Calderdale Council

Hackney Carriage demand survey

July 2017

Executive Summary

This Hackney Carriage demand survey has been undertaken on behalf of Calderdale Council following the guidance of the April 2010 DfT Best Practice Guidance document, and all relevant case history in regard to unmet demand. This Executive Summary draws from the report the key information needed to help councillors determine their views about what the body of evidence suggests in regard to the existence of unmet demand and its significance in Calderdale at this point in time, and therefore what they are able to decide in terms of the current policy limiting the number of hackney carriage vehicles in the central Halifax zone.

This current study was undertaken between March and July 2017 including on-street pedestrian interviews, rank observations, key stakeholder consultation, trade consultation and review of the significance of any observed unmet demand using the industry standard tool available. This study is undertaken in the context of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority Transport Strategy which supports licensed vehicles with two specific policies to improve taxi facilities, environmental performance and enhanced customer experience.

The recent experience of the area in terms of demand for vehicles has been dominated by the impact of national changes compounded by the existence of the multi zone hackney carriage system. However, the current situation for hackney carriages in Halifax is that they must all be wheel chair accessible, to a relatively wide range of specifications, including rear loaders, as well as being limited in number. No such limits apply to the other zones. Local fares are the second highest across the Combined authority, and above the present average for the authority, although this still leaves the Authority 193rd equal out of the 366 Great British fare setting authorities at this time.

Rank observations, similar to those of the previous survey, found 89% of all plates available active on the busiest day. Abuse of ranks by other vehicles was relatively low apart from near to George Square rank. Five people used wheel chairs to access ranks in the area, with seven others appearing to have some form of disability that could be observed.

The 156 hours of observation found George Square remains the busiest rank although it has lost passengers and market share since the last estimated values in 2010. The station rank has gained passengers and market share and tends to be busiest in the evening peak. Both Waterhouse Street and the

Theatre rank have increased usage but the overall picture is an estimated loss of 30% in patronage at ranks since 2010.

No usage was found of any of the ranks identified and observed in the outer areas. This implies that most hackney carriages working in those areas exist either to allow them to undertake hailings, or to avoid the need for the individual to have an operators license. However, some did say they might use ranks were they located in the appropriate places.

People in the streets said they made fairly high use of licensed vehicles (63%), about 2.2 trips per person, but reduced to just 0.3 for hackney carriage specific usage. Rank usage was quoted at 20% by respondents.

There is a high level of competition in the area and only moderate brand loyalty to specific private hire operators. The livery means most people are aware of hackney carriages, but a high 72% could not remember when they last used one. Rank knowledge was good, but 74% said they did not use them. George Street was low down the places people knew about.

Apparent need for disabled accessible vehicles was relatively high, with an equal split between needing WAV and other adaptations. 51% of those responding to the question felt people with disabilities got a good service from hackney carriages. Latent demand was very low at just 0.4%.

Key stakeholders mainly used private hire services, with only a few aware directly of customers using ranks. Ranks were most appreciated by the night economy representatives spoken to.

Trade response was high at 22%. They demonstrated a moderate working week of 41 hours and five days. Responses came from the outer zones as well as the Halifax zone, with those in Halifax getting most of their work directly from the ranks. The limit received a 100% support for retention.

There is unmet demand, but it is a very long way from being counted as significant either by the formal index or from any other sources such as the latent demand factor and other consultees. The index has reacted to reduced demand with suggestions that levels of service are improved now. The private station rank seems to be influenced negatively in service terms by its growth in usage and additional restriction on those able to use it.

Hackney carriages in Halifax are appreciated but relatively little used. A key issue is the main used rank does not appear to be highest in public awareness and also suffers from abuse by other vehicles even though part of it is unique to hackney carriages.

People are not, as in most other areas, suggesting fares are particularly high or a restraint on hackney carriage usage, but on balance a wider review of the fare structure and context would seem more appropriate than any small rise at this time.

The lack of existence of any unmet demand which is significant allows the council to continue its present policy of limiting vehicle numbers in the Halifax zone if it so chooses, and that decision would be defensible if challenged.

Outer zone hackney carriages do not use ranks that exist, although some of those responding suggested better locations might be used, although this was not replicated by passenger suggestion although much more detailed work would be needed in each area to clarify this in detail. It is more likely the low level of demand may never substantiate active ranks.

Other suggestions for development of hackney carriages are provided in the main final chapter.

Contents

1 General introduction and background

Calderdale 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 retains a limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicles licensed. This is the only part of licensing where such a stipulation occurs, 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. DfT sources do not suggest when the limit began, but given the zoning system it must be at least back as far as the local government reorganisation in 1972. Prior to this survey, previous tests of the validity of the limit and its level were undertaken in 2010, by the current taxi expert writing this Report.

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

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

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

The upshot of all these reviews in respect of the principal subject of this survey is that local authorities retain the right to restrict the number of hackney carriage vehicle licenses. The Law Commission 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 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), the two clauses of the Deregulation Act which were successful in proceeding, relating to length of period each license covers and to allowing operators to transfer work across borders (enacted in October 2015), and most recently enactment of Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act, albeit on a permissive basis (see below).

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

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

This was enacted from April 2017. There remains no confirmation of any timetable for instigating either the remainder of the Equality Act or the Law Commission recommendations, or for the update of the BPG.

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

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

In general, the determination of conclusions about significance of unmet demand must take into account the practicability of improving the standard of service through the increase of supply of vehicles. It is also important to have consistent treatment of authorities as well as for the same authority over time.

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

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

2 Local background and context

Key dates for this Hackney Carriage demand survey for Calderdale are:

- appointed CTS Traffic and Transportation on 22nd February 2017
- in accordance with our proposal of February 2017
- as confirmed during the inception meeting for the survey held by telephone in early March 2017
- this survey was carried out between March and July
- On street pedestrian survey work occurred in April 2017
- the video rank observations occurred in late March 2017
- Licensed vehicle driver opinions and operating practices were obtained by a letter and questionnaire issued by the council and due for return by mid-July 2017
- Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the period of the survey
- A draft of this Final Report was reviewed by the client during June 2017
- and reported to the Council Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 7 August 2017.

Calderdale is a metropolitan borough council. The authority has a current population of 211,800 using the 2017 estimates currently available from the 2011 census. In terms of background council policy, Calderdale is a unitary authority but part of the former West Yorkshire county area. However, the Local Transport Plan (LTP) for the area is the West Yorkshire LTP, adopted on 1st April 2011 and valid up to 2026, and known as 'My Journey West Yorkshire'. The LTP is supported by the daughter document 'Calderdale District Implementation Plan' (2011-2014).

Work is currently under way on the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) Transport Strategy which will be a 20-year vision updating the LTP (2016 to 2036). This has been through consultation and the current summary document is the 'Transport Strategy Transport Committee Report' of 24th February 2017. The accompanying Leeds City Region Metro Study was completed during 2016 and considered by the Transport Committee on 21st April 2017.

The Strategy document identifies that 1% of travel to work in West Yorkshire is by taxi, the same level as by bicycle or motorcycle, and a quarter of the level undertaken by train (4%). Policy RN5 seeks 'to work with the taxi trade to improve taxi facilities and environmental performance. Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are a valuable part of our transport system, providing more choice for whole or part journeys. Taxis also provide a valuable service for those people with a disability or mobility impairment. We want to enhance this offer'

'We will provide enhanced taxi ranks at appropriate key transport hubs, work with the taxi trades to strengthen safeguarding protection for vulnerable users, to achieve a greater take up of low emission electric taxis, working with the Governments Ultra Low Emission Vehicle programme and accelerating the provision of recharging facilities at transport hubs, car parks and on the highway network'.

A further policy including licensed vehicles is SF2 'deliver mobility as a service for an enhanced customer experience. This would provide a mobility account enabling people to use licensed vehicles as part of their mode mix where appropriate'.

The Transport Strategy consultation included various questionnaires, including one of what mode of transport people used, and how often. 1,596 people responded. Of these, 1471 answered the question about frequency of use of taxis. None said they used taxis four or more days per week, 78% said they used them three or less days and 22% said they never used them. This compared to 20% not driving cars, 11% never using buses and 11% never using cars as a passenger. 9% said they had a particular interest in taxis.

