

Wednesday, 16 October 2024

REGULATORY COMMITTEE

A meeting of **Regulatory Committee** will be held on

Thursday, 24 October 2024

commencing at **9.30 am**

The meeting will be held in the Banking Hall, Castle Circus entrance on the left corner of the Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Members of the Committee

Councillor Barbara Lewis (Chairwoman)

Councillor Amil

Councillor Brook

Councillor Bryant

Councillor Douglas-Dunbar

Councillor Foster (Vice-Chair)

Councillor Hutchings

Councillor Johns

Councillor Pentney

Councillor Virdee

A Healthy, Happy and Prosperous Torbay

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Governance Support, Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, TQ1 3DR

Email: governance.support@torbay.gov.uk - www.torbay.gov.uk

REGULATORY COMMITTEE AGENDA

1. **Apologies**
To receive any apologies for absence, including notifications of any changes to the membership of the Committee.
2. **Minutes** (Pages 3 - 6)
To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 18 July 2024.
3. **Declarations of interest**
 - (a) To receive declarations of non pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda
For reference: Having declared their non pecuniary interest members may remain in the meeting and speak and, vote on the matter in question. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.
 - (b) To receive declarations of disclosable pecuniary interests in respect of items on this agenda
For reference: Where a Member has a disclosable pecuniary interest he/she must leave the meeting during consideration of the item. However, the Member may remain in the meeting to make representations, answer questions or give evidence if the public have a right to do so, but having done so the Member must then immediately leave the meeting, may not vote and must not improperly seek to influence the outcome of the matter. A completed disclosure of interests form should be returned to the Clerk before the conclusion of the meeting.

(**Please Note:** If Members and Officers wish to seek advice on any potential interests they may have, they should contact Governance Support or Legal Services prior to the meeting.)
4. **Urgent items**
To consider any other items that the Chairman decides are urgent
5. **Results of the Unmet Demand Study of Taxis in Torbay 2023 and the second public consultation in 2024** (Pages 7 - 166)
To consider a report that details the outcome of the second public consultation for Members further consideration and determination of the issue of unmet demand.

Minutes of the Regulatory Committee

18 July 2024

-: Present :-

Councillors Amil, Brook, Douglas-Dunbar, Foster, Hutchings, Barbara Lewis, Pentney,
Long and David Thomas

1. Apologies

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Virdee.

It was reported that, in accordance with the wishes of the Conservative Group and the Liberal Democrat Group, the membership of the Committee had been amended for this meeting by including Councillors David Thomas and Long instead of Councillors Bryant and Johns respectively.

2. Results of Unmet Demand Study of Taxis in Torbay 2023 and the public consultation in 2024

The Regulatory Services Manager presented the submitted report which set out the outcome of an Unmet Demand Survey commissioned by Torbay Council in response to the guidance issued by the Department for Transport. Members were advised that at the time the survey was undertaken the best practice guidance stated an Unmet Demand Survey should be undertaken every three years, best practice guidance had since been updated requiring an Unmet Demand Survey be undertaken at least every 5 years.

To comply with the three yearly requirement, Torbay Council engaged the services of a company called Licensed Survey Vehicle & Assessment (LVSA) to undertake the seventh of these unmet demand studies in 2023. Their study included rank observations, on street interviews, discussions with user groups and stakeholders and a questionnaire sent to all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and vehicle licence holders.

From the results of this survey, it has been identified that passenger demand has fallen by 0.4% from the last survey carried out in 2020. However, 48% of those passengers experienced a delay of over a minute compared to just 18% in 2020. In 2018 when there was no unmet demand, passenger delay was 5%.

Members were requested to consider the recommendations contained within the consultant's report in respect of quantity control and the results of the 12-week public consultation.

Members are also asked to consider amending the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, (hereinafter referred to as 'The Policy'), dependant on the outcome of their decision at 1.2. This includes not enforcing a section of the Policy, along with Appendix K from the Policy (criteria to be considered in the allocation of Hackney Carriage vehicle proprietors licence waiting list).

At the meeting representations were received from Jacqui Nickels from Torbay United Licensed Drivers Association and Mr Ray Hall from Torbay Licensed Taxi Association.

Three members of the public present at the meeting, also raised various concerns including safety of drivers and tariff increases. Members noted these concerns and sought clarification of what could be done. The legal advisor advised that whilst members were concerned about these issues, this was not within the scope of the Regulatory Committee to discuss today, however the following concerns would be noted:

- Rate review and implementation of Nighttime tariff increase.
- Review of Marshalls
- Review of ranks: numbers and spaces
- Enforcement of Rank Spaces
- Safety of Taxi Drivers at nighttime.

Resolved:

That the meeting be adjourned, and the Divisional Director of Community and Customer Services be asked to arrange a further consultation upon the option of an additional 17 Hackney Carriage vehicle licences with a further test of level of service to be undertaken within 6 months of all these additional licences being issued. The results of this public consultation to come back before the Regulatory Committee for their further consideration and determination.

Reasons:

Members heard the oral submission from Torbay Council's Regulatory Services Manager which summarised the results of the Unmet Demand Survey report undertaken by a company called LVSA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment) and the impact and required steps of those findings, and the submissions made by the trade representatives through their oral representations.

Whilst Members recognised that to do nothing was not an option, they were concerned that to de-limit the Hackney Carriage vehicles within Torbay, would have a negative impact upon the trade. Therefore, in noting that the Unmet Demand Study concluded that Torbay has an extremely high level of significant unmet demand and steps must be taken to return passenger waiting times to a reasonable level, Members wished to first explore managed growth, as set out as being an option within

the LVSA report, though preferred the suggestion of a 10% increase, as put forward at the hearing by the trade representative.

Noting that a 10% increase had not been the subject of a public consultation, Members determined it should be, on the advice of officers.

In concluding, Members were advised, that should Hackney Carriage vehicle licence applications be received, these would have to be considered in accordance with the current Policy and the survey report findings.

Chairman/woman

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Meeting: Regulatory Committee **Date:** 24 October 2024

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Results of the Unmet Demand Study of Taxis in Torbay 2023 and the second public consultation in 2024

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities.

Director Contact Details: Joanna Williams, Director of Adults and Community Services

Officer Contact Details: Rachael Hind, Regulatory Service Manager

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 At the Regulatory Committee Hearing on 18 July 2024, Members adjourned the meeting and requested that the Divisional Director of Community and Customer Services be asked to arrange a further consultation upon the option of an additional 17 Hackney Carriage vehicle licences, with a further test of level of service to be undertaken within 6 months of all these additional licences being issued.
- 1.2 This report details the outcome of the second public consultation for Members further consideration and determination of the issue of unmet demand. As the Licensed Survey Vehicle & Assessment (LVSA) report recommended 20 additional plates, and this option was not considered as part of the first public consultation, this option was also included as part of the second consultation.
- 1.3 An additional clarification report was also requested from the LVSA consultant to include:
 - answers to Members questions that were raised during the Committee meeting on 18 July 2024.
 - a reasoned clarification of the estimation and impact of the 20 extra plates as recommended in the 2023 Unmet Demand Study report.
 - a more detailed modelling exercise, as subsequently recommended by the LVSA consultant in August 2024, to demonstrate the quantification of impacts and confidence in the estimate of the impact of the 20 plates.

This report can be found in Appendix 2. The report author will be attending the Regulatory Committee Hearing on 24 October 2024 to present his report and answer any questions.

- 1.4 Members are to consider the options outlined in section 2 of this report, and following their determination, instruct Officers to amend the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy (the Policy) accordingly.

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 updated the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 with respect to Hackney Carriages and advised that ‘**..the grant of a licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of hackney carriages in respect of which licences are granted, if, but only if, the person authorised to grant licences is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet**’.

This places the decision maker under a clear duty to grant new applications for Hackney Carriage vehicle licences unless they are satisfied, on the evidence, that there is no significant unmet demand.

- 2.2 Unmet demand is considered to be significant when the index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD) is calculated, its resulting value is 80 or greater. The results of the 2023 survey (Appendix 1) found that the ISUD level is currently at 1801.26, well above the cut-off figure of 80. This is an 806% increase on the ISUD figure from the 2020 survey, which was 198.89, and an increase of 3755% from the 2018 survey when there was no significant unmet demand (ISUD of 46.72). The conversion of the 7 seasonal Hackney Carriage licences to full time licences following the 2020 survey was an attempt to bring the ISUD figure down to the cut-off figure of 80. This has not succeeded, and unmet demand has risen significantly further.
- 2.3 The additional report provided by the LVSA (October 2024; Appendix 2) outlines the difficulty in estimating the extra numbers of vehicles required to reduce the significant unmet demand to under the ISUD figure of 80, due to a range of factors including that we cannot require drivers to work at ranks or on specific days and times.

Appendices

- | | |
|------------|--|
| Appendix 1 | LVSA unmet taxi demand survey November 2023 |
| Appendix 2 | LVSA unmet taxi demand survey Additional Clarification Report October 2024 |
| Appendix 3 | Second Public Consultation results and comments |
| Appendix 4 | Regulatory Committee Report regarding unmet demand held on 18 July 2024 |

Background Documents

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Torbay Council's Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022

DFT: Statutory Taxi and Private Hire vehicle standards 2020

DFT: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance

James Button on Taxis; Licensing Law and Practice Book; 4th Edition

DFT: FS13 Future of Transport – Equalities and access to opportunity September 2020

Supporting Information

1. Introduction and Background

- 1.1 At the Regulatory Committee Hearing on 18 July 2024, Members adjourned the meeting and requested that the Divisional Director of Community and Customer Services be asked to arrange a further consultation upon the option of an additional 17 Hackney Carriage vehicle licences with a further test of level of service to be undertaken within 6 months of all these additional licences being issued.
- 1.2 An additional clarification report was also requested from the LVSA consultant to include:
- answers to Members questions that were raised during the meeting on 18 July 2024.
 - a reasoned clarification of the estimation and impact of the 20 extra plates as recommended in the 2023 Unmet Demand Study report.
 - a more detailed modelling exercise, as subsequently recommended by the LVSA consultant in August 2024, was undertaken to demonstrate the quantification of impacts and confidence in the estimate of the impact of the 20 plates.

This report can be found in Appendix 2. The report author will be attending the Regulatory Committee Meeting on 24 October 2024 to present his report and answer any questions.

2. The Law and Best Practice

- 2.1 There are 314 Local Authorities in England. The Taxi and Private Hire Statistics England 2023, advised that 72 licensing authorities (25% of licensing authorities with taxi's) applied a limit on the numbers of licensed hackney carriages with a further 8 setting limits either for some of the areas they covered or some vehicle types ([Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England: 2023 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/taxi-and-private-hire-vehicle-statistics-england-2023)).
- Torridge District Council is the only one of the eight district authorities in Devon that has retained a limit (49 HCVs). The unitary Authorities in Cornwall and Plymouth have removed their limits in the last two years.
- 2.2 In June 2004, the Department for Transport (DfT) wrote to all Local Authorities who had a quantitative limit on the number of hackney carriage taxi licences it issued, to require them to review their restriction and publish an outcome by 31 March 2005. Torbay Council conducted a thorough review, and it retained a numerical limit of 162 hackney carriage licences (plus 7 seasonal licences).
- 2.3 Torbay Council has carried out unmet demand surveys every three years as suggested by the DfT best practice guidance, in order to comply with section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. Surveys were carried out in 2011, 2014, a delayed survey in 2018 and its last survey being carried out in 2020. All the surveys up to and including 2018 found no evidence of significant unmet demand, however, in the 2020 survey significant unmet demand was

found. The numerical limit was retained, but the 7 seasonal hackney carriage licences were extended to full time licences meaning the limit went from 162 full time licences and 7 seasonal (1 May – 30 September) to 169 full time licences, this was done in an attempt to reduce the significant unmet demand.

- 2.4 The findings of the 2023 unmet demand survey that was undertaken by the LVSA was outlined in the Regulatory Committee report of the 18 July 2024 which can be found in Appendix 4. The survey found that Torbay has a significant unmet demand.
- 2.5 Section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 updated the provisions of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 with respect to Hackney Carriages and advised that ***‘..the grant of a licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the number of hackney carriages in respect of which licences are granted, if, but only if, the person authorised to grant licences is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet’.***

This places the decision maker under a clear duty to grant unless they are satisfied, on the evidence, that there is no significant unmet demand.

- 2.6 The DfT reinforces this position on quantity restrictions within section 9 of the Best Practice Guidance and advises that ***‘Most licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions. The department regards that as best practice’.***
- 2.7 The Department for Transport outlines in section 9.2 of the guidance, that where restrictions are imposed, the department would urge that the matter should be regularly reviewed and should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public.
- 2.8 The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) became the UK’s lead competition and consumer body. The CMA brought together the competition and consumer protection functions of the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission in April 2014. In April 2017, the CMA was clear in their guidance on the Regulation of Taxis and Private Hire vehicles: ***‘Understanding the impact of competition that quantity restrictions are not necessary to ensure the safety of passengers, or to ensure that fares are reasonable and that they can harm passengers by reducing availability, increasing waiting times and reducing the scope for downward competitive pressure on fares.’***

A delimitation would allow free entry to the market and may reduce the rental costs of vehicles, thereby reducing overheads and assist in obtaining a sustainable income for drivers. CMA and DfT have claimed that increased competition would reduce fares for passengers, improve availability, and reduce waiting times.

- 2.9 The Department of Transport Circular 4/87 stated:
- ‘A Council which believes that there is significant unmet demand and is able to quantify the extent of that demand must grant at least such number of taxi licences***

as it considers necessary to ensure that no significant unmet demand remains' (page 369, James Button on Taxis; Licensing Law and Practice Book; 4th Edition).

- 2.10 In the event of a challenge to a decision to refuse a licence, the local authority would have to establish that it had, reasonably, been satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand.

3. LVSA Report– Unmet Taxi Demand Survey Additional Clarifications October 2024

- 3.1 As outlined in 1.2 above, following the Committee Hearing on 18 July 2024, an additional clarification report was requested from the LVSA to further explore the impact on the suggested tranche of 20 extra plates and whether this is likely to remove the significant unmet demand. The report is attached in Appendix 2.
- 3.2 The author has advised in the additional report that there is widespread unmet demand and outlines the difficulty in estimating the extra numbers of vehicles required to reduce the significant unmet demand to under the ISUD figure of 80, due to a range of factors including that we cannot require drivers to work at ranks or on specific days and times.

4. Options under consideration

- 4.1 The five options for consideration are:
- (i) To do nothing and retain the now 171 hackney carriage vehicle licences, if satisfied the numerical limits are correct and public demand is being met.
 - (ii) To remove the numerical limit of hackney carriage vehicles
 - (iii) To increase the limit to 186 hackney carriage vehicles (an addition of 17 licences) as proposed by the trade, with a further survey within 6 months thereafter to determine whether the unmet demand is now met.
 - iv) to increase the limit to 189 hackney carriage vehicles (an addition of 20 licences) as suggested by the LVSA, with a further survey within 6 months thereafter to determine whether the unmet demand is now met.
 - v) to make any other determination.

Where there is a change to Policy, the Policy will need to be updated accordingly.

5. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 5.1 If any limit remains, then there will be financial implications for the hackney carriage vehicle proprietors as further unmet demand surveys will be required every five years thereafter. Where there is a determination of an unmet demand survey be carried out within 6 months of the last plate being issued, this will be an additional cost to those proprietors. This will

cost a minimum of £15,000 per survey and will result in an increase in the hackney carriage vehicle licence fees to cover this cost.

6. Legal Implications

- 6.1 The current unmet demand survey shows that there is a significant unmet demand. Where a numerical limit remains, this is open to challenge if the Council refuse to grant a hackney carriage vehicle licence. Any subsequent appeal may be costly to defend.

