



**Chesterfield Borough– Hackney Carriage  
Unmet Demand Survey**

**Final Report**

**November 2016**

---





## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### *Key points*

This study has been conducted by Vector Transport Consultancy on behalf of Chesterfield Borough Council.

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

Within the guidance, the Department for Transport recommend that if a Licensing Authority should seek to retain a quantity restriction, then a survey should be carried out to establish if there is any unmet demand for Hackney Carriages.

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

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

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

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

Surveys were undertaken at taxi ranks in Chesterfield Borough, for four days, from a Thursday morning to the early hours of the following Monday morning, 96 hours later. The volume of passengers and hackney carriages was recorded, together with Hackney Carriage waiting times and wait times for any queuing passengers.

The busiest rank was Chesterfield Railway Station. Approximately 57% of all observed hires occurred at the Railway Station rank.

Incidences of passenger waiting were observed, involving 17 passengers (out of 2,158 passengers observed over the four days). Incidences of passenger queuing were at a range of times on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Occasions when passengers had to wait for a Hackney Carriage to arrive at a rank were generally isolated events rather than lengthy continuous periods of queuing.

Volumes at the ranks are summarised in the following tables.



RANK LOCATION	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK EMPTY	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK WITH PASSENGERS	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK	TOTAL PASSENGERS DEPARTING RANK	AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER TAXI	AVERAGE WAIT TIME AT THE RANK PER TAXI (MINUTES)
Chesterfield Railway Station	7	219	226	276	1.3	19
Elder Way	45	55	100	68	1.2	15
Knifesmith Gate	5	0	5	0	0.0	4
Vicar Lane / Old Ship Lane	6	1	7	1	1.0	6
Coach Station Car Park	24	0	24	0	0.0	4
Saltergate	4	1	5	1	1.0	2
West Bars	2	0	2	0	0.0	3
Stephenson Place	13	11	24	17	1.5	11
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Corporation Street	15	8	23	13	1.6	12
Holywell Street Section A	14	14	28	17	1.2	15
Holywell Street Section B	9	1	10	1	1.0	4
Holywell Street Section C	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>310</b>	<b>454</b>	<b>394</b>	<b>1.3</b>	<b>15</b>

**Table 1 - Summary of Rank Observation Results – Thursday to Friday totals**

RANK LOCATION	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK EMPTY	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK WITH PASSENGERS	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK	TOTAL PASSENGERS DEPARTING RANK	AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER TAXI	AVERAGE WAIT TIME AT THE RANK PER TAXI (MINUTES)
Chesterfield Railway Station	7	257	264	316	1.2	16
Elder Way	26	55	81	77	1.4	10
Knifesmith Gate	0	0	0	0	0.0	
Vicar Lane / Old Ship Lane	7	3	10	6	2.0	3
Coach Station Car Park	9	3	12	5	1.7	2
Saltergate	2	0	2	0	0.0	0
West Bars	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Stephenson Place	24	77	101	124	1.6	5
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Corporation Street	20	3	23	4	1.3	3
Holywell Street Section A	10	48	58	71	1.5	8
Holywell Street Section B	13	0	13	0	0.0	0
Holywell Street Section C	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>446</b>	<b>564</b>	<b>603</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>11</b>

**Table 2 - Summary of Rank Observation Results –Friday to Saturday totals**

RANK LOCATION	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK EMPTY	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK WITH PASSENGERS	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK	TOTAL PASSENGERS DEPARTING RANK	AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER TAXI	AVERAGE WAIT TIME AT THE RANK PER TAXI (MINUTES)
Chesterfield Railway Station	0	237	237	316	1.3	14
Elder Way	28	60	88	91	1.5	10
Knifesmith Gate	0	2	2	2	1.0	
Vicar Lane / Old Ship Lane	1	1	2	1	1.0	1
Coach Station Car Park	10	0	10	0	0.0	2
Saltergate	2	2	4	3	1.5	1
West Bars	1	0	1	0	0.0	10
Stephenson Place	11	194	205	365	1.9	2
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Corporation Street	4	2	6	3	1.5	1
Holywell Street Section A	8	76	84	116	1.5	3
Holywell Street Section B	7	26	33	36	1.4	0
Holywell Street Section C	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>600</b>	<b>672</b>	<b>933</b>	<b>1.6</b>	<b>7</b>

**Table 3 - Summary of Rank Observation Results –Saturday to Sunday totals**



RANK LOCATION	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK EMPTY	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK WITH PASSENGERS	TOTAL TAXIS DEPARTING RANK	TOTAL PASSENGERS DEPARTING RANK	AVERAGE PASSENGERS PER TAXI	AVERAGE WAIT TIME AT THE RANK PER TAXI (MINUTES)
Chesterfield Railway Station	6	154	160	218	1.4	14
Elder Way	8	2	10	3	1.5	12
Knifesmith Gate	1	0	1	0	0.0	0
Vicar Lane / Old Ship Lane	1	0	1	0	0.0	0
Coach Station Car Park	5	0	5	0	0.0	0
Saltergate	2	0	2	0	0.0	3
West Bars	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Stephenson Place	3	4	7	6	1.5	3
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Corporation Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Holywell Street Section A	0	2	2	2	1.0	0
Holywell Street Section B	3	0	3	0	0.0	2
Holywell Street Section C	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>191</b>	<b>229</b>	<b>1.4</b>	<b>13</b>