People were also asked if they supported specific policies. 54% said they would support policy RN5, improvement of taxi facilities and their environmental impact, although this was amongst the lowest support for any of the proposed policies.

The present vision is the 'LCR Metro' a way by which connectivity will be provided between the principal towns, cities and transport hubs across the City Region. It is not a mode of transport or a brand. It focusses on quality, frequent, reliable, resilient, integrated transport from all modes. However, its focus is on higher capacity transport and as such currently ignores licensed vehicles (and many other modes such as cycling and walking).

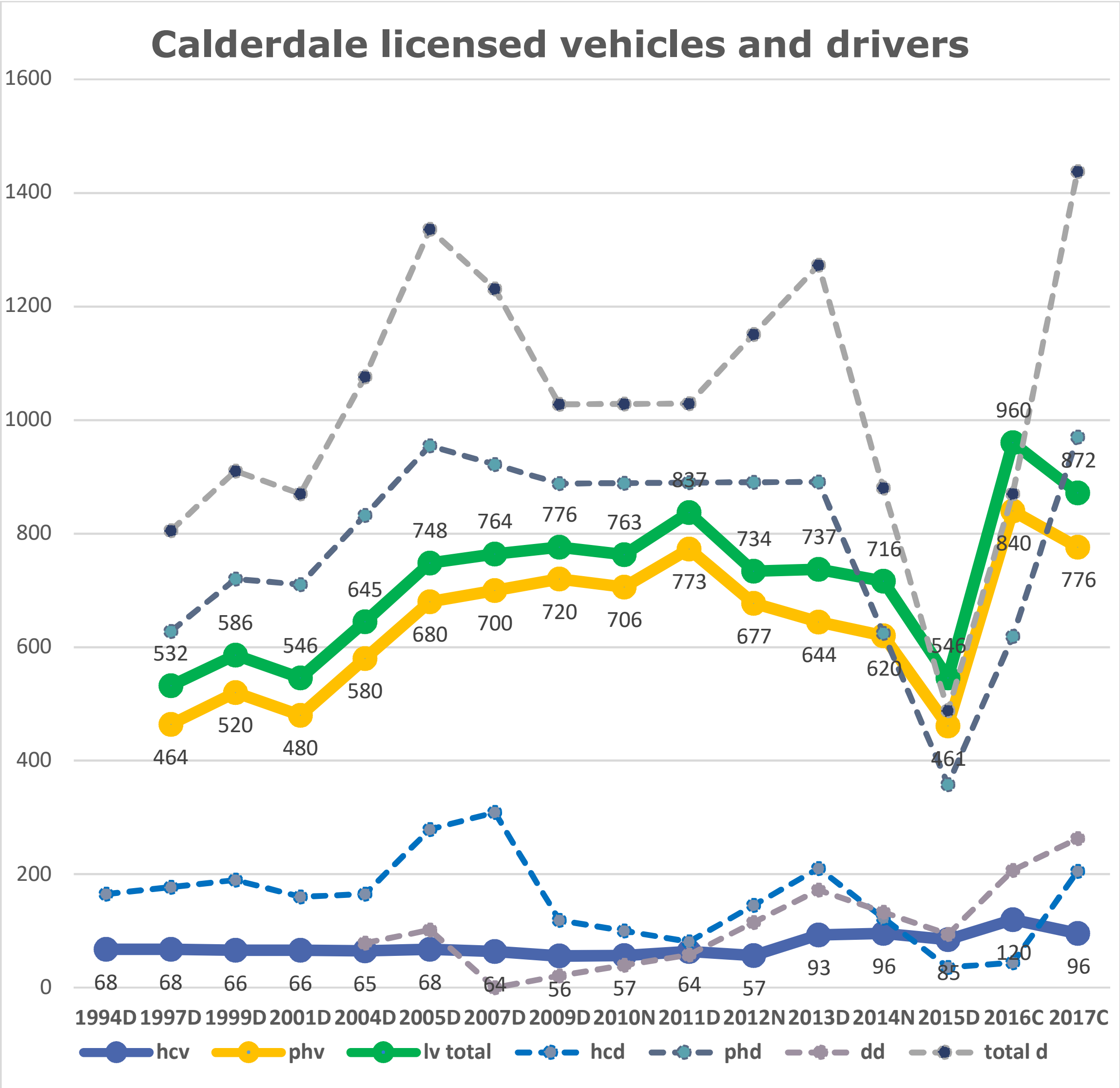
June 2016 saw the publication of the Calderdale Local Plan Transport Evidence, Technical Note 1: Future network baseline. This document supports the emerging Local Plan for the area. However, there is no information regarding hackney carriage or private hire as they were treated as private transport throughout.

There is also a document, Calderdale Transport Strategy, 2016-2031. Again this document follows the lead of earlier documents including hackney carriage and private hire within the car mode.

The nature of the authority means that rank provision is directly under the control of the authority itself, but within a separate highway element.

All licensing authorities have full powers over licensing the vehicles, drivers and operators serving people within their area. Calderdale has chosen to utilize its power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers, and as far as we are aware has done so since at least 1994. The area is also one of the few remaining in the country (alongside Wakefield, Sunderland, Bath and Cornwall) to have hackney carriage zones. Only the Halifax zone currently has a limit on vehicle numbers, although the outer zones have in the past had similar limits.

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



Licensing Statistics from 1994 to date

The graph demonstrates a number of changes in policy regarding hackney carriage and private hire relatively clearly, although some of the complexities of the situation cannot be shown readily. Hackney carriage numbers remained steady until relaxation of the restrictions on the outer zone vehicles at some point after the last survey. Until then private hire vehicle numbers had been steadily increasing, seeing a 66% increase by the peak in 2011. After this, there appears to be some transfer of private hire to outer area hackney carriage, seeing overall hackney carriage numbers increase to about 71% more than the lowest level recorded. Over the recent years, changes to national legislation and conditions both in Calderdale and other licensing areas has seen wide variation in vehicle and driver numbers. Hackney carriage numbers rose to a peak of 120 in 2016 alongside a peak of some 840 private hire vehicles, but both numbers have now dropped back with further revision of policies in Calderdale, particularly an intended use policy.

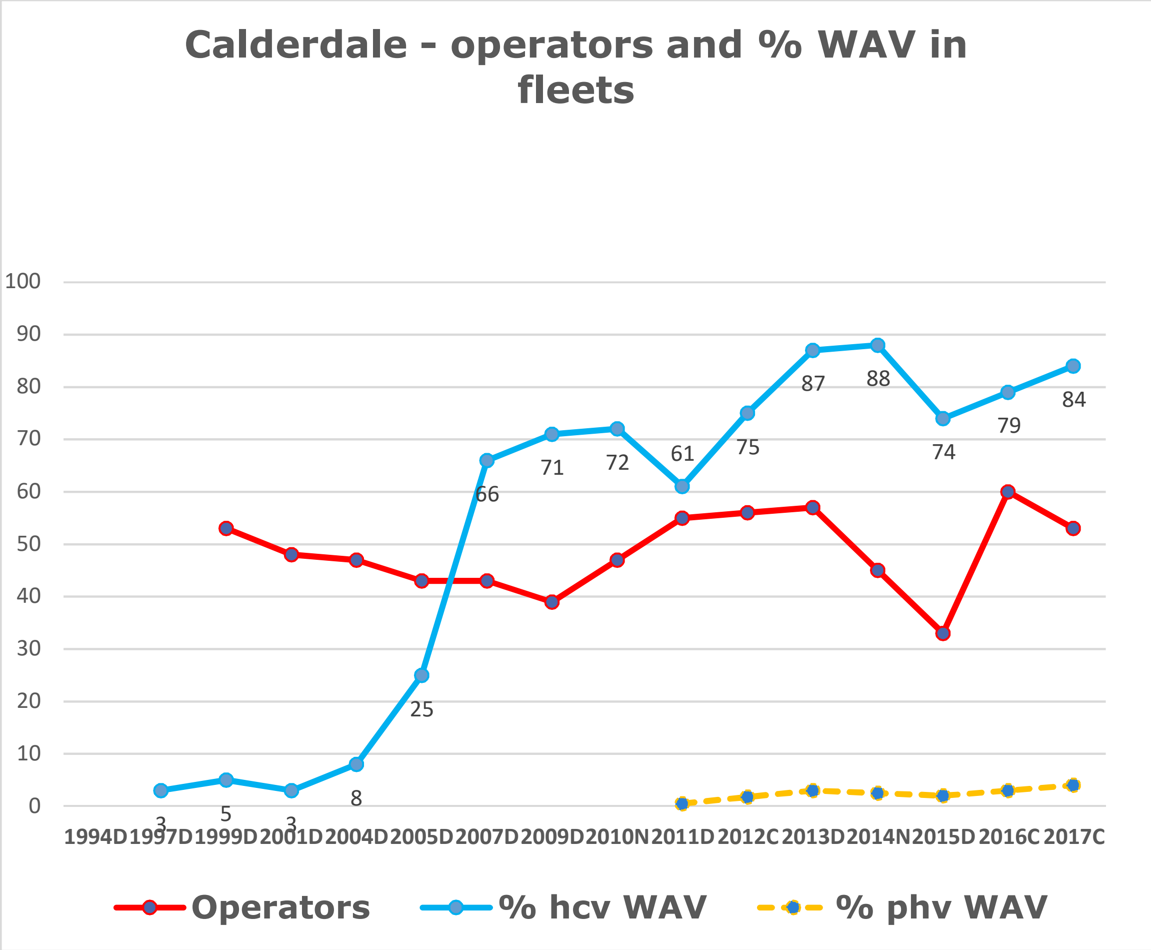
Driver numbers have followed a similar pattern, although the recent decline in vehicle numbers has not yet been matched by a fall in driver numbers, possibly related to the length of time these licences are now valid for. There has also been strong take-up of dual driver licences although this has not seemed to be taken from either single licence, with the gap between vehicle and driver numbers now quite significant.