7. Engagement and Consultation

- 7.1 On 9 August 2024, Torbay Council launched a second consultation for 6 weeks until 20 September 2024. This was sent out to the taxi and private hire trade, businesses in Torbay, stakeholders, disability groups, groups that represent passengers with special needs, school transport, resident associations, street pastors, faith groups, the Police, and the general public.
- 7.2 The consultation received a total of 275 responses. The results of this consultation can be found in Appendix 3. The majority of respondents (41.5%) selected the option to increase the number of hackney carriages by 17 vehicles; followed by 21% to keep the current limit, 20% to remove the limit and 17.5% to increase by 20 vehicles.
- 7.3 As part of the consultation, wider matters were raised by the public and the trade which fall outside the remit of this report. The Licensing Department are dealing with these separately.

8. Procurement Implications

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications, however, if a further unmet demand survey was decided to be required, the procurement process will be followed by the Authority as required for all surveys.

9. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 9.1 The current Taxi Policy is working towards a cleaner emissions policy and is due to be reviewed to ensure it is in line with government recommendations.

If the limit is removed, there is the potential to have an impact on the climate due to an increase in hackney carriage vehicles across Torbay. However, there is no limit to the

number of private hire vehicles, nor restrictions of any other public vehicles. Any new vehicles would have to meet our vehicle specifications and be no more than 4 years old and have a maximum mileage of 50,000 miles. Our current Policy requires that from 1 May 2030 all new licensed vehicles must be electric. We currently do not have a suitable infrastructure of electric chargers to support the taxi and private hire trade and therefore it would not be appropriate to restrict any new licences to be electric vehicles if the limit was removed. A number of vehicle proprietors have purchased hybrid vehicles and those less than 4 years old will be much cleaner and more efficient to run than existing older vehicles.

10. Associated Risks

- 10.1 Approval to remove the numerical limit of hackney carriage vehicles and amend the Policy accordingly, is a Licensing Committee decision. Any challenge to the Policy would have to take place within three months of it being adopted. Such challenge would be by way of Judicial Review.

The findings of the unmet demand survey have been calculated using a tool developed by Leeds University in 1985 and has been added to over time, following specific court cases. In 2019 there were three challenges with respect to surveys of unmet demand. All three found in favour of the current methodology being undertaken, the same methodology which was used in producing the outcome of this latest survey.

11. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>Public transport, including taxis play a crucial role in helping people to stay connected and maintain independence when they are unable to drive, and are therefore of particular significance to older residents aged over 65 and to younger people who may not have access to a car. Aging is linked with reduction in personal car use and people being more reliant on taxis especially as it is a door-to-door service. The availability of public transport is also very important to all adults and parents who do not have a car for work and social activities.</p>	None	N/A
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however those caring for others with protected characteristics may be affected with this proposal as outlined in this table. Increasing the number hackney carriages will mean there are more taxis available and are likely to assist carers.</p>	None	N/A

Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.</p>	<p>It is hoped that by increasing the number of hackney carriage licences, there will be more taxis available for the public including those with a disability. The Council have a register of all wheel chair accessible vehicles at Helping disabled passengers - Torbay Council</p> <p>All licensed vehicles must also carry assistance dogs.</p> <p>Taxis are particularly important method of transport for people with a disability because of the door-to-door nature of the service.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>Page 16</p>	<p>In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group. The DFT FS13 report highlights how discrimination is part of daily life for trans people and generates 'behaviours of avoidance', particularly to using public transport. This can potentially reduce this groups pool of wider employment, educational, health and recreational opportunities. By increasing the number of licences, there will be more taxis available which may improve confidence in travelling safely.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the Southwest (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all. The DFT FS13 report identified that public transport plays a vital role in supporting social inclusion for many parents with young children.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the Southwest and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however, the DFT FS13 report identifies that 'people from BAME background are less likely to have access to a private vehicle, be more reliant on public transport to access employment and live in densely populated urban areas – increasing their exposure to air pollution'. Furthermore 'for many people from a BAME background having regular, affordable, clean and efficient transport is essential'. Fear of safety, from racially motivated attacks, is also reported to be a barrier to using public transport networks. It is hoped that by increasing the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences, there will be more availability of taxis.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however the DFT FS13 report identifies that certain groups of people, face an increasing risk of being victims of religious hate crime.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

		<p>For people who have a marked religious identity through clothing there is a heightened risk for harassment or discrimination. It is reported that this is particularly true for women who are already more vulnerable regardless of the way they dress. It is hoped that by increasing the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences, there will be more availability of taxis to assist.</p>		
<p>Sex</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 18</p>	<p>51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group.</p> <p>However, the DFT FS13 report identifies that 'as women are more likely than men to live on low incomes, work part time and undertake paid work in the home and in the community, such as being carers for dependent relatives, poor quality unreliable and expensive transport has a far bigger impact on the lives of women'. The report also identified that women may not have access to a car during the day as they 'either cannot afford one or the family car is being used by a partner'. The F13 report also identifies women make greater use of taxi's than men, increasing with age, where women over 70 make double the number of trips than men.</p> <p>Increasing the number of hackney carriage vehicles is particularly important in the evening and nighttime economy and to protect violence against women</p>	<p>Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated</p>	<p>Licensing Officers and Police Officers</p>

		by providing a safe means of transport home, instead of other less safe methods such as walking alone late at night or using unlicensed vehicles. However, the Council cannot stipulate what the hours that the drivers work.		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group. However, the DFT FS13 report identifies that safety and security (and perceptions of them) are key for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and may influence how they choose or prefer to travel. It also says that a 2018 LGBT survey pointed to public transport as the most common place where respondents avoided being open about their sexual orientation and that it may even be avoided altogether. It is hoped that by increasing the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences, there will be more availability of taxis to assist.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Veterans	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously serviced in the UK armed forces.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including	N/A	Taxis are one of the more expensive forms of public transport. However, an	N/A	N/A

impacts on child poverty and deprivation)		increase in taxis may help keep the costs down as currently there is a high demand so private hire vehicles in particular increase their rates on a frequent basis. The taxi tariff (table of fares) is reviewed regularly to ensure it provides a viable income but also a reasonable cost to the public.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	N/A	There is no differential impact.	N/A	N/A
Human Rights impacts	There are no human rights impact with regards to the taxi tariff.	No negative impacts on human rights have been identified.	N/A	N/A
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council, and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	There is no differential impact.	N/A	N/A

12. Cumulative Council Impact

None

13. Cumulative Community Impacts

None

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Torbay Council
Unmet taxi demand survey

November 2023

Executive Summary

This report title has been undertaken on behalf of Torbay 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 together key points from the main report that are needed to allow a committee to determine from the facts presented their current position in regard to the policy of limiting hackney carriage vehicle licences according to Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act. It is a summary of the main report which follows and should not be relied upon solely to justify any decisions of a committee but must be read in conjunction with the full report below.

This study finds that the limit on vehicle numbers continues to provide stability and vehicle retention in the hackney carriage element of the fleet. However, despite passenger demand remaining relatively stable, levels of unmet demand have grown across the area to levels that are now very clearly significant. The conclusion in the previous study that it was principally the geographic split and the extra permit needed at Paignton that were pushing unmet demand in Paignton and Brixham whilst Torbay seemed to be performing relatively well can no longer be held. It is true that there is some evidence of marginal improvement in Brixham, but this is within the picture that there is significant unmet demand across the area and across time periods.

In essence, the index is demonstrating there is no longer a level of service to customers that is appropriate. This seems to arise from changes in how vehicles and particularly their drivers are working. Many now prioritise towards family commitments and find they can earn sufficient to not need to work periods they find customers difficult in. Although there were five plates not active due to changes of ownership at the time of the survey, there was other evidence that many others now no longer service ranks at all such that the present fleet was no longer able to meet the same level of passenger demand.

There is positive evidence that the public are generally happy to wait longer periods but this should not be allowed to continue for the overall health of the hackney carriage industry. There is evidence that the livery policy helps people be sure what a hackney carriage is and also that the use of marshals is ensuring more vehicles are active than might otherwise be the case at busy times when there might otherwise be even less willingness of drivers to service demand.

The report suggests a range of options. However, do nothing is no longer possible as it is clear the public deserve and need better service.

These options are discussed in the Recommendations Chapter in detail and give Councillors a range of reaction to seek to remediate the observed unmet demand in an appropriate manner. This all has to be within the confines of the legal options available, as well as within practicality and reasonableness bounds.



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1 General introduction and background

Torbay 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. Further details of the local application of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act with regard to limiting hackney carriage vehicle numbers is provided in further Chapters of this report. Hackney carriage vehicle licences are the only part of licensing where such a stipulation occurs and 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.

The Best Practice Guidance

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”.

Background

Current hackney carriage, private hire and operator licensing is undertaken within the legal frameworks first set by the Town Polices Clause Act 1847 (TPCA), amended and supplemented 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. This latter Act saw application of regulation to the then growing private hire sector which had not been previously part of the TPCA. 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 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 vehicle’ to refer to both hackney carriage and private hire. The formal DfT stance is to term its documents using ‘taxi’ for hackney carriage, with private hire termed separately and hackney carriage rarely used.

Review of Policy and Legislation

The legislation around licensed vehicles and their 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 current BPG in fact says “most local licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions, the Department regards that as best practice”.

The most recent reviews were by the Office of Fair Trading in 2003, through the production of the BPG in 2010, the Law Commission review which published its results in 2014, the Parliamentary Task and Finish Group which reported in September 2018, the Government Response in February 2019 and the consultation on “Protecting Users” which closed on 22 April 2019 that then resulted in issue of the “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” (STPHVS) on 23rd July 2020. A fully revised Best Practice Guidance document draft was issued and consulted on during 2022 but despite its final issue being noted as ‘imminent’ for some while, nothing had been issued by the time of issue of this Report, and certainly all work undertaken was consistent with the previous BPG at the time it was undertaken.

None of these previous changes resulted in any material change to the legislation involved in licensing. Other groups have provided their comments (including the Urban Transport Group and the Competition and Markets Authority) but the upshot remains no change in legislation from that already stated above.

With respect to the principal subject of this survey, 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. It is assumed the Government response to the Task and Finish Group is now effectively the current reaction to this extensive research. There was no mention of this topic in the STPHVS although that document did discuss wider review of the overall BPG document in the next consultation (see below).

Current Government Policy review status

To reiterate, it is also understood that the revisions resulting from the recently closed Government Consultation will eventually lead to a more comprehensive review of the sections of the BPG not affected by the February 2019 Statutory Guide, as stated in para 1.8 of that document – “A consultation on revised BPG, which focusses on recommendations to licensing authorities to assist them in setting appropriate standards (other than those relating to passenger safety) to enable the provision of services the public demand, will be taken forward once the final Statutory Guidance has been issued.” STPHVS suggests this wider BPG review will involve a consultation ‘later this year (2020) confirming the aim of making “clear recommendations on the measures licensing authorities should consider in order to enable the trade to react to the demands of passengers”. This means the April 2010 BPG remained valid for our review even though the new BPG was issued on 17th November 2023 (but has relatively little difference in regard to demand surveys).

The present background to policy

A more recent restriction, often applied to areas where there is no ‘quantity’ control felt to exist per-se, is that of ‘quality control’. This is often a pseudonym for a restriction that any new hackney carriage vehicle licence must be for a wheel chair accessible vehicle, of various kinds as determined locally. In many places this implies a restricted number of saloon style hackney carriage licences are available, which often are given ‘grandfather’ rights to remain as saloon style.

Within this quality restriction, there are various levels of strength of the types of vehicles allowed. The tightest restriction, now only retained by a few authorities only allows ‘London’ style wheel chair accessible vehicles, restricted to those with a 25-foot turning circle, and at the present time principally the LTI Tx, the Mercedes Vito special edition with steerable rear axle, and the Metrocab (no longer produced).

Others allow a wider range of van style conversions in their wheel chair accessible fleet, whilst some go as far as also allowing rear-loading conversions. Given the additional price of these vehicles, this often implies a restriction on entry to the hackney carriage trade. For some, this is complicated by local education authority rules on vehicles used on their contracts.

Some authorities do not allow vehicles which appear to be hackney carriage, i.e. mainly the London style vehicles, to be within the private hire fleet, whilst others do allow wheel chair vehicles.

The most usual method of distinguishing between hackney carriages and private hire is a 'Taxi' roof sign on the vehicle, although again some areas do allow roof signs on private hire as long as they do not say 'Taxi', some turn those signs at right angles, whilst others apply liveries, mainly to hackney carriage fleets, but sometimes also to private hire fleets.

Some authorities have also considered use of deregulation in favour of more sustainable vehicle types as a further potential quality restriction given the urgent need to improve overall vehicle emission standards, but the status of charging points and public views regarding electrification in general are not as favourable now, particularly with reduced government subsidy.

Unmet demand and its significance

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 authority's. This is mainly due to some court cases in Scotland taking interpretation of the duty of the licensing authority further than is usual in England and Wales, requiring current knowledge of the status of unmet demand at all times, rather than just at the snap-shot taken every three years. However, the three-year survey horizon has become generally accepted given the advice of the BPG and most locations that review regularly do within that timescale.

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. The reaction of many authorities to that request was to remove limits. In due course, DfT produced 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 fairly 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 latest STPHVS required an update given to the DfT by the end of January 2021 in terms of consideration of the measures included in that document, principally production of a comprehensive policy document, review of if CCTV might be mandated and documentation of passenger complaints but it is not clear if DfT have actually reviewed this.

Case law and unmet demand

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).

2019 saw three challenges with respect to surveys of unmet demand. All three found in favour of the current methodology being undertaken. A key focus was the need for a robust and up to date independent survey report being available.

In one case it was made clear the current guidance is based on the 2010 BPG, which supercedes previous notes and DfT advice, whilst in another case having a valid survey meant those challenging had no case for their proposed challenge, and in the final case an authority was clearly told they could not rely on a very old survey which itself could not be produced. In the end a fresh survey was undertaken, finding no unmet demand.

Most recent changes relating to demand

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 adoption of the update of the BPG.

The two 2022 Acts make small but significant changes. The 2022 Acts are the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety Act) (31 March 2022)" and the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) (28 June 2022)".

The first makes it mandatory for any licensing authority in England that has information about a taxi (hackney carriage) or private hire vehicle (phv) driver licensed by another authority that is relevant to safeguarding or road safety concerns in its area to share that information with the authority that issued that drivers licence.

The second amends the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on taxi and phv drivers and operators such that any disabled person has specific rights and protections to be transported and receive assistance when using a taxi or phv without being charged extra for doing so.

Regard has also been had to the Statutory Taxi and Private Standards July 2020 which were published on 21 July 2020 and represented a milestone in transportation regulation, because for the first time the safeguarding of children and vulnerable people were put right at the heart of the taxi licensing system. This publication also noted that a more complete review of all sections of the 2010 Best Practice Guidance would occur in due course and consultation on a draft of this new document ran from March to June 2022.

The current status regarding unmet demand studies

In general, industry standards suggest (but specifically do not mandate in any way) that the determination of conclusions about significance of unmet demand should take into account the practicability of improving the standard of service through the increase of supply of vehicles.

It is also felt important to have consistent treatment of authorities as well as for the same authority over time, although apart from the general guidance of the BPG there is no clear stipulations as to what this means in reality, and certainly no mandatory nor significant court guidance in this regard.

During September 2018 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on taxis produced its long-awaited Final Report. There was a generally accepted call for revision to taxi licensing legislation and practice, including encouragement for local authorities to move towards some of the practical suggestions made within the Report. However, the Report has no legislative backing and the key conclusion was that the Government needed to act firstly to revise the 2010 BPG but then to move to revisions to primary legislation as soon as practicable.

Despite some opposition from members of the group, the right to retain limits on hackney carriage vehicle numbers was supported, with many also supporting adding a tool which would allow private hire numbers to be limited where appropriate, given reasonable explanation of the expected public interest gains. This latter option is now being taken forward in Scotland, with two studies published and the Scottish Government preparing guidance, although the Government response did not support this option.

As already stated, other groups have provided comments giving their views about licensing matters but the upshot remains no change in legislation from that already stated above. The Scottish Government are moving forward in terms of their application of the potential limiting of private hire vehicle numbers but this is specific to Scottish law and not presently relevant to the English licensing authorities.

A number of authorities have recently changed and become unitary authorities. This has led to a number of former 'limited' areas now becoming a larger single area and losing their limit on vehicle numbers. However, the overall proportion of authorities with limits appears to remaining similar.

