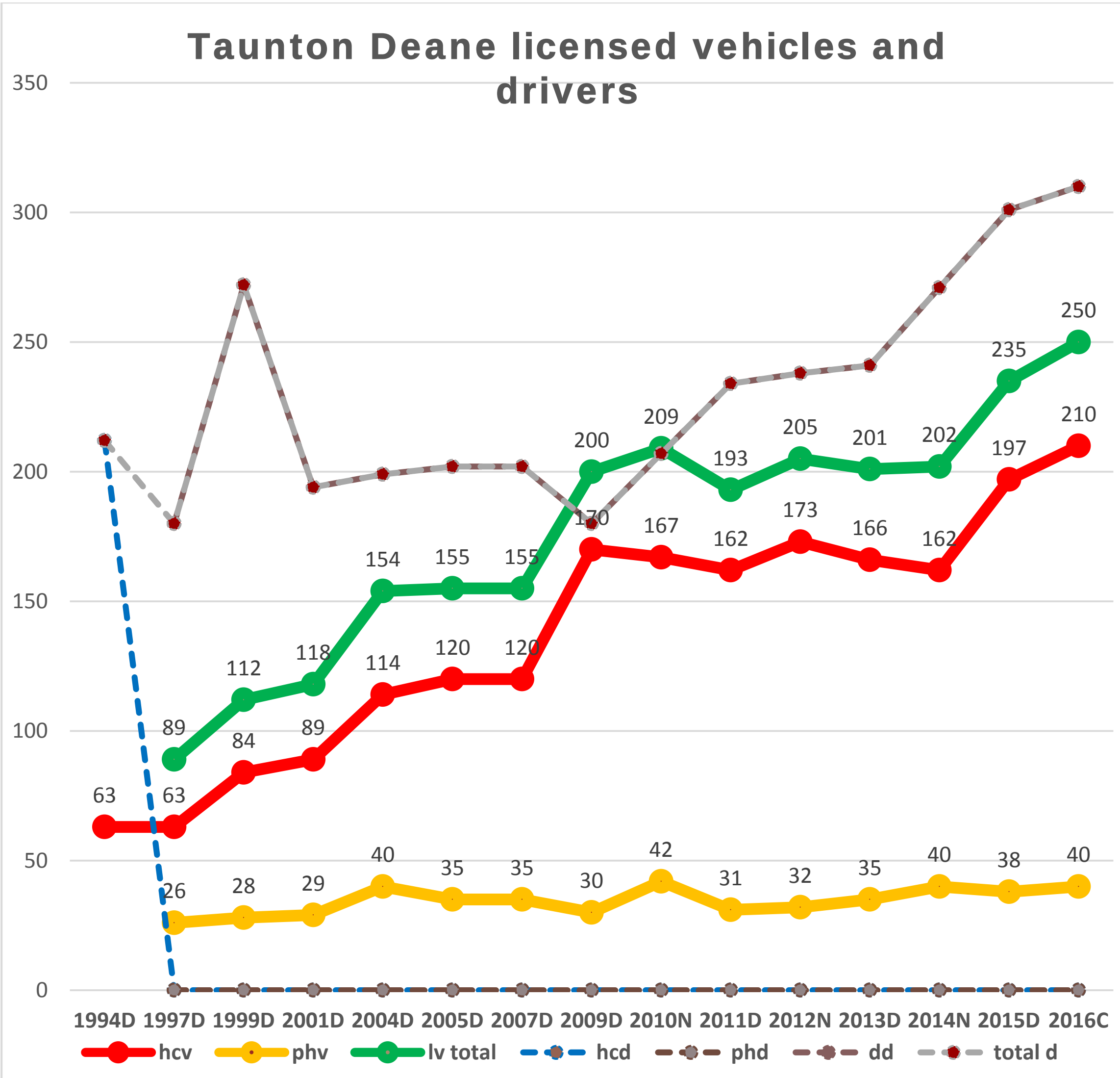
- appointed CTS Traffic and Transportation on 13 September 2016
- in accordance with our proposal of August 2016
- as confirmed during the inception meeting for the survey held on 21 September 2016
- this survey was carried out between 21 September 2016 and the end of November 2016
- On street pedestrian survey work occurred in early November
- the video rank observations occurred in late September / early October 2016
- Licensed vehicle driver opinions and operating practices were identified from an all-driver survey using a questionnaire issued after the rank surveys and returned within October 2016
- Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the period of the survey
- A draft of this Final Report was reviewed by the client during January 2017

Taunton Deane Borough Council is one of five local authorities at the lower tier of the County of Somerset. The authority has a current population of 114,200 using the 2016 estimates currently available from the 2011 census. In the near future the informal agreement between the authority and West Somerset Council is proposed to provide a formal merger between the two authorities.

In terms of background council policy, Taunton Deane Borough Council is a Borough Council at the lower tier of current council structures, with transport and highway policy and controls at the County council level. This means that the final responsibility for ranks lies at the County level. This will remain the case even with the merger of the two lower tier authorities.

However, all licensing authorities have full powers over licensing the vehicles, drivers and operators serving people within their area. Taunton Deane Borough Council has chosen not to utilize its power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers, although it made a clear choice to give up the power to limit in 1998 before which it had held hackney carriage vehicle numbers at 63. Removal of the limit was, however, in favour of quality control in terms of requiring all new vehicles to be wheel chair accessible, of a fairly wide standard. At the same time, grandfather rights were given to the saloon vehicles with no attempt to take the fleet to full wheel chair accessibility as some other authorities have done.

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

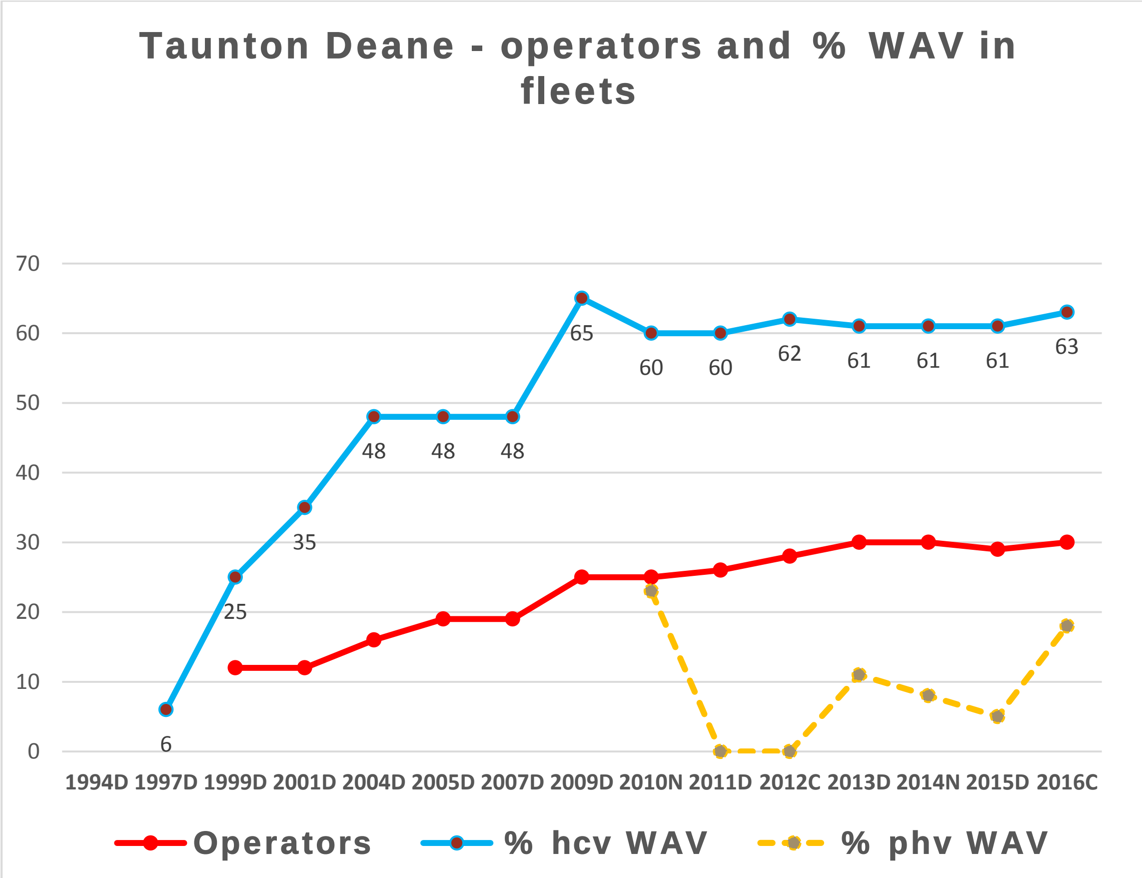
Hackney carriages have grown more than threefold from the time when the limit was taken off and there were just 63 vehicles. Levels were generally stable between 2009 and 2014, but have seen a 29% growth in the last two years. The largest previous growth was some 42% between 2007 and 2009.

Private hire vehicle numbers have grown just 54% since 1997 although most of this growth was in the early years when hackney carriages were also growing.

The proportion of the fleet which is hackney carriage has risen from 71% at the time the limit was removed to 84% now. This implies that even phoned-for journeys within the area are most likely provided by hackney carriage, with much of the private hire meeting specific niche markets.

The authority has long provided only dual driver licenses allowing any driver to drive either hackney carriage or private hire. Numbers have generally followed the level of vehicle growth although there was a period when the statistics appear to show less drivers than vehicles in total – corresponding with the greatest level of vehicle increase. At the present time there are about a quarter more drivers than vehicles suggesting there could be some double shifting of vehicles.

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

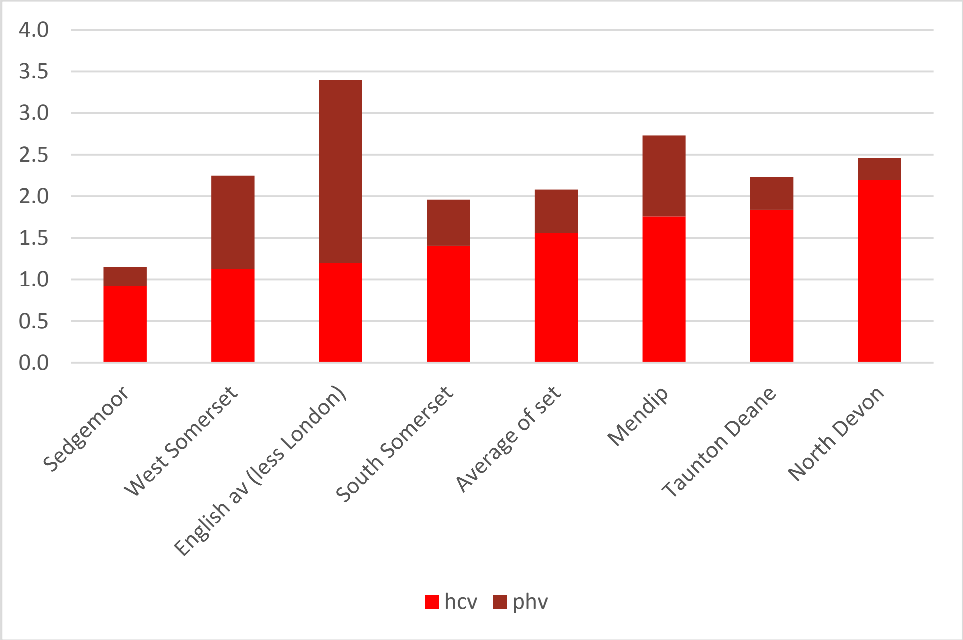
The proportion of vehicles which are WAV saw significant increase between the removal of the limit and 2009, since when the level has remained stable around 61%, although the present level is actually 63%. Further discussion of the actual make up of this fleet is provided below.

Unusually for an area with a relatively high level of WAV in the hackney carriage fleet, there are also around 5% of the phv fleet which are understood to have WAV capability.

The number of private hire operators in the area is rising gently, and has shown an upward trend since this statistic was included in the national information collected.

Comparison of Taunton Deane to nearby and similar authorities

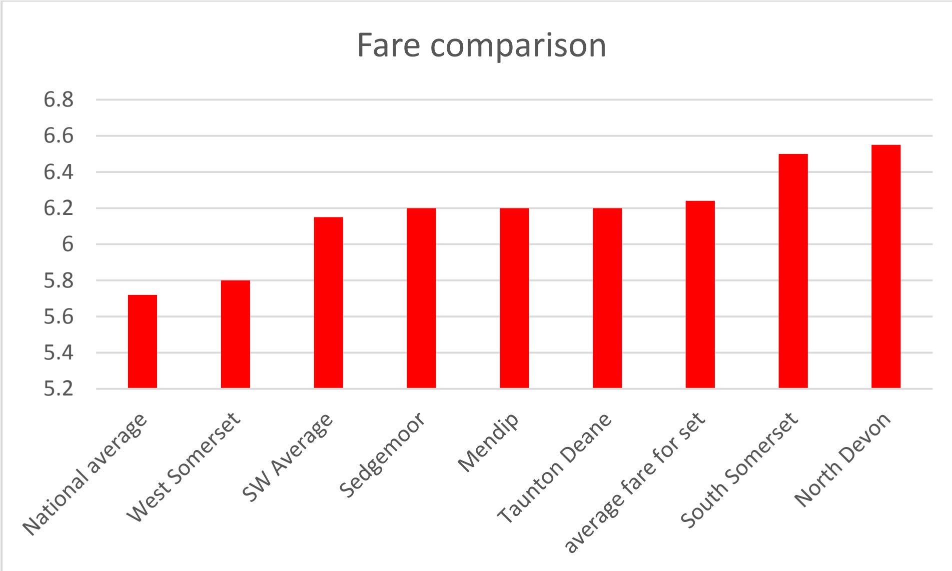
Statistics from the DfT 2015 dataset and the 2016 population estimates provide a comparison of how Taunton Deane's licensed vehicle fleet relates to other authorities in Somerset, plus North Devon, plus a comparison to the average of this set and to the English average levels (excluding London).



Comparison of vehicles per thousand of population, ranked lowest to highest levels of hcv

The graph shows that Taunton Deane has the second highest level of hackney carriage provision per thousand population in the areas compared. Only North Devon has a higher level of hackney carriages. Compared to the national average, the level of private hire across Somerset and North Devon is very low, which is generally typical of areas with relatively long histories of no restraint on hackney carriage numbers.