The figures however mask the zone complexity of the hackney carriage vehicle numbers. The Halifax hackney carriage zone remains limited to 37 vehicles, all of which must be fully wheel chair accessible. The area currently has a further five zones, all related to the former authority boundaries from 1974. Current vehicle numbers are (2010 values in brackets):

Sowerby Bridge – 37 (2)
Brighouse – 11 (5)
Elland – 7 (3)
Hebden Bridge – 2 (5)
Todmorden – 2 (2)
Ripponden and Hepton (2)
Shelf (1)

These figures demonstrate that the larger centres have seen the main growth in hackney carriage vehicle numbers, with only Todmorden seeing no overall change in numbers from 2010 to now. The smaller zones have either lost all their hackney carriages or lost some numbers. There are two ranks in Todmorden and one in Sowerby Bridge, but none known elsewhere.

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 graph shows a general and steady increase in levels of WAV in the hackney carriage fleet, although dominated by the fully WAV policy for the Halifax zone. There are also a steadily growing but small number of WAV in the private hire fleets. Operator numbers have shown a gentle increase since 2009 but more fluctuation in recent years, with the present level slightly down on the peak.

Calderdale undertakes regular review of its policy to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers in line with the BPG. The previous survey was in 2010 and focussed on the Halifax zone, where there are most ranks and the only limited number fleet. However, with the recent changes, the known ranks in the remainder of the area were also covered by this survey (see Chapter 3).

Fares

The latest fare increase took effect from 12th July 2016. Using the National Private Hire and Taxi Monthly league table from July 2016, their estimated value for two miles at tariff 1 of £5-60 places Calderdale 193rd equal with 25 other authorities (196th in numerical order) out of the 366 fare setting authorities in Great Britain. For the West Yorkshire authorities, Calderdale has the second highest fares, behind Leeds (£6-20), but more than Bradford (£5-36), Kirklees (£5-00) and Wakefield (£4-60). The overall average for West Yorkshire is £5-35 (Calderdale fares are about 5% above this).

The other authorities on this level of fare at July 2017 were Boston, Breckland, Broxbourne, Forest Heath, Gosport, Hinckley and Bosworth, North Kesteven, North Tyneside, North West Leicestershire, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Rushcliffe, Sandwell, South Buckinghamshire, Suffolk Coastal, Tameside, Wirral, Wolverhampton, Wrexham and Wyre, plus Newport in Wales and Edinburgh, Orkney, Renfrewshire and West Lothian in Scotland. Wirral and Sandwell are similar metropolitan authorities with multi centres but many of the others are from the south of the country, where fares tend to be higher.

The March 2017 Licensing and Regulatory Committee determined that the issue of the 2017 fare rise, which was due to start from July 2017, should be considered as part of this study. The proposed increase on the table was an additional 4p on the 'drop' element of the fare. With no other changes this would move the average two mile fare up to £5-64. With no other changes assumed in the 2017 July PHTM table, this would make Calderdale a unique 193rd in the table. However, the overall change is marginal given it is only on the 'drop' element of the fare.

3 Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)

As already recorded in Chapter 2, control of provision of on-street ranks in Calderdale is under the council's full control, albeit in the highways section of the authority. Appendix 2 provides a list of ranks in Calderdale 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 demand survey and at the study inception meeting, together with site visits where considered necessary. This provides a valid and appropriate sample of rank coverage which is important to feed the numeric evaluation of the level of unmet demand, and its significance (see discussion in Chapter 7). There were no changes in provision of ranks since the previous survey in 2010. This survey has, however, also included observations at two ranks in Todmorden and one in Sowerby Bridge. The detailed specification of the hours included in the sample is provided in Appendix 3.

Plate activity levels

A sample of eight hours of plate activity were undertaken on the Saturday of the rank survey. This was to identify how many plates were active at different times of this day meeting the demand observed. A total of 261 observations were made of the Halifax zone plates (1-37). Seven different sets of observations were undertaken, for between one and 2.5 hours each session.

During the course of the sample, 89% of the plates were observed, a high level of activity. However, the level of activity near to each rank varied from 46% up to 81%. 31% of the plates were seen in four of the sets, 24% in six, 21% in five, 15% in three, 6% in two and just one vehicle (3%) was seen in all seven observation sets. This again suggests high levels of activity and no specific preferences for rank used.

The period seeing most plates, 81% of the fleet, was the period over midnight near George Square (although this was the longest set at 2.5 hours). The location / time with the least vehicles was the early evening period at Halifax station (46%). The later observation at the station in the 1.5 hours up to 23:00 saw 57% of all plates whilst the hour at George Square from 20:00 to 21:00 saw 51%. The last 1.5 hours, ending at 04:00 saw 65% of plates.

All these statistics show a highly active set of vehicles, but still leaving a small number not observed on the busiest day. Further discussion of this in context of the rank results occurs in the synthesis section below.