**Table 4 - Summary of Rank Observation Results –Sunday to Monday totals**

Approximately 19% of Hackney Carriages left the ranks empty. However, the proportion of Hackney Carriages leaving the Railway Station rank was significantly lower. If we exclude the Railway Station rank from the calculation, 35% of Hackney Carriages left the ranks empty during the periods observed. It may be the case that many of these empty departures may have been responding to telephone bookings. Hackney Carriages which leave the rank empty have the effect of reducing the average waiting time observed.

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

The consultation feedback indicated that:

- The Hackney Carriage fleet in Chesterfield Borough is generally well regarded.
- Consultation feedback from stakeholders, the public and the trade suggests that there are few issues with the availability of Hackney Carriages and the levels of service provided.
- Some initial feedback suggested that issues had been raised regarding the availability of wheelchair accessible vehicles. However, there was very little feedback from representatives of wheelchair users and use groups to support this. Several organisations which make use of wheelchair accessible vehicles on a regular basis indicated that they rarely faced any issues with availability. However, several of these organisations have an account with a service provider. This may afford them a level of priority in the service they receive.
- The principal feedback from the trade was comments regarding the number of licensed vehicles from other licensing authority areas which are working for Private Hire Operators. It was felt that some of these out of area drivers have insufficient local knowledge to offer good levels of service. In addition, concerns were raised regarding public safety, as the ability of Chesterfield Council licensing officers to check vehicles and drivers is limited.
- Feedback from Private Hire and Hackney Operators indicated that they faced shortages of driver availability to meet demand. This was especially the case for Private Hire drivers. This may be driving the perceived growth in out of area vehicles and drivers licensed in other areas, operating in Chesterfield.
- There is a trend within the Hackney Carriage fleet for drivers who operate from town centre ranks, to also subscribe to a Private Hire booking circuit. Drivers who operate from the Railway Station tend to be solo operators or working



within small operator companies. As such, the proportion of Hackney Carriages which leave the Railway Station rank empty (to fulfil a booking) is relatively low, compared with other ranks.

### ***Observations***

Not all Hackney Carriage drivers work full time. Some work for shorter periods, a few days a week, others work long hours (12 hours + per day) up to 7 days a week, on occasions. Drivers were asked how many hours they worked each day. The average working week for Hackney Carriage drivers was 62.45 hours per week.

Some individuals own multiple Hackney Carriage vehicle licences and rent these licenced vehicles to drivers for a weekly fee, or a share of earnings. There was relatively little objection to this arrangement from drivers who responded to the survey.

The proportion of the fleet which operated from the ranks during the survey period, was relatively low. This ranged from around 17% in mid-morning, to around 35% during the period of peak demand on Saturday night. It is understood that a significant proportion of demand for Hackney Carriages is obtained from booking, in addition to hires obtained off ranks.

### ***Wheelchair mystery shopper survey***

A series of test purchase hires were made by a surveyor in a wheelchair accompanied by and able bodied person. A total of seventeen test purchases were made on 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> October 2016 and on the 1<sup>st</sup> November 2016.

The test purchases involved the hire of Hackney Carriages from ranks in Chesterfield. The level of service provided was tested. One of the drivers surveyed didn't secure the wheelchair adequately and it moved whilst the vehicle was being driven. Another driver didn't stop the meter when he had arrived at the destination and the meter continued to run whilst the wheelchair was disembarked. The remaining 15 out of the 17 drivers surveyed managed to adequately secure the wheelchair and stop the meter on arrival at the destination. All of the journeys undertaken were relatively short and generally barely exceeded the minimum flag drop fare on the taxi meter. No drivers refused to take the hires offered and all drivers offered to use ramps and to board the wheelchair.

A separate paper detailing the vehicles, drivers and journeys undertaken for the surveys has been prepared and supplied to the Licensing section of the Council.

### ***Unmet need assessment***

Data from the taxi rank surveys was used, together with any indication from the public consultation surveys of frustration with non-availability of Hackney Carriages, to calculate an Index of Significant Unmet Demand (ISUD). The ISUD index value calculated from the survey results was 9.1. A value of less than 80 is normally taken as an indicator that there is no significant unmet demand. Whilst the ISUD value is a strong indicator, it should not be taken in isolation as the only valid evidence. Further evidence from stakeholder and public consultation indicated that there were normally sufficient Hackney Carriages available to satisfy demand.

### ***Future requirements***

There is currently an adequate supply of Hackney Carriages. No additional licences would be necessary to cater for foreseeable growth in general demand over the next three years. The low proportion of Hackney Carriage fleet observed working from the ranks suggests that there is capacity within the fleet to deal with any moderate rise in demand.



### ***Conclusions and recommendations***

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

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