Conclusions

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.

Further, the jurisdiction focusses on the vehicles, drivers and operators but rarely extends to the physical infrastructure these use (principally ranks).

The vehicles 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 generally considered to be insured for their journey.

Drivers can either be split between ability to drive either hackney carriage or private hire, or be 'dual', allowed to drive either kind of vehicle. Whilst a private hire driver can only take bookings via an operator, with the 'triple-lock' applying that the vehicle, driver and operator must all be with the same authority, a hackney carriage driver can accept bookings on-street or by phone without the same stipulation required for private hire.

Recent legislation needing clarification has some operators believing they can use vehicles from any authority as long as they are legally licensed as private hire. At first, under the 'Stockton' case, this was hackney carriages operating as private hire in other areas (cross-border hiring). More recently, under the Deregulation Act, private hire companies are able to subcontract bookings to other companies in other areas if they are unable to fulfil their booking, but the interpretation of this has become quite wide.

The 'triple lock' licensing rule has also become accepted. A vehicle, driver and operator must all be under the same licensing authority to provide full protection to the passenger. However, it is also accepted that a customer can call any private hire company anywhere to provide their transport although many would not realise that if there was an issue it would be hard for a local authority to follow this up unless the triple lock was in place by the vehicle used and was for the area the customer contacted licensing.

Further, introduction of recent methods of obtaining vehicles, principally using 'apps' on mobile phones have also led to confusion as to how 'apps' usage sits with present legislation.

All these matters can impact on hackney carriage services, their usage, and therefore on unmet demand and its significance.

Coronavirus

For the record (repeated below), for the last survey the 'main' rank observations (and associated on-street interviews) were undertaken from Thursday 10th September 2020 to the early hours of Sunday 13th September 2020 (before the curfew) whilst the 'off season' observations on the Saturday were on 24th October when the curfew was in place. By the time this survey was undertaken, the pandemic was effectively over and although flare-ups are expected, there is unlikely to be any further strong restrictions.





2 Local background and context

Key dates for this report title for Torbay Council are:

- appointed Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment (LVSA) on 12 June 2023
- in accordance with our proposal of May 2023
- as confirmed during the inception meeting for the survey held on 15 June 2023
- this survey was carried out between June and September 2023
- On street pedestrian survey work occurred in early July 2023 (on a Tuesday or Wednesday)
- the main video rank observations occurred in late June 2023
- Licensed vehicle driver opinions and operating practices were canvassed using an electronically available and texted out survey during July 2023
- Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the period of the survey
- A draft of this Final Report was reviewed by the client in late September 2023
- and reported to the appropriate Council committee following acceptance by the client.

Torbay Council is a unitary authority in the South West of England. The authority has a current population of 139,300 from the initial results for the 2021 census for 2021, 2% more than the 137,064 using the 2020 estimates currently available from the 2011 census, 2016 revision, which was itself just over 1% higher than at the time of the last survey. Of the current total who are 15 or over, 48% were male and 52% female (same as in 2020), 17% were 15-30, 34% (33%) were 31-55 and 49% (50%) were over 55.

In terms of background council policy, Torbay Council, being a unitary authority, has full transport policy and highway powers alongside its licensing function. This means that ranks are provided within the same authority, albeit by a separate section of the Council, and that overall transport policy is also set within the Council.

The Devon and Torbay Local Transport Plan 2011-2026 (LTP) is the adopted Council transport policy document that guides all transport development. Developed over an 18-month period, it was shaped by a balance between national aims and local priorities. The latest update is the Local Transport Action Plan and the Local Cycling Walking Infrastructure Plan agreed on 20 April 2021.

The LTP is based on an Evidence Report, a Consultation Report and supported by three review documents, the Strategic Environmental Assessment, Health Impact Assessment and Equality Impact Needs Assessment. It is being implemented with close working with the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership.

The LTP vision is to offer businesses, communities and individuals safe and sustainable travel choices. It seeks to deliver a low carbon future, successful economy and prosperous, healthy population living in an attractive environment. One of five key elements is 'making best use of the transport network'. A key need is developing high quality connections and safe sustainable transport. The overarching strategy of the LTP focuses on places rather than modes. However, a further important plan item is the South Devon Link Road seeking to remove longer distance traffic from the A380.

The Torbay Strategy seeks a low-carbon sustainable transport system that contributes towards the public realm, distinct character and function of the three towns of Torquay, Brixham and Paignton. The area saw 8.5 million visitor bed nights per year and tourism increasing the population to over 200,000 in the summer months. It also has a high level of older people. The fishing industry and Sutton's Seeds are key industries in the area of national importance. Despite this, the average income per person is about 15% below the national average, with a widening economic gap between the area and the rest of Devon and the UK. Torbay has a track record of delivery, being the "Most Improved Transport Authority of the Year 2006" in the National Transport Awards of that year. However, key developments have included improved bus routes, some of which have reduced demand for licensed vehicle services, particularly on the main Torquay-Brixham axis (as noted in the previous report).

The main LTP, as is typical for many areas, makes no direct reference to licensed vehicles.

The Evidence Report has a section on licensed vehicles (Chapter 8.8). This quoted information from 2007 and compared Torbay to Blackpool, Bournemouth and Poole. It notes "With regards the Mayor's Vision and transport goals for 2026, taxis could have an increased role as part of an integrated sustainable travel package across Torbay. Longer ranks for at least six vehicles at key locations such as Torquay, Paignton and Brixham harboursides, railway stations, town centres and key tourist areas will be required." It also notes that key congestion issues mainly arise in the Summer months arising from tourist flows, and from issues with school travel.

The consultation report for the LTP reports levels of satisfaction with local licensed vehicles as 70% compared to 57% for community transport, 52% for satisfaction with local public transport information and 61% for overall satisfaction with local bus services, putting licensed vehicles in Torbay in a very good light at that time (about 2010). (Consultation Report para 3.4.10).

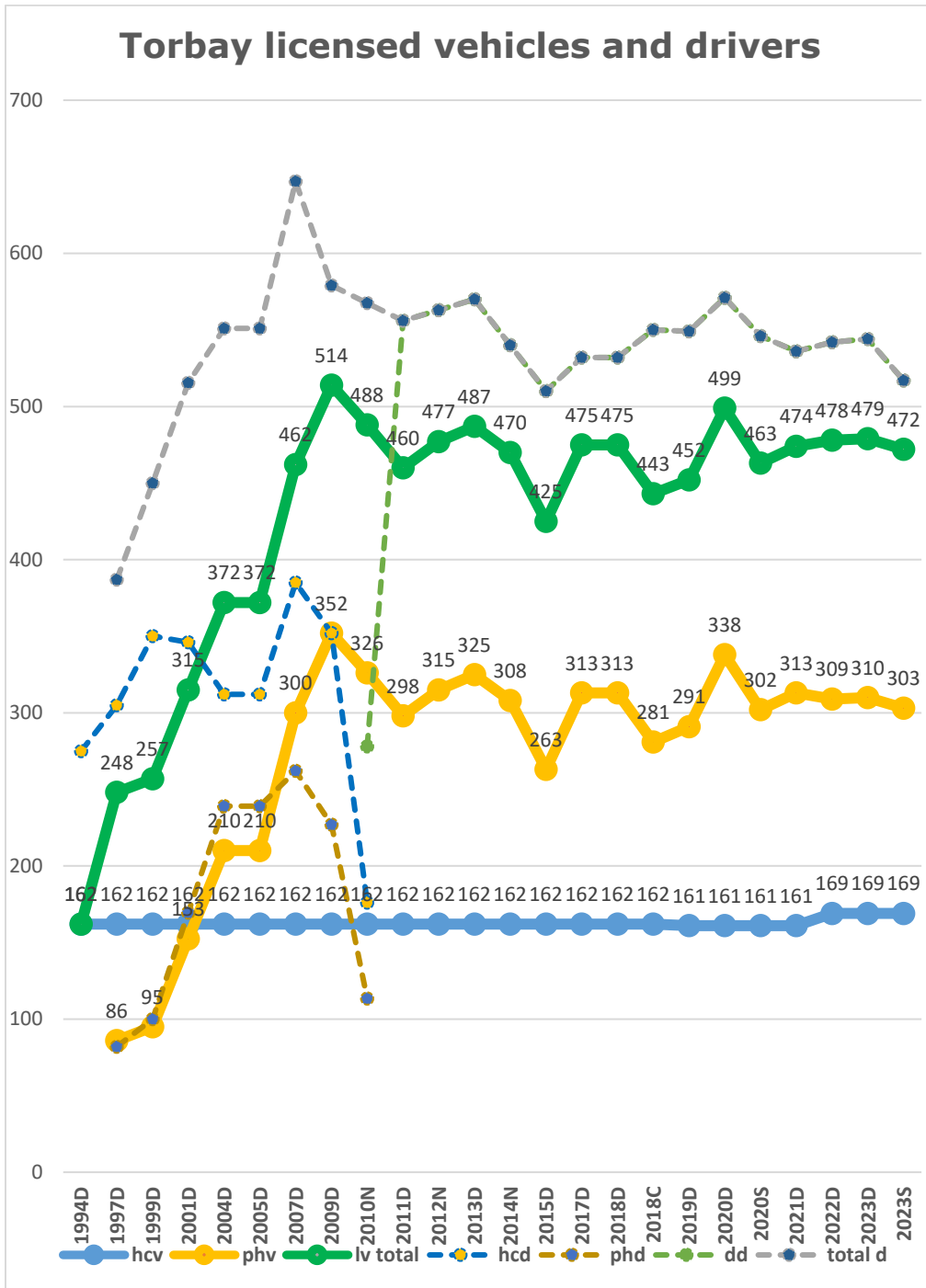
The main reference to licensed vehicles within the Torbay Council web pages is the statement at the beginning of the licensing pages "Hackney carriages and private hire vehicles are an important mode of local transport, and as such, have a specific role to play in an integrated transport system. They are able to provide safe, secure and comfortable transport, providing an on-request door-to-door service in various circumstances, including where public transport may not be available (e.g. in very rural areas), or for those with mobility difficulties.

The aim of the (Taxi) Policy is to regulate the provision of a robust taxi and private hire licensing system, which ensures that the public travel safely, receive a good level of service, and that drivers and operators are not overly burdened by unnecessary conditions.

Taxi Policy

Torbay Council has chosen to utilize its power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers, and as far as we are aware has done so since 1968, according to quotations from the DfT statistics.

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 shows that hackney carriage vehicle numbers have remained stable in the area for a very long period. However, the recent three hackney carriage vehicle numbers reflect the incorporation of the seasonal licences into the main stream all-year fleet.

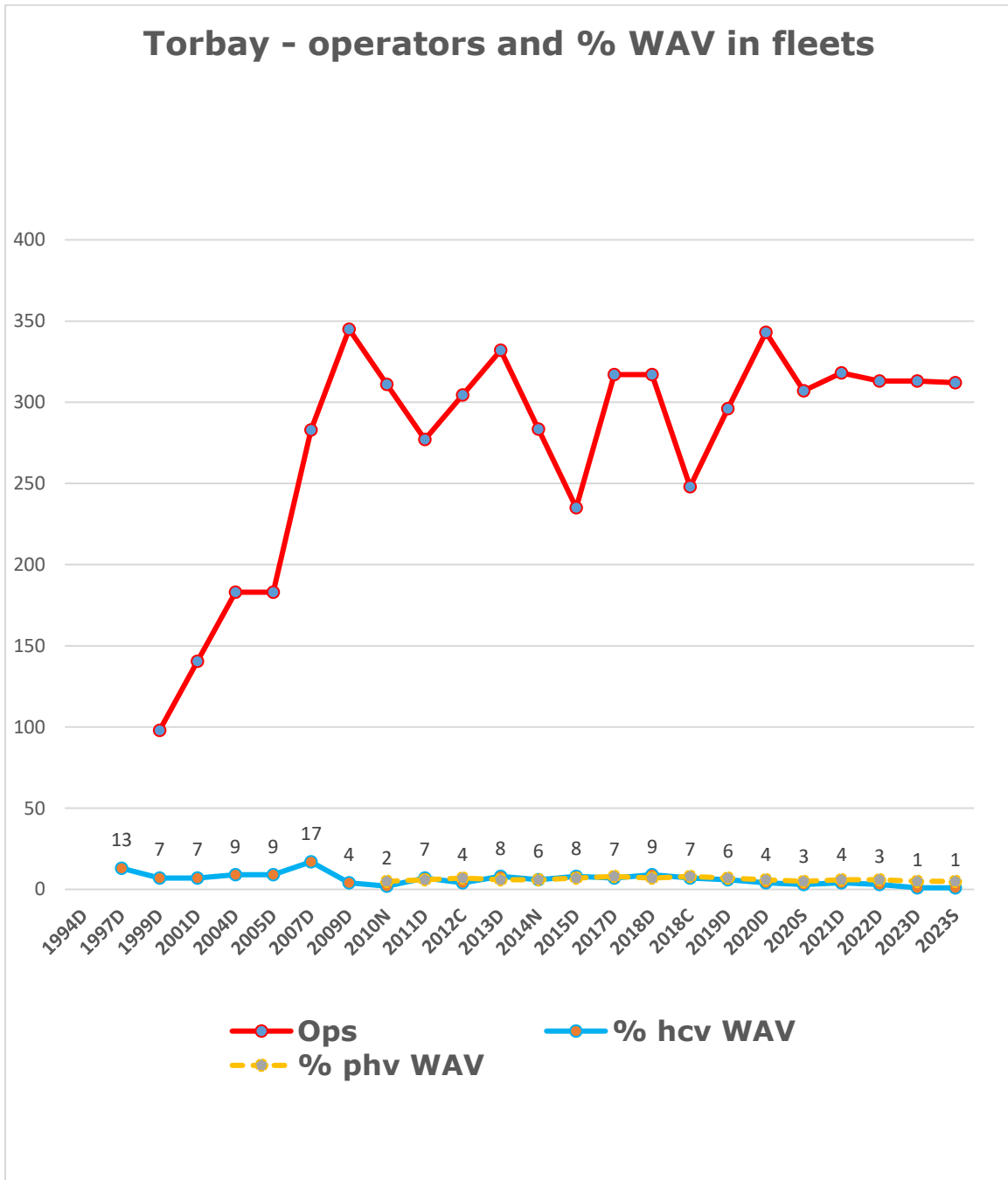
At the same time, the number of private hire vehicle licences has been steadily reducing since the last survey, although there was a peak just before the pandemic occurred (and a relatively large drop in the first data for the pandemic period).

In terms of driver numbers, which are all now 'dual' licences with all drivers able to drive either hackney carriage or private hire according to their wish at the time of driving each day, the trend remains a steady reduction since the peak of 2007, albeit with some increase from 2015 to 2018. Total driver numbers are now about 34% higher (was 41%) than in 1997 although 40% (was 16% in 2020) less than the peak level. The gap between the total number of drivers and vehicles continues to be closing, suggesting a reduction in the number of people who would be wishing to rent a vehicle.

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.

The information for levels of wheel chair accessible vehicles and number of operators is shown in the graph below:





Operator numbers and levels of WAV provision in the fleet

Like private hire vehicle numbers, the number of operators grew quickly from 1997 to its peak in 2009. This was about 3.5 times the initial level, similar to the overall level of vehicles. The general trend since then has been downward, although numbers have again varied but since the last survey, the decline has been gradual but certain.

The number of operators in Torbay is high given the following statement of policy (Policy document Chapter 16): "Any person who makes provisions for the invitation for acceptance of bookings for a private hire vehicle or a private hire service, must do so under the provision of a valid private hire operator licence..." They may also work for a company that has its own operating licence but if they intend to take any direct booking they must have their own licence. This effectively means every private hire vehicle has its own licence. Our review of the structure of the industry (below) found there were several multiple operator licences held for unknown reasons.

This means that a very high number of the operators are in fact one-man operations who can then choose to work for larger operators as suits them, providing a much more fluid private hire operating background than in many other areas. The statistics are artificially inflated by the process of allocating operators that can lead to those owning several vehicles having more than one operators' licence which is later revised to ensure no owner has more than one operator licence. In the figures used below, the number of operators on this basis is 13% higher than the real number.