Overall rank observations

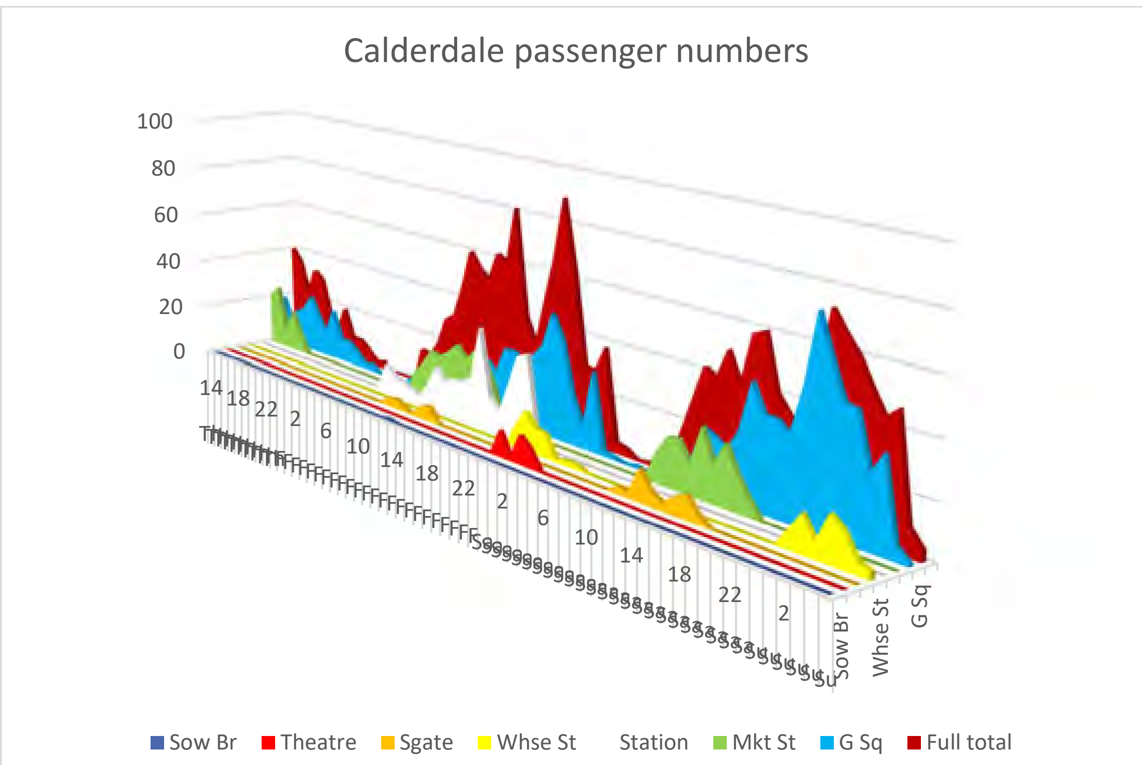
During the course of our rank observations, we recorded some 5,533 total arrivals and departures of vehicles at or near the ranks recorded. 20% of these movements were private cars, most of which were at George Square. 2% of movements were related to goods vehicles, again the bulk of which were at George Square. 5% were private hire vehicles, again mainly at or near George Square. The remaining 73% of vehicle movements observed were hackney carriages.

No hackney carriages were observed at all near either rank in Todmorden. A handful of private hire were observed near one of the ranks. Sowerby Bridge saw more active hackney carriage vehicles, but also a slightly higher number of private hire active.

In terms of passengers, a total of five people were observed accessing hackney carriages at ranks in wheel chairs, three at George Square and two at Market Street. Seven other people appeared to be disabled, with two at George Square, four at Market Street and one at Southgate during our survey.

Overview of rank activity

All actual observations were reviewed and are shown in the graph below.



The graph shows George Square as the main active rank, although its main activity tends to be from mid-afternoon to the early hours. More activity occurs in the earlier hours at Market Street but this then becomes quiet.

The station rank is also busiest in the evening peak, and then later on for arrivals back from other locations, or arrivals in to Halifax. Waterhouse Street and the Theatre rank see usage late at night, with Southgate seeing moderate levels of daytime activity.

Review of the profile suggests that the overall demand levels are relatively similar between Friday and Saturday and generally lower for the Thursday. However, there is no clear peak and the overall demand profile for the purposes of estimation of unmet demand is not overly peaked.

Average weekly flows

The individual days of observation were then used to produce average weekly estimates of demand to set each rank in the overall context of demand in Halifax. The table below shows ranks with the busiest in passenger terms first. It also provides comparison to the 2010 information. The Todmorden and Sowerby Bridge observations are not included below, but are referred to within the detailed review section below.

Location	2017		2010	
	Passengers	%	Passengers	%
George Square	2,008	37	4,858	62
Station	1,866	35	908	12
Market Street	940	17	1,620	21
Waterhouse St	286	5	11	0.0
Southgate	174	3	304	4
Theatre	116	2	48	1
Total	***5,390***		***7,749***	
Change from 2010	***-30%***			

Our estimates suggest that George Square and the station both have just over a third of the total passengers in a typical week each, with George Square marginally the busiest location. Market Street takes just over a further sixth of demand, with Waterhouse Street 5%, Southgate 3% and the Theatre around 2%. All Halifax ranks surveyed were used at some point and all provide some contribution to overall demand.

Compared to 2010, demand for hackney carriages observed at ranks is down by some 30%. However, within this there are some significant changes. The Station rank has doubled in passenger numbers, and become almost as significant at George Square. Both the Waterhouse Street and Theatre ranks have both shown increase in both passenger numbers and share of the total demand. Both George Square and Southgate ranks have, however, seen passenger numbers about halved, accounting for much of the reduced overall demand.

Individual rank operation

The following paragraphs cover each rank in descending order of average weekly usage, by day. For each location, discussion occurs about overall passenger flows, passenger and vehicle waiting times, and any other operational issues identified. Full details of results are in Appendix 4.

George Square

This rank is located in George Square and is a separate paved area capable of taking around five vehicles. The rank has bollards either side and no passing lane, although the length is not very long. Given the paved area around, entry can be safely from either driver or passenger sides. The rank is fed by a section of rank in Commercial Street. From the front of the feeder, the rear of the main rank is visible. However, other traffic also has access to the road between which could cause delays feeding to the main rank. Exit from the rank is also close to a bus stop and another street which could cause interference for vehicles leaving.

The rank was observed from 14:00 on Thursday 23rd March 2017 through to 05:59 on Sunday 26th March 2017.

Thursday observations

During the Thursday, 157 people left this rank in 106 vehicles, a moderate occupancy of 1.5 per vehicle. 18% of vehicles arriving left without taking passengers. During this day, no passenger ever arrived without a vehicle being there for immediate hire.

Passenger flows were between two and 23, with the peak flow in the 18:00 hour. From the 22:00 hour onwards, there were never more than nine passengers in any hour, and the rank saw no passengers in the 03:00, 04:00 or 05:00 hours, although the first two of these hours did see some vehicles pass by.

Vehicle waits for passengers were ten to 20 minutes in daytime hours, but up to 22 to 40 from the 19:00 hour onwards.

Friday observations

During Friday, a full day of observations, 407 people used the rank, leaving in some 269 vehicles, the same high occupancy of 1.5 people per vehicle. A lower 13% left the rank without passengers. During this day one person arrived when there was no vehicle available, but only waited a minute.

Apart from the 06:00 hour, every hour saw some passengers. For the first five hours, flows were between three and nine. They then rose to between nine and 21 during daytime office hours. From the 18:00 hour onwards there were between 18 and 47, with the peak flow in the 23:00 hour. There was a higher flow of 30 in the 03:00 hour, but otherwise night flows were relatively low, but there were also more vehicles using the rank during this night.

Vehicle waits for fares were very variable, with some quite long waits in some hours, although only one vehicles was recorded with a wait over an hour.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday, again covering a full day of operation, 591 people left the rank in 381 vehicles, a slightly higher, but still moderate occupancy of 1.6 per vehicle. An even lower 10% left the area without passengers. No passenger ever arrived and had to wait for a vehicle to be there to take them away immediately.

There were passengers in every hour apart from the 06:00 and 08:00, although flows were between one and 11 up to the 12:00 hour. They were then between 18 and 26 for the next four hours. Between the 17:00 hour and the 21:00 flows were higher at 34 to 47. The peak hour was 23:00 with 59 passengers after which flows reduced, with just five and one respectively in the 04:00 and 05:00 hours.

From the 10:00 hour onwards, average waits by vehicles were relatively low, between eight and 18 minutes, until the midnight hour when they tended to get longer.

Summary

Overall service to this rank is **good**.

Halifax Station (Private)

This rank is located on the main access road to Halifax station. Other parking is allowed nearby the rank, with a drop off point behind. This location provides waiting for two to three vehicles. There is little other space for feeding vehicles to the rank. Entry to vehicles is from the passenger side.

On the Friday observed, 261 people left the rank in 197 hackney carriages, a low occupancy of 1.3 per vehicle. Just 8% left the rank without passengers. Eight people arrived and had to wait for a vehicle to hire. In the 15:00 hour there was one wait of six minutes, but other waits were two minutes or less. Over all passengers, the typical wait was just six seconds.

Passenger levels were between three and 11 in the hours up to and including the 12:00 hour. They were then between 12 and 17 to the 17:00 hour. The 18:00 hour saw a peak of 38 passengers, after which flows returned to the level of eight to 12. The last three hours saw higher flows, with 20, 32 and 34 in each of these hours consecutively.