Taunton Deane has even less private hire than the average for the set, suggesting it is effectively very close to being a 'one tier' area for licensed vehicles. Interestingly, the closest area to the national values is West Somerset, the area which Taunton Deane is shortly to merge with.



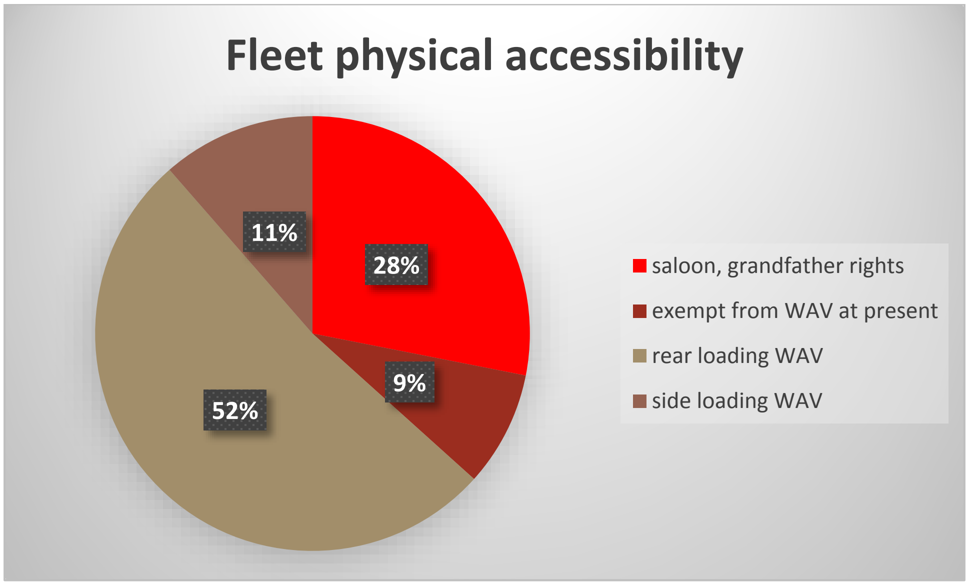
Comparison of local hcv fares from NPHA table dated October 2016

The comparison of fares, for tariff 1, 2 miles, taken from the latest NPHA industry standard comparisons for October 2016, shows that Taunton Deane current fares are above both the current national average fare by 8%, and the South West area average by 1%. They are about 1% beneath the average for the set compared, which comprises Somerset with the addition of North Devon. Interestingly, Taunton Deane has the same level of fare as Sedgemoor and Mendip, and West Somerset has the lowest fares of the set compared, with South Somerset (Yeovil) and North Devon the highest. The overall variation is only about 13% however, not great.

Composition of the Taunton Deane vehicle fleet

At the time of our survey, Taunton Deane has 210 hackney carriages and 40 private hire vehicles. As already noted above, all new hackney carriage vehicles must be wheel chair accessible, although a wide range is allowed following the DfT BPG. However, over recent years, drivers unable to handle wheel chairs due to medical issues, have been allowed to return their vehicles to saloon until the vehicle needs to be replaced.

Details of the fleet were provided, and assumptions made regarding if WAV vehicles were side or rear loading to provide an outline of overall physical accessibility of the fleet. A review was undertaken and the category of vehicle type was taken from the formal record held by the Council. An estimate was made using vehicle make and model of the level of WAV in the private hire fleet, although the actual status of these vehicles is harder to confirm.



Content of the hcv fleet, by vehicle access type, as at October 2016

At October 2016, 28% of the fleet retain grandfather rights and remain as saloon style vehicles. A further 9% have reverted in recent years to saloon styles with the WAV exemption. Of the 63% which are wheel chair accessible, 11% are side loading (including the single London Tx style vehicle), with the remainder rear loading. Further discussion of the implications of this for people using vehicles in this area are provided in the synthesis chapter, where the impact is discussed in the context of what other evidence has come forward in terms of people's perceptions and experiences of Taunton Deane licensed vehicles.

Detailed analysis of the ownership of the fleet and comparison with publicly available information found that of the 30 formal private hire companies in the area, eight did not appear to provide internet advertising via the source we tested. Of the 22 companies advertising, 16 have only hackney carriage vehicles. Five have a mix of hackney carriage and private hire whilst just one only has private hire vehicles.

The largest company had a mixed fleet, dominated by saloon hackney carriages, and accounted for just over a quarter of the total licensed vehicle fleet. No other owners or companies appeared to have more than eight vehicles. Three quarters of the saloon fleet is in multi-ownership whilst 56% of the WAV fleet is similarly in such ownership – suggesting that much of the WAV fleet should therefore be accessible by phone as well as at the rank. Overall 40% of the hackney carriage fleet is with single owners.

Of the 22 companies identified advertising on the internet, three hackney carriage only and one mixed fleet company suggested from their details they were based in Wellington, with two others based outside Taunton and the remainder all with their bases within the Taunton urban area.

In general, the ownership structure of the licensed vehicle industry in Taunton Deane is therefore quite complex, although it is also dominated by the hackney carriage vehicle, typical of an area where there has been no limit on vehicle numbers for some while. Although there is domination in numbers by one company, there is also a high level of competition from the myriad of smaller multi owners, companies and individuals, suggesting a healthy overall fleet.

Further consideration arising from these statistical details is provided in the synthesis section of the report below.

3 Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)

As already recorded in Chapter 2, control of provision of on-street ranks in Taunton Deane Borough Council is under the control of the higher tier Somerset County Council. This adds an extra level of complication into provision of ranks in the area, although this is the typical case around most of the lower tier councils across England.

Appendix 2 provides a list of ranks in Taunton Deane Borough Council at the time of this current survey.

Our methodology involves a current review both in advance of submitting our proposal to undertake this Hackney carriage 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). The detailed specification of the hours included in the sample is provided in Appendix 3.

In our discussions with the Council (both at pre-tender stage and during the rank walk-round), we were advised that Corporation Street it the busiest, all day and night rank in the area. It can suffer from over-ranking due to popularity to drivers, and is the main place people should tend to head if they want a hackney carriage. The second most popular rank is located near to the bus station, in Tower Street. This is not far from Corporation Street and on the same side of the town centre in access terms as the busiest rank.

The East Street rank is on the main route through the town centre and near to a key public house. We were advised it would tend to be used on Friday and Saturday nights.

The two next busiest locations for hackney carriage passenger pick-ups are in fact not formal ranks. They are both relatively close to each other, along the main route into the town from several locations. One is along North Street near a key restaurant / bar whilst the other is located near the main night club a little further out, on The Bridge.

Two other ranks, at Hammet Street and on Station Road, are believed to see little if any passenger use and occasional vehicles waiting, whilst the final Taunton rank in Mary Street suffers from its main venue (the British Legion club) closed a long time ago, with the replacement use (The Lawns Social Club) being the only venue in that area and currently unlikely to generate sufficient custom for hackney carriages to feel it worthwhile waiting there at any point.

There is a private rank on the southern side of Taunton railway station, although some vehicles tend to pick up or drop off at the northern station entrance. Permits are allocated by First Great Western train operating company to a limited number of vehicles – there was also a private hire operating company based in the area near to the formal station rank although it is understood this base is no longer in use.

Finally, there is a small rank in Wellington although it is not currently believed to be used significantly.

Our rank surveys were carefully designed to obtain a sample both to feed the needs of the industry standard ISUD evaluation tool, and to capture a true picture of present operation. The initial survey period was delayed because there was a road closure immediately south of the station access during that period, whilst there was also a Carnival under way in Wellington that weekend.

The results of the rank surveys are provided below.

Overall rank operation details

Some 1,521 vehicle arrivals were recorded at all the rank locations across the area, including those at the informal rank sites. Of these, 7% were private cars abusing ranks, 1% were goods vehicles and 0.5% each were emergency vehicles or private hire vehicles. Considering the hackney carriage movements, which comprised 91% of the observed arrivals, 63% of these were WAV vehicles – a remarkable match to the actual percentage of WAV in the fleet.

During the observations, no persons in wheel chairs, nor any with clear visually observable disabilities were seen obtaining hackney carriages from ranks. There were 24 occasions where drivers assisted passengers into their vehicles for various reasons, and 66 cases where people arrived at the rank and did not find a vehicle available for immediate hire. Across all the observations there were just 19 people who appeared to arrive at the rank, and then walk away without using a hackney carriage. Some of these may have been friends of those who took hackney carriages, although this is just 1% of the number of people observed arriving at all the rank locations observed.

Corporation Street

This rank was observed from 09:00 on Friday 30th September 2016 through to just after 08:00 on the morning of Sunday 2nd October 2016.

Friday observations

During the Friday and early hours of Saturday morning (until 08:00 that day) we observed 376 passengers leave this rank in some 241 vehicles, an average occupancy of 1.6 passengers per vehicle, a moderate occupancy level. 99 vehicles, 29% of those arriving, left without a passenger.

No passengers were ever observed here arriving when there was not a vehicle immediately ready to take them. Daytime hourly passenger flows varied from six to 17, although the 16:00 hour saw a peak of 27 persons. Flows rose in every hour from 20:00 to the peak in the 23:00 hour of 49 people leaving the rank by hackney carriage. Flows then remained at 34 or 33 for the next three hours, followed by 18 and then one person, with no passengers at all in the 05:00, 06:00 and 07:00 hours, although all but the first of these hours did see vehicles available.

Vehicle waiting times for passengers tended to be 23 to 37 minutes during the daytime, but less after 22:00 (nine to 21 minutes). Maximum vehicle waits tended to be around 40 minutes, although sometimes vehicles were recorded waiting over an hour before leaving.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday, total passengers were higher at 675, leaving in 357 vehicles, a higher, and generally high occupancy per vehicle of 1.9 passengers per vehicle. About the same number, 91 vehicles, left empty, 20% of those arriving.

33 people arrived when there was no vehicle available for immediate hire. Of these, 9 waited between six and seven minutes, with two examples of longest waits of seven minutes. People waited in every hour from 01:00 to 05:00 although over all the passengers using the rank on this day, this averaged a wait of just 12 seconds. The most waiting was observed in the 03:00 hour, with some 21 people waiting in that period.

During the daytime hours, vehicles tended to wait 25 to 40 minutes for a fare, with some early maximum waits of up to 90 minutes. As the day went on, average vehicle wait times fell with the period from the 01:00 hour on seeing average vehicle waits between nothing and five minutes.

Passenger numbers tended to be from six to 15 until the 15:00 hour when average numbers increased per hour to between 22 and 31. From the 21:00 hour onwards flows of passengers increased every hour to the peak of 101 in the 02:00 hour, a later peak and almost double the Friday night peak. Flows were then 24 and 10, with one person in each of the next two hours and no-one in the 07:00 hour.

Summary

Corporation Street is clearly the main rank for Taunton town centre. It generally copes very well with the demand – with only the Saturday night / early Sunday hours seeing passengers having to wait, and then not for long. This ranks sees **good** levels of service.

Tower Street

This rank was observed from 12:00 on the Friday 30th September to 20:00 and again from 07:00 on the Saturday through to 22:00 that night.

Friday observations

On the Friday just 15 passengers left this rank in nine hackney carriages, an average occupancy of 1.7, a moderate level. 37 other vehicles, 80% of those arriving, left without passengers. Whilst some vehicles were observed waiting here for 74 minutes, others tended to move on quickly. This was not surprising as there were many hours at this rank when there were no passengers observed at all (the 13:00, 14:00 and 19:00 hours). In fact, nearly half the passengers using this rank did so in the 16:00 hour. Despite the low usage, no passenger ever arrived when there was not a vehicle available for immediate hire.

Saturday observations

The rank was not really used by passengers at all on the Saturday, with just six people leaving using four hackney carriages. Again, no passenger ever arrived to an empty rank, but a very high number of 75 hackney carriages, 9%% of all arriving, left without passengers. Average wait times by vehicles varied from 20 to 40 minutes before leaving. Passengers only used the rank in the 11:00, 12:00, 16:00 and 18:00 hours, the latter having the peak of just three people.

Summary

This rank seems to be mainly a feeder rank to the main rank, or a waiting place for those working on telephone circuits. However, this does allow some people to obtain a vehicle here when they need to, and service at this location is therefore considered to be **good**.

Hammet Street

This rank was observed on Friday 30th September 2016 from 13:00 to 21:00. During this period, just one passenger used the rank. They had to wait two minutes for this vehicle to arrive, even though there were the maximum number of vehicles servicing this rank (four) in this hour (14:00). Generally vehicles paused here for no more than six minutes before leaving.

In effect this rank is, as believed, not really used although it does seem to have some benefit in providing a waiting place for some vehicles.

East Street

This rank was observed from 16:00 on Friday 30th September to 08:00 on the Saturday morning, and again from 14:00 on the Saturday to 06:00 on the Sunday morning.

Friday observations

The rank was used between 19:00 and 03:00 by both vehicles and passengers. In total during this period, 31 passengers left in 18 vehicles, a moderate average occupancy of 1.7. However, the peak passenger flow was just seven people in the midnight hour, with other flows between two and six in any hour. There were no passengers in the 01:00 hour but then five and two in the 02:00 and 03:00 hours, most of whom had to wait for a vehicle to arrive (but none more than five minutes). This provides an average wait for the rank on this day of 27 seconds per passenger.

Vehicle waits here ranged from five to 34 minutes, the latter being the longest recorded wait time for a vehicle. Much shorter waits met those vehicles servicing the 02:00 and 03:00 passengers, although these may have been reactions to phone calls given the short periods and low flows.

Saturday observations

The Saturday saw the rank used much more. A total of 71 passengers left the rank in 43 vehicles, the same moderate occupancy. However, the rank was also used during most hours, although no vehicles or passengers were observed here after the 02:00 hour. Passenger flows were low, however with between none and five people only until the four main used hours. Peak passenger usage was the midnight hour with 28 people.

There were some 54% of vehicles arriving which left empty. On this day, there were several vehicle waits, one of which was 63 minutes in the 19:00 hour. However, vehicle waits usually led to passengers using the vehicles.