In terms of wheel chair accessible vehicles, since the peak of 17% of the hackney carriage fleet as at 2007, numbers have reduced, although numbers have grown in the private hire fleet, starting from 2010. In the most recent figures (from council sources at the time of the survey), there are 5% of the private hire fleet wheel chair accessible but only 1% of the hackney carriage fleet (just two vehicles). The bulk of the private hire WAV style vehicles mainly work for one company with a specific focus on providing this demand. These proportions have fallen since the last survey, with ten less vehicles now available.

An analysis was undertaken using the consistent DfT 2023 set of licensed vehicle statistics to understand the total provision of WAV vehicles in the total licensed vehicle fleet. At that time Torbay had two WAV in the hackney carriage fleet and 15 in the private hire element of the trade. This provides 4% of the total licensed fleet of WAV format. This placed Torbay 218th out of the 267 licensing authorities in England.

However, previous research in the last survey found that Torbay had made effort to increase the WAV level of hackney carriages, with the main positive gain from increasing the age limit on such vehicles from eight to ten years (achieved by October 2013, seeing the proportion rise from 4 to 8%). In 2017 other ideas were formally discounted, and a discussion of setting a target of 20% not taken forward. Extensive and targeted research in that period did not obtain any evidence of issues of shortages of such vehicles.

The 2018 survey did not identify any concerns about the low level of provision, and on the contrary found a good level of usage of hackney carriages at ranks by those in wheel chairs in the rank observations.

A much higher level of people was identified with non-wheel chair requiring disabilities who were provided with very good assistance into vehicles by drivers. Furthermore, we identified that one company, which happens to have the bulk of the private hire WAV vehicles allied to it, is providing a high level of service to those needing a range of WAV vehicles, but principally doing this through pre-bookings, with the bulk of such being Monday to Friday daytime. They suggest that most of their customers tend not to need WAV at other times but also do try to provide vehicles, often from the hackney carriage WAV independent fleet if customers have a particular, out-of-weekday requirement.

This confirms that, although the level of WAV provision appears to be low in number, in reality the focus of those vehicles that are available on the actual needs means that the majority of requirements were well-met suggesting no need for any further action on this matter. We believe this conclusion remains correct for this latest review (see further evidence in rank chapter below).

We would therefore confirm that the level of provision and manner of provision of WAV style vehicles across the full licensed vehicle fleet in Torbay seems to be appropriate and sufficient for the bulk of current need, and that this statement from the previous survey remains correct. The issue of out of weekday hour service, and the issue that there are several vehicles that appear to be WAV but are not actually WAV-capable also remains.

In terms of the pandemic, the decline in WAV vehicle proportions has continued but the change is only a continuation and not an impact directly of the pandemic itself. Both fleets have seen reducing numbers of WAV style vehicles since the time of the last survey which has continued further into this survey.

Industry Structure

A detailed analysis was undertaken to identify the current industry structure behind the 169 hackney carriage vehicles, 303 private hire vehicles, 517 drivers and 312 operators licensed as involved in the industry at the time of the survey. This equates to 567 (was 602 in 2020) different persons having various licences in the licensed vehicle trade of Torbay. The total of people involved in the industry is higher as the number excludes any administrative staff who do not need any current licence.

There are a wide range of legitimate operating models for how people can be involved in the licensed vehicle industry. The simplest model is where an owner owns and drives their own vehicle. For hackney carriages, this only requires a vehicle and a driver licence. On the private hire side, any similar operation that

does not want to work for an operator, also needs a private hire operators' licence. The 'triple lock' rule means that all three licences must be from the same licensing authority to be totally valid.

Traditionally, the market can be split whereby a person becomes a driver but does not own a vehicle, supported by people who own vehicles but do not drive them. In many authorities, such as Torbay, any person with a driver licence for a licensed vehicle can drive either a hackney carriage or a private hire (both vehicle types need to be licensed by Torbay).

More complex models arise based on these groupings, e.g. a person might own and drive their own vehicle but also own several other vehicles they rent out. This can often, but not always, be a family grouping (where rents might not apply).

Although there is extensive legislation and guidance regarding both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles, drivers and operators, there are a good number of practices that are not regulated, some of which impact on unmet demand and service to the public. Key ones include no specific requirement that a plate retains a vehicle attached for the length of the license issued, no way to ensure that drivers cover all needed operating hours, nor any stipulation that reserves hackney carriages to service at ranks or by hailing. In fact, one often stated benefit of hackney carriage operation is that a vehicle and its driver can operate from ranks, be hailed or take bookings, the first two items within the area both are licensed only, but the latter effectively anywhere in England (which resulted in one of the two 'cross-border' conundrums).

Torbay historically had a small sub-set of hackney carriage plates only issued for the first six months of the licensing year. This was the only such example in England and was discontinued after the last survey.

To confirm, at the time of the rank survey work, when the database was summarised, there were 169 hackney carriage vehicles licensed, 303 (was 307) private hire vehicles, 517 (was 543) drivers and 312 (was 234) distinct operators.

The largest groups are the individuals who also own a single vehicle (and for the private hire element are also operators). There are 96 (was 61) single hackney carriage owner drivers and 187 (was 201) single private hire owner driver operators. There is nothing to prevent these vehicles having either supplementary drivers or being rented if the owner does not wish to drive them. Others own more than one vehicle. Where a person owns both a hackney carriage and a private hire it has been assumed for these purposes that they would choose to drive the hackney carriage.

On this basis, the figures imply that 49 hackney carriage vehicles (29% of the fleet) and 99 private hire vehicles (33% of the fleet) must be directly available to the public only if rented, a total of 148 vehicles.

There are 173 (was 240) individuals who are only drivers and must therefore rent a vehicle to be active in the trade (some 31% of all drivers). This is marginally higher than the number of vehicles directly available (148) suggesting some owner drivers may also rent, or that some drivers hold a licence but may not use it.

As already stated, whilst some authorities ask for record to be provided of company allegiances, this is not a legal requirement and is generally left to the market and individuals to determine. In Torbay, one relatively unique arrangement is that any private hire vehicle owner is encouraged to have their own private hire operator licence to ensure any operation of the vehicle would be on a legal footing. Again, we are not aware of any other authorities that do this.

A variety of complex arrangements are in place – some owner drivers also have extra vehicles on both hackney carriage and private hire sides. A small number of vehicles are owned by people with both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles. All the seasonal vehicle plates are within arrangements including at least one other vehicle.

On the hackney carriage side, the largest owner has four vehicles, with most multiple owners having two or three. On the private hire side, the largest owner has 21 (was 19 in 2020) vehicles. Others have 18, 10, 6, 4, 3 or 2.

This suggests there is plenty of scope for people to find a way to be part of the licensed vehicle trade of Torbay in a way that suits their preferences. It does, however, imply that a good proportion of the fleet is dependent on relationships between people to operate, rather than just being the involvement of a single party. This has implications discussed later.

Limit policy and its review

Torbay undertakes regular review of its policy to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers in line with the BPG. The previous surveys were in 2020 (September, 600 outline hours plus a test in October), 2018 (May, 300 hours), 2014 (October, 252 hours), 2011 (May, 259 hours), 2008 (November 2007, 519 hours) and 2005 (October 2004). The dates in brackets are the dates the rank survey work was undertaken. Further discussion of the rank usage results is provided in Chapter 3 whilst discussion of the unmet demand standard industry index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD) tool results are provided in Chapter 7.

3 Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)

As already recorded in Chapter 2, control of provision of on-street ranks in the Torbay Council area is entirely within the gift of the authority itself, albeit being through the separate highways department.

Our methodology involves a current review both in advance of submitting our proposal to undertake this Unmet Taxi 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 have been no changes to rank provision in the area since the previous survey. Nor have there been any significant changes in the area which might cause major change between usage of ranks.

Street marshals, introduced before the last survey, remain in place with part of their time spent being specifically allocated to managing hackney carriage operations. They operate on Fridays and Saturdays (but only up to the end of the Summer season, June to August) as follows:

Torquay Harbourside: 19:00 to midnight, then taxi specific to 04:00

Paignton: 17:30 to 23:00, then taxi specific to 01:00, then assist at Torquay Harbourside until 02:30

Like many other areas, Torbay has several ranks that ceased to see regular use some while ago. Others have very specific uses related to their specific demand generators. Some service a wider range of uses that provide them with more stability within the overall tapestry of change that can occur in any area.

Overview of rank observations

All known active ranks in Torbay, including those at the two private station locations, were observed from 07:00 Thursday 22nd June 2023 through to the 06:59 on Sunday 25th June 2023.

The video record was observed to identify periods when each rank was active, lightly used or not used at all. The rank at Torwood Street is only operational from 18:00 to 06:00 daily but was checked for activity – only parked cars were observed during those hours.

Of the 607 (600 last survey) total hours of observation included, 41% (45%) were active (three or more hackney carriage movements per hour), 10% (12%) saw light usage and 49% (44%) saw no hackney carriage or passenger activity at all – a similar spread to the previous survey with just a few less active hours than quiet, but with more inactive hours. This is interesting given the previous survey was within COVID times suggesting that patterns of usage then have not changed significantly since.

All active hours were observed in detail, with further information gleaned from the hours lightly used in order to ensure that all rank activity during the 607 hours were captured. Information from many of the 61 quiet hours was also observed and added into the information analysed, such that our record covers all rank hours with any activity.

Further details of actual active hours are discussed in the detailed sections below.

During the course of the 607 hours of observation, a total of 13,632 (13,213 in 2020) records were produced including vehicle and passenger arrivals and departures and other relevant comments (such as notes about location openings or other relevant points). 39% (37%) of these records were from the Strand, 15% (16%) from Paignton station, 15% (12%) each from Union Street and Brixham, 2% (10%) from Victoria Parade, 6% (same) from the Post Office Roundabout, 4% (5%) from Cary Parade, 2% (same) from Torquay station, none (1%) from Torwood Street and none (a small number in 2020) from Castle Circus. These values include all vehicles observed at the rank, or considered to be in locations impacting on the rank. It should be noted that parked vehicles at Torwood Street were not counted for this survey as they were in 2020 as there were no hackney carriage movements observed there at all.

69% (70% in 2020) of these records related to vehicle arrivals or departures. 6% (7%) were private cars, 0.1% (0.5%) emergency vehicles, 0.3% (just under 1%) private hire vehicles and 0.9% (just over 1%) goods vehicles. The remaining 92% (90.5%) were local Torbay hackney carriages. This shows very good compliance, and possibly even improved compliance since 2020, with rank regulations in the area, well against national trends.

Two active ranks that saw private car incursions were Union Street (18% (22% in 2020) of observations) and Victoria Parade (14%, same). Cary Parade also saw 18% cars. Other ranks only saw between 0.3% and 3% cars.

Overall rank usage estimates

The rank observations were analysed to identify the estimated weekly usage of each site by passengers. For context, the table includes comparison to all previously available and identified values.

Rank	2023		2020		2018		2014		2011		2008		2005
	June		Early Sept		May		October		May		Nov 2007		
	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass
Torquay, The Strand	5907	43	5953	43	5761	33	3400	23	1766	14	497	4	
Paignton Stn, priv	2272	17	2061	15	2762	16	2165	15	2037	16	1182	11	
Brixham, Bank Ln	2206	16	1685	12	2619	15	2357	16	2204	18	1864	17	1982
Torquay, Union St	1380	10	1168	8	2026	11.6	1924	13	1601	13	3469	31	
Torquay, PO Rbt	900	7	781	6	1058	6.1	1106	8	1313	10	1422	13	
Torquay, Cary Pde	432	3	587	4	409	2.3	456	3	436	3	319	3	
Torquay, Vic Pde	414	3	1269	9	1869	10.7	1721	12	2037	16	765	7	
Torquay Stn, priv	202	1	245	2	868	5	534	4	648	5	391	3	
Torquay, Torwood St			14	0.0	36	0.2	873	6	69	1	Not there		
Torquay, Castle Circ			6	0.0	12	0.1	197	1	417	3	711	6	
Paignton, Hyde Rd											465	4	
Tqy, Princess Th											80	1	
Tqy, Westlands Sch											20	0	
Pnton, Dtmouth Rd											18	0	
Tqy, Lymn Rd, 2 site											5	0	
Tqy, Lymn Rd, Co Stn											5	0	
Tqy, Chestnut Av											0	0	
P'nton, Palace Av											0	0	
P'nton, Torbay Rd											0	0	
TOTALS	13713		13769		17420		14734		12527		11212		
Growth frm previous			-21		+18		+18		+12		N/A		

The key result is that current levels of passengers at ranks is estimated to be almost the same observed in the previous survey. This compares to the 21% reduction from 2018 to 2020 and the 18% growth in rank observed passengers found between both the 2014 and the 2018 and the 2011 and 2014 results, both of which were effectively 30 months apart, similar to the 2020 gap to 2018. It is notable that effectively this survey suggests that usage of hackney carriages at ranks overall is now stable.

Looking at the ranks overall, The Strand is about the same level of usage, Paignton, Brixham, Union Street and PO Roundabout have all increased in both number and share. The big loser is Victoria Parade which has dropped in usage and moved from fourth to seventh in overall usage terms. Cary Parade and Torquay Station also reduced their usage.

Rank usage by location and time

The outline information gathered identified the following by rank:

The Strand – no activity 07:00 Thursday, 04:00 to 08:59 Friday, 06:00, 08:00 and 09:00 Saturday.

Victoria Parade – Mixture of active or light usage for most hours apart from no usage Thursday 08:00, 10:00 and 11:00, Thursday midnight to Friday 15:59, 19:00, 23:00, Saturday 01:00 to 12:59; 14:00, 15:00, 17:00 to 20:59 and from 22:00 onwards until 06:59 Sunday

Union Street – No activity 19:00 Thursday to Friday 06:59; 18:00 Friday to 06:59 Saturday and 19:00 onwards Saturday to Sunday – very clearly related only to shopping hours – just six lightly used hours

Post Office Roundabout – no activity 20:00 Thursday to 07:59 Friday; 20:00 Friday to 07:59 Sat and 19:00 on Saturday through to Sunday – seven lightly used hours and clearly mainly related to shopping.