Vehicle waits for passengers were four to 28 minutes, but longer than this in the 19:00 and 20:00 hours. We did see several vehicles wait over 50 minutes at times for fares.

Service to this rank was **fair**.

Market Street

This rank is located directly outside the Tesco Metro in Market Street. The rank takes five vehicles and is in a parking bay on the right hand side of the one way road. This means passengers must enter from the driver side, although there is limited traffic along the street, there could be safety concerns with any loading from the passenger side.

Thursday observations

The Thursday saw 76 people leave the rank in 61 vehicles, a very low occupancy of 1.2 per vehicle. A very small 3% of vehicles left the rank without passengers. One person arrived and had to wait for a minute for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger flows varied between six and 25, with the busiest hour the 15:00 hour. Vehicle waits were not long, four to nine minutes, apart from in the quietest hour when the average wait was nearly 25 minutes.

Friday observations

On the Friday, 196 people left the rank in 164 vehicles, a similar very low occupancy of 1.2 per vehicle. Just 2% left without passengers, and no passenger ever arrived to an empty rank.

Passenger flows occurred in every observed hour, but were low, ranging from nine to 26, with two peaks in the 14:00 and 16:00 hours. Vehicle waits were low, ranging from five to 12 minutes, generally longer in the afternoon than the morning.

Saturday observations
The Saturday observations found 141 people leaving the rank in 100 different vehicle movements. This was a slightly higher, but still low occupancy of 1.3 persons per vehicle. Again, only 2% left without passengers. One person arrived and had to wait a minute for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger flows were between 11 and 26, apart from just six in the last hour observed, 18:00. The peak was in the 14:00 hour. Vehicle waits tended to be longer, with some up to 34 minutes in the afternoon.

Summary
Overall service to this rank is **good**.

Waterhouse Street
This rank operates from 23:00 to 05:00 and provides two spaces. However, these are on the opposite side of the road from the Acapulco Club, but this does allow entry to the vehicles from the passenger side. There is quite a lot of other traffic passing by which would make driver side entry difficult.

Friday observations
On the Friday, 47 people used the rank, leaving in 33 vehicles, a low occupancy of 1.4 per vehicle. 71% of all vehicles arriving left without taking a fare. No passenger ever had to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger flows were eight to 15 from the 23:00 hour until the 02:00 hour. There were passengers in the next three hours, but no more than one or two per hour. Vehicle waiting times were three to 10 minutes.

Saturday observations
The Saturday observations identified 65 people leaving the rank in 42 different hackney carriage movements. This was a moderate occupancy of 1.5 per vehicle, although 77% of vehicles arriving left without a passenger. No passenger ever arrived not to find a vehicle available for immediate hire.

Passenger flows were between three and 17, with the peak in the 02:00 hour. Vehicles tended to wait three to seven minutes, but longer in the last two hours observed when flows were much lower. The longest vehicle wait was 24 minutes.

Summary
Service to this rank is **good**.

Southgate

Southgate rank has space for around six vehicles. The road is effectively a shared surface and one way from the central area. Loading would be from the driver side of the vehicle although passenger side loading would be relatively safe given the generally lower speeds arising from the road layout here.

Friday observations

On the Friday, 20 people used the rank, leaving in 17 hackney carriages, a very low occupancy of 1.2 per vehicle. No passenger ever arrived when there was no vehicle immediately available, but 81% of arriving vehicles left without passengers, a very high level.

The rank did not see passengers in every observed hour. Flows were between two and six, with the peak in the 15:00 hour. Morning flows tended to be lower than afternoon ones. Vehicle waiting times varied but the longest observed wait was 28 minutes.

Saturday observations

The Saturday saw a higher level of 44 people leaving this rank in 32 vehicles, but still a low occupancy of 1.4 per vehicle. Again, a high level of vehicles left the rank without passengers, some 79% of arrivals. However, there were two hours when people arrived and no vehicles were there to hire. The longest wait was four minutes in the 12:00 hour, with a longest wait of two minutes in the 10:00 hour. A total of eight people had to wait in total, although their average wait time shared over all passengers was still moderate at half a minute.

Passenger flows were between three and nine, apart from a peak of 12 people in the 12:00 hour, which did lead to the worst queueing observed. Vehicle waits for passengers were between one and 15 minutes.

Summary

Overall service to this rank is **fair** although demand is relatively low, and also sporadic at times.

Commercial Street, Theatre

This rank operates from midnight to 05:00 and is otherwise disabled parking spaces. It is directly outside the Theatre exit at the far end of Commercial Street. Loading is from the driver side of the vehicle, which could cause safety issues if passenger side loading is needed, although exit from the area is by traffic light which should slow some traffic movements.

The Friday night observations here found 29 people leaving the rank in 14 vehicles. This was a relatively high occupancy of 2.1 per vehicle, the highest seen in our observations. Passenger flows were variable, with 10 in the midnight hour, one in the 01:00, 11 in the 02:00 and seven in the 03:00. No other hour saw passengers. However, the 23:00 hour (before) and the 04:00 hour (after) there were any passengers, did see vehicles servicing the rank. No passenger arrived without a vehicle being available for immediate hire.

Given that vehicles did arrive in the hour before the rank first saw passengers, and were then there after the rank ceased to see passengers, Some vehicles had long waits, with one waiting nearly an hour to get a fare. Other waits were lower, but many hours saw waits between 12 and 18 minutes. Overall service to this rank is **good**

Todmorden ranks

Two ranks were identified in Todmorden. One is a single space on the railway side of Station Approach, adjacent to a bus stop. It is well marked and signed and opposite car parking for the station.

The other rank is located in the central area alongside the Central Methodist Church on School Lane. There is a usual traffic management sign as well as a blue plate identifying it for two hackney carriages, but road markings are completely worn out (as it the road surface). A lot of car parking is located nearby.

Both would see entry from the passenger side of the vehicle, although the nature of nearby roads should not preclude driver side entry if needed. Both were observed from 09:00 on Friday 24th March 2017 from 09:00 through to 20:59 that evening.

During the full period of observation, no vehicles or passengers were observed using these two rank locations.

Sowerby Bridge rank

This rank is located on Tower Hill, Sowerby Bridge, very close to the main through road. Entry would be from the passenger side. It is over the road from a private hire booking office, which has very little if any parking nearby, with a significant level of double yellow line markings in this area near to the junction with the main road. It was observed from 09:00 on Friday 24th March 2017 from 09:00 through to 20:59 that evening.

During our observations, just one passenger used one hackney carriage from this rank. This was in the 13:00 hour. Other hackney carriages were observed waiting in the 09:00, 10:00 and 12:00 hours, but left without a fare.

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, 201 people were interviewed in the streets of central Halifax. These were undertaken one Thursday in early April 2017 in a range of central streets. Further details of results are in Appendix 5.

63% of those interviewed said they had used a licensed vehicle in the last three months in the area. All said how often they had used a licensed vehicle, with the highest proportion saying they had used them less than once a month (41%). When an estimate was made of trips per person per month, it was estimated there were about 2.2 trips per person per month by licensed vehicles in the area for those interviewed.

People told us how they normally obtained a licensed vehicle in the area. 87% of people responded, but several gave two answers, and five people gave three answers. Of all the responses, 59% were phone bookings, with a further 20% using mobile phones and 1% using Freephones (a total of 80% for booked vehicles). None hailed and the remaining 20% said they got them at ranks. However, there were only five people who only got them at ranks, most responding about use of ranks also used at least one other phone method, with five giving two phone methods.

People were asked which companies they would phone. 84% named at least one company. Of these, 43% named just one, 40% two and 17% named three companies. This suggests a high level of competition in the area.

17 different names were provided, although five were only mentioned once, two just twice and one three times. The area has quite a number of very similar names but we have taken the direct quotes from those interviewed as some are difficult to clarify if they are the same or not. On this basis, the top two quoted gain 15% of the mentions. Two others obtained 14%, one 13% and one 11%, suggesting again high levels of competition but no dominant company (which could change given the names used). Two others obtained 6% and 5% (but these were highly likely to be one or other of the top six), with the remainder obtaining three or less mentions.

One person clearly named Halifax hackney carriages as their choice.