In the midnight hour there were waits by passengers of up to nine minutes, with a total of eight people experiencing waiting. The next hour saw just one person wait for two minutes. Average wait over all passengers on this day was 35 seconds.

Summary

This rank does see limited usage, mainly at night and during Saturday daytime, although flows are only high around pub closing time. It does also appear to be a location used for pick-ups for telephone bookings particularly in the early hours of quieter mornings. Service here is **fair.**

Station Road

This rank was observed during the afternoon of Friday 30th September, between 13:00 and 19:00. As expected, there was no passenger usage of this location. Vehicle did pause here for between two and eight minutes, but this was only four vehicles, or around one per hour. The location is clearly of value to the trade for waiting, but is unlikely to see any passenger usage.

Mary Street

This rank was observed on the Friday evening from 22:00 until 04:00. No activity was observed of any kind, not even parking by private cars.

North Street, informal rank location

There is a venue along North Street which does generate potential hackney carriage demand. The nature of the roadspace nearby has not allowed a formal rank to be put in place. The location was observed from 16:00 on Friday 30th September 2016 until 04:00 and again on Saturday 1st October from 20:00 to 05:00.

Friday observations

On the Friday, some 85 passengers boarded 47 hackney carriages in this general area, a high occupancy of 1.8 per vehicle. Although there were some pick-ups before 23:00, the main usage was in the four hours beginning with the 23:00 hour. Peak usage was 30 passengers in the 01:00 hour. 13 hackney carriages, 22% of those arriving, left the area empty. In the active period, there were some lengthy waits by hackney carriages, with the longest recorded wait being 39 minutes. None of the passengers ever had to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

Saturday observations

In a similar manner to Corporation Street, Saturday flows here were around double, at 176 passengers leaving in 85 vehicles, a relatively high occupancy of 2.1 per vehicle. Main use was again from 23:00 onwards, but this time extending into the 03:00 hour. Again the peak was 01:00, with 59 passengers at this time. The hours of 01:00, 02:00 and 03:00 all saw some passengers arrive and have to wait for vehicles to collect them. Whilst most waits were between one and three minutes, the 03:00 hour saw a wait of seven minutes. However, overall this was an average of just eight seconds.

Again, there was evidence that vehicles did wait here as if the location was a rank, with the longest wait recorded of 17 minutes in the 23:00 hour. Vehicles did also pause here in hours when there were no passengers, in some cases gaining custom just into the following hour.

Summary

This location is clearly treated by trade and public as a rank location, albeit mainly from 22:00 onwards. A **good** service results.

The Bridge, informal rank location

Observed on Friday 30th September from 16:00 until 04:00 the next morning, and then from 20:00 on the Saturday 1st October again until 04:00, this location saw nine and three passengers respectively. Some passengers did have to wait for vehicles to arrive, although in the 03:00 hour in the early hours of Saturday and in the midnight and 01:00 hours in the early hours of Sunday some vehicles did wait here for up to six minutes before leaving with passengers. The observed passenger waits were never more than a minute, suggesting potential flag-down of passing vehicles.

This location is not really used as a rank on this evidence, but is clearly a location where demand tends to be met possibly by hailing of passing vehicles, which at this point would be heading back either to the other informal rank or to the main rank at Corporation Street.

Wellington High Street

The small rank in Wellington High Street was observed from 07:00 on Saturday 1st October 2016 through to 01:00 the next morning. Passengers and hackney carriages were only observed here in the 22:00 and 23:00 hours. In the first case, two people waited a minute for a vehicle to arrive, whilst in the second hour six people waited some 16 minutes for a hackney carriage to collect them. Given the low activity, it appears these two journeys may well either be hailing of passing vehicles, or booked vehicles picking up at the rank. There does not seem to be any general demand here.

Taunton Station, private rank

Observations here were made on Friday 30th September, during the operation of the rail service (omitting some early trains). Between 08:00 and 05:00 the next day, 138 passengers used this rank leaving in 116 vehicles, a very low occupancy of just 1.2 persons per vehicle. 19 other hackney carriages left without taking passengers, 14% of those arriving.

During the course of the observations, 27 passengers had to wait for vehicles to arrive. Eight had to wait between 11 and 18 minutes (the longest wait). Waits occurred in the 08:00, 09:00, 11:00, 13:00, 15:00 and 16:00 hours. The average wait shared over all passengers was an average of just under 1.5 minutes.

A high number of the hackney carriages servicing this location had long maximum wait times. Most trains seemed to provide some passengers, including the midnight and 02:00 hours. The highest passenger flow was 17 in the 13:00 hour, followed by 16 in the 21:00 hour. Other flows were between four and 14 per hour.

Service to this rank can only be counted as **poor** as the moderate flows do seem to result in passengers having to wait for vehicles to arrive much more than is the case at other ranks in the area. This could be a result of the further limitation on available numbers from the extra permit needed to service this location.

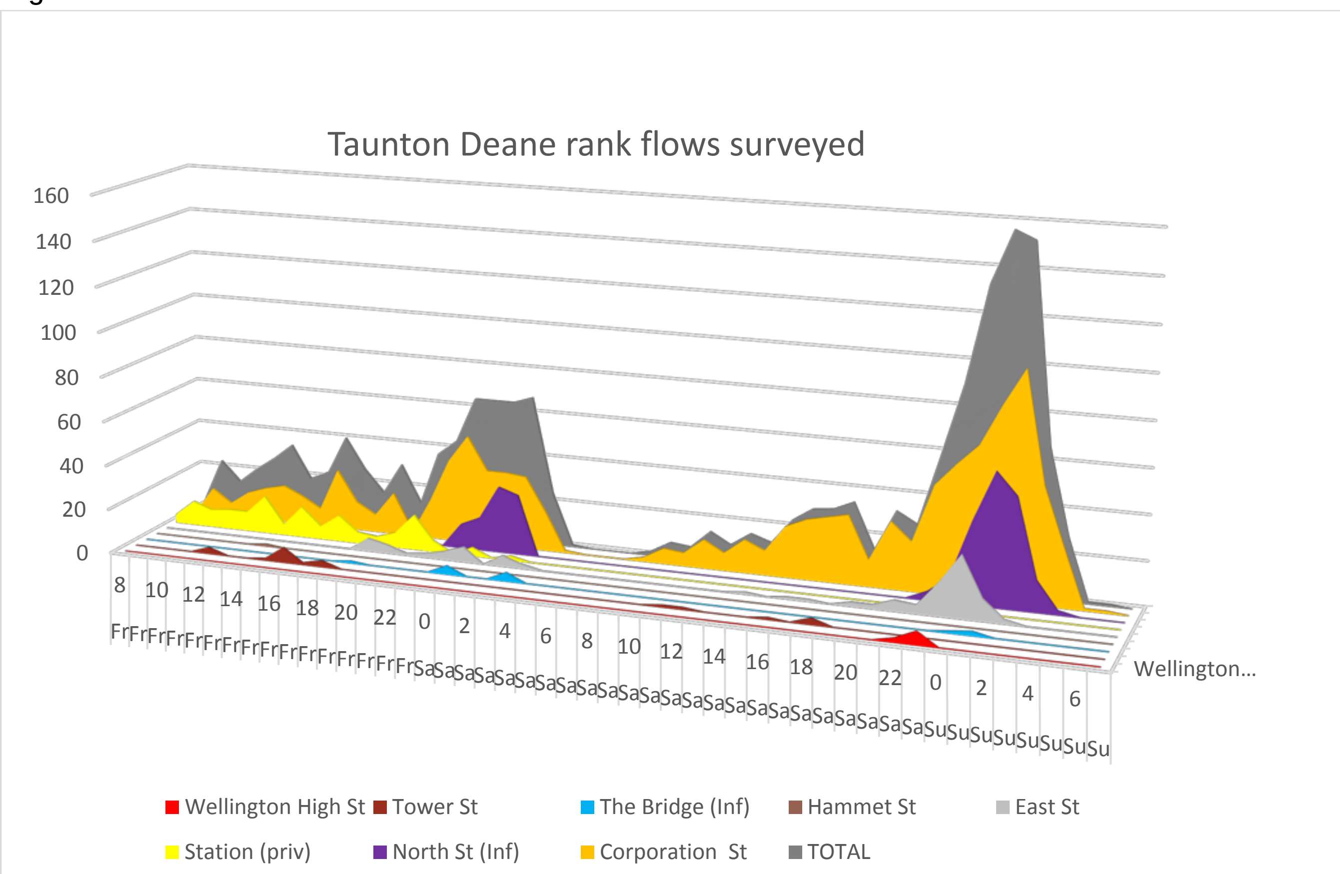
The separate flows by hour were aggregated to provide a profile of surveyed demand with a further estimate made of the level of demand in Taunton across all ranks over a typical week.

Considering the surveyed flows, the Saturday is clearly the busiest time overall for hackney carriages in Taunton. The Saturday peak flow of 156 passengers is over twice the Friday peak of 67, although the Friday peak is an hour later at 02:00 compared to that on Saturday. In general, the late evening / early morning demands dominate, with these hours seeing the only four hours with between 90 and 156 passengers on the Saturday. The equivalent four hours on the Friday/Saturday account for between 64 and 67 passengers (and this is including the station flows, which were not counted on the Saturday). The conclusion from this is that hackney carriage demand in Taunton Deane follows a clearly peaked profile.

The graph below plots the surveyed flows by rank. On the Friday, demand is made up from Corporation Street and the station, with the addition of the North Street informal location and East Street later in the evening and in the early hours of the morning. The station peaks tend to differ from the main rank peaks, leading to a complementary draw on demand for the vehicles, although this may not work in practice given the ownership of the supplementary plates for that location.

On Saturday, the pattern is similar (although there are no station flows included), with firstly North Street (informal) and again East Street adding significant flows into the equation in the evening through to the early hours.

The Saturday peak over the midnight hours is very clearly dominant in the graph, with the disparity between day and night much stronger on that day. The importance of the North Street informal demand to the overall profile is also clear – it making the highest impact after Corporation Street on both nights observed.



The table below estimates overall demand in a typical week from the observed flows. Corporation Street provides 61% of estimated weekly demand. The station provides 19%, North Street informal 12% and East Street 5%. Tower Street provides 2%, The Bridge 0.5% and Wellington High Street 0.5%. The suggestions regarding Hammet Street, Station Road and Mary Street being unused are proven, apart from the first two occasionally being used for waiting by vehicles, albeit for short periods only.

Rank	Flow (% of total)
Corporation Street	2,702 (61%)
Taunton Station	828 (19%)
North Street (informal)	519 (12%)
East Street	200 (5%)
Tower Street	87 (2%)
The Bridge (informal)	32 (0.5%)
Wellington High Street	32 (0.5%)
Hammet Street	6 (0.0%)
Station Road	Unused (some vehicles)
Mary Street	Unused
TOTAL	**4,406**

Further review was undertaken of the performance statistics of each rank on each day observed. Detailed tables are provided in Appendix 4.

In terms of the number of hours active, only Corporation St is active nearly all days and hours. The railway station is active for much of the time, but only when the train service is operating. East Street operates for about eight to 11 hours, more so on Saturday. The informal North Street location operates nights only, and again more hours on Saturday. Tower Street is the most intermittent operating rank.

In terms of the highest level of loaded vehicle departures, Corporation St comes top, with Saturday seeing 16 departures on average per active hour, and Friday 12. North Street follows (12 and 9). The station is next with an average of seven loaded departures. All other locations are four or less.

The most active location for vehicle departures per active hour is Tower Street on the Saturday. The two days at Corporation Street are next (19 and 17) followed by North Street (16 and 12), East Street Saturday and Tower Street Friday (both 9) and then the station and Hammet St (8).

In terms of comparison between loaded departures (demand) and vehicle arrivals (supply), the closest match at 88% is the station, followed by Corporation Street Saturday (84%), the two locations which suffer the most passenger waiting.

All these statistics confirm the general dominance of Corporation Street, but also make it clear there are other key active ranks, including the North Street informal location and East Street. Tower Street is principally a feeder location.

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). 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.

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.

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, we obtained 199 public interviews in and around the main central area of Taunton. A further sample of 50 interviews were undertaken in and around Wellington. No other large areas of population were felt sufficient to generate the minimum sample size of 50. The results are provided below. Further detail by questions is provided in Appendix 5.

People were asked if they had used a ‘taxi’ in the Taunton Deane area. Overall, 31% had, although this level was higher for those interviewed in Taunton (35%) than for those interviewed in Wellington (18%). Some 61% of those interviewed in Taunton went on to specify how often they had used licensed vehicles. For Wellington, just 14% provided this information. The overall usage of licensed vehicles in the area is 1.1 trips per person per month, with again a higher value for the Taunton respondents (1.3) and much lower a value for Wellington (just 0.3). Neither of these are high values for the overall licensed vehicle fleet.

People were asked how they obtained their licensed vehicles. Again, more responded in the Taunton sample than the Wellington one. In the Taunton sample, 43% phoned, 10% used mobiles or smart phones, 3% hailed and a relatively high 42% said they used ranks. For Wellington, there was no quoted use of ranks with 17% saying ‘other’ and 83% telephone.

People were asked which company they called for a licensed vehicle. People named companies, subsidiaries and the phone numbers of companies within their choices. Of the 19 different names or numbers quoted, 13 of these were identified as legitimate, and seven of these were in effect three companies. The largest company obtained a total of 68% of all mentions, very dominant, including some of the Wellington responses. The next largest set of mentions, accounting for some 5% was a Wellington based company, only referred to there. The next company obtained 4%, with a further three formal local operators having 3% mentions each.

Three other formal local operators obtained 1.4% each. One hackney carriage operator obtained 1.4%. Only one of the ‘unknown’ companies obtained 3% of mentions, the remaining four getting 1.4% each.

Overall, this suggests a good level of competition and choice between the private hire companies, although it is also clear that one company is very dominant in Taunton itself. This company does operate hackney carriages, so calls to them are very likely to see dispatch of a hackney carriage to the customer. There are, however, many other companies who have not appeared in this list from the public we engaged.

People were then asked some more hackney carriage specific questions. The first sought to understand how often people said they used a hackney carriage, compared to a general ‘licensed vehicle’.

Just one respondent said they had used a hackney carriage in Wellington, with 53% of those responding saying they could not remember when they had last used one, and 42% not remembering seeing one. Nearly two thirds of those interviewed in Wellington gave no answer at all to this question.

