

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Key points

This study has been conducted by LVSA 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 three days, from a Thursday morning to the early hours of the following Sunday morning, 72 hours later. The volume of passengers and hackney carriages was recorded, together with Hackney Carriage waiting times and wait times for any queuing passengers.

The busiest rank was Chesterfield Railway Station. Approximately 50% of all observed hires occurred at the Railway Station rank.

When we compare the 2022 results with the 2019 survey, the number of hires observed from Thursday morning to Sunday morning decreased by 28%.

Incidences of passenger waiting were observed, involving 52 passengers (out of 1,950 passengers observed over the three 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.

Thursday - Friday						
Rank location	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks empty	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks with passengers	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks	Total passengers departing the ranks	Average passengers per hackney carriage	Average vehicle wait time at the ranks per hackney carriage (minutes)
Total for all locations	35	263	298	373	1.4	29
Corporation Street	2	2	4	3	1.5	5
Saltergate	1	0	1	0	0.0	15
Stephenson Place	1	0	1	0	0.0	15
Knifesmith Gate	4	66	70	77	1.2	19
Chesterfield Railway Station	16	183	199	272	1.5	35
Holywell Street	6	11	17	19	1.7	14
Old Ship Lane	3	1	4	2	2.0	5
West Bars	2	0	2	0	0.0	5
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0

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

Friday - Saturday						
Rank location	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks empty	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks with passengers	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks	Total passengers departing the ranks	Average passengers per hackney carriage	Average vehicle wait time at the ranks per hackney carriage (minutes)
Total for all locations	37	347	384	589	1.7	32
Corporation Street	0	2	2	5	2.5	0
Saltergate	1	1	2	1	1.0	0
Stephenson Place	1	0	1	0	0.0	25
Knifesmith Gate	5	55	60	73	1.3	17
Chesterfield Railway Station	19	176	195	291	1.7	46
Holywell Street	8	112	120	216	1.9	20
Old Ship Lane	1	1	2	3	3.0	3
West Bars	2	0	2	0	0.0	23
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0

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

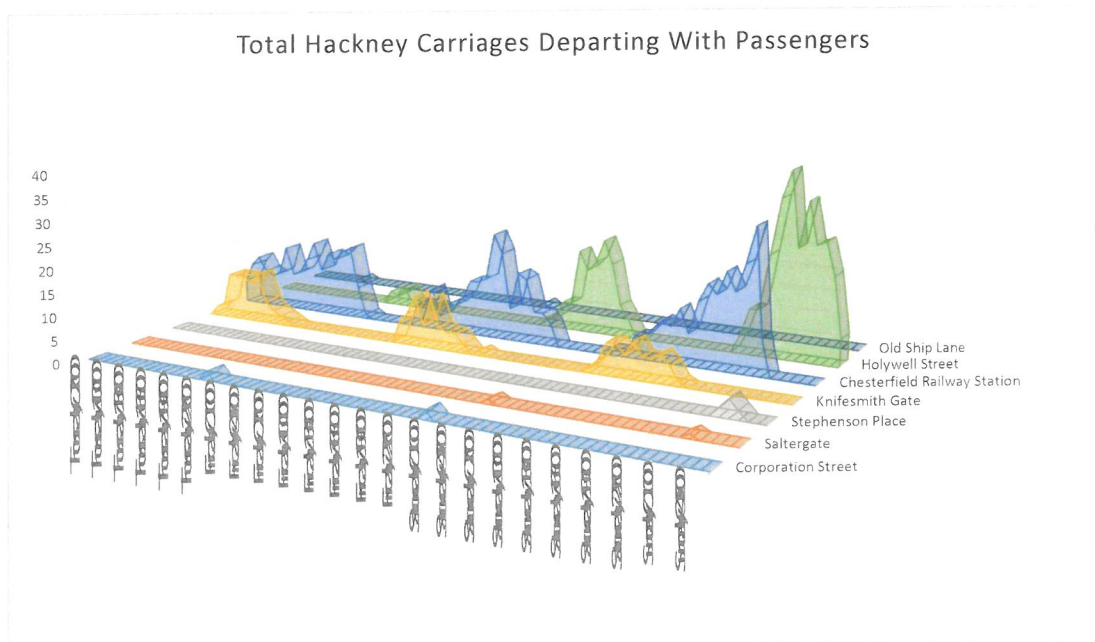
Saturday - Sunday						
Rank location	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks empty	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks with passengers	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks	Total passengers departing the ranks	Average passengers per hackney carriage	Average vehicle wait time at the ranks per hackney carriage (minutes)
Total for all locations	90	519	609	988	1.9	18
Corporation Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0
Saltergate	2	1	3	1	1.0	3
Stephenson Place	3	8	11	14	1.8	5
Knifesmith Gate	6	52	58	65	1.3	19
Chesterfield Railway Station	21	204	225	372	1.8	30
Holywell Street	56	254	310	536	2.1	10
Old Ship Lane	1	0	1	0	0.0	10
West Bars	1	0	1	0	0.0	5
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0	0

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

All 3 days					
Rank location	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks empty	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks with passengers	Total hackney carriages departing the ranks	Total passengers departing the ranks	Average passengers per hackney carriage
Total for all locations	162	1129	1291	1950	1.7
Corporation Street	2	4	6	8	2.0
Saltergate	4	2	6	2	1.0
Stephenson Place	5	8	13	14	1.8
Knifesmith Gate	15	173	188	215	1.2
Chesterfield Railway Station	56	563	619	935	1.7
Holywell Street	70	377	447	771	2.0
Old Ship Lane	5	2	7	5	2.5
West Bars	5	0	5	0	0.0
Cavendish Street	0	0	0	0	0.0

Table 4 - Aggregate Rank Observation Results Thursday to Sunday totals

A comparative profile of hire activity across all rank locations is presented below.



Approximately 13% of Hackney Carriages left the ranks empty. 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 an online questionnaire. Stakeholder consultation was undertaken with minority group representatives, local businesses, hotels, licenced premises, the police and transport providers.

The consultation feedback indicated that:

- 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.
- The principal feedback from the trade was comments regarding the number of out of area licensed vehicles working in the area.
- Some hackney carriage drivers obtain a substantial proportion of hires through pre-booked hires, in addition to hires from ranks.

Observations

The proportion of the fleet which operated from the ranks during the survey period, was relatively low. Much of the fleet works away from the ranks and undertakes pre-booked hires for much of the time. The level of demand from ranks is not sufficient to sustain all Hackney Carriages in the fleet on purely rank based hires. Consequently there is an effective surplus of Hackney Carriages in the fleet, when we consider what is necessary to service rank based demand alone.

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 0.3. 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.