Nearly all respondents told us how often they used a hackney carriage in the area. Just one person said they could not remember seeing a hackney carriage, suggesting the livery is helping people know that vehicles are available and raising awareness to a very high level. However, 72% went on to say they could not remember when they last used a hackney carriage, a very high level of non-use. None said they used hackney carriages daily, and just 2% said once a week. Not surprisingly our estimated number of trips per person per month is low at just 0.3. This level is 14% of the level of usage of all licensed vehicles for those interviewed. This is lower than the level of people telling us they used ranks (20%) although this is explained by the very low level of usage of ranks, even if people say they do use them.

90% of people took time to give names of ranks, and if they used them or not. 3% gave four rank names, 34% three, the most, 41% gave two rank names, and the remainder, 40% gave just one rank. In total, there were 392 different mentions of ranks provided. If these, 74% said that they did not use the rank they had named, and just over a quarter said they did. This shows good knowledge of ranks and their locations, but confirms the low levels of actual usage.

12 different names were provided for ranks. Several were colloquial names, such as 'near theatre'. Only one location could not be linked to an active or existing rank (Union Street). The most known rank was Southgate, with 31% of mentions. Halifax station came second with 21% closely followed by Market Street (with one person calling this Tesco rank). George Square obtained 11% of mentions, and Commercial St 9% including some mention of it as being the Theatre rank. 8% mentioned Waterhouse Street, including reference to this as the Acapulco or nightclubs rank. This shows good knowledge of the central Halifax ranks which are used.

People were asked if they would like to see ranks in any other locations. 56% of people said they did not feel there was any need for any further ranks in Calderdale at all and no-one suggested any new rank locations at all.

Just 10% of those interviewed said they had problems with the hackney carriage service. One person had three problems, four had two and the rest had just one. 41% of responses were driver issues and 33% cleanliness issues. One person had been taken the wrong route, and 19% of the problem was with high fares. However, none of these are at a significant level.

People were asked if they could get a hackney carriage in Calderdale when they needed one. 59% of those interviewed gave at least one answer, of these, 46% answered two of the parts of the question, 11% just answered one and 2% gave two answers. None said they could never get them, and none said they could only get them in Halifax central area.

Of those responding, 48% said they could get them in the day time, 44% said they could get them at night and 8% said if phoned for. This is not a great difference between availability day and night but also suggests relatively low usage of radio circuits by people wanting hackney carriages.

People were asked what might make them use hackney carriages, or use them more often in Calderdale. The response was minimal, just a total of seven responses. Of these, the top encouragement would be better drivers (57%) and the only other one was better vehicles. However, the level of response is not significant.

People were asked if they had a disability meaning they needed an adapted licensed vehicle to travel in. A modest 82% said they did not. This response is usually closer or above 90%, suggesting a relatively high need for disability friendly vehicles in this area. When asked about the type of vehicle there was an equal split between need for WAV style and need for other adaptations.

People were also asked if they felt people with disabilities got a good service from hackney carriage vehicles and their drivers in Calderdale. 48% said they were not sure, but 51% said they felt they did. Just 1% said they felt disabled people did not get a good service, a very low response, and therefore quite a positive one.

Just one person said they had given up waiting for a hackney carriage in Calderdale. This person said they had given up at Tesco, which we assume to be reference to the Market Street rank. This implies a latent demand factor of just 0.4%, very low.

76% had regular access to a car. 93% lived in the area. The sample interviewed more females than in the census (56% compared to 51% in the census for 2017). There was a very marginal over-representation of the younger ages (23% compared to census 21%), balanced by slight under-representation of the middle age group (38% compared to 41% in census), but overall the sample seems to be quite age balanced.

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. Full details are in Appendix 6.

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

Where the statistical analyses in Chapter 2 demonstrate low levels of wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) provision, an increased emphasis will be given to the issue in terms of the focus of stakeholders but also in specific efforts to contact disabled users and their representatives.

Supermarkets

All four supermarkets contacted said their customers used licensed vehicles, but mainly using Freephone provision in the store. Three were unware of any ranks and one named a private hire company as their provision. Three had not received any complaints although one said there were rare occasions when customers complained their vehicle was delayed arriving.

Hotels

Of nine hotels contacted, eight gave response, all saying that their customers did use licensed vehicles. Five said reception would make a booking for customers, two said any staff would call if asked, and one said though staff would call, often customers made their own arrangements. Three were unaware of ranks. Four named private hire companies as being where customers would get vehicles from. Six had received no complaints, whilst one had complaints that vehicles were delayed arriving. One said the rank in the nearby street was noisy, but there does not appear to be a rank there (Horton Street, Railway Hotel).

Public houses

Of the six public houses contacted, five responded, of which one said they did not consider their customers did use licensed vehicles. The other four said that they did. Two of these said customers usually made their own arrangements, whilst two others said they thought this was the case, but would also make arrangements for people if asked. Three were unaware of ranks, one named a private hire company and the other named the George Square rank. Three had received no complaints. One said there were occasional delays whilst another said people told them about delays and inconsistent fares.

Night clubs

Five night clubs were contacted. Three responded and told us that their customers used licensed vehicles. Two said people would make their own arrangements, whilst one said people would use the Commercial Street rank. Another club was aware of the Waterhouse Street rank. None of those responding had received any complaints about the service provided.

Other entertainment venues

Two other entertainment venues told us their customers did use licensed vehicles. One said people made their own arrangements whilst the other said staff would contact on behalf of customers. One named a private hire company as the place people would get vehicles whilst the other named George Square. None had received any complaints from customers about the taxi service received.

Restaurants

Seven restaurants were contacted. Three either refused to respond or were not contactable. Another did not respond despite several attempts to contact them. The three responding all told us their customers did use licensed vehicles. Two said staff would make contact for customers, whilst the third said that customers usually made their own arrangements, but staff would also do so if asked. Two named private hire companies as ranks, with the other saying they were not aware of any rank nearby. All three had not received any complaints at all regarding the service provided.

Other contacts

The Halifax tourist information centre told us they did not get many requests for the services of licensed vehicles. On occasion, they will advise customers or visitors about the nearby ranks at Tesco, Market Street or the Railway Station. More sporadically older people ask them to phone for vehicles, often giving the company to call, or the TIC randomly choose a company on their behalf. They did not think additional marketing materials were necessary. They did not receive any comment, positive or negative about the service, nor did they think people had any confusion about how out of town hackney carriages services differed to the Halifax provision.

The Hebden Bridge tourist information office told us they are next door to a taxi office, so they do not get many walk-in customers seeking a taxi. They get on well with their neighbours and they also received good feedback from customers who have used the service. Some people do email or phone asking for details of a taxi company which they provide. They are unware of licensed vehicle services in any other part of the area.

The local police and hospitals made no response to this consultation.

The local Street Angels representative told us that they felt all seemed well with access to licensed vehicles within the Halifax town centre night economy. They observed more than sufficient vehicles and none of their volunteers has ever suggested anything otherwise.

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6 Trade stakeholder views

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

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

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

In all cases, we believe it is essential we document the method used clearly and measure response levels. For this study, all 90 current hackney carriage proprietors and all 43 current private hire operators were sent a copy of the questionnaire by the Council. Copies of the letter and questionnaire were also made available at the Transport Depot where vehicles are tested. Further, all those sent the letter were encouraged to circulate this to other interested individuals, particularly drivers using their companies or vehicles to carry out their business. The consultation ran through June and half of July 2017.

From the 133 or more letters issued, 29 responded, a very high 22% response rate. All were from hackney carriages although one person said they drove both hackney carriage and private hire at times. However, there were many who just answered a small selection of questions, but they remain valid and welcomed responses.

From those that gave an answer, the average length of service with the Calderdale licensed vehicle trade was high at 17 years, with the highest length of service being 43 years – a significant level of experience.

Of those telling us how many days they worked, 50% said five days, 31% six, 13% three and 6% seven days. No other number of days were quoted.

Average hours worked were 41, with a maximum of 76 quoted. This is a moderate level for the average.

A small number told us matters affecting their choice of shift. Of those responding, 57% said it was family commitments and the remainder that they worked when demand was highest. 92% owned their own vehicle whilst 21% said someone else also drove their own vehicle at some point, suggesting some dual drivers. Three said when their vehicle was used by others, principally mornings and various evenings.