In Taunton, 52% gave an answer. Of these, 37% could not remember seeing a hackney carriage whilst 28% said they could not remember when they last used one. Most frequent usage quoted was less than once a month. Using the quoted frequencies, and normalizing to a 100% response, people make 0.8 trips per person per month by hackney carriage from the Taunton sample, and 0.6 across the area taking the Wellington sample into account. This compares to the 1.3 for all licensed vehicles (or 62% by hackney carriage, a higher estimate than the 42% people said in the direct rank usage question). This may well relate to the usage of hackney carriages when telephone bookings are made.

People were asked which ranks they were aware of in the district, and which they made use of. 46% gave responses. Of these, 49% said just one location, 40% said two, and 11% gave three locations. Of all the mentions, 23% said they used the rank they mentioned, 24% said they did not and the remainder did not specify if they used that rank or not.

“Train Station” was mentioned in 40% of the responses. Corporation Street obtained a 41% response, but split between six different colloquial names including Prezzo, Central, Town and Town Square. 8% of mentions were the bus station and 4% East Street. Station Road and Hammet Street both got single mentions, with four people mentioning the rank in Wellington, one of whom said they used it (but from the Taunton interviews). Two people mentioned Mambo’s as a rank (the informal location). Two supermarket locations were mentioned which were probably free phone provision.

This suggests overall good knowledge of ranks, albeit under various names, and that the informal location is felt to be somewhere at least a few people would wait for a hackney carriage.

There were just nine suggestions for new ranks. Many were near actual rank locations, or at supermarkets, whilst one was assumed to be the Bridge informal location. This confirms a general satisfaction with current rank locations.

The level of issues with the service provided was very low – just 11 responses in total. Driver issues were the only item with more than one response. Conversely, there were few suggestions of changes that would encourage more use of hackney carriages, apart from 75% of those responding saying if they were cheaper. The second score went to people saying if they could get more at a rank, but this was just for nine people overall, all in central Taunton.

People said they could always get a hackney carriage in the daytime (62% of total responses to this question), 14% if they phoned, 10% at night. 5% said only from Taunton Town centre, and 8% said ‘never’. These suggest a generally good availability of vehicles, but some awareness of the concentration of vehicles at the town centre, and during daytime hours. Further, of those responding if they had ever given up waiting for a hackney carriage in the area, just four said they had. None said where. If all others are assumed to never have given up, this implies a measurable latent demand factor of just 1.6%, very low.

87% said they did not need, nor know anyone who needed a wheel chair accessible vehicle. Of those needing, or knowing someone needing an adapted vehicle, 71% preferred some other adaptation rather than wheel chair accessible, with the remaining 29% preferring the standard WAV. This confirms the current policy allowing a wide range of different styles of vehicle, but retaining the saloon as part of the hackney carriage fleet, appears to suit the needs of the area.

People were asked if they thought that disabled people in Taunton Deane got a good service from hackney carriages. Of those responding (one in three), a resounding 98% said they thought that people did.

All those interviewed in Wellington, and 80% of those interviewed in Taunton were from the district. 76% had regular access to a car (higher in Taunton, and lower in Wellington).

There were slightly more females interviewed than the census level (58% compared to the census 52%). The proportion of under 30’s interviewed was very close to the census. However, the proportion of 31-55’s was the same amount higher than the proportion of over 55’s was beneath the census level. Neither of these differences will have skewed the results to any significant degree.

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. A list of those contacted and responses are provided in Appendix 6.

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.

Supermarkets

Five supermarkets were contacted. During the time available just one responded. They told us their customers used licensed vehicles, but called them using their own phones. They were not aware of any ranks nor any issues raised by customers about the service.

Hotels

Four hotels were contacted. Just one responded to say their customers did use licensed vehicles, which they generally called for using their own phones. They were not aware of any ranks nor any issues with the service provided.

Public houses

Eleven public houses were contacted across the full Taunton Deane licensing area. Just one responded. They were not sure if their customers used licensed vehicles or not, but said if they did they would call them on their own mobile phones. Despite having a rank outside, the location was not aware of this. Nor had any customer ever reported an issue with the service provided. Pubwatch sought the views of their members at a recent meeting, but no feedback was provided, suggesting no significant issues with the service received.

Night clubs

The single night club in the area did not respond during the time available.

Other entertainment venues

Three entertainment venues were contacted. Just one, a theatre, responded and said their customers definitely used licensed vehicles. They did not know how they obtained them, and they had received no complaints about the service provided.

Restaurants

Five restaurants were contacted. Just one responded, saying their customers did use licensed vehicles. They obtained them by asking for one at the reception desk. They were not aware of any ranks nor of any issues with the service provided.

Hospitals

Two local hospitals were contacted. None responded during the time available.

Police

A police representative told us they believed the current provision was reasonable. However, they also had issues with licensed vehicle drivers seeming desperate to get their next fare, and as a result tending to have poor driving standards. Regular issues included:

- Parking on cycle lanes demarked with double yellow lines
- Speeding
- Parking on the wrong side of roads
- Turning within the carriageway
- U-turns at junctions
- Parking in cross-hatch boxes
- A constant accusation from some drivers that the police are ‘picking on them’

A representative of a group who help late night passengers said they felt there were sufficient vehicles to get people home. They have a good relationship with the taxi forum and individual drivers. They often get direct calls from drivers to assist with a passenger who has issues. They hold the local drivers in high regard, seeing them feed back that passengers had got home safely. They also had been able to work together to encourage a ‘pay at destination’ practice which had found to work very well.

Disability

An organization serving those with disabilities reported a visit of a council officer to a discussion group. Detailed issues were raised about specific elements of the service provided, such as training, existence of vehicles to take two wheelchairs, switching off air bags if an assistance dog was in the foot well, training and first aid. In terms of finding sufficient vehicles, they said there is one company which has both a sufficient number and range of vehicle types to meet most of the disability needs that existed within the group. Another smaller company provided knowledgeable drivers who knew how to assist with a range of disability needs. They were keen to see the level and range of disability friendly vehicles kept as high as possible.

The organization could obtain further feedback and consultation but felt it would need to charge for that wider information or for any further forwarding of our request for information.

Rail and other transport operators

The rail operator for Taunton station was contacted. No response was received.

Other Council contacts

A representative from Somerset highways spoke with us. They said they felt they had little general input to ranks. It was known that the main rank was often over-full. The only option had been the extra spaces near the bus station, there was no other real option to provide more feeder spaces.

They confirmed that both informal rank locations had no waiting at any time restrictions, plus loading bans which were not active at the time they were used as ranks. A check was made regarding accidents near these locations, but no relevant observations were found. Any accidents identified were not at the time the locations were used informally. This suggested there could be a case made for formalizing the informal arrangements at both locations, although the police may have different views.

The highway representative provided other contacts in Wellington and with those enforcing parking restrictions in the area. Those responsible for enforcing parking on street told us that the only rank causing issues with too many vehicles is the main rank in Corporation Street.

The county enforcers would issue a penalty notice to any non-taxi vehicle which abused this location, to ensure the maximum space was available for the hackney carriage fleet. The representative gave their personal view that were any limit to be imposed, attempt should be made to prevent development of plate values, suggesting use of non-transferable plates might resolve this.

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.

Response to the driver survey was low, with just 11 responses received. All of these were hackney carriage drivers. Their average level of experience in the local trade was ten years, although this ranged from one to 25 years. One person who only drove two days in the previous week was included, though most worked four or more days. The typical week was five or six days, although the average was some 46 hours, fairly typical.

Choice of working patterns was equally split between being affected by working when it was busy, avoiding busy traffic conditions, and working around family commitments.

In terms of days and hours covered, the part time person covered afternoons and evenings on Fridays and Saturdays only. The person working seven days only worked daytime hours – but ended up working the second longest overall. The person working the longest worked all mornings apart from Sunday, five afternoons and just Friday and Saturday evenings. Three of the nine responding worked Sundays. Only two said they worked at any point after midnight, with no-one working Monday or Tuesday at that period.

Just one person covered Monday or Tuesday evenings.

55% did not own their own vehicle whilst 36% said someone else drove the same vehicle. Exactly half said they worked on a radio circuit, all for the same company. A third of respondents told us they served all ranks. Only one specifically mentioned the station rank. Most ranks were mentioned, apart from Mary Street.

55% of those replying said there were insufficient rank spaces available.

Nine of the respondents told us how they obtained fares. One said they used all methods mentioned. Only one other mentioned hailing as being important. 30% of the total responses were that phone bookings were most important, followed by 26% saying ranks. Both school and private contracts were important in 17% of mentions.

Nine of the eleven told us their view about the current policy not restricting vehicle numbers. Two thirds of these said they thought a limit should be imposed – but this is from a small sample. Only three benefits were suggested, two fairly similar and referring to it helping keep vehicles safe, and also keeping the vehicles of higher service standard. Another suggested a limit would encourage more professional driving standards. The person who worked part time said they had been unable to make a living driving and had therefore obtained another job to provide sufficient income.

Despite the return level being low, the overall views from this part of the survey suggest a fairly active trade, although dominated more by servicing private hire bookings than working as a pure hackney carriage.

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.

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.

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.

For Taunton Deane, the following values were identified for the various parts of the ISUD index:

- Average passenger delay = 13 seconds, or 0.22 minutes
- Proportion of passengers travelling in hours when there is over a minute of average delay = 6.66%
- Proportion of off peak hours when there is any average delay = 3.33%
- Seasonality index = 1
- Peaky indicator = 0.5 (see detailed discussion in rank chapter)
- Latent demand = 1.016

The resulting index is a value of 2.5, well below the standard cut-off value used for significance of unmet demand of 80. For the sake of clarity, these values exclude observations at Taunton station which has restrictions on entry not controllable by the Council.

A test was undertaken where the station observations were also included in the calculation. The following values increased:

- Average passenger delay to 19 seconds (0.32 minutes)
- Proportion travelling when average delay over a minute to 8.28%
- Proportion of off peak with any average delay rose to 13.16%

This led to an increased value of 17.7 which is much higher than the standard evaluation, but remains well below the level that would be considered significant. However, it appears that the additional restriction through having to purchase paid for additional permits, may be providing a worse service for this location than seen at the council ranks.

Further discussion of the implication of these calculations are provided below in the summary and synthesis.

8 Summary, synthesis and study conclusions

This Hackney carriage survey on behalf of Taunton Deane Borough Council has been undertaken following the guidance of the BPG and other recent case history regarding unmet demand and its significance. This specific review is being undertaken against the background that Taunton Deane has had a period of time (since 1998) when there has been no limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles in the area.

Background

Taunton Deane is one of the five lower tier authorities within the county of Somerset, with current plans to merge with West Somerset Council. Even with this change, responsibility for ranks will remain at the County, higher tier level, as will overall transport policy, but not licensing policy. In terms of licensing policy, the removal of the quantity restriction in 1998 was in favour of quality control requiring any new hackney carriage to be wheel chair accessible, albeit to a very wide range of vehicle types. Saloon vehicles were granted grandfather rights.

Hackney carriage numbers have grown more than threefold since the removal of the limit policy. After stable levels between 2009 and 2014, there has been 29% growth in the most recent two years. Private hire vehicle numbers have grown just 54% from 1997 to date, seeing the proportion of the fleet which is hackney carriage now at 84%, a very high proportion. This implies even phoned for demand will mainly be undertaken by hackney carriages. This was confirmed by review of the company information available, suggesting there were 16 private hire companies with only hackney carriages, five with mixed fleets and just one pure private hire company, plus eight other pure private hire niche market companies. The largest company accounted for about a quarter of the entire licensed vehicle fleet, although most of its hackney carriages were saloon style. Other companies had no more than eight vehicles.

Driver numbers, which are for drivers able to drive either kind of vehicle (dual drivers) only, are about a quarter higher than the number of total vehicles. Private hire operator numbers are increasingly gently.

The hackney carriage fleet currently has 63% of its vehicles wheel chair accessible. About 5% of the private hire fleet are also similar vehicle types. We found that 56% of the wheel chair accessible hackney carriage fleet is part of radio circuits. However, 40% of the total hackney carriage fleet is with single owners.

In geographic terms there were just two companies outside Taunton, four in Wellington and the remainder within the urban area of Taunton. There appears to be a healthy level of competition across the area.

A comparison of Taunton Deane to the other Somerset authorities plus North Devon shows the area has the second highest provision of hackney carriages per thousand population. It has the lowest level of private hires in the areas compared, and is significantly lower than the English average, and to South Somerset.

Fares at October 2016 are 8% higher than the national average but slightly lower than the average for the areas compared. West Somerset fares are the lowest, but again as with the level of private hires, closest to the national average value.

Review of the vehicle types in the hackney carriage fleet found 28% were saloon, plus 9% now saloon which have gained exemption from originally being wheel chair accessible. 11% are side loading wheel chair accessible and 52% rear loading.

Ranks

Rank activity was observed. Of all the rank observations, 7% were private cars abusing ranks, 1% goods vehicles, 0.5% emergency vehicles and 0.5% private hire. 63% of the hackney carriage movements were wheel chair accessible, very similar to the overall level of these vehicles in the fleet.

We found that Corporation Street rank produced 61% of estimated weekly demand. It was also the only rank active nearly 24/7. Taunton Station (private) rank provides 19%. The third largest area of passenger demand is the informal location at North Street, with 12% of demand. East Street sees 5%, Tower Street 2% (but very important as a feeder to Corporation Street), The Bridge (informal) 0.5% and a similar amount for Wellington High Street.

Hammet Street, Station Road and Mary Street were all found unused, apart from some waiting by vehicles at Hammet Street.

Even with the busy nature of Corporation Street within the area, overall demand there is relatively low with an average of just 16 loaded vehicle departures per hour on the Saturday, and 12 on the Friday.

No persons in wheel chairs were observed accessing hackney carriages at ranks during our observations.

On street public views

Those in the streets of the area, including a sample in Wellington, making a total of 249 interviews, gave their views on the local licensed vehicle service. 31% had used a licensed vehicle recently, giving an estimated 1.1 trips per person per month across the area, not particularly high.

