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# Southampton Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Survey

Final Report

Southampton City Council

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# 1 Summary and Conclusions

## 1.1 Introduction

Halcrow has conducted a study of the hackney carriage and private hire market on behalf of Southampton City Council. The present study has been conducted in pursuit of the following objectives. To determine;

- whether or not there is a significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriage services within Southampton as defined in Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985; and
- how many additional taxis are required to eliminate any significant unmet demand.

This section provides a brief description of the work undertaken and summarises the conclusions.

## 1.2 Significant Unmet Demand

The 2011 study has identified that there is NO evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in Southampton. This conclusion is based on an assessment of the implications of case law that has emerged since 2000, and the results of Halcrow's analysis.

Although the ISUD value is close to the cut off level of 80, each of the day time hours in which excess passenger demand was observed was at the cruise terminals. This indicates it is associated with short term spikes in demand as passengers disembark the cruise liners at the four terminals. This is particularly evident on days when more than one terminal is in use. The consultation responses indicate that stakeholders believe there are traffic management and congestion issues around the docks when liners are in berth.

We would suggest that it would be beneficial for additional dock permits to be issued and / or consider what might be done to improve traffic flow in the area to improve the ability of hackney carriages to access the ranks during periods of high passenger demand.

It should also be noted that since the survey was conducted eight additional hackney carriage licenses have been issued.

## 1.3 Public Perception

Public perception of the service was obtained through the undertaking of 470 surveys. Overall the public were generally satisfied with the service – key points included;

- Some 45% of respondents had used a taxi within the last three months;
- High levels of satisfaction with delay on last trip;

- The majority of respondents felt safe using hackney and private hire vehicles during the day (86.7%) and at night (73.2%) in Southampton;
- Some 92% of respondents agreed with the councils new safety policy;
- The majority of respondents had not given up waiting for a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle in the last three months. Some 5.8% stated that they had given up trying to obtain a vehicle by rank and/or flagdown in Southampton.

#### **1.4 Trade Perception**

Trade opinion of the market in Southampton was obtained through a survey issued to all those in the private hire and hackney carriage trades. The key findings included:

- Some 47% of hackney carriage respondents subscribed to a radio circuit;
- Only 38% of the hackney trade and 45% of the private hire trade felt safe at all times when working in Southampton;
- Some 84% of the hackney trade would like more and extended ranks;
- The majority of the private hire and hackney carriage trade agree with Southampton Councils training requirements but 84% of the hackney trade and 72% of the private hire trade would like to see further training introduced;
- If the current limit on hackney carriage licenses was removed, 46% of the hackney carriage trade report they would leave the trade, while 35% of the private hire trade would expect to switch to a hackney carriage license.

#### **1.5 Stakeholder Perception**

In line with DfT guidance stakeholders were consulted during the study by a combination of face to face meetings and written consultation. The image of the trade was generally considered to be positive by stakeholders although it was noted a few drivers could give the trade a bad name and that in general standards of dress should be greatly improved. Both the trade and stakeholders reported that additional training was required for drivers, notably disability awareness, driving skills and communication skills.

Sufficient vehicles are generally available but many stakeholders felt there was a need for further wheelchair accessible vehicles. It was also felt that these larger vehicles would be useful in servicing the ports as the saloon vehicles cannot carry much luggage.

The trade representatives felt further ranks were required though other stakeholders noted that some ranks are underused and could be utilised for other kerbside requirements.

It was felt further information on taxi services and the various operators should be made publically available, and that if cross stakeholder taxi forums were held, communication could be improved and reported issues could be resolved more quickly.

## 1.6 Recommendations

The 2011 study has identified that there is NO evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in Southampton. This conclusion covers both patent and latent/suppressed demand and is based on an assessment of the implications of case law that has emerged since 2000, and the results of Halcrow's analysis.

On this basis the authority has discretion in its hackney licensing policy and may either:

- Maintain the current limit of 275 + the 8 additional hackney carriages licensed in December 2011;
- issue any number of additional plates as it sees fit, either in one allocation or a series of allocations; or
- remove the numerical limit.

Furthermore it is clear that there are peaks in demand as cruise liners dock at the terminals. The consultation highlighted potential traffic management and congestion issues around the docks and we would advise that these issues be looked into.