Torquay Station rank (private) – light usage 10:00, 11:00, 14:00 Thursday, 09:00 and 14:00 Friday, 10:00 Saturday, heavier usage 12:00, 13:00, 15:00 Thursday and Friday and 11:00 to 15:59 Saturday

Cary Parade – effectively a waiting area for the nearby hackney carriage circuit office – but vehicles and passengers regularly there often appearing to take advantage of a vehicle being there – active hours Friday 17:00, 20:00 to 23:59 and Saturday 13:00 to 15:59 and 17:00 to 01:59

Torwood Street – no real usage at all by hackney carriages

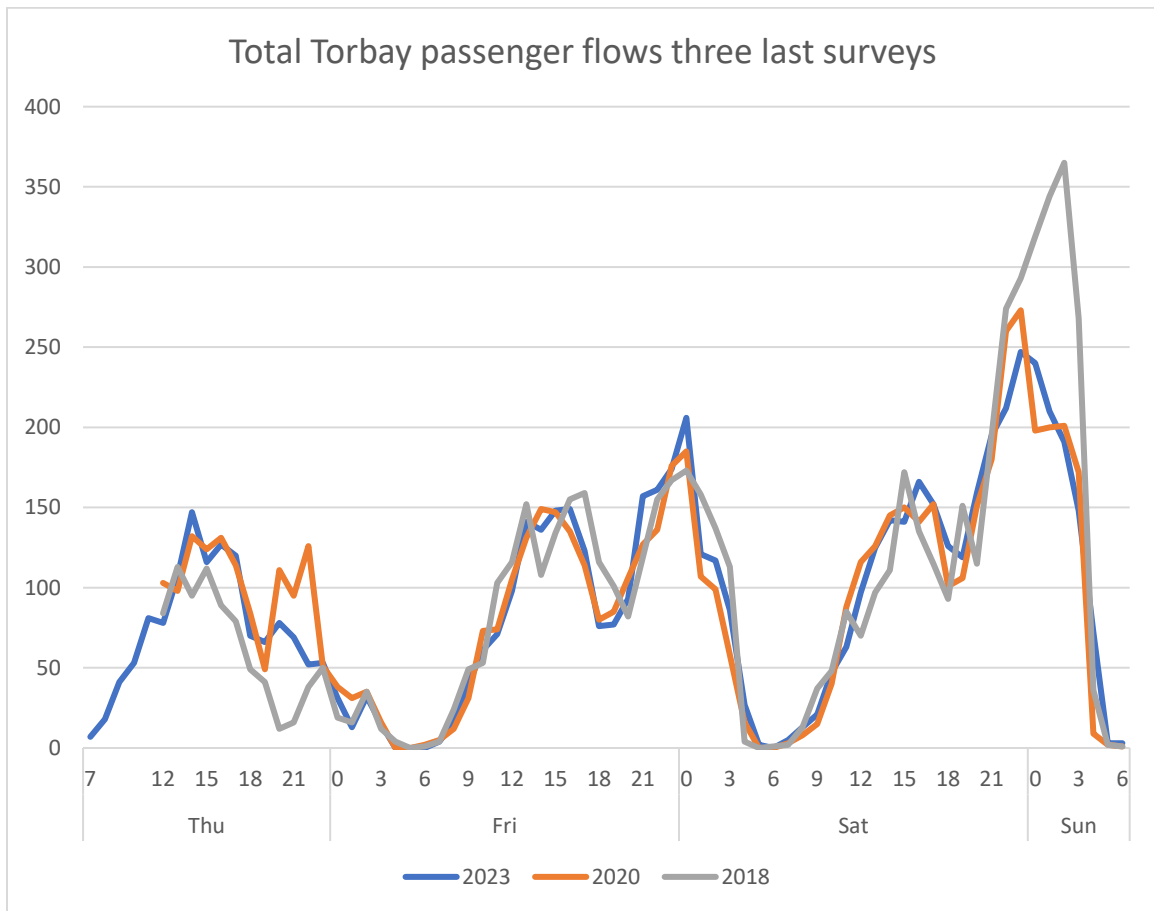
Castle Circus – no real usage at all by any vehicles

Brixham – active Thursday 08:00 till 21:59; Friday 09:00 to 00:59 Saturday and Saturday 09:00 to 01:59 Sunday, otherwise no activity apart from one or two quiet hours 22:00 Thursday, 04:00, 07:00 and 08:00 Saturday (none on Friday).

Paignton Station – private – quiet 07:00 Thursday then active till 23:59 Thursday, quiet 07:00 and 08:00 Friday then active 09:00 Friday to 02:59 Saturday, quiet 03:00 and 07:00 / 08:00 then busy 09:00 Saturday until 02:59 Sunday.

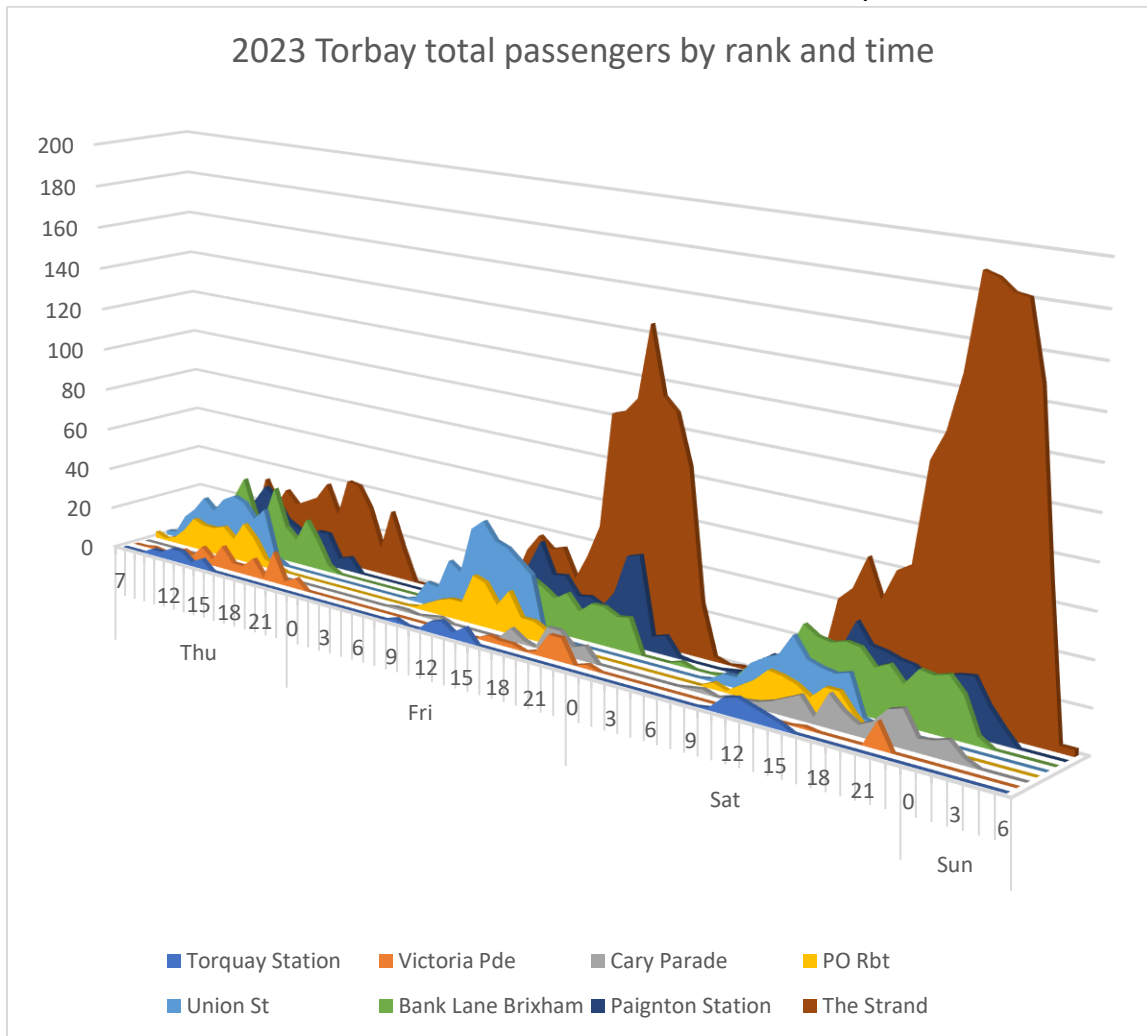
Further review was used to provide the following demonstration of how demand varied over the survey period (using actual data only). These graphs are comprehensive given that all ranks were observed in full over the period covered.

The graph below shows total hourly passenger flows across all ranks in the area during the period surveyed, and also covers the last three surveys. All three days show a similar pattern with reduced flows around 18:00 and 19:00 each day after which there were peaks growing in size from Friday to Saturday (no peak on Thursday in evening this survey as there was in 2020). Daytime flows still appeared similar on all three days. There were three other hours Friday morning (two in 2020) but just one hour on Saturday (two in 2020) that saw no passengers at any rank, otherwise there were people using ranks somewhere in the area in all observed hours, even on Sunday mornings.



Average passenger flows in 2023 were 91 (94, 2020, 98, 2018) per hour. However, the peak to average ratio has continued to reduce, from 3.7 2018 to 2.9 2020 to 2.7 now. The peak was in the same 23:00 Saturday hour as in 2020, which was in the 02:00 hour in 2018. Though the peak in 2023 was again lower, there is evidence that there is a little more early Sunday morning activity, but nowhere near the levels seen in 2018. This suggests that the patterns of usage in 2020 and 2023 are relatively similar, with the hoped-for recovery not yet really observed to any significance.

The second graph considers each separate rank compared to the others, and demonstrates the different contributions of each rank compared to each other.



The graph shows the rise of numbers from Thursday to Friday to Saturday, typical of many rank usage profiles. It does, however, show that morning flows appear relatively similar on all three days although Thursday seems to have the earliest peak flow levels, albeit at a lower level than the late night peaks on Friday and Saturday nights. This is similar to 2020 but as already noted there is no evening peak on Thursdays now.

The graph also shows the continued clear dominance of the Strand rank in passenger numbers. This is the principal rank operating overnight. However, Paignton station rank also contributes strongly to the Friday – Saturday and Saturday – Sunday peaks although generally ending much earlier than the Strand, although continuing a little longer in 2023 than in 2020. Victoria Parade seems to have dropped out of any significant usage in 2023.

Union Street and the Post Office roundabout both operate during shopping hours with the former having generally higher levels of patronage. Brixham tends to run at fairly constant levels through the day but decreases much less on Friday and Saturday nights than on Thursdays. Cary Parade operates at most hours but at a generally lower level overall. All these statements are no different from 2020. This again suggests that from a demand point of view things have remained stable since levels occurring what was in the midst of the pandemic. This is not perhaps what was expected, with little sign of any significant return of pre-pandemic demand, but at least no further reductions.

Surveyed hours with observed unmet demand

Information from the rank observations was reviewed to consider only those hours when there was average passenger delay (APD) identified. Of the total hours observed, 36% (a significant increase since the 21% of 2020) had average passenger delay of any amount. 61% (44% 2020) of these hours with delay had levels of a minute or more (22% (9%) of the total overall hours).

In terms of the overall average passenger delay across the surveyed hours, for all ranks, this is 37 seconds per person shared out over all those using hackney carriages. However, when applied just to those that actually had to wait, the typical wait was 4 minutes 24 seconds. 78% of those waiting waited between one and five minutes, 15% six to 10 minutes and 7% 11 minutes or more.

However, the pattern across the area varies. Over the full days observed, Torquay Station saw the worst average passenger delays – over four minutes on the Thursday, just under six minutes on the Friday and 56 seconds on the Saturday. Brixham had 1m51, 1m11 and 1m 54 respectively. Paignton Station saw 1m17, 34 seconds and 1m 4 respectively. All other ranks, all in Torquay, had average passenger delays over each day of no more than 51 seconds, with many less than that (e.g. Union Street, Saturday, just one second).

A review of the times that passengers experienced waits for hackney carriages suggested this was spread over time and not concentrated on any one period of the day or week. The worst average passenger delay in an hour that was not related to 'thin' demand was of 10m 31 seconds at Brixham at 18:00 on the Saturday of the survey.

In terms of total time waited by passengers, Paignton saw 37% of delay time, Brixham 13%, The Strand 13%, Torquay Station 9%, Post Office Roundabout 8%, Cary Parade 7%, Union Street 3% and Victoria Parade 2%.

Further discussion regarding how significant this unmet demand is follows in the later chapter specifically regarding this.

Frequency of vehicle operation during rank survey

For this survey, a sample set of observations were undertaken to identify the vehicles that were active on the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the rank observation programme (in 2020 just Friday and Saturday were covered). Five different locations were observed covering a total of 8.5 hours each day (7.5 hours last time). A total of 1,009 (391 last time) different vehicle movements were observed, of which 26% were on the Thursday, 40% on the Friday and 34% on the Saturday. Just taking the Friday and Saturday observations to compare to 2020 54% (57%) were on the Friday and 46% (43%) on the Saturday, a relatively similar spread. All were near to ranks or routes to or from ranks but not at ranks in order to minimise any opportunity for the observations been seen and 'played up' to.

The observations were reviewed to confirm observations that were legitimate hackney carriage and private hire vehicles from the Torbay licensed vehicle fleet. A total of 15 (eight last time) observations, just 1.5% (2%) of those noted, were not local licensed vehicles, with again perhaps half of these possibly registered with one distant licensing authority, although these vehicles could also have simply been visiting the area for various reasons as the observations were not meant to identify what activity each vehicle was undertaking in detail.

73% (76%) of the observations were identified as local Torbay hackney carriage vehicles. 25% (22%) were local Torbay private hire, with the remaining 2% not identified (0.5% could have been mis-observations and 1.5% were believed to be out of town plates).

The number of plates available for the survey period was 169 hackney carriages (165 last time with some not on issue then).

Over the three-day sample, 72% (53% over two days last time) of the active available fleet (AAF) was observed.

24% (16% 2020) of the AAF were observed at more than one location, with just 2% (none in 2020) vehicle observed in more than two different locations. 41% (46%) of the AAF were observed passing along Cary Parade, 21% (14%) at Union Street and in Paignton (2020, 12%) and 17% along Pimlico (5% 2020) and in Brixham (23% 2020). This confirms the main rank still sees the largest share of vehicles serving it.

The comparison suggests vehicles are servicing more of the whole area now than in 2020. There appear to be more vehicles servicing Paignton and Brixham now, but as shown below including more vehicles servicing beyond Torquay. It must be remembered that this survey is a sample and that it is not at ranks but nearby, so it will capture vehicles passing through or serving as private hire as well as those working at the ranks.

12% (17%) were only observed in Brixham. 10% (14%) were only observed in Paignton and 55% only at Torquay locations. 4% (3%) of the fleet were observed in Brixham and also at other Torquay ranks. 12% (5%) were seen in Paignton and also at other Torquay ranks. This continues to suggest a fleet split three ways but perhaps less so than in 2020.

A review was undertaken of the plates not seen. It must be remembered the plate survey is a sample, covering Thursday / Friday / Saturday during the rank observation period which may miss vehicles whose work patterns do not include the surveyed hours. However, the sample hour structure has been developed over time to maximise the results obtained, so the level of missed working vehicles should be low.

Of the 48 hackney carriage plates not seen it was suggested by licensing that 10% were in the process of being transferred at the time of the survey due to driver retirement for a range of reasons and a third were known either to only service school contracts or other specific client bases. A further 29% were known to service school contracts but were still believed to service ranks, with the final 27% unclear why they were not seen. One of the two hcv WAV were not seen in the plate review although the vehicle is believed to service ranks but mainly services school runs so was probably operating out of the time period the plate survey covered.

Further consideration and validation of these values, and their impact on public service levels, are considered in the synthesis section below. In this context it must be remembered that there are no ways by which drivers can be expected

to use their plates in any stipulated manner although the issue of a hackney carriage plate is primarily to service the public at ranks and through hailing, particularly where their numbers are limited.

Observed usage for those with disabilities

The overall observations across all ranks found that 5% (7% in 2020) of the observed vehicles at ranks appeared to be wheel chair accessible vehicle style. This compares to 2% (3%) of the hackney carriage fleet that are this style. This may arise either from a tendency for the WAV style vehicles to spend more time at the ranks than other vehicles, or from the possible issue that a number of vehicles in the fleet may appear to be WAV but are not actually WAV-capable (i.e. minibuses or larger WAV style vehicles that are not fitted with ramps or other items that see them WAV-capable), or in some cases the larger capacity of the WAV style vehicles may suit service particularly at busy night ranks for service of groups of people.

A review by rank found the highest proportion of WAV were observed at the Cary Parade rank. Some 31% of the fleet observed there appeared to be WAV. This location is effectively a base for vehicles waiting bookings and this may demonstrate that several WAV are allied to this operation. The other locations with higher values than average were Torquay Station (8%) and Brixham (7%). No WAV were seen at the Post Office roundabout rank, 1% at Union Street, 3% at Victoria Parade and 4% at both Paignton Station and the Strand ranks. These numbers however and the fact there are just two hcv WAV suggest that some observations were in fact vehicles that appeared to be WAV but were actually not.

During the course of the observations, 10 (13 in 2020) people were observed accessing hackney carriages at ranks in wheel chairs. There were three at the Strand (same as 2020), two at Union Street (1, 2020), two at Brixham (3, 2020), and one each at Paignton (3,2020), the Post Office roundabout (1,2020) and Victoria Parade (none 2020). There were none at Cary Parade (2 in 2020). These values are also high given that many wheelchair user trips are undertaken with two specialist companies who operate on the basis of bookings only with private hire vehicles.

This distribution has some stark contrasts to where WAV were observed suggesting several of the wheel chair users transferred from their chair. This appears most true at the Post Office Roundabout and Union Street locations, both principally shopping trip ranks.

However, this does demonstrate that the very low level of overall WAV provided seem to get high usage by the public, which is encouraging, and there seems some willingness for passengers to transfer.