When specifically asked about frequency of use of hackney carriages, the estimated trip rate was 0.6 across the area, a much higher proportion than in many other licensing areas. Further, values in Taunton were higher than this average, and the level of quoted rank usage was 42% in Taunton, but zero in Wellington.

These values can be better understood considering the companies people said they phoned for a vehicle. Of all mentions, one company obtained 68%, with the next most popular only having 5%, 4% and three with 3%. Many of these companies operate hackney carriages so that people are in effect getting mainly hackney carriage service. On the contrary, in Wellington, 42% could not remember seeing a hackney carriage, and 53% could not remember when they last used one, but it is actually most likely the vehicle they phoned for was a hackney carriage as most of the vehicles there on private hire fleets are.

There was good knowledge of ranks, albeit under various names, with the station being the most well-known and singly named, whilst Corporation Street was actually just more well-known than the station, but only when six different colloquial names were added together. One person from Taunton said they used the rank in Wellington. Low suggestions for new ranks suggest people are satisfied with the ones they have.

In terms of general satisfaction, there were very few issues with the service but also very few suggestions of anything that would make people use hackney carriages more. There is good availability of vehicles though people are aware that hackney carriages are more available in Taunton town centre and the daytime. Latent demand was low at 1.6%.

87% did not need, nor know anyone who needed a wheel chair accessible vehicle. For those needing such a vehicle, other adaptations were preferred to WAV style. A third gave an answer to the question if they felt people in Taunton got a good service if they had a disability and 98% of these said yes.

Car ownership in those interviewed was high, and the general nature of our sample matched the census results for the area.

Key stakeholders

Key stakeholders generally provided a low response, but none had issues, though most said their customers used phoned for vehicles, and none were aware of ranks. The police felt there were sufficient vehicles but had various issues with driving standards from the fleet. Those working with people travelling at night gave high praise to the service provided and the co-operation received from the trade, which they felt had increased safety and satisfaction significantly.

One disability group provided response. They were generally pleased with the service provided although there were detailed areas that needed continual improvement. County highways were very helpful and considered that there may be opportunities to formalize the informal ranks with care.

Trade consultation

A low response was obtained to the driver survey, with none from the private hire side. The typical week was five or six days and an average of 46 hours, about typical. Times worked showed there were periods when there was felt to be no demand and hence no-one worked those periods, particularly Monday and Tuesday after midnight.

Half those responding (all hackney carriage) said they were on radio circuits. Telephone bookings tended to be most important for 30% of respondents with ranks at 26%. Two thirds of the small number of respondents to the question about limits said they thought there should be a limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers (six responses).

The index of significance of unmet demand

Use of this industry standard tool found a result of 2.5, well below the level of 80 that is taken to suggest unmet demand is significant. Average passenger delay observed was just 13 seconds. There was delay in off peak hours, but just 3.33%, whilst some people travelled in hours when there was an average waiting time over a minute, but just 6.66%. All these values excluded performance at Taunton station which has supplementary permit required which also restricts the number that serve that location, and in a manner out of the control of the council. If this information was included, the index rose to 17.7, suggesting the station does not enjoy as good a service as the remainder of the area.

Synthesis

With a high level of car ownership in the area, use of licensed vehicles is very low overall. While people are satisfied with the service they get, they also have very little that might make them use the service more. This suggests that demand will remain stable in the area but is unlikely to grow much. The only area that could see improved service would be the railway station, but this is related to its location and to the supplementary permit which is not under the control of the Council.

With no limit on vehicle numbers, the bulk of vehicles servicing the public in the area are actually hackney carriage, even though in some places people do not understand they are (because they mainly phone for them). However, the usage information suggests that many are aware that the vehicle they phone for is actually a hackney carriage, although there also seems to be some confusion in peoples' minds about what a hackney carriage is from other responses, e.g. them saying they cannot remembers when they last used a hackney carriage. Further, use of liveries by at least two companies also colours peoples views of what they are aware of. People know ranks well, but are not sure what to call them specifically. Some think informal locations are ranks.

The high level of wheel chair accessible vehicles focusses on the lower cost end of the spectrum, with relatively few side loading vehicles. All the quoted use of WAV vehicles was by phone, with no-one seen to access a hackney carriage at ranks in a wheel chair. Only detailed improvements to the service were mentioned, with a general appreciation of what was available, albeit focused on the service provided by companies rather than specific individuals.

The overall service provided by the current licensed vehicle fleet to those needing their service in the area seems to be very good. Demand and supply are generally very well-tuned.

Conclusions

There is currently no unmet demand in the Taunton Deane licensing area which we would consider to be significant. The overall level of unmet demand is very low, even when the station with its more restricted service arising from the extra permit is taken into account. It does not seem that there is much option to increase usage of vehicles in the area. However, public information about ranks and the vehlcle fleet could be improved to benefit. The area almost has a one-tier system in place given the dominance of hackney carriages even in the private hire company fleets.

The low demand and high provision of vehicles could suggest the option of adding a limit to the number of hackney carriage vehicles could be possible and defensible. However, this would possibly reverse the trend towards the area almost being a one-tier system by meaning new vehicles would add to the private hire fleet. Although there is limited evidence of the impact of there being too many vehicles, mainly from the police in terms of behavior issues, and from highways in term of over-ranking at the main rank location, there are no major issues arising at this time from the high levels of supply provided.

On the balance of evidence, applying such a limit is more likely to lead to more competition from private hire than at present, and would make anyone wishing to provide innovative services to almost certainly have to do this on the private hire side, which would increase public confusion and make the opportunity to improve public perception harder.

Current policies towards wheel chair accessible vehicles are generally providing the right sort of fleet, although the continued granting of exemptions which is reducing the WAV numbers needs to be carefully considered. Some similar authorities require any such exemptions to revert to WAV style when ownership changes, or require the person to retain the vehicle as WAV even though they would not be required to provide the service to wheel chair users and would have a clear sign this is the case. This is more true of side loading WAV whose change to saloon style should be strongly resisted when applications are made.

It is possible that the low number of side loading WAV explains the little use of WAV hackney carriages from ranks. Methods to increase the level of this kind of vehicle should be considered. It is clearly true that rear loaders must find servicing wheel chair users very hard at the main rank, given the pressure on space there. This may be why many of them end up waiting at the bus station rank, where there is less such pressure. New legislation applying from this April will, however, make policies such as requiring any new vehicles to be side loading WAV less easy to put in place.

The issue of applying a livery to hackney carriages would not be easy given the present existence of some company liveries, but leaflets and advertising campaigns explaining what the difference between hackney carriage, private hire and out of town vehicles would help people significantly.

8 Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence gathered in this Hackney carriage survey for Taunton Deane Borough Council, 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 Taunton Deane Borough Council licensing area. The committee could therefore choose to apply a limit to hackney carriage vehicle numbers and would be able to defend that limit in court if challenged. The balance of evidence, however, suggests that this would not be in the general public nor trade interest at this time.

Rank issues

The most important item is to ensure good location maps are provided on internet and on-ground for the current active ranks.

There would be strong value in seeking to formalize the informal rank on the Bridge if only to clearly face the issues that may arise from taking this step. There is no formal evidence of safety issues and careful design should be used to mitigate further any potential.

Information

In conjunction with the rank mapping provided, consideration should be given to a general information leaflet explaining to the public, and to visitors, what the vehicles legitimately available in Taunton Deane actually look like. This would need to include current provision including the use of liveries by some companies within the explanation.

A key place for such information would be a poster at exits from the station to inform visitors. This may also encourage increased dialogue with the rail operator to ensure the level of service there is the same as that provided in the rest of the area.

Vehicle issues

There would be benefit in encouraging a higher level of side loading WAV vehicles if possible. Reversion of any of the side loading WAV to saloon should be strongly resisted. Reversion of other WAV to saloon also needs to be carefully considered to avoid further dilution of the potential service provision.

Other matters

It would be prudent to allow for further information to be gathered to allow continual review of the service provided.

Appendix 1 – Vehicle, driver and WAV statistics

limit was removed 1998

	hcv	phv	lv total	hcd	phd	dd	total d		Operators	% hcv WAV	% phv WAV
1994D	63			212			212	**1994D**			
1997D	63	26	89			180	180	**1997D**		6	
1999D	84	28	112			272	272	**1999D**	12	25	
2001D	89	29	118			194	194	**2001D**	12	35	
2004D	114	40	154			199	199	**2004D**	16	48	
2005D	120	35	155			202	202	**2005D**	19	48	
2007D	120	35	155			202	202	**2007D**	19	48	
2009D	170	30	200			180	180	**2009D**	25	65	
2010N	167	42	209			*207*	*207*	**2010N**	*25*	60	23
2011D	162	31	193			234	234	**2011D**	26	60	0
2012N	173	32	205			*238*	*238*	**2012C**	*28*	62	0
2013D	166	35	201			241	241	**2013D**	30	61	11
2014N	162	40	202			*271*	271	**2014N**	*30*	*61*	*8*
2015D	197	38	235			301	301	**2015D**	29	61	5
2016C	210	40	250			310	310	**2016C**	30	63	19

Appendix 2 – List of Ranks

From p20/21 of Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Drivers, Vehicles and Operators Handbook, January 2014 edition

Taunton
Station Road
Castle Green (Taunton Bus Station)
Hammet Street
East Street
Space for eight Hackney Carriages on the North side of Corporation Street

Wellington
Space for two Hackney Carriages on the North side of the High Street

Appendix 3 – Rank observation schedule

Rank location		Corporation St	Tower St (bus station)	Hammet St	East St (Perkin Warbeck)	Station Road	Mary St	North Street (informal)	The Bridge (informal)	Wellington High St	Taunton Station (private)	Hours
Co suggested usage												
Operating Hours												
Streetview status?												
		8 veh				2 veh				1-2 veh		
2016 comment		busiest heavily over-ranked	1-4 veh most of day	more hidden from passengers	busy Fri / Sat nights	occasional use	not known to be used - original uses gone away	used near pubs and as supplement to Corp St	used near pubs and as supplement to Corp St	near Vet hospital unlikely to be used	GWR permit needed	
Friday	08:00										1	1
Friday	09:00	1									2	2
Friday	10:00	2									3	2
Friday	11:00	3									4	2
Friday	12:00	4	1								5	3
Friday	13:00	5	2	1		1					6	5
Friday	14:00	6	3	2		2					7	5
Friday	15:00	7	4	3		3					8	5
Friday	16:00	8	5	4	1	4		1	1		9	8
Friday	17:00	9	6	5	2	5		2	2		10	8

Friday	18:00	10	7	6	3	6		3	3		11	8
Friday	19:00	11	8	7	4			4	4		12	7
Friday	20:00	12		8	5			5	5		13	6
Friday	21:00	13			6			6	6		14	5
Friday	22:00	14			7		1	7	7		15	6
Friday	23:00	15			8		2	8	8		16	6
Friday	00:00	16			9		3	9	9		17	6
Saturday	01:00	17			10		4	10	10		18	6
Saturday	02:00	18			11		5	11	11		19	6
Saturday	03:00	19			12		6	12	12		20	6
Saturday	04:00	20			13						21	3
Saturday	05:00	21			14							2
Saturday	06:00	22			15							2
Saturday	07:00	23	9		16					1		4
Saturday	08:00	24	10							2		3
Saturday	09:00	25	11							3		3
Saturday	10:00	26	12							4		3
Saturday	11:00	27	13							5		3
Saturday	12:00	28	14							6		3
Saturday	13:00	29	15							7		3
Saturday	14:00	30	16		17					8		4
Saturday	15:00	31	17		18					9		4
Saturday	16:00	32	18		19					10		4
Saturday	17:00	33	19		20					11		4
Saturday	18:00	34	20		21					12		4
Saturday	19:00	35	21		22					13		4
Saturday	20:00	36	22		23			13	13	14		6
Saturday	21:00	37	23		24			14	14	15		6
Saturday	22:00	38			25			15	15	16		5
Saturday	23:00	39			26			16	16	17		5
Saturday	00:00	40			27			17	17	18		5

Sunday	01:00	41			28			18	18			4
Sunday	02:00	42			29			19	19			4
Sunday	03:00	43			30			20	20			4
Sunday	04:00	44			31			21				3
Sunday	05:00	45			32							2
Sunday	06:00	46										1
Sunday	07:00	47										1
Sunday	08:00											0
Sunday	09:00											0
Period for sample			hours included above									202
Week day			38									
Weekend day			28									
Weekend night			65	50								
Inter periods			3	14	4							202
Total hours at site		*47* *23%*	*23* *11%*	*8* *4%*	*32* *16%*	*6* *3%*	*6* *3%*	*21* *10%*	*20* *10%*	*18* *9%*	*21* *10%*	***202***

