

**From CTS Traffic and Transportation Unmet Demand Survey 2017**

**Executive Summary**

This Hackney carriage unmet demand survey has been undertaken on behalf of Birmingham City Council following the guidance of the April 2010 DfT Best Practice Guidance document, and all relevant case history. This executive summary draws together the key points to allow the Committee to determine its view regarding retention, or otherwise, of the current moratorium on hackney carriage plate issue. It is not meant to replace consideration of the full main document.

The latest review of the moratorium policy was undertaken from March to August 2017. The moratorium was applied in 2008, since when hackney carriage plates on issue have reduced from 1,466 to 1,219, a 17% reduction with most occurring in the past year. Private hire vehicle numbers, which cannot legally be limited, have only grown marginally since the last survey whilst driver numbers have fallen only showing increase in the very latest year. Operator numbers have generally also fallen again until the latest year.

A robust sample of 263 hours of rank operation were observed by video methods. This also included observing any abuse of ranks by private cars or other licensed vehicles. It found two people using wheel chairs to access hackney carriages at ranks, with 14 others who appeared to have disabilities not needing a wheel chair. Overall hackney carriage demand has reduced 6% at ranks since the last survey. This is in spite of significant increases of use between the two station ranks – seeing increase more than double the increased level of rail passengers. The two station related ranks between them take 45% of all estimated passengers in a typical week. Broad Street is next largest with 8% of passengers. There are 26 active ranks in total (excluding the Airport), most of which enjoy good, very good or excellent service to those using them.

On the busiest day, demand was met by around 21% of the fleet active. Allowing for other factors, it still suggests the fleet could be 25% smaller and still retain spare capacity for expected growth.

291 on-street interviews suggested increased overall usage of licensed vehicles including hackney carriages in total. However, there were very clear changes even in private hire company fortunes, with many new entrants or many that had reacted to new demand positively, and others that had very clearly lost their market share. Hackney carriages are very visible across the city, but remain less used by people. Rank knowledge is good, but could benefit from better information and publicity. Latent demand was not particularly high.

Key stakeholders as is typical around the country mainly used private hire or phoned for services, but many were aware of ranks. A key police concern was continued reduction of out of town vehicle activity and need for an all-trade rank review. The view from those with disabilities was positive.

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The trade survey and trade consultation found high support for retaining the moratorium, even from private hire elements of the trade. The hackney carriage trade had retained its high level of access by phone, but still obtained a high proportion of work from ranks.

Neither with industry standard use of the “index of significance of unmet demand” tool, nor from any other evidence gathered, is there any unmet demand for hackney carriages which can be counted significant in terms of the 1985 Transport Act Section 16. The survey therefore supports the conclusion that the moratorium can be retained and defended if necessary.

The City of Birmingham retains an active fleet of hackney carriages across the city and at ranks, by hailing and by phone. Despite overall increases in usage of licensed vehicles, rank usage is down since the last survey, as is demand for some private hire companies, although others have clearly grown or entered the market and achieved good levels of growth. Birmingham has not seen reduced off-peak service as many other areas have, partly due to the long term existence of the radio aspect of the hackney carriage trade which remains competitive in that part of the market.