A further 160 (89 in 2020) people were observed with other forms of visible disability, mainly people using sticks. The largest number was at Union Street (43, 24 in 2020), then Paignton station (42 now, 27 2020), then Brixham (28 compared to 13), the Strand (22 compared to 14), Post Office roundabout (16 compared to 11), and Victoria Parade with 5. These are high levels of usage by those with need for assistance and are a very positive comment on the public trust in the hackney carriage service.





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 (e.g. of students, or a sub-centre), although conclusions from these separate samples can only be indicative taken alone. For some authorities with multiple centres this can imply value in using a higher sample size, such as 250 if there are two large and one moderate sized centre.

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 details of the results of the on-street responses are included in Appendix 5.

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, people were interviewed directly on the streets on Tuesday 4th and Wednesday 5th July 2023. Of the target of 200 interviews, 128 were obtained (135 last survey). It proved more difficult to obtain larger samples in the two smaller towns. These results are therefore marginally more indicative than normal.

25% (13% last time) were obtained in Brixham and 24% (11%) in Paignton, with the remainder in Torquay, some near to the Harbour. 62% (75% last time) of those interviewed said they lived in the Torbay area. In the 2017 survey there were more non-locals (57% lived in the area). The remainder provide a range of postcodes, covering several parts of England with no specific place dominant.

Comparing the interview sample with the latest estimates for Torbay from the census (initial 2021 census values for 2021), more men were interviewed than expected (50% (63% last time) compared to a census level of 48%) whilst more of the mid-age group (31-55) were interviewed (37% (52% sample compared to 34% (33% census) with a few less of the younger group (16% compared to 17% expected) and 47% (42%) of the older group compared to 49% (50%) in the census. This is a better spread than in the previous survey so results should be more robust and reliable, although last time proved sufficiently robust.

33% (37% 2020, 36% 2017) said they had made one or more trips by licensed vehicle in Torbay in the last three months, a marginal reduction. Of these, for this survey 40% (26%, 44% in previous two surveys) said they had only used hackney carriage, 19% (30%, 25%) said they had used both hackney carriage and private hire whilst the remaining 40% (44%, 33%) said they had used only private hire. The shift this time is away from use of either kinds of vehicle with people appearing to make more direct choices either to use hackney carriage or private hire.

People gave their frequencies of use of licensed vehicles in the area. 47% (45% last survey) said they had never used them. 22% (18%) said once or twice yearly, 13% (11%) said less than once a month but more than twice a year whilst none (6%) said three or more times weekly. Using average levels, an estimate of trips per person per month of 0.4 (1.7 2020 and 1.3 2017) – a strong reduction. The similar level for hackney carriage usage was 0.25 (1.0, 0.7), suggesting 69% (58%, 54%) of licensed vehicle usage was in fact by hackney carriage, a relatively high and increased level survey on survey.

People were asked how they normally obtained a licensed vehicle in the Torbay area. 44% (36%, 30% and 23% previously) said at a rank with a further zero (14%, 5%, 2%) saying they hailed on street. This gives 44% (50%) for direct hackney carriage usage, in the same order (but slightly lower) than the estimate from the usage statistics. Compared to previous years the clear trend is increase in usage of hackney carriages from ranks. 47% (38%, 45%, 75%) said telephone (reversing what was an apparent reducing trend) and 9% (3%) an app. None (8%) said 'other'.

People were invited to tell us the companies they phoned for vehicles. 33% (31%) of respondents gave us at least one company. Of these, just 2% (5%) gave three names, 22% (19%) two and 76% (same) just a single name. This suggests either reasonable satisfaction or an element of a concentration of the industry on a few large players, perhaps even more so for this survey in 2023.

However, counter to this was that this time nine (just five last time) companies were named, with the largest gaining 40% (43%) of the responses given (the same company, still dominant). The second largest gained 17% (second last time was 22% but a different company) and the third, 13%. Both were mentioned first time for this survey. The next two responses gained 12% (9% last time) and 10% (17% last time). The final three gained 4%, 2% and 2%. One of the companies with 2% this time had seen 22% in the last survey, the other two were not mentioned last time. Another company that gained 9% in the last survey was not mentioned this time.

In terms of apps used, just two were used, a local and a national, with the local app taking 64% and the national 36%, a typical result if local apps are in place and well-promoted.

52% (58% 2020, 47% 2017) of those responding to the question about how often they used hackney carriages in the area said they could not remember when they last used a hackney carriage.

3% (9% in 2020 and 2017) could not remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area. This suggests people are slightly more aware of hackney carriages now, consistent with their apparent small increased usage in some questions above.

19% (12%) said they only used them once or twice yearly, with 11% saying once or twice a month and 9% less than once a month or more than twice a year.

When asked about ranks, a check list was used to reduce quoting of different names. This resulted in nine ranks being listed with no-one suggesting any that were not on the list (27 names but many that were similar were given last time with a free entry of names). 58% of those interviewed provided at least one name (62% last time).

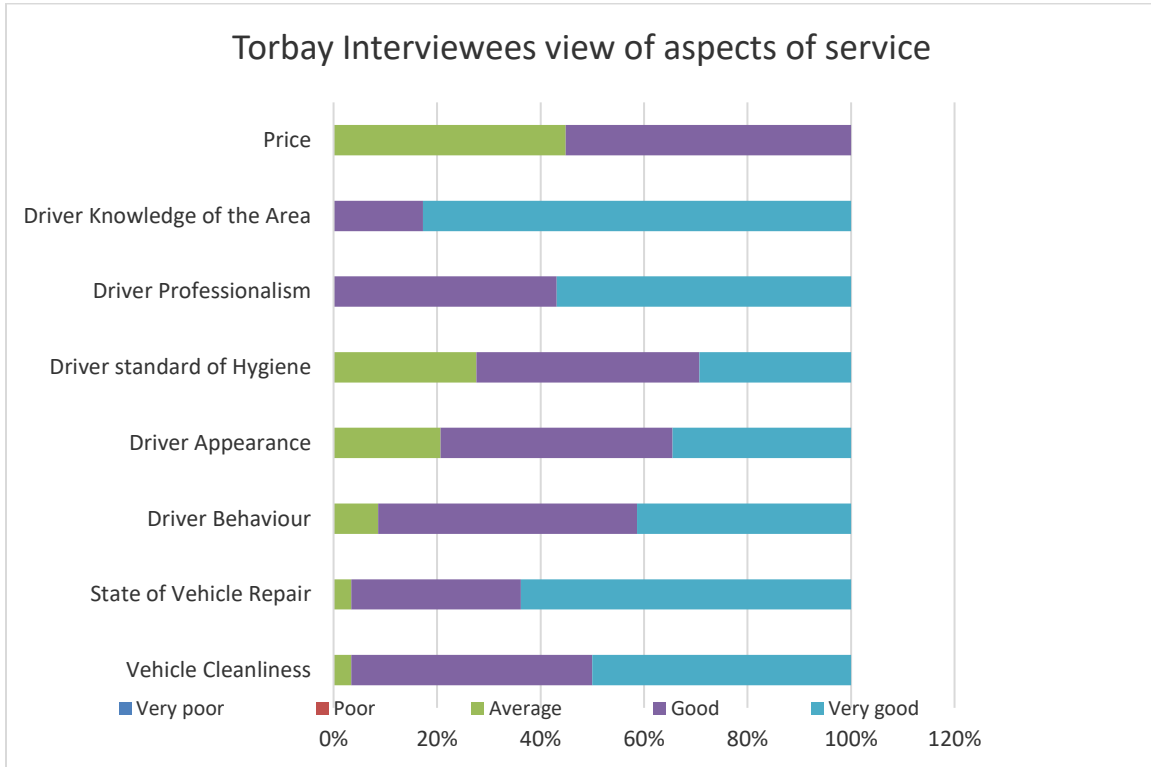
Of all those giving names, 29% (48% last time) named just one rank, 29% (20%) two and 22% (32%) three. A total of 198 (155) mentions were given overall. Of these, 60% (very similar to the 59% of last time, but still different to the 43% of the previous) of responses were for ranks people named but then said they did not use.

The top rank mentioned was The Strand, with 18% (was 17% last time including Torbay Road and Torbay Harbour quotes), with Union Street getting the same share (14% last time). Torquay Station surprisingly gets 16% (19% last time), with Bank Lane Brixham fourth with 13% (5%). Victoria Parade gained 11% (13%), Paignton Station 10% (6%), Post Office Roundabout 8% (5%), Torwood Street 4% (1%) and Cary Parade 3% (6%).

Most quoted as used rank was Union Street with 25% of the total mentions for ranks that were used. The Strand was second with 24%. For non-use The Strand gained 14% of mentions of not being used as did Bank Lane and Torquay Station. 1% of responses were that people used Torwood Street with none saying they used Cary Parade.

People were asked about their last Torbay licensed vehicle journey. There were a total of 46% (51% last time) of those interviewed who gave their opinions and did so for all categories. Overall, the views of the standard of all aspects of the service ranged from good to very good, with a small number of exceptions. Remarkably, for this survey there were no poor or very poor scores at all, with even price 45% average 55% good. The best score was for driver knowledge, where 83% said very good and the remainder good. Other than price, worst average score was for driver standard of hygiene, with an average score 28% and good 43% but also very good 29%.

The graph is shown below:



Over the whole area, 42% (47%) of respondents told us changes that might encourage them to use hackney carriages or use them more often. The main item was cheaper fares, with 70% (32%) of respondents saying this. Next was 19% for better driver quality (6% but also second last time) and finally 2% for more hackney carriages they could phone for (same as last time, but also with a similar share for rank last time), with no other matters receiving any score (last time 32% said nothing and a further 21% said nothing as they were not from the area).

Across the area, 91% (81% last time, 90% previously) said they did not need, nor were aware of anyone that needed an adapted licensed vehicle. The type of vehicles needed scored 10% (11%) for WAV style and none (7%) for other styles, suggesting WAV style is more strongly required.

With reference to latent demand, 44% (84% last time) of respondents provided an answer, with just two (four last time) saying they had given up waiting at a rank. This time the only location stated was 'town centre', although one person said they went on to make a booking while another hailed. This suggests very low latent demand, effectively 0.8%, i.e. 1.008, lower than the 1.01 of last time, but not that much less.

All (77% last time) respondents gave a view if there were enough hackney carriages in the Torbay area. Last time all responded they felt there were enough. This time 31% said yes, 6% no, but 64% said they were not sure.

People were asked if they felt they knew the current difference between a Torbay hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle. Most responded, with two thirds saying they did not know the difference. Specific aspects were then reviewed, with the licensing team advising us the correct answers they would expect (given that there is a wide variation across licensing areas for what is correct or not).



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 given stakeholders, but we try 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 is normally 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.

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.

For this survey, no responses were received. As our consultation is not statutory, there is little more that can be done. However, people have been provided the option to respond and if there were major issues, someone would have taken the opportunity. We do not consider this is a serious issue given that it is very rare that key stakeholder views overturn the results identified from the other elements of the data collection.

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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 behaviour.

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. However, it is also rare for there to be high levels of response, with 5% typically felt to be good and reasonable.

Taking into account the multiple involvement of some parties, the number of individuals involved and therefore contacted to complete the driver survey, was in the order of 567 (602 in 2021). 212 (172) responses were received, 37% (29%), showing a very strong response rate, which is encouraging, and even better than that in the previous survey. The survey was issued once the rank work had been completed.

The responses were reviewed and validated with no evidence of duplication. The largest proportion came from those saying they drove private hire vehicles (52%, 50% last time). This compares to 64% (65%) of the vehicle fleet being private hire. A further 2% (3%) said they drove both private hire and hackney carriage whilst 2% (8%) said they did not drive. 42% (39%) said they drove hackney carriages. This is a generally similar structure to the last survey so should give similar answers albeit for the present time.

Of those responding, 81% told us the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. 7% worked part time but had no other source of income. 7% were part time but with other sources of income. 2% said they were not working but intended to return, with 3% saying they were not working in the licensed vehicle trade and had no intention of returning.

Those responding had a wide range of lengths of service in the industry, with the most experienced person having been involved with the Torbay trade for 48 (52) years. The average length of service was 12 (13) years. Comparing those stating only hackney carriage and only private hire service, the average and maximum levels were both higher for hackney carriages (16 (13) compared to 9 (9) for average service and 48 (52) and 38 (37) years for the maximum length of service).

In terms of work normally undertaken (where people had to choose just one option), 37% (same) said immediate hire work from ranks. 34% (31%) said immediate hire work from bookings, 22% (same) advanced hire work and 4% (same) chauffeur or corporate work. The remaining 3% (6%) confirmed they were not drivers. Again, this question shows little difference from the last survey.

The overall profile across the survey for days worked found the highest frequency was five days (44%, same), followed by six days (29%, 21% last survey), four days (11%, 16% last time), not working (1%, was 8%), seven days (9%, was 5%), two or three days (1% and 3%, was 3% each) and the final 0% (was 1%) for one day only. The average was 5.2 (4.5) days. This suggests more days being worked, and more drivers returning to work, which is as could be expected.

Comparing hackney carriage, private hire and both categories for days worked, all saw the highest percentage for five days (40%, 47% and 67%, was 40, 44 and 60% respectively) but the hackney carriage profile was much more focussed on the higher number of days, resulting in an average for hackney carriage of 5.5 (was five) days compared to 5.0 (4.2) for private hire and 4.3 (5.4) for 'both'. This time, 7% (none last time) private hire driver said they had worked seven days. 12% (10%) of hackney carriages said they had.

With respect to hours worked in the week before completing the questionnaire, the overall average was 43 (35) per week. The maximum quoted was 90 (70) hours. When considered split between hackney carriage, private hire and those saying 'both' the values were 46, 41 and 31 (was 40, 34 and 33) respectively, suggesting a typical profile of longer hours for hackney carriages. Again these figures demonstrate an increase in activity since the last survey.

65% (Just over two thirds in last survey) of respondents told us their main issues that affected their choice of when to work. The main item quoted was working around family commitments (30%, last time 18%), then when contracts required (mostly school contracts)(16%), when busiest (11%, was 9%), simply that people were able to choose when they preferred to work, with no further detail (10%, was 31%). 7% worked around bookings (4% last time), 5% avoided busy traffic periods, 4% chose times because of their age, 4% avoided awkward customers (5% last survey), 3% worked when the tariff was highest, 3% preferred nights. A further 1% each quoted need to charge their vehicle, preference for mornings, working when rank space was most available, around another job (2% last time), preferring days, that they rented the plate, that they shared a vehicle, or at quieter times. It is clear many drivers, as with national views, are now putting family first, followed by guaranteed earnings such as contracts. However, against the national trends, is the small level of people avoiding awkward customers, which has reduced.

Respondents told us if they owned and drove their own vehicles. 77% (81% last time and 76% previously) said they did. This level was higher for hackney carriages at 88% (91%), 80% (same) for those saying they drove both and 72% (73%) for phv, very similar numbers.

Just 14% (much reduced from the 27% last time) said someone else drove the vehicle that they drove at another time. For hackney carriages, the value was 12% and 15% for private hire.

Drivers were asked if they accepted pre-bookings. 96% (94% last time) gave a response, of which 86% (exactly as last time) said that they did accept pre-bookings. A check was made of those that drove hackney carriages, or those that said they drove both but clearly used ranks. This found that 90% (87% last time) of all hackney carriages responding said they did accept bookings – a marginal increase.

For the full response, 47% (53% last time) of bookings were via an office, 17% (29%) by phone and 15% by direct referrals. Last time there were 7% by phone or email, with the remaining 11% by a mix of the above plus contracts and apps. This would include those taking bookings via the Cary Parade hackney carriage office. Apps were 3% for this survey with contracts a similar 3%. The company related shares were 11% for hackney carriage, 34% for private hire and 1.2% for the 'drive both' responses. Direct referrals were higher for hackney carriage (10% compared to 5% private hire). This demonstrates the wide range of ways all parts of the trade get their fares.

The question about rank usage received responses from 89 drivers (94% of the total possible). The total included all but three hackney carriages, two who clearly said they got most work from immediate hire from ranks but gave no rank names, and another who did not answer many further questions. Two of those that drove both kinds of vehicle did not respond, one because their main work was school contracts and another who was a vehicle owner.