Appendix 4 – Detailed rank observation results

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Corporation St	30/9/16	9	22	11	1.1	4	27%	15	00:23:16	00:23:52	00:43:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	10	15	5	1.2	7	58%	12	00:31:00	00:34:50	00:38:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	11	15	11	1.1	7	39%	18	00:30:52	00:32:05	00:50:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	12	20	12	1.2	6	33%	18	00:26:54	00:26:09	00:38:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	13	17	13	1.3	5	28%	18	00:26:10	00:26:54	00:39:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	14	14	9	1.4	8	47%	17	00:26:51	00:27:22	00:43:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	15	15	8	1	3	27%	11	00:37:24	00:36:18	00:52:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	16	15	12	2.2	4	25%	16	00:30:28	00:31:10	01:06:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	17	15	7	1.9	7	50%	14	00:33:28	00:37:34	00:48:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	18	12	8	1	7	47%	15	00:30:10	00:34:34	00:49:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	19	13	9	2.1	5	36%	14	00:31:50	00:30:00	00:38:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	20	12	1	2	7	88%	8	00:43:45	00:51:50	01:04:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	21	12	10	1.8	3	23%	13	00:30:30	00:29:46	00:45:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	22	25	23	1.6	5	18%	28	00:16:45	00:16:40	00:49:00						
Corporation St	30/9/16	23	35	28	1.8	3	10%	31	00:15:27	00:15:49	00:50:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	0	22	20	1.7	1	5%	21	00:21:30	00:21:30	00:42:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	1	17	22	1.5	3	12%	25	00:13:49	00:13:56	00:48:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	2	26	21	1.6	3	12%	24	00:10:13	00:10:57	00:21:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	3	7	10	1.8	1	9%	11	00:18:34	00:18:34	00:35:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	4	8	1	1	4	80%	5	00:27:52	00:09:00	00:09:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	5	0	0	0	3	100%	3									
Corporation St	1/10/16	6	2	0	0	2	100%	2	00:05:30								
Corporation St	1/10/16	7	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:29:00								
Corporation St	**30/9/16**		**340**	**241**	**1.6**	**99**	**29%**	**340**						**0**	**0**	**0**	**00:00**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-	Number of people waiting 6-	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Corporation St	1/10/16	8	4	1	2	0	0%	1	00:17:00	00:17:00	00:18:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	9	8	6	1.2	1	14%	7	00:21:52	00:22:50	00:35:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	10	8	6	1	2	25%	8	00:39:37	00:39:00	01:28:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	11	8	7	1.9	2	22%	9	00:36:00	00:34:08	01:04:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	12	9	6	1.3	1	14%	7	00:35:00	00:37:30	01:24:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	13	12	8	1.9	2	20%	10	00:37:10	00:37:06	00:58:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	14	8	7	1.6	2	22%	9	00:27:22	00:26:20	00:39:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	15	10	14	1.6	2	12%	16	00:24:12	00:25:13	00:40:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	16	23	18	1.5	3	14%	21	00:10:23	00:10:54	00:24:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	17	22	16	1.8	5	24%	21	00:10:05	00:09:52	00:25:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	18	23	16	1.9	3	16%	19	00:10:33	00:06:56	00:19:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	19	17	7	1.7	10	59%	17	00:20:49	00:24:10	00:51:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	20	16	13	2.3	3	19%	16	00:23:52	00:27:09	00:44:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	21	17	12	1.8	6	33%	18	00:17:14	00:18:40	00:37:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	22	37	29	1.7	11	28%	40	00:08:40	00:09:15	00:20:00						
Corporation St	1/10/16	23	34	31	1.9	3	9%	34	00:09:15	00:09:13	00:20:00						
Corporation St	2/10/16	0	35	30	2.2	2	6%	32	00:10:03	00:10:13	00:21:00						
Corporation St	2/10/16	1	48	47	1.8	4	8%	51	00:05:05	00:04:53	00:10:00	00:00:01	00:01:00	2			00:01
Corporation St	2/10/16	2	55	47	2.1	4	8%	51	00:05:26	00:05:06	00:16:00	00:00:11	00:05:00	4			00:05

Corporation St	2/10/16	3	29	24	2.2	6	20%	30	00:05:35	00:05:27	00:14:00	00:01:34	00:03:54	16	5		00:07
Corporation St	2/10/16	4	18	10	2.6	12	55%	22	00:05:20	00:02:20	00:05:00	00:00:46	00:04:00	2	3		00:06
Corporation St	2/10/16	5	1	1	1	3	75%	4	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:07:00	00:07:00		1		00:07
Corporation St	2/10/16	6	5	1	1	2	67%	3	00:23:00	00:00:00	00:00:00						
Corporation St	2/10/16	7	0	0	0	2	100%	2									
Corporation St	**1/10/16**		**447**	**357**	**1.9**	**91**	**20%**	**448**				**00:00:12**		**24**	**9**	**0**	**00:07**

p

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Tower St	30/9/16	12	7	2	1.5	2	50%	4	00:16:42	00:06:00	00:09:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	13	6	0	0	8	100%	8	00:10:10	00:00:00	00:00:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	14	3	0	0	3	100%	3	00:35:00	01:14:00	01:14:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	15	1	1	1	0	0%	1	00:13:00	00:00:00	00:00:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	16	12	3	2.3	7	70%	10	00:10:55	00:11:45	00:30:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	17	4	1	1	5	83%	6	00:17:00	00:46:00	00:46:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	18	8	2	1.5	7	78%	9	00:07:00	00:02:00	00:02:00						
Tower St	30/9/16	19	5	0	0	5	100%	5	00:05:12	00:00:00	00:00:00						
Tower St	**30/9/16**		**46**	**9**	**1.7**	**37**	**80%**	**46**						**0**	**0**	**0**	**00:00**

q

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Tower St	1/10/16	7	5	0	0	4	100%	4	00:09:00								
Tower St	1/10/16	8	4	0	0	3	100%	3	00:10:00								
Tower St	1/10/16	9	8	0	0	10	100%	10	00:08:37								
Tower St	1/10/16	10	3	0	0	2	100%	2	00:05:00								
Tower St	1/10/16	11	11	1	1	10	91%	11	00:16:54	00:13:00	00:13:00						
Tower St	1/10/16	12	8	1	1	7	88%	8	00:12:15	00:10:00	00:10:00						
Tower St	1/10/16	13	5	0	0	5	100%	5	00:32:12								
Tower St	1/10/16	14	4	0	0	4	100%	4	00:22:45								
Tower St	1/10/16	15	2	0	0	2	100%	2	00:38:30								
Tower St	1/10/16	16	5	1	1	4	80%	5	00:20:24	00:18:00	00:18:00						
Tower St	1/10/16	17	3	0	0	2	100%	2	00:29:20	00:38:00	00:38:00						
Tower St	1/10/16	18	6	1	3	6	86%	7	00:17:50								
Tower St	1/10/16	19	7	0	0	6	100%	6	00:13:00								
Tower St	1/10/16	20	8	0	0	8	100%	8	00:12:07								
Tower St	1/10/16	21	0	0	0	2	100%	2									
Tower St	**1/10/16**		**79**	**4**	**1.5**	**75**	**95%**	**79**						**0**	**0**	**0**	**00:00**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Hammet St	30/9/16	13	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:02:00								
Hammet St	30/9/16	14	4	1	1	3	75%	4	00:01:45	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:02:00	00:02:00	1			00:02
Hammet St	30/9/16	15	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
Hammet St	30/9/16	16	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
Hammet St	30/9/16	17	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
Hammet St	30/9/16	18	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
Hammet St	30/9/16	19	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:01:00								
Hammet St	30/9/16	20	2	0	0	2	100%	2	00:06:00								
Hammet St	**30/9/16**		**8**	**1**	**1**	**7**	**88%**	**8**						**1**	**0**	**0**	**00:02**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
East St	30/9/16	16	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	30/9/16	17	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:18:00								
East St	30/9/16	18	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	30/9/16	19	5	1	6	3	75%	4	00:13:36	00:14:30	00:23:00						
East St	30/9/16	20	3	3	1.3	1	25%	4	00:10:20	00:11:30	00:17:00						
East St	30/9/16	21	5	1	1	2	67%	3	00:07:48	00:05:00	00:08:00						
East St	30/9/16	22	3	1	2	2	67%	3	00:29:20	00:34:00	00:34:00						
East St	30/9/16	23	4	3	1.3	1	25%	4	00:19:30	00:20:20	00:33:00						
East St	1/10/16	0	5	5	1.4	2	29%	7	00:09:48	00:11:00	00:19:00						
East St	1/10/16	1	4	0	0	4	100%	4	00:04:45								
East St	1/10/16	2	4	3	1.7	1	25%	4	00:01:00	00:00:40	00:02:00	00:00:48	00:01:20	3			00:02
East St	1/10/16	3	1	1	2	0	0%	1	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:05:00	00:05:00	2			00:05
East St	1/10/16	4	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	1/10/16	5	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	1/10/16	6	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	1/10/16	7	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	**30/9/16**		**35**	**18**	**1.7**	**17**	**49%**	**35**				**00:00:27**		**5**	**0**	**0**	**00:05**

TRAFFIC + TRANSPORTATION

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
East St	1/10/16	14	1	1	1	0	0%	1	00:14:00	00:14:00	00:14:00						
East St	1/10/16	15	3	0	0	3	100%	3	00:06:00								
East St	1/10/16	16	1	1	1	0	0%	1	00:06:00	00:06:00	00:06:00						
East St	1/10/16	17	2	1	1	1	50%	2	00:10:00	00:09:00	00:09:00						
East St	1/10/16	18	5	0	0	2	100%	2	00:33:48	00:53:00	00:53:00						
East St	1/10/16	19	6	1	2	7	88%	8	00:27:10	01:03:00	01:03:00						
East St	1/10/16	20	8	2	1	4	67%	6	00:20:22	00:22:30	00:23:00						
East St	1/10/16	21	10	4	1.2	6	60%	10	00:25:30	00:31:30	00:47:00						
East St	1/10/16	22	16	3	1.3	15	83%	18	00:14:41	00:11:00	00:16:00						
East St	1/10/16	23	14	8	1.9	6	43%	14	00:06:38	00:07:00	00:13:00						
East St	2/10/16	0	16	15	1.9	2	12%	17	00:01:41	00:01:47	00:08:00	00:01:37	00:04:52	5	3	0	00:09
East St	2/10/16	1	10	6	1.7	4	40%	10	00:01:30	00:00:50	00:02:00	00:00:12	00:02:00	1	0	0	00:02
East St	2/10/16	2	2	1	2	1	50%	2	00:02:00	00:01:00	00:01:00						
East St	2/10/16	3	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	2/10/16	4	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	2/10/16	5	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
East St	**1/10/16**		**94**	**43**	**1.7**	**51**	**54%**	**94**				**00:00:35**		**6**	**3**	**0**	**00:09**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Station Rd	30/9/16	13	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Station Rd	30/9/16	14	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:08:00								
Station Rd	30/9/16	15	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:08:00								
Station Rd	30/9/16	16	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:03:00								
Station Rd	30/9/16	17	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Station Rd	30/9/16	18	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:02:00								
Station Rd	**30/9/16**		**4**	**0**	**0**	**4**	**100%**	**4**						**0**	**0**	**0**	

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Mary St	30/9/16	22	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	30/9/16	23	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	1/10/16	0	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	1/10/16	1	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	1/10/16	2	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	1/10/16	3	0	0	0	0	0%										
Mary St	**30/9/16**		**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0%**							**0**	**0**	**0**	**00:00**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	16	2	0	0	2	100%	2	00:09:00								
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	17	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	18	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	19	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	20	1	0	0	1	100%	1	00:02:00								
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	21	3	1	2	1	50%	2	00:04:00	00:00:00	00:00:00						
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	22	5	0	0	4	100%	4	00:25:36	00:37:30	00:39:00						
North St (Inf)	30/9/16	23	8	5	2.2	2	29%	7	00:12:45	00:15:10	00:24:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	0	8	9	1.7	0	0%	9	00:15:37	00:15:37	00:26:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	1	17	17	1.8	0	0%	17	00:05:42	00:05:42	00:13:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	2	16	15	1.8	3	17%	18	00:03:33	00:03:50	00:08:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	3	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
North St (Inf)	**30/9/16**		**60**	**47**	**1.8**	**13**	**22%**	**60**						**0**	**0**	**0**	**00:00**

Taunton Deane Borough Council Hackney carriage survey

x

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	20	2	0	0	2	100%	2	00:01:00								
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	21	9	0	0	7	100%	7	00:11:26	00:15:00	00:15:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	22	7	2	2	5	71%	7	00:14:00	00:04:00	00:04:00						
North St (Inf)	1/10/16	23	11	6	1.8	7	54%	13	00:06:32	00:07:50	00:17:00						
North St (Inf)	2/10/16	0	22	18	2.1	2	10%	20	00:04:13	00:04:30	00:08:00						
North St (Inf)	2/10/16	1	29	31	1.9	0	0%	31	00:02:18	00:02:18	00:08:00	00:00:01	00:01:00	2			00:01
North St (Inf)	2/10/16	2	22	21	2.3	1	5%	22	00:01:49	00:01:54	00:05:00	00:00:07	00:03:00	2			00:03
North St (Inf)	2/10/16	3	11	6	2.3	4	40%	10	00:02:00	00:01:08	00:02:00	00:00:52	00:07:00		2		00:07
North St (Inf)	2/10/16	4	0	1	2	0	0%	1									
North St (Inf)	**1/10/16**		**113**	**85**	**2.1**	**28**	**25%**	**113**				**00:00:08**		**4**	**2**	**0**	**00:07**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	16	0	0	0	0	0	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	17	0	0	0	0	0	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	18	0	0	0	0	0	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	19	1	1	1	0	0%	1	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:00						
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	20	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	21	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	22	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	30/9/16	23	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	0	1	1	4	0	0%	1	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:01:00	00:01:00	4			00:01
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	1	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	3	2	2	2	0	0%	2	00:03:30	00:03:30	00:06:00						
The Bridge (Inf)	**30/9/16**		**4**	**4**	**2.3**	**0**	**0%**	**4**						**4**	**0**	**0**	**00:01**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	20	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	21	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	22	3	0	0	1	100%	1	00:06:20								
The Bridge (Inf)	1/10/16	23	6	0	0	8	100%	8	00:01:40								
The Bridge (Inf)	2/10/16	0	3	1	1	2	67%	3	00:01:00	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:01:00	00:01:00	1			00:01
The Bridge (Inf)	2/10/16	1	2	2	1	0	0%	2	00:03:30	00:03:30	00:06:00						
The Bridge (Inf)	2/10/16	2	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	2/10/16	3	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
The Bridge (Inf)	**1/10/16**		**14**	**3**	**1**	**11**	**79%**	**14**						**1**	**0**	**0**	**00:01**