Just 17% were on a radio circuit, though only half of these told us the company, both were private hire companies.

In terms of ranks, 39% of those responding said they serviced all ranks. 13% said the station and a similar level Southgate. 10% said George Square, 9% said Market Street or Tesco, and 3% each said Commercial Street and Waterhouse Street. 6% said they serviced Sowerby Bridge rank and 3% the Brighouse town rank.

Issues with ranks were mainly that there were too few ranks or spaces (40%), their locations (20%) and public parking on them (20%). The final 10% said there were issues with accessing for those with wheel chairs.

Of those responding, 88% got their main fares from rank pick-ups, with 12% from phone bookings. These three respondents were in fact those from Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge who made specific points that more ranks were needed in those locations which would allow them to operate as hackney carriages there.

All agreed that the limit policy was relevant and should remain. Of those telling us how this benefitted the public, 44% said it meant cars were always available at ranks, 19% said it meant the number of vehicles was certain, 19% said it helped ensure vehicles were clean and safe, 13% said it reduced issues with safety concerns and 6% said they felt it reduced pollution and congestion.

Many other comments were made. Many pointed out the large number of private hire office, many near to ranks, which they felt took trade. Another confirmed the station only sees a restricted number of vehicles due to the need for an additional permit there. Many said they were aware of continuing falling demand.

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 this survey, we first estimated the index components excluding the private station rank, where supplementary requirements not controllable by the council apply. Figures in brackets relate to all data including the station:

Off peak hours with delay – 5.26% (8.7%)
Proportion of passengers travelling in hours with over 1-minute average delay – 0.85% (1.47%)
Peakiness factor – 1.0 in both cases
Seasonality factor – 1.0 in both cases
Latent demand – 1.004 in both cases

This produces an ISUD value of 0.075 without the station and 0.428 with. Both values are well below the accepted cut-off value of 80 that would suggest the observed unmet demand was significant according to Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act. This confirms that the Halifax zone has unmet demand, but at very low levels, and a long way from being significant. This provides the option of retaining the limit and being able to defend this if necessary. Further discussion of this occurs in the synthesis chapter.

Review of the component values of the index show overall very low levels of unmet demand, with more focus on gaps in the off-peak hours rather than overall queueing per se. There is also evidence that the station rank tends to see less good service than the other ranks, which may also relate to the low number of feeder spaces available there as well as the recent increases in demand. Again, further discussion of this occurs in the synthesis section below.

8 Summary, synthesis and study conclusions

This Hackney Carriage demand survey on behalf of Calderdale has been undertaken following the guidance of the BPG and other recent case history regarding unmet demand and its significance. This chapter first summarises each of the preceding chapters, provides a synthesis of how the different elements of data draw together and complement each other, and then provides study conclusions.

Background and context

Our study was carried out between March and July 2017 and included on-street pedestrian interviews, rank observations, canvassing of opinions of key stakeholders and all those involved in the licensed vehicle trade, and a review of the significance of any observed unmet demand using the industry standard ISUD tool.

Calderdale is a unitary metropolitan authority within the West Yorkshire Combined Authority, which has an overarching Transport Strategy defining the value of hackney carriage and private hire services and confirming policy RN5 which seeks to work with the taxi trade to improve taxi facilities and environmental performance. Policy SF2 focusses on an enhanced customer experience for those with mobility issues.

Nationally available statistics, supplemented by recent information from the Council, shows that the steady increase of private hire vehicles to 2011 was replaced from then by some transfer of private hire to outer area hackney carriage vehicles when the limits on the outer zones were removed. More recent years have seen greater fluctuation of numbers as vehicles and drivers moved between authorities dependent on standards required, with Calderdale first gaining vehicles to a peak in 2016, followed by a reduction after the introduction of an intended use policy. The Sowerby Bridge zone gained the most vehicles, with a rise from two to 37. There is a single rank in Sowerby Bridge, although it is near to a private hire booking office. Driver numbers have also reduced but not as quickly as vehicle numbers have.

The area remains zoned, but only the Halifax zone retains a limit and a requirement that all hackney carriage vehicles in that zone must be fully wheel chair accessible (WAV). However, the range of vehicles allowed as WAV is broad and specifically includes rear entry vehicles. With previous regulations regarding outer zone vehicle types, the level of WAV over the whole fleet is high, at 84%, but the Halifax zone is 100% WAV. There are a small amount of WAV in the private hire fleet.

Local fares of an estimated £5-60 for a two mile tariff 1 fare place Calderdale 193rd equal of 366 Great Britain fare setting authorities. Calderdale currently has second highest fares in West Yorkshire, with only Leeds higher at £6-20. The present fare is 5% above the average of £5-35 for the Combined Authority.

The proposed July 2017 annual fare rise was estimated at an extra 4p on the drop element of the fare (only). This would only place Calderdale as a unique 193rd in the league table. However, on balance such a small change would not appear to be of any great value at this time and a more significant discussion and review between now and the next expected change would be much more beneficial. Further comments are made in the synthesis section.

Rank observations

Observations of vehicle and passenger activity at ranks this time included that at the outer area known ranks, as well as covering a sample of plate activity levels on the Saturday of the rank observations. These observations only covered the Halifax zone, and found 89% of all plates active on that day. No specific preference was found for particular ranks by vehicles. The busiest time period saw 81% of plates active (over midnight). Our later observations still found 65% of plates out servicing demand. This suggests a fleet reacting to demand very well, but not to the point that there was any 'playing up' to the survey, with a small element of spare capacity available in the fleet.

Generally, abuse of ranks was quite low, although the situation around the George Square rank did see a high level of interference of operation by private cars, private hire and goods vehicles, partly arising from the way the protected rank spaces interact with the remaining road space, and issues with the feeder rank tending to be abused.

During the observations, five people used wheel chairs to access hackney carriages at both George Square and Market Street ranks, with seven others appearing to be disabled.

In total, some 156 hours were observed over the full set of ranks, covering relevant operational hours. Results show that George Square remains the busiest rank, operating from mid-day to the early hours, but has lost passengers and market share since 2010. On the contrary, the station rank has gained both passengers and market share, but tends to be busiest in the evening peak. It is almost used as much as George Square over a typical week. Other ranks seeing increased usage are Waterhouse Street, which was hardly used in 2010 but now sees 5% of the estimated weekly usage and the Theatre rank, which saw 2% in this survey.

The overall picture is an estimated 30% drop in demand since 2010. However, this is spread over all available ranks in the zone, and all clearly contribute their own specific part of the overall requirement. Detailed reviews of each rank found service provided being between fair and good, with many cases of long waits by vehicles to gain customers.

Compared to the good usage of ranks by passengers and vehicles in the Halifax zone, the three outer ranks observed saw effectively no hackney carriage nor passenger activity of note. This confirms there is no rank-based activity related to these two zones at all.

On street public views

201 people were interviewed in the streets of central Halifax. Car access was high in the sample, with most from the area, a fairly age-balanced sample compared to the census, but an over-representation of females. Generally, the views represented should be indicative at the level needed for this study.

63% of those interviewed said they had used a licensed vehicle in the last three months in the area, fairly high. About 2.2 trips were made per person per month by licensed vehicles, reducing to 0.3 by hackney carriage (14% of trips). Of all responses made, 59% were that people got licensed vehicles by phone with a further 20% using mobile phones and 1% freephones. None said they hailed. Rank usage was quoted at 20%, higher than the proportion of the share of overall trips made using hackney carriages.

In terms of phone options, there appeared to be a high level of competition in the area and only moderate brand loyalty. The top two companies used both got 15% of mentions each, with 17 different names given (though some may have been the same company). Four others obtained near similar levels of citation confirming the level of competition available. Very unusually, one person said they would always choose a local hackney carriage.

Asking people directly about their experience of hackney carriages, only one could not remember seeing a hackney carriage, an encouraging conclusion given the livery. However, 72% could not remember when they last used a hackney carriage. Knowledge of ranks and locations was good, but again confirmed low usage with 74% saying they did not use ranks which they were aware of. Southgate rank was best known, followed by the Station and Market Street, with George Square low down the rankings. All active ranks were named by people.