As in the previous survey, the responses demonstrated several trade names for ranks in the area:

- Short Rank = The Strand (also known as Shiraz, Prezzo or Vaughan Parade)
- Long Rank = Victoria Parade
- Haldon Rank = Union Street rank
- GPO Rank = Tesco rank
- Torquay Harbour = Short, long and Cary Parade

Of all the responses, one (1%) named four locations, essentially the Harbour ranks plus Torquay Station, 16% named three (60% last time), 27% named two (17%) and 56% (23%) named just one, although 9% did say 'Torquay Harbour' which implies three ranks there (Strand, Victoria and Cary Parades). 17% said only Paignton Station (9% last time), 11% only Brixham (same as last survey), 8% only Torquay harbour ranks, and 6% only Strand. Just 3% said Torquay Station with none of these only servicing that location.

4% said they serviced all ranks, 0.5% all but Paignton and one told us they only worked in Paignton, but not at the Station rank due to the need for a permit. They confirmed no other rank there saw any significant patronage.

In total, some 142 (166 last time) different mentions were made of ranks. When transformed to a common set of names, 19% (23%) said the Strand, 19% (17%) Union Street, 9% Torquay Harbour, 8% (17%) Victoria Parade, 8% (10%) GPO roundabout, 9% (same) Brixham, 12% (8%) Paignton, 7% (same) Cary Parade, 2% (3%) Torquay station, 3% (2%) "Torquay", with no mention of any of the unused ranks at all this time. This suggests a strong reduction in use of Victoria Parade, a small reduction in use of the GPO rank, but a strong increase in use of Paignton rank.

In terms of share of work, just 2% of the hackney carriages giving shares of their work said they got all their work from ranks. However, a further 17% obtained 90% or more, 43% obtained 50-89% and a third gained 49% or less of their work from ranks. The average share from those saying they got work from ranks was that 49% of their work came from ranks.

There were 3% of hackney carriages responding who confirmed they did no work from ranks, one getting all their work from phone bookings and another all their work from school contracts. Interestingly, the other vehicle got 95% of work from telephone bookings but the balance from hailing.

The average level of hailing quoted was 5%, with a range from 0.25% to 25% (with two vehicles saying the latter). 63% of all hackney carriages providing a response said they gained at least some work from hailing.

59% of all responding private hire got all their work from telephone bookings. 10% got all work from schools contracts with 7% more getting all their work from contracts but not exclusively from schools work. 18% got between 20 and 80% of their work from school contracts.

Respondents were asked if they thought there were sufficient hackney carriages in Torbay at this time. 98% of hackney carriage and 93% of private hire responded. 93% of hackney carriage said there were enough. Only 58% of private hire agreed. 20% of private hire said there were not enough. 16% of private hire did not know.

Drivers were invited to confirm if they thought the limit policy remained correct for the area. Most responded (94%) of which 75% (91% last time) agreed this remained correct. This included most hackney carriages (93%), all that said they drove both kinds of vehicle and a majority of private hire drivers (57%). Of the overall total, 8.5% said they did not know, with 1% saying the questions was not applicable and 0.5% saying 'possibly not'. 15% of all respondents said they did not think the limit should be retained, higher than the 9% from last survey. Overall support is also reduced, but mainly from the private hire sector.

83% responded to the question regarding why the limit remained appropriate (50% last time). There were almost the same number of hackney carriages and private hire responding, and four each from the non-drive and drive both categories. This suggests a rounded response. 16% said they did not know. 2% said they felt there needed to be more vehicles, with 15% telling us they thought the limit provided no public benefit.

There were a further 12% who simply said the limit was a benefit, but not why. The remaining 56% gave various benefits. Top was preventing over ranking and congestion (11%) followed by 8% saying the limit meant that customers had a better chance of knowing the drivers, and 6% saying it prevented loss of drivers by keeping incomes higher. Other benefits included maintaining vehicle standards, providing better vehicles and drivers, enabling investment, covering the issue that seasonal earnings were lower, and many others.

When asked the benefits of removing the limit, 80% responded. Of these, 19% said they did not know. A quarter said there would be benefits, mainly adding more vehicles, better public safety, less issues at ranks and overall better service. However, 46% used this question to say they did not think there would be any benefit, with a further 7% saying there would be initial benefit and then a worsening as more drivers found they could not make a living. One suggested the real need was for part time night drivers.

Other General Comments

48% provided other comments. Many were very detailed and gave extensive views about the real issues, including need for more drivers and more that were willing to work night shifts.

There were concerns about potential loss of the GPO rank and changes to the Paignton station rank. Two said they only worked on school contracts. One pointed out a need for wheelchair accessible vehicles, whilst others said there were more than enough WAV.

Many reiterated the need to retain the limit whilst others pointed out shortages were mainly at busy times only.

A very big concern from across the trade was the current shortage of rank space which they believed was going to get worse. Many said that more plates would mean more vehicles not able to wait at ranks and therefore more congestion and pollution from these driving around.

Summary

There are many areas in which the current responses to the trade questionnaire suggest little has changed since the last survey. However, there is some evidence of more drivers working now and slightly more days and hours being worked. The strength of feeling regarding retention of the limit seems to have reduced a little (mainly from private hire), but the level of people quoting benefits of removing the limit has reduced, but both sides of the argument both remain strong. Other comments were made about vehicle policies and the need to consider ensuring drivers could make a reasonable living. A small number of hackney carriage and larger numbers of private hire confirm they do not service ranks or the general public but undertake specific work, principally for school contracts.

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 (factoring high demand level impacts down) to 1.2 for January / February (inflating the values from low demand levels upwards).

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 and needs to be taken fully in context.

Component	2023		2020		2018		2014	2011	2008
	All	Council only	All	Council only	All	Council only			
Average passenger delay (APD)(mins)	1.73	1.37	0.62	0.48	0.27	0.13	0.7	0.16	0.47
Off peak hours with any delay	43.33	39.77	35.09	31.4	30.59	30.88	8	0	7.2
Proportion of passengers travelling in hours with over a minute APD	47.58	42.24	18.2	16.63	5.40	5.278	5.7	1.42	15.71
Seasonal factor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peak factor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	0.5	1
Latent Demand factor	1.008	1.008	1.01	1.01	1.047	1.033	1.101	1.126	1
Index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD)	1801.26	1157.17	198.89	127.4	46.72	22.39	35.15	Zero	53.16

The table provides two values for the ISUD statistic for the last three surveys. The 'all' value includes all observed passenger waiting times from all ranks. The 'council only' value excludes observations at both Paignton and Torquay stations where the number of vehicles able to service demand is reduced by the imposition of the external requirement for a permit to service that location by the train operating company. Both values are over the cut-off of 80 suggesting that the observed unmet demand is significant. This was also the case in 2020.

Review of the information for each element shows that, apart from the latent demand factor which has marginally reduced, and the seasonal and peak factors that have remained the same, all have changed towards the observed levels of unmet demand being significant. The proportion of those travelling in hours when average passenger delay is over a minute is the component that has worsened most.

This is a contrary result given the stability in numbers of passengers observed, which would normally means unmet demand levels would not change. Further discussion occurs below and in the synthesis section.

Given that our observations confirmed, as in the last survey, that the area tends to operate almost as three separate areas, and that there are also two ranks with further restricted vehicle numbers arising from the station permit system, further tests were undertaken to compare performance of the fleet divided up into the respective operating regimes. The table below presents the results from these tests.

Component	Torquay		Paignton		Torquay Station		Brixham	
	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020
Average passenger delay (APD)(mins)	1.37	0.3	3.63	0.93	3.38	3.32	1.32	1.62
Off peak hours with any delay	34.72	27.78	75	53.85	31.25	35.71	62.5	50
Proportion of passengers travelling in hours with over a minute APD	43.11	10.98	74.83	22.78	65.43	45.52	38.01	51.23
Seasonal factor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peak factor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Latent Demand factor	1.008	1.008/1.01	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1.06
Index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD)	1031.12	45.74	10195.3	572.48	3486.71	2698.83	1563.89	2194.9

These results demonstrate the focus of operations and that if each were a separate zone what the service levels identified were. Whilst in 2020, Torquay council ranks were operating satisfactorily, in 2023 none provide satisfactory performance levels using the ISUD index. However, the situation in Brixham has shown improvement, whilst Paignton station has worsened significantly. The main set of Torquay ranks remain the location seeing by far the best level of service.

As in 2020, the issue of Brixham remains complicated in several ways:

- The town is at the far end of the area and geographically remote
- The town itself is hilly discouraging walking and cycling
- Journeys tend to be short
- There is no public transport within the town apart from the service towards Paignton and Torquay and a few other rural services

- The taxi service provided (both private hire and hackney carriage) is very locally based, operated and appreciated as such
- We have been advised that any Torquay or Paignton based plate setting down is very unlikely to feel welcome taking any passengers and that the local passengers know their local provision and are faithful to those drivers
- There is some evidence that the fleet servicing demand tends to be more established and therefore with more drivers likely to be considering retiring than might otherwise be the case
- Our plate review and the driver survey suggested several Brixham hackney carriage plates were not operating which would have more serious impact given the smaller size of the overall operating fleet.

The principal issue in Paignton is the need for the supplementary permit. Further, this location saw increased passenger numbers in 2023, although Brixham also saw increase whereas the situation there improved.

Taken alone, the inference of the ISUD results is that more vehicle plates are needed to ensure public service is returned to levels agreed by the ISUD methodology to be more appropriate. However, recent thought has meant that it is even more important at this time to consider the overall picture in the round and not just simply be dictated by the mathematical formula, which has always meant to provide guidance.

Overall responses to the identified operational matters is also discussed further below in the synthesis section, in the light of matters that are legally and practically possible.



8 Summary, synthesis and study conclusions

This unmet taxi demand survey on behalf of Torbay has been undertaken following the guidance of the BPG and other recent case history regarding unmet demand and its significance.

Background and context

The Best Practice Guidance of 2010 remains the principal explanation of the application of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act to the testing of the level and veracity of a policy limiting the number of hackney carriages in any licensing area. Despite various reviews in recent years, Section 16 and the BPG still remain the benchmark legal background and guidance. The Law Commission review, the results of the Parliamentary Task and Finish Group and the latest proposed BPG all suggested retaining limited numbers remained useful to ensuring good public service was provided, although the guidance remains that reduced regulation (including not having a limit) is 'best practice'.

The heart of any unmet demand study remains the collection of information about actual service to the public in terms of how many arrive at ranks and have to wait for vehicles to arrive. The industry standard evaluation of the measurable elements of this remains the ISUD index as developed over time through various court cases. Over time, the context of the statistical background has been widened and deepened with the principal concept of unmet demand and its significance remaining. However, over the time since Section 16 and even since the BPG, the distinction between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles has tended to become more blurred, most recently more so with changes in communication towards first mobile phones and then increasing power of mobile devices, allowing the development of pseudo-ranks in terms of the widespread take-up of app-based hiring of licensed vehicles.

Since 2020, two new items of legislation have been added including one that strengthens the encouragement for service to be provided to those with disabilities. However, the planned release of entirely refreshed Best Practice Guidance remains in abeyance (at the time of writing this Report) and views about discouraging out of town vehicles though strengthening against still see no practical way this issue can be resolved.

Further, despite loss of many limited authorities through their being amalgamated into new unitary authorities who have in general not retained zones, or who have removed limits within zones, overall the proportion of authorities with limits on hackney carriage vehicle numbers has remained similar with many having strong views regarding their retention.

Area background

Torbay is a South West unitary authority with a marginally growing population but a high proportion of older people. Being unitary it has direct control over all policies although the Local Transport Plan (LTP) is produced jointly as the Devon and Torbay LTP given the links with that overall area. The Torbay Strategy seeks a low-carbon sustainable transport system supporting the three constituent towns. In most recent statistics (before the pandemic) the tourist demand was some 8.5 million bed-nights per year and an extra 200,000 population increase. Some transport improvements achieved, notably improved bus services, have been at the expense of use of licensed vehicles although as in other places, the impact of the pandemic has been severe on levels of patronage and provision of public transport.

Comment in the LTP evidence report supports taxis having an increased role as part of sustainable transport packages across the area, involving ensuring key ranks are at least six vehicles each to allow for sufficient ability to meet passenger demand effectively. The Consultation Report (2010) found that licensed vehicles had the highest level of customer satisfaction within various public transport measures, putting them in a very good light in terms of overall contribution to the local transport economy. However, some comments suggest that there are plans to revise rank provision particularly in Paignton although this has not been formally confirmed.

Recent council web pages confirm licensed vehicles to be an important public transport mode with an important role providing safe, secure, comfortable and on request door-to-door services for a range of customers. Key aims are safe travel, good service levels without the trade being burdened by unnecessary conditions.

Over the years preceding the previous survey, and up to the time the pandemic began, strong investment in bus services had impacted on hackney carriage and private hire usage, particularly the longer distance journeys across the area. However, as noted above, bus companies now have to focus on ensuring they remain viable and less services now operate than pre-pandemic even though a national cap on fares continues to be extended. Working from home has reduced commuting levels although leisure travel has increased nationally.

Timetable

The May 2023 proposal was accepted on 12 June 2023 and an inception held remotely on 15th June 2023. The rank surveys were undertaken in late June with on-street pedestrian interviews in early July. The driver survey was run after the rank work was completed principally through July 2023, with key stakeholders consulted over the survey period.

Industry Statistics

Since the last survey, the hackney carriage fleet has seen the seasonal plates revised to be all-year giving a total of 169 all-year licences at the time of the survey. However, this total number has been in place at least since 1974 when DfT statistics were first collected. The level of private hire vehicles has been reducing steadily since the last survey. In 1997, hackney carriages were 65% of the fleet. At the height of private hire growth in 2009 this had fallen to 32%. With recent changes the share has increased again, albeit to only 36%.

Driver licences, which have all been fully dual since 2011 (providing maximum flexibility for the trade) saw a peak in 2007 and again in 2018, but sharp decline with the pandemic, and continued reduction since, with the gap between vehicle and driver numbers reducing suggesting less sharing or renting of vehicles than in the past.

Operator numbers have broadly followed the driver number profile with a general trend downwards since the last survey. Torbay always has a high number of operators due to their means of definition of who needs such a licence as explained in full earlier (anyone intending to take any direct booking, including a contract, must have their own operator licence).

Wheelchair accessible hackney carriages are a very small percentage of the hackney carriage fleet, with main demand taken up by two specialist companies who operate WAV as private hire. However, observed usage at ranks is more than these figures would suggest, to an encouraging level, but also suggests there may be a good level of wheel chair users transferring from their chairs to use saloon style vehicles.

Industry background

Torbay has utilised its power to restrict hackney carriage vehicle numbers since at least 1968 and has undertaken regular review of this policy. The timeline is as follows (date of rank surveys, hours and gap between observation months in brackets):

- 2005 (October 2004)
- 2008 (November 2007, 519 hours) (3 years)
- 2011 (May, 259 hours) (3.5 years)
- 2014 (October, 252 hours) (3.5 years)
- 2018 (May, 300 hours) (3.5 years)
- 2020 (September, 600 hours plus October supplementary test) (2.5 years)
- 2023 (June, 600 hours) (2 years 10 months)
-

Details of sample structures and times covered are available for most but not all the above but in each case the focus has been using industry standard methods to obtain a typical weekly average passenger level at each rank.

Whilst the number of hackney carriage vehicles has remained stable given the limit policy, the unregulated number of private hire vehicles has continued to reduce. Driver and operator numbers have followed a similar pattern. The level of drivers per vehicle has reduced. It must be noted that the means of definition of an operator in Torbay implies there will always be a very high number compared to the overall fleet.

Industry structure impacts

At the time of the survey the licensed vehicle industry in Torbay comprised (2020 in brackets):

- 169 (161) hackney carriage vehicles
- No (6) seasonal hackney carriage vehicles
- 303 (307) private hire vehicles
- 517 (543) drivers (all able to drive any vehicle)
- 312 (234) operators

In total some 567 (602) different people are linked to the above; this excludes any persons involved not requiring specific licences, such as office staff in booking offices.