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5	Number of people waiting 6-10	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	7	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	8	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	9	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	10	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	11	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	12	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	13	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	14	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	15	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	16	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	17	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	18	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	19	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	20	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	21	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	22	1	1	2	0	0%	1	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:00:00	00:01:00	00:01:00	2			00:01
Well'ton High St	1/10/16	23	1	1	6	0	0%	1	00:01:00	00:01:00	00:01:00	00:16:00	00:16:00			6	00:16
Well'ton High St	2/10/16	0	0	0	0	0	0%	0	00:00:00								
Well'ton High St	**1/10/16**		**2**	**2**	**4**	**0**	**0%**	**2**						**2**	**0**	**6**	**00:16**

cc

Location	Date	Hour	No of Vehicle Arrivals	Loaded Vehicle Departures	Average vehicle occupancy	Empty Vehicle Departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	Total Vehicle Departures	Average Vehicle Waiting Time	Average Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Maximum Vehicle Waiting Time (for a fare)	Average Passenger Waiting Time in Hour	Average Passenger Waiting Time, those waiting only	Number of people waiting 1-5 mins	Number of people waiting 6-10 mins	Number waiting 11 mins or more	Maximum passenger wait time
Station (priv)	30/9/16	8	5	4	1	1	20%	5	00:05:36	00:03:45	00:07:00	00:04:42	00:08:15	2	0	2	00:15
Station (priv)	30/9/16	9	9	9	1.2	0	0%	9	00:00:13	00:00:13	00:01:00	00:07:30	00:07:30	5	2	3	00:18
Station (priv)	30/9/16	10	12	8	1	2	20%	10	00:24:50	00:25:48	00:46:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	11	8	8	1.1	0	0%	8	00:10:22	00:10:22	00:15:00	00:00:06	00:01:00	1			00:01
Station (priv)	30/9/16	12	11	7	1.3	4	36%	11	00:09:21	00:09:17	00:22:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	13	15	11	1.5	1	8%	12	00:15:04	00:15:09	01:16:00	00:00:35	00:02:00	5			00:02
Station (priv)	30/9/16	14	6	5	1	2	29%	7	00:25:30	00:24:36	00:51:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	15	11	11	1.3	3	21%	14	00:14:21	00:17:30	01:20:00	00:03:17	00:15:20	0	0	3	00:16
Station (priv)	30/9/16	16	11	4	1.5	1	20%	5	00:24:00	00:23:40	00:58:00	00:06:20	00:09:30	0	4	0	00:10
Station (priv)	30/9/16	17	8	11	1.1	2	15%	13	00:19:07	00:19:51	00:41:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	18	8	5	1	0	0%	5	00:52:37	00:54:00	01:07:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	19	6	4	1	1	20%	5	01:12:50	01:12:50	01:18:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	20	3	4	1.8	0	0%	4	00:43:00	00:43:00	00:59:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	21	18	14	1.1	0	0%	14	01:02:46	01:02:46	02:51:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	22	4	5	1	0	0%	5	04:06:15	04:25:00	04:28:00						
Station (priv)	30/9/16	23	0	0	0	0	0%	0									
Station (priv)	1/10/16	0	0	4	1	0	0%	4									
Station (priv)	1/10/16	1	0	0	0	1	100%	1									
Station (priv)	1/10/16	2	0	2	1	1	33%	3									
Station (priv)	1/10/16	3	0	0	0	0	0	0									
Station (priv)	1/10/16	4	0	0	0	0	0	0									
Station (priv)	**30/9/16**		**135**	**116**	**1.2**	**19**	**14%**	**135**				**00:01:28**		**13**	**6**	**8**	**00:18**

Appendix 5 – Public Attitude Details

Q1: Have you used a taxi in this area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Yes	69	35%	9	18%	78	31%
No	130	65%	41	82%	171	69%
Total	199	100%	50	100%	249	100%

Q2: How often do you use a taxi within this area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Almost daily	8	7%	0	0%	8	6%
Once a week	2	2%	2	29%	4	3%
A few times a month	16	13%	4	57%	20	16%
Once a month	9	7%	1	14%	10	8%
Less than once a month	87	71%	0	0%	87	67%
Total	122	100%	7	100%	129	100%

Almost daily	20
Once a week	4
A few times a month	2
Once a month	1
Less than once a month	1

Resulting estimate of trips per person per month	1.3	0.3	1.1

Q3: How do you normally book a taxi within this area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
At a Taxi rank	45	42%	0	0%	45	40%
Hail in the street	3	3%	0	0%	3	3%
Telephone a company	46	43%	5	83%	51	46%
Use a Freephone	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Use my mobile or smart phone	11	10%	0	0%	11	10%
Other	1	1%	1	17%	2	2%
Total	106	100%	6	100%	112	100%

Q4. If you book a taxi by phone, please tell us the three companies you phone most?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
A1	29	45%	0	0%	29	40%
ACE (A1)	12	18%	0	0%	12	16%
332211 (A1)	7	11%	2	25%	9	12%
MONUMENT MINI CABS (Wellington)	0	0%	1	13%	1	1%
664444 (Monument)	0	0%	3	38%	3	4%
TLC	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
335599 (TLC)	1	2%	0	0%	1	1%
ALI CABS	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
CHARLIE CABS	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
LEO	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
A CABS (mainly hcv)	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
TITAN	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
WIVELISCOMBE TAXIS	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
STEVES	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
323232	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
663322	0	0%	1	13%	1	1.4%
APPLE	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
JOLLY JAUNTS	0	0%	1	13%	1	1.4%
PATS TAXI	1	2%	0	0%	1	1.4%
Total	65	100%	8	100%	73	100%

Formal Taunton Deane operators

TRAFFIC + TRANSPORTATION

Q5. How often do you use a hackney carriage within the Taunton area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Almost daily	6	6%	0	0%	6	5%
Once a week	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
A few times a month	6	6%	1	5%	7	6%
Once a month	5	5%	0	0%	5	4%
Less than once a month	18	17%	0	0%	18	15%
I can't remember when I last used a hackney carriage	30	29%	10	53%	40	33%
I can't remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area	38	37%	8	42%	46	37%
Total	104	100%	19	100%	123	100%

Almost daily	20
Once a week	4
A few times a month	2
Once a month	1
Less than once a month	1

Resulting estimate of trips per person per month	**0.8**	**0.0**	**0.6**

cts
TRAFFIC + TRANSPORTATION

Q6. Please tell us the ranks you are aware of in the Taunton area, and for each if you use them?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
TRAIN STATION	72	40%	3	30%	75	40%
CORPORATION STREET	17	10%	3	30%	20	11%
PREZZO	25	14%	0	0%	25	13%
CENTRAL	6	3%	0	0%	6	3%
TOWN	23	13%	0	0%	23	12%
TOWN SQUARE	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
THE SQUARE	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
BUS STATION	11	6%	2	20%	13	7%
MECCA BINGO	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
EAST STREET	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
PRIMARK	3	2%	0	0%	3	2%
ARGOS	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
STATION ROAD	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
HAMMET STREET	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
WELLINGTON	4	2%	0	0%	4	2%
MAMBO'S	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
CONSERVATIVE CLUB	0	0%	1	10%	1	1%
MARKET	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
TK MAXX	0	0%	1	10%	1	1%
MORRISONS	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
HOSPITAL	2	1%	0	0%	2	1%
LIDL	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Total	178	100%	10	100%	188	100%

Formal ranks, or colloquial names for them

Q7. Is there any location in Taunton where you would like to see a rank, and if it was there and vehicles were available, would you use it?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
BOTTOM END OF TOWN	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
BY THE WARBECK	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
CENTRAL MEMORIAL	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
EAST ROAD	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
HOSPITAL	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
MORRISONS	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
NORTH STREET	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
TESCO	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
LIDL	1	11%	0	#DIV/0!	1	11%
Total	9	100%	0	#DIV/0!	9	100%

Q8. Have you had any problems with the hackney carriage service ?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Design of vehicles	1	9%	0	0%	1	8%
Driver Issues	4	36%	0	0%	4	33%
Position of ranks	1	9%	0	0%	1	8%
Delay in getting a taxi	1	9%	0	0%	1	8%
Cleanliness	1	9%	0	0%	1	8%
other problems	3	27%	1	100%	4	33%
Total	11	100%	1	100%	12	100%

Q9.Can you get a hackney carriage in the Taunton Deane area when you need one?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Yes, in day time	151	62%	1	50%	152	62%
Yes, at night	25	10%	0	0%	25	10%
Yes, if I phone one	34	14%	1	50%	35	14%
Only from Taunton town centre	13	5%	0	0%	13	5%
No , never	20	8%	0	0%	20	8%
Total	243	100%	2	100%	245	100%

Q10. What would encourage you to use taxis or use them more often?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
1. Better vehicles	3	4%	0	0%	3	4%
2. More Hackney carriages I could phone for	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
3. Better drivers	2	3%	0	0%	2	3%
4. More Hackney carriages I could hail or get at a rank	9	13%	0	0%	9	12%
5. Better Located ranks (please state where)	4	6%	0	0%	4	5%
Other (all but two, lower fares)	49	72%	7	100%	56	75%
Total	68	100%	7	100%	75	100%

Q11. Do you consider you, or anyone you know to have a disability that means you need an adapted vehicle ?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
No	109	87%	23	88%	132	87%
Yes, I need an wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV)	1	1%	0	0%	1	1%
Yes, Someone I know needs a (WAV)	5	4%	0	0%	5	3%
Yes, I need an adapted vehicle, not a (WAV)	6	5%	1	4%	7	5%
Yes, Someone I know needs an adap[ted vehicle, not a (WAV)	5	4%	2	8%	7	5%
Other	0	0%	0	0%	0	0%
Total	126	100%	26	100%	152	100%

Q12. Have you ever given up on waiting for a hackney carriage at the rank in the Taunton area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
NO	114	97%	13	100%	127	97%
Yes	4	3%	0	0%	4	3%
Total	118	100%	13	100%	131	100%

Q13. Do you have regular access to a car?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Yes	147	79%	29	62%	176	76%
No	38	21%	18	38%	56	24%
Total	185	100%	47	100%	232	100%

Q14. Do you think that disabled people travelling in this area get a good service from hackney carragies?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Yes	73	97%	7	100%	80	98%
No	2	3%	0	0%	2	2%
Total	75	100%	7	100%	82	100%

Q15. Do you live in the area?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL	
Yes	158	80%	42	100%	200	83%
No	40	20%	0	0%	40	17%
Total	198	100%	42	100%	240	100%

Q16. What is your gender?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL		Census
Male	85	43%	18	37%	103	42%	48%
Female	112	57%	31	63%	143	58%	52%
Total	197	100%	49	100%	246	100%	

Q17. Which age bracket do you fall into?	TAUNTON		WELLINGTON		TOTAL		Census
Under 30	43	24%	6	12%	49	21%	20%
31 – 55	81	45%	14	29%	95	42%	37%
Over 55	55	31%	29	59%	84	37%	43%
Total	179	100%	49	100%	228	100%	

Appendix 6 – List of Key Stakeholders and responses

Chapter	Stakeholder Group / Person	Views returned?
5	**Supermarkets**	
	Sainsbury's	Y
	Asda	N
	Tesco	N
	Morrison's	N
	Lidl	N
5	**Hotels**	
	The Castle	N
	Premier Inn	N
	Royal Ashton	N
	Taunton House Hotel	Y
5	**Hospitals**	
	Musgrove Park	N

	Nuffield Health	N
	St Mary's Hospice	(N)
5	**Restaurants / Café**	
	The Willow Tree	N
	Mint and Mustard	N
	Castle Bow	N
	Hide Out	Y
	The Master Thatcher	N
5	**Night clubs**	
	Zinc	N
5	**Disability representatives**	
	Compass Disability	Y

5	**County Education and Social Services / Public Transport / Rail Operators**	
	First Great Western, Taunton	N
	Street Pastors	Y
	Parking, Somerset	Y
	Devon Highways	Y
	Wellington Town Council	Y
5	**Police**	
	Avon and Somerset Police	Y
5	**Entertainment venues**	
	Museum of Somerset	N
	The Brewhouse Theatre	Y
	Creative Innovation Centre	N
5	**Pubs, etc**	

	Taunton Pubwatch	Y
	Perkin Warbreck Wetherspoons	Y
	The Plough	N
	Racehorse Inn	N
	Flying Horse	N
	Winchester Arms	N
	Hankridge Arms	N
	Ring of Bells	N
	Cross Keys	N
	The New Mill	N
	The Stone Gallows Inn	N
6	**Hackney carriage / private hire trade**	
	Questionnaire	Y

Appendix 4

Responses to the licensed driver consultation, between 26th June and 31st July 2017

Name	Licence badge no.	Should the council limit the number of hackney carriages (taxis) that it licenses to work in Taunton Deane?	Any further comments:
Neil Rudram	339	Don't know	As I am very much part time driver and private hire operator I am not aware of the arguments for and against limit the number of taxis. It would seem to me that if a person is willing to purchase and insure suitable vehicles and have available sufficient licence holders to operate them then the vehicle should be licensed. To limit the number of taxis seems to me a restrictive practice and I would hope this is not due to lobbying from existing operators. Hey what do I know!
Jetheesh Panicker	529	No	Plenty of new residential areas are being established in Taunton and surrounding areas. Instead of reducing the vehicle licenses, you can control the driver licenses through stricter procedures. For eg- written test, driving test, geographical test, strong interview etc.
Paul Benson	523	No	As for your findings overleaf.
Khairul Alam	367	No	Incresing population in taunton
Raymond Parr	560	No	There are no restrictions on other types of business as to how many outlets there are eg: restuarants, take aways, convenience stores etc. So I think if restricted it would suppress freedom to run a business of your choice. Those who are efficient will survive, those who are not will go out of business.
Mark Thomas	206	No	The amount of taxis in percentage to the population has actually dropped.
Abu Saeef	60	No	
Andrei Dinu	535	No	If we have competition we can guarantee to offer better services to the customers. If the council limit the number of hackney carriages (taxis) licences customers will have no option. Thank you.
Ashfak Ahmed	522	Yes	Too many taxis and not enough work
Abdul Malik	362	Yes	
Richard Harris	79	Yes	To many taxi. Not enough spaces to park
Craig Mortimer	18	Yes	With the number of cars operating in the town to date is just far to many. Its impossible to make a full time wage with the number of taxis and to get anywhere near you have to work 100+ hours a week which is very unsafe and can ruin family life.