The level of issue with the service was low, just one in ten had issues, and most that had issues had just a single issue. The most dominant was driver issues followed by cleanliness of vehicles. 19% felt fares were high. 48% said they could get hackney carriages if they needed them in the day time, and 44% at night. This suggests fairly even availability of vehicles.

Only seven people gave reasons they would use hackney carriages more. The top encouragement was better drivers but this was not a significant response. Interestingly, there was no response saying more use were they cheaper, which is the usual response.

The level of need for adapted vehicles was relatively high, with quoted needs split between WAV and other styles. 51% of those responding felt people with disabilities in the area got a good service from hackney carriages, with most of the rest that responded saying they did not know.

The latent demand factor was just 0.4%, very low.

The overall view sees generally good regard for the hackney carriage service, just relatively little usage of it, with very little to be improved to increase usage apart from the potential benefit of better trained drivers.

Key stakeholder views

Most key stakeholders tended to use private hire for their customers, with only a few being aware of ranks, and many saying people would go to private hire offices if not phoning. There was some appreciation of the ranks by the night time economy. Those looking after people getting home late at night felt there were sufficient vehicles available.

Trade views

A high 22% response rate was achieved from hackney carriages to the driver survey. They demonstrated a long level of service, with an average length of some 17 years. Half, the largest number, worked five days. A further 31% worked six days and 6% seven days. This led to a moderate average working week of 41 hours, with a high maximum of 76 quoted. Just around a sixth said they were on radio circuits and the two companies named were private hire.

39% said they serviced all ranks, with the two most popular being the station and Southgate, both with 13% of mentions. All those from Halifax got most of their work from ranks.

Driver concerns included the number of private hire offices near to ranks and a feeling this was taking business. Many wanted more or larger ranks but also were concerned about private cars abusing some rank locations.

Three drivers responded from the Brighouse and Sowerby Bridge areas. They said most of their work was from phone bookings but that they did not have sufficient or the right ranks to allow them to work as hackney carriages in those locations.

There was 100% support for the retention of the limit.

Formal evaluation of significance of unmet demand

Use of the industry standard index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD) found a very low index, suggesting that any unmet demand observed is a long way from being counted as significant. The largest contributor to the level of significance is off peak hours with delay, although even this is just 5.26%. Of measures taken in 2010, all values are now lower (consistent with the reduced demand and similar number of vehicles).

There was some evidence of poorer service to the station rank than to other ranks which may relate to the low level of feeder spaces and to recent growth in patronage. The fact it is a private rank (but on Combined authority and not railway land) may have some bearing.

Synthesis

Hackney carriages in Halifax are appreciated but relatively little used even by those that use licensed vehicles. Their presence and knowledge of where to get them, and if you can, is very good, and they are used by those in wheel chairs. But overall usage from ranks has reduced, although there are three locations which give counter evidence to this. Overall service levels have improved although there appear to be slight issues with the reaction to increased usage at the station rank. The only slight issue appears to be the most used rank does not seem to be highest in public awareness, which may need improved signing. That rank may also benefit from more general traffic enforcement to ensure its operation is as sharp as it might be.

With respect to fares, public views are only marginally that fares are high for hackney carriages. The usual statement that people would use hackney carriages more if they were cheaper is notable by its absence in the on street surveys. However, demand is down 30% over seven years. In this context, and also taking into account surrounding authority fares are generally lower, the small proposed increase does not seem worthwhile, given that it could be counter-productive. It would be better to use the resources released from putting a rise in place to carry out a wider review, identifying perhaps across the Combined Authority a better match between the costs of meeting public need and the charge to those using it. This would also need to take into account the rise of apps and issues related to cross-border hiring in the private hire sector which can easily combine with changes to hackney carriage fares to see a reduction in usage of hackney carriages exacerbated.

With respect to the outer areas, there are no active ranks. This suggests that only hailing might be a valid reason for the high level of hackney carriages in some of these areas. Or possibly the simplicity of not having to have an operator licence to operate. The supposition that many of the outer vehicles are such so they can act as private hire in other areas remains a clear possibility, meaning the intended use policy remains very important.

Conclusions

There is no evidence at all of any unmet demand in the Halifax central zone which is significant at this point in time. There is no evidence of any demand for hackney carriages at ranks outside the central area at all.

9 Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence gathered in this Hackney Carriage demand survey for Calderdale, 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 Calderdale licensing area Halifax zone. The committee is therefore able to retain the current limit at its present level and defend this if necessary.

In terms of fares, the balance of evidence is that the minor proposed increase would be better drawn forward into a more detailed review of the context of hackney carriage fares in the area, with the aim of a reasonable change being made in the 2018 review. Key issues are the context of competition, reduced demand at ranks and review of the true costs of service provision.

With respect to outer area hackney carriages, the only two legitimate uses for these relate to hailing opportunities or the ability of a person to operate without needing a private hire operator licence. Otherwise, the value of the intended use policy, together with careful maintenance of standards compared to other authorities, is critical to ensuring these plates are only used for the benefit of Calderdale residents and licensed vehicle users in the area.

Consideration should be given to some better form of signing from key locations to the George Square rank, and to ensuring highways enforcement take action to reduce impacts on the rank operation.

Appendix 1 – Industry Statistics

	hcv	phv	lv total	hcd	phd	dd	total drivers	Operators	% hcv WAV	% phv WAV
1994D	68			165						
1997D	68	464	532	177	628		805		3	
1999D	66	520	586	190	720		910	53	5	
2001D	66	480	546	160	710		870	48	3	
2004D	65	*580*	645	165	832	79	1076	47	8	
2005D	68	680	748	279	955	102	1336	43	25	
2007D	64	700	764	309	922	0	1231	43	66	
2009D	56	720	776	119	888	21	1028	39	71	
2010N	57	706	763	*100*	*889*	*40*	*1029*	*47*	72	
2011D	64	773	837	81	890	58	1029	55	61	1
2012N	57	677	734	*146*	*891*	*115*	1151	*56*	75	*2*
2013D	93	644	737	210	891	172	1273	57	87	3
2014N	96	620	716	*123*	*625*	*133*	881	*45*	88	*3*
2015D	85	461	546	36	358	94	488	33	74	*2*
2016C	120	840	960	44	619	207	870	60	*79*	*3*
2017C	96	776	872	205	970	263	1438	53	84	4

Appendix 2 – List of ranks, Halifax

24-hour

Market Street

George Square with Commercial Street feeders (one part 2300-0500 only)

Southgate

Night rank, 2300-0500

Waterhouse Street opposite night club

Night rank, 0000-0500

Commercial Street, near Theatre

Private rank

Halifax Station

Appendix 3 – Survey hours proposed

See separate document

Appendix 4 – Results of rank surveys

See separate document

Appendix 5 – On Street survey results

See separate document

Appendix 6 Key Stakeholder Contacts

Place	**Response?**
Supermarkets	
Asda, Thrum Hall Lane	Y
Tesco, Haugh Shaw Road	Y
Sainsbury's, Wade Street	Y
Morrison's, Keighley Road	Y
Hotels	
The Wool Merchant	Y
Tower House Hotel	Y
The Old Post Office	N
Imperial Crown Hotel	Y
White Swan Hotel	Y
Railway Hotel	Y
The Shakespeare Hotel	Y
Plummet Line Hotel	Y
Holdsworth House	Y
Restaurants / Café	
The Firehouse Restaurant and Café Bar	R
Café Passion	N
Towngate Brasserie	Y
Long Can Hall	Y
Café Thai	R
Shibden Mill Inn	Y
Eighteen Coffee House	R
Entertainment Venues	
Victoria Theatre	Y
Electric Bowl	Y
Square Chapel Centre for the Arts	N
Public Houses	
The Causeway Foot Inn	Y
Harvester, Broad Street Plaza	Y
Winterburn	Y
The Percy Shaw	Y
The Delvers	Y
Union Cross Hotel	R
Night Clubs	
Acapulco	Y
Lee Mount Club	R
Atik	N
Club La Salsa	Y
Maggies Bar	Y

Other stakeholders	
Police	N
Street Angels	Y