Michael Masters	54	Yes	There are too many taxis day and night for customers that are available. I do not work off the ranks anymore during the day as I cannot earn enough to warrant coming out and the ranks are not big enough to accommodate the number of taxis.
Simon Spoors	90	Yes	If you don't limit the amount of taxis, are you going to provide more taxi ranks?
Paul Spoors	38	Yes	
Jeremy Simons	26	Yes	There are limited taxi ranks for a start, meaning that often taxis are extended beyond the ranks especially on the Corporation rank and the bus station (causing traffic problems). Also there is not enough work consistently to keep all the taxis reasonably busy. You can be on the rank (Corporation) for 1-2 hous on average before you get a fare most days and evenings.
Rebecca Baxter	20	Yes	
Thomas Baxter	96	Yes	As discussed at a lot of the forum meetings, there are way to many taxis out there, there isn't enough rank space to accommodate these cars and with the forth coming closure of East street and Hammet street this situation is only going to get worse as these roads hold nearly half of the current rank spaces in Taunton. Already we see drivers applying for hire in none designated areas, this is making it unsafe for the general public to be able to distinguish between legal taxis and chancers, if you look on a Friday and Saturday night, you will see drivers touting for hire outside pubs and clubs, this really has to stop, it's making the main road through town very narrow which is making driving much more dangerous and evan more dangerous for walkers when crossing the roads in between theses taxis that are parked up. Also as more cars appear, so the current work gets filtered between them, this then makes the driver work more hours to meet the every day living costs or they take short cuts in other ways ie, maintenance of the cars, neither is expectable! Regularly I see cars untaxed, or tyres down to the legal limits, or evan engine failure due to lack of servicing because in most cases the driver either puts food on the table for his family or pays to have the car serviced, it's one or the other sometimes. I think the damage is now done to be honest, but by capping now, may just help the trade along.
MD Shazzad Hossain	143	Yes	Too many taxis!
Daniel Robbins	193	Yes	TDBC carry out a survey and find that we have more than enough taxis to cater for the public's needs. But the Council stop us dealing with the public by only having 21 parking spaces for taxis and if we have park more we are issued parking tickets. We can travel all around London and use bus lanes. But not in Taunton. Why? So i think the answer is obvious.
Barry Horton	102	Yes	There are too many taxi in Taunton. Also there are not enough rank spaces for the taxis in Taunton. Also in my opinion Taunton Town is declining fast. Too many taxi not enough people needing them to warrant any more.
Shelley Jones	135	Yes	There are enough hackney carriage taxis,

Robert Gray	34	Yes	When I started taxi driving in May 2000 there was 70+ taxis in taunton. Since then we have had an economic downturn and there are half of the night time venues of those days. If you were to venture into town at 2-3am now on a Friday or Saturday night then I don't think you would be asking this question. My accountant is shocked that my earnings go down year on year (I am a night driver). One of the things to address is that when people phone up the big firms for taxis for short fares, they are invariably told "nothing for one hour". But if you said you wanted to go to Minehead they would be there in 5 minutes. This constant 'batting away of diddlys' as we call it, gives the impression that there are not enough taxis. Local drivers have really suffered these last few years, we have families, mortgages etc, we are disgruntled to say the least.
Mike Davis	293	No	Forgive me for responding to you directly, but I think there are important issues around the unmet demand survey that need to be considered more deeply than most in the trade will articulate. In my business and personal life, I am most successful when I figure out where I am trying to get to, as opposed to knowing what I am trying to leave. I also try and work through things that may happen, what I have control over and what I do not. It is to these points that Matt and I are currently considering in order that we can chart a successful way forward for our business over the next couple of decades. I am not saying that I am right, rather that context needs to be given to whether committing the trade to a regular expensive process is appropriate. There are some fundamental changes that are happening in society, in technology, economically, the way we consume and how people live their lives, that I believe will make the unmet demand survey redundant in future years, if not now. I will try and be brief. The major points are; - Electric cars will reach a price point in circa 2023 that will dramatically reduce the cost of car ownership, knowing that running costs will also be lower as there are less moving mechanical parts. - Semi automation of cars will progress to fully autonomous vehicles by 2030, if not sooner. - The current manufacturer, dealer model will no longer be viable, as vehicle hire companies are purchased or merge with manufacturers, as customers in large numbers start to spot hire vehicles as a way of travel. By 2030 this becomes the normal behaviour in towns and cities as self drive vehicles become the "norm". Urban planning will also gradually reduce the influence of car ownership. - Taxi companies work with a manufacturer running the local spot hire circuit and where needed providing a car with assistance. Nearly 25% of the UK population will be over 65 by then. For retirement towns like Taunton there will be a large over 75 population needing driver assistance for shopping, in order that they can stay at home safely. A1 will become a vehicle hire / Taxi operator / care provider. When is an autonomous vehicle a Taxi and

			when is it a car being hired, with or without a human for added service? - As a consequence licensing law will change and the focus will be much more on the Directors / Proprietors of a firm and their procedures. An ISO certificate or similar will be required. Less people will be in the trade, but those that are will be much more professional on average, because the trade has changed. So how does that impact an unmet demand survey now? At the start of this process I protested that it was a waste of time and that the Council should focus on the professionalism of the trade. I remain convinced that this is the right approach for customers. Remove the tax evaders, those that smoke in their cabs, improve the quality of vehicles with an age / mileage limit. Have all new drivers take a BTEC in customer service. I assure you that doing these things properly will "cap" the trade by removing the people who are not interested in serving the public, but do it for the cash in the hand. In so doing you lay the ground for the changes that are coming to the trade in the next two decades. Whilst the survey suggests you can put a cap on vehicles, I think it is open to legal challenge on several levels. I do not think that it is the right investment of TDBC time, nor money. TDBC would need to define where the cap sat. How many cars, how many drivers? The survey did not answer those questions, nor state a clear opinion. So to restrict the trade without having a defined position is nonsensical and open to challenge. I could go further and say that the survey does not state all times of the week are adequately covered. Without posturing, but being very clear if a cap was passed without such detail we would consider a legal challenge on the basis of restricting our trade, if we could not recruit required drivers. Further if you cap the number of vehicles, but not drivers, companies who grow will have to "double shift" vehicles, so forcing them to go from self employed to employed status as one would be controlling hours worked. This discriminates against firms and favours one man bands and by definition is an anti competitive act. So in summary let us work to professionalise the trade, in order that the public are well served and in so doing remove the element that are scamming the system for their own ends. Whilst laying the foundations for the changes that are coming.

Appendix 5

Responses to the public consultation, between 11th July and 14th August 2017

Please state your name or the name of the business/organisation you represent	Do you live and/or work in Taunton Deane?	Should the council limit the number of taxis that it licenses to work in Taunton Deane?	Any further comments:
Roger Habgood	Yes	Yes	Any taxi that sits with its engine running on a rank should be taken off the list. It seems to happen a lot both in summer and winter
Ann Trott	Yes	No	The cost of taxis is very high in Taunton compared to other places I use them, including Bristol and Birmingham. I feel that limiting the amount of taxis will see this increase further.
	No	Yes	
William Rigby	Yes	No	Limiting the numbers will drive up prices.
Callum Holburn	Yes	Yes	
	Yes	No	
Terry Baker	Yes	Yes	There are way too many taxis operating in taunton
Philippe Messy	Yes	Yes	Too many taxi meaning more congested road and also not enough money generated for them ratio customers/taxi not correct.
M Smith	Yes	No	Not just number of vehicles,issue for consumers is pricing. restricting supply you'll push up already expensive prices. How do prices compare with other rural towns that is survey should have done and how are taxis owned? Are there multiple owners is it a competitive market place? Council job is to champion consumer. restricting supply only protects the businesses. One consumer advantage of restricting may be to encourage more uber cars in area.
Ex taxi driver	Yes	Yes	For a number of years taxi drivers have said there are too many and they all have to 60hours plus every week at one point I did 80. I know of drivers who are loosing homes and living in bed sits. As for parking approx 15 rank spaces and 198 licenced taxis. Cap it and quick
B Parsons	No	No	No evening bus service along A358 and a tourist town needs as many taxis as possible. Do not leave women in vunerable position where they may try walking along dark narrow roads where drivers do not expect to see pedestrians. There is already too many accidents along A358. Travelling from London by train you need taxis for late return from theatre trips, holidays, friends and

			relatives visiting, tourists, people too old to drive and disabled people. We need to enhance arrival at Taunton station to encourage people to visit and live in the area.
Rebecca Hobbs	Yes	Yes	There are too many taxis. They form long queues and cause obstructions
Tracy	Yes	No	Sometimes it's really difficult to get a taxi so if there was too many on the road this wouldn't be the case.
Sheila Thomas	Yes	No	The population of Taunton Deane has increased considerably over the last 10 years, the number of taxis has not increased by the same percentage, therefore explaining why there are no taxis to be had as certain times of day. A cap on licences means reverting to a previous system where taxi plates were sold for up to £15,000 and were considered a business asset. Capping would also prevent new businesses starting up and restrict the expansion of established firms.
Mike Salway	Yes	No	Local Taxi fares are far too expensive compared to most other large towns /cities (e.g London). If they were cheaper more people would use them so there would be ample customers for all of them. No need then to limit numbers.
Lee Slatter, Taunton Taxi Services	Yes	No	Tighter checks on suitability of drivers should be more of a priority than the number of cabs. As a new business operator, capping would damage my chances of expansion. Tighter driver checks would ensure a better quality of service for the paying public in my opinion. Freedom of choice is good as long as a certain standard is maintained. Capping will not necessarily guarantee this level but proper testing of regulations and routing would.
Steve Altria	Yes	Yes	It should ensure that there taxis in Wellington not all gone off into Taunton.
Nicole Kirbyshire	Yes	No	Restricting numbers will only serve the big companies and will work against the smaller businesses and sole traders. Everyone should have the opportunity to start or expand a business and currently one or two companies have the monopoly. However a local code of conduct that all licensed drivers must sign up to would be much more effective. This could include maximum taxi numbers allowed to queue in certain areas to help manage disruption. Allow taxi drivers the opportunity to be competetive and dont bring in unneccesary council red tape and restrictions.
	Yes	Yes	
TJ	Yes	Yes	Far to many taxis in Taunton
Matthew Smith	Yes	Yes	IIRC there used to be a cap. God only knows why it was abolished.
tony murphy ex taxi diver	Yes	Yes	far to Meany in taunton
John Wood	Yes	Yes	There are too many that often spill out of taxi ranks and obstruct and cause danger to the public highway.
Raymond Harris	Yes	Yes	Way too many taxis fighting for trade in corporation street of an evening, past Mecca bingo and in the cycle lane...illegally parked

Taunton Taxi Services	Yes	No	Capping the number of vehicles will not solve any problem. You need to create a larger rank space in the centre of town. Personally I think hammet street is a perfect location, it's a very long street, & slap bang in the centre of town. Taxi drivers who want to sit on the rank are struggling to make ends meet because they have no drive & enthusiasm, our company has grown & grown because we provide a good service, our reviews speak for themselves & we put the effort in. There's plenty of work out there, however in my personal opinion not enough taxis on our fleet currently. Capping the number would force smaller businesses to stay smaller.
Holiday Inn	Yes	No	I believe that the problem lies within their being insufficient spaces for taxis to park.
Kelly Dryden	Yes	No	Whilst there are some times obviously too many taxis queueing, the times taxis are actually required more often (eg evenings when the completely ineffective buses, and park & ride cease), there are insufficient taxies to meet demand. In my experience anyway!
Stuart Cormie	No	No	The problem in my view is that the prices charged are too high in relation to other towns and the local payrates. Make the pricing more realistic and the current glut would get used!
Kris Batstone	Yes	Yes	
	Yes	Yes	
Hugh Finnis	Yes	No	Taunton is the 3rd most expensive place in the country to take a taxi - why? Greedy council? We need independent taxi's that do not have to abide by the council tariff
Ryan Maynard Eames	Yes	Yes	
	Yes	No	Due to the lack of public transport to areas only 4 miles from the town, the choice of getting to and from town are limited to taxis if you are not using a car. The taxi charges in Taunton Deane, in comparison to other districts in the U.K. Are shocking. I can travel 8 miles, include a pick up, in the west mids for £16. In Taunton to get 4 miles it would cost me the same!!! That is perhaps why the evening economy is not booming. So feel free to add more taxis in the hope there will be more competitive prices.
Mickey Bartlett	Yes	No	
Jade Jewell	Yes	No	Most people struggle to get a taxi at the best of times, we use Taunton Taxi services - a really good family business & capping the taxis wouldn't allow them to grow to their full potential. It's a really good, safe & reliable taxi company
Zinc	Yes	Yes	Town centre has more than enough taxis
Andy Beake	Yes	Yes	The ranks are full at peak times with many taxis desperate to get the next fare. When they can't get on the rank they then park on the double yellow lines on North Street and bridge street with no regards to highway code. Often facing the wrong direction and then u-turning in the road when there are drunk pedestrians wondering across the highway.

			Less taxis better quality of service and higher regard for the highway code = makes Taunton a safer place.
Beverley Higgins The Black Horse Inn	Yes	No	At times it is so hard to get taxis, bad weather, school run times, tea times how can you say no more or limit what we have, people are trying to earn some money as long as they are all licensed and regulated let them work.
	Yes	No	Limiting taxi number will allow the big companies to push up their prices. Taxis in Taunton are already ludicrously expensive compared to other towns in the South West.
Roderick Lukins		No	I wish to state my objections to the proposed limitation of new taxi plates in taunton i was a taxi driver over 30 years and the only people to be financially rewarded will be the owners of the big taxi operators who holds most of them and have there drivers over a barrel with a limited number of taxi plates available these operators are charging a premium to there owner drivers better to exchange all existing taxi plates upon renewal to taxi plates that can only be used on disabled equipped vehicles Not just saloon type cars this will have a duel effect within the industry taking away the power from the big operators and allowing all drivers a level playing field

Appendix 6

Taunton Deane Borough Council

Maximum Permitted Taxi Fares – Valid from 25 November 2010

Standard Fare if the distance does not exceed 500 yards **£2.40**

If the distance does exceed 500 yards:
For the first 500 yards.. **£2.40**
For each completed 160 yards or part thereof.. **20p**

Waiting Time for each completed period of 42 seconds..................................... **20p**

Extra Charges
For hiring's commencing between 10pm and 7am ...... **+ 50% of the Standard Fare**
For Saturday & Sunday .... **+ 50% of the Standard Fare**
For all Public and Bank Holidays .... **+ 100% of the Standard Fare**
In Excess of 4 Passengers at any point during the hire…. **+50% of the Standard Fare**
In Excess of 4 Passengers between 10pm and 7am. **+ 100% of the Standard Fare**
In Excess of 4 Passengers Saturdays, Sundays,
Bank/Public holidays .... **+ 100% of The Standard Fare**

Soiling Charge **£100.00**

If you have any queries or comments relating to this taxi, please contact the Licensing Unit on 01823 356343 quoting the vehicle's registration or plate number

All charges are inclusive of V.A.T. (if applicable)