Considering the various operating models the above can be divided as follows:

- 96 (61) hackney carriage owner drivers
- 187 (201) private hire owner driver operators
- 173 (240) people purely drivers
- 49 (100) hackney carriage vehicles only owned
- 99 (106) private hire vehicles only owned

This is a big change from 2020 away from vehicles available for rent towards owner-drivers on both sides of the industry. On the face of these statistics this provides 148 (206) vehicles needing drivers and 173 (240) that can drive them. However, there is nothing to restrict any vehicle being driven by more than one person at different times. Many people consider that owning extra vehicles is their contribution to the trade to allow people unable to afford to own vehicles but wanting to be involved to rent from them. The analysis suggests the owner-driver market is marginally larger than the rental market but that otherwise the split in vehicle operating models is almost equal between the two options (ignoring multiple use).

The Torbay industry remains complex. There are multiple owners in the hackney carriage fleet although the largest has just four vehicles (as in 2020). On the private hire side there are more multiple owners and larger fleets – the biggest being 21 (19) vehicles, followed by one with 18 (none 2020), one with ten (same 2020), and several others with six or less.

A small number of owners have both hackney carriage and private hire in their ownership. Many other vehicles are individually owned but choose to work for either the hackney carriage telephone network or private hire companies.

Internet searches suggest the principal large groups are:

- A company with 50 hackney carriages and a booking office with a rank outside
- A private hire company with 180 vehicles including ones outside the licensed vehicle system (minibuses under public service vehicle regulations) and an app
- A private hire company with over 50 vehicles and also an app

Whilst both private hire companies have hackney carriages operating for them these are understood to be fairly small numbers (albeit growing during the pandemic, but not clear how many have shifted back away from this option since).

Overall, the Torbay industry uses the full range of flexibility in operating models available.

WAV vehicles

The level of wheel-chair accessible (WAV) in both fleets have continued to decline to almost none in the hackney carriage fleet now. Notwithstanding this, with a dedicated private hire operator servicing most wheel chair requirements our view that there are sufficient vehicles with the majority of requirement well-met remains correct. Use of ranks by those with wheel chairs was relatively high and the level of WAV at ranks exceeded the proportion in the fleet although there is concern that more may appear WAV than actually are.

Low or zero emission vehicles

The level of hybrid, low or zero emission vehicles is low but growing. Further detailed analysis was not part of this Brief.

Rank observations

Details of the overall scope of the rank observations are provided above. In essence the authority seeks to follow the Best Practice Guidance by having regular review of the level of its hackney carriage licences. Like most licensing areas, Torbay has a large number of ranks, many of which ceased use, or significant use, as the geography and economy of the area changed and developed, and as people and trade focussed lower demand requirements on bookings. Busy ranks continued to see assistance from street marshals.

All known active ranks were observed for 72 hours from early Thursday 22nd June 2023 to the early hours of Sunday 25th September 2023. Schools were in full operation implying that any vehicles operating on school contracts were active on those.

All hours were observed at all ranks and a screening method applied to confirm:

- 41% (45% 2020) of observed hours were active (three or more hackney carriage movements per hour)
- 10% (12%) of hours saw light usage
- 49% (43%) saw no hackney carriage or passenger activity at all

The observations totalled 13,632 (13,213) different records of which 69% (70% 2020) were vehicle arrivals or departures. 92% (90.5%) of these were local Torbay hackney carriage vehicles. 6% (7%) were private cars, 0.3% (1%) private hire vehicles, 0.9% (1%) goods vehicles and 0.1% (0.5%) emergency vehicles suggesting generally good compliance with rank regulations in the area and showing marginal improvement since 2020.

Estimated weekly passenger numbers for this survey appear to almost the same as those in the last survey. In 2020 there was 21% reduction from the previous survey, but the previous two surveys both saw 18% growth between them. Resulting patronage remained above the levels observed in 2008 but beneath that observed in the more recent surveys.

Four ranks – Paignton, Brixham, Union Street and the Post Office roundabout rank all saw increases whilst Victoria Parade saw significant reductions.

The general picture of active times at ranks was very similar to the previous survey:

- Strand – almost 24/7/ rank but unused early Thursday, before 09:00 Friday and before 10:00 Saturday
- Victoria Parade – much lower usage and mainly weekday afternoons and a short period Saturday night
- Union Street – shopping period only
- Post Office Roundabout – shopping period only
- Brixham – daytime activity only
- Paignton – unused in early hours but this period much shorter at weekends, clearly a local rank far from dependent on allied station usage
- Cary Parade – booking office vehicle waiting that passengers take advantage of
- Torwood Street – unused
- Castle Circus – unused

Total passenger flows were compared over the last three surveys. All three days show a similar overall pattern of demand with each day seeing a dip in usage from 18:00 to 19:00. Average passenger flows showed further reduction (98, 2018, 94, 2020 and 91 in 2023). The peak to average ratio also continued to reduce, changing from 3.7 to 2.9 to 2.7 now. The peak hour remained 23:00 Saturday as it was in 2020. There is suggestion that hoped-for recovery of night life has not occurred to any significant level.

The detailed graph shows the continued dominance of the Strand rank, which is also the principal rank overnight. Paignton Station rank showed more weekend night demand than in 2020.

Unmet demand extent

Review of the delay information showed a significant increase despite overall demand levels being similar. For 2023, 36% (21% in 2020) of all observed hours had some observed passenger delay. Of these 61% (44%) saw that average passenger delay (APD) level one minute or more (shared over all travelling passengers in that hour).

Unmet demand appeared in varying ways at most ranks and was spread over different times and days and not in any systematic manner. Further discussion of the significance of this unmet demand is provided below.

Fleet activity

Over the three (two in 2020) days when fleet activity was reviewed, 72% (53% over 2 days in 2020) of the available hackney carriage fleet was observed. 24% (16%) were seen at more than one location. 55% of the fleet were only seen in Torquay locations, 12% (17%) only in Brixham, 10% (14%) only in Paignton suggesting the fleet were more active across the area in 2023.

The overall statistics suggest plenty of vehicles were available but not observed during our survey. This suggests no shortage of vehicles. However, other evidence suggests many may not have been available given reduced driver numbers working (see below). A review of the unobserved plates found 10% were inactive and in the process of changing their use, a third were known not to service ranks and focus on school work, with a further 29% known to service schools but also thought to service ranks in addition. Further implications of this is considered in the synthesis section as it is clear the lack of activity by hackney carriages at ranks has led to the significant increase in unmet demand levels.

WAV service levels

5% (7%) of all vehicles observed at ranks appeared to be WAV style, higher than the 2% (3%) in the fleet. 10 (13) people were observed accessing hackney carriages at ranks in wheel chairs. These were spread across the ranks with the main usage at The Strand. Those with other disabilities saw the highest level of usage at Union Street.

Overall, the level of usage by those with disabilities was high particularly in context of the very low number of hackney carriages that are WAV, and the fact that much of the provision is made by private hire vehicles through two specialist companies.

On street public views

The level of response to the on-street surveys remained low despite relaxation of COVID procedures that had reduced numbers in 2020. 64% (68% in 2020) of the target number were obtained, with most difficulty in the two smaller locations of Paignton and Brixham still being the case. 62% (75% last time) of the total said they were local.

The sample was compared to the census and it was found there had been a larger proportion of men and mid-age groups interviewed. This may favour more traditional hackney carriage usage in the responses. However, the bias was less than last time but in the same directions.

The proportion of respondents having made a recent trip by licensed vehicle was again reduced to the levels of the previous survey at 33% (37% 2020 and 35% 2017). There were changes again in the levels of usage of different kinds of vehicle, with the share for hackney carriage now increased to 40% (from 26% and 44% in the last two surveys). The main shift was away from use of both kinds of vehicle towards use of one type or the other.

In terms of frequency of usage 47% (45% in 2020) never used licensed vehicles with the overall level of trips per month significantly down to 0.4 (1.7 2020 and 1.3 2017). However, an increased percentage of this total used hackney carriages at 69% (58% 2020 and 54% 2017).

Respondents appeared to suggest an increase in usage of licensed vehicles from ranks but not from hailing with the increase continuing from the last two surveys but remaining on-trend. The estimate of 44% of trips by hackney carriage is less than that from the frequency information (69%).

The level of competition in the booked market appears to have increased since the last survey, with nine companies quoted compared to the five last time. Reduction in the number of quotes of the top company and the drop in quotes for the second and third companies (now fifth and seventh) suggests others have upped competition and the previous incumbents have lost out.

Two apps were quoted, one being national, although the national app was not mentioned in the company quotes. The app quoted was for the hackney carriage company although they had lost share in general quotes.

The level not remembering when they last used a hackney carriage had reduced from 58% in 2020 to 52% now. The level not having seen a hackney carriage was also reduced (3% from 9%) suggesting adding the livery has been beneficial.

The level of ranks known about but not used at 60% was similar to the response in the last survey (59% 2020 43% 2017). 58% named one rank (49% in 2020). A list was used to minimise use of different names. The Strand was most named (18%, 17% in 2020), with Union Street also getting 18% (14% 2020). Brixham increased share (13% from 5%) with others relatively similar to their share of quotes in 2020.

In terms of quotes of most used, Union Street came top with 25% of those naming it saying they used it with The Strand next at 24%.

Views of the last journey taken are generally good to very good with no very poor or poor scores at all, even for price. Driver knowledge scored best with 83% saying this was very good. However, the main item people said would increase usage, with some 70% saying they would use hackney carriages more if they had cheaper fares.

The question regarding disability suggests reduced need at this time compared to the previous survey, although the need now appeared to pure WAV style whereas last time it has shifted to wanting a range of types of vehicle.

Latent demand levels had reduced.

For this survey, 31% felt there were enough hackney carriages with 64% not sure and 6% saying there were not enough.

Two thirds said they did not know the difference between hackney carriages and private hire – another good reason why the livery is a good thing, although it clearly still needs promoting.

Key stakeholder views

There were no responses despite a wide trawl of potential stakeholders. This is not a serious issue given it is rare that such views overturn results from other elements. However, it does suggest there are no significant issues perceived that people wished to tell us about.

Trade views

An even stronger 37% (29% in 2020) response rate was obtained for the on-line driver survey. No evidence was found of any duplication. 52% (50%) of response was from private hire (who make up 64% of the vehicle fleet) and 42% (39%) hackney carriage, with the remainder being 25 (8%) who did not currently drive and 2% (3%) that drove both kinds of vehicle.

81% said the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. 7% said they worked part time with no other sources of income and 7% part time but with other income sources. 2% said they were not working but intended to return and 3% said they were no longer working and had no intention of returning to the trade.

Levels of experience were high, with the average being 12 (13) years but the maximum 48 (52) years. Hackney carriage drivers tended to have more experience on average (16 (13) years compared to 9 (9)) and for length of service (48 (52) years compared to 38 (37)). These figures suggest an element of retirement since the last survey particularly on the hackney carriage side.

For the full sample, 37% said their normal work saw them obtain work from immediate hire from ranks (same as 2020), 34% (31%) from immediate bookings and 22% (same) advanced hire (with 4% (same) chauffer or corporate and 3% (6%) not driving).

Overall most worked five days, but the average number of days was marginally higher for hackney carriage respondents. Average weekly hours were 46 (40) for hackney carriage, 41 (34) for private hire and 43 (35) on average. All these suggest drivers have responded to the need for more hours worked.

The main reason given for choosing when to work was now 30% family commitments (18% last time), then when contracts required (16%). 4% (5%) said they worked to avoid disruptive passengers with a further 5% (same) avoiding busy traffic.

A very high 77% (76% 2020) drove their own vehicle with a very much reduced 14% (27%) saying they shared a vehicle. 86% (same) said they accepted pre-bookings, a value slightly higher for hackney carriage (90%, and higher than the previous 87%) than for private hire respondents. 47% (53%) of bookings were via an office, 17% (29%) by phone, 15% by direct referrals, 3% for apps and 3% for contracts (replacing last times 7% by phone or email and 11% a mix of phone, email, contracts and apps).

The trade had their own names for the three main Torquay ranks. Top rank used was the Strand followed by Union Street, Victoria Parade, GPO roundabout, Brixham, Paignton, Cary Parade, Torquay Station, all very similar to 2020 but with no mention this time of the smaller ranks. Use of Victoria Parade was reduced from 17% to 8%, consistent with the rank usage information.

In terms of getting fares, 3% of hackney carriages said they did no rank work, one exclusively from school contracts, and the other from bookings but with the balance from hailing.

94% (same as 2020) answered the question about if the limit policy remained correct. Of these, 75% (91% last time) agreed. 93% of hackney carriages agreed with 57% of private hire.

Reasons the limit benefitted included 11% (35% 2020) saying preventing congestion at ranks and 8% (10%) that it provided known drivers to the public. 6% (8%) said the main benefit was to the trade but that this fed back to the public getting a good service.

When asked benefits of removing the limit, 46% of respondents used the question to reiterate they thought there was none. 25% suggested benefits including more vehicles, better public safety, less issues at ranks and overall better service. 7% said there would be initial benefit but once drivers realised they could not make a living worse results.

In general comments many said more drivers were needed and in particular more that worked nights.

Formal evaluation of significance of unmet demand

Use of the industry standard index of significance of unmet demand for the full main data set shows that all elements of the index apart from the latent demand factor (which has reduced) and the peak and seasonal factors (that have remained the same) have worsened in terms of identifying higher levels of unmet demand. The proportion of those travelling in hours when average passenger delay is over a minute is the element that has worsened most.

The full data set has unmet demand that in terms of the ISUD tool is well beyond 80 and therefore significant. This remains true when the two ranks with additional limits not under the control of the authority are removed, although the level reduces by around a third.

As in the last report, a review was undertaken as if each area operated separately. This suggests there has actually been improvement in the situation in Brixham but unlike in 2020 where Torquay ranks on their own did not have significant unmet demand, the test this time shows that they do, albeit having the best levels of service. Paignton has worsened significantly.

Further discussion is provided in the synthesis section below drawing this result in with other evidence.

Synthesis

Torbay retains a vibrant hackney carriage and private hire fleet providing well-used service to those with disabilities despite the very low number of vehicles specifically wheel chair accessible. Notably, demand is remarkably similar to 2020 which is a disappointment given hope for return to normality beyond the pandemic. However, this retention of demand is actually nationally a good result given many other authorities have seen very significant continued reduction in demand at ranks, some seeing up to halving of rank usage since pre-pandemic survey levels.

People interviewed about their usage of the service were generally even more well satisfied with the service provided than in 2020 and evidence was that latent demand had gone down again. Even though the number of WAV style hackney carriages was reduced, there was evidence that those available focussed on the ranks and a good number of people were observed accessing vehicles using wheel chairs. A much higher proportion were observed with other visible disabilities, with some evidence that more people now needed non WAV style vehicles to meet their needs. It is possible that the changes in the fleet observed may have reacted partly to customer demand.

The livery appeared to have increased the number of people saying they had seen a hackney carriage in the area (9% last time said they could not remember seeing them, just 3% now), and its importance is emphasised moving forward when the fact is noted that two thirds of people told us they did not feel they knew the difference between a hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle in Torbay.

The existence of the marshals is also showing benefit, with a marginal reduction in the level of drivers saying they avoided hours when passengers were more likely to be disruptive. However, there was a major shift driving when people worked towards working around family commitments, with that moving from 18% in 2020 to 30% now, a nationally observed change in habits of drivers.

The three areas of Torbay retain clear different operating practices and characters. Whilst this provides customer benefit in terms of people having more chance of knowing their driver, there are also issues that it reduces the pool of available vehicles to serve that demand. There was some evidence in this survey however that parochial working had reduced between 2020 and now, and that more of the vehicles focussing on an area were working than in 2020.

The overall fleet statistics show that the hackney carriage fleet has on paper remained available compared to the private hire side where vehicle numbers have fallen. However, as already noted, the value attached to the hackney carriage plate and their scarcity encourage retention whereas on the private hire side direct market forces act more promptly. What these statistics cannot show is people choosing not to use these assets, on either side of the equation, i.e. any available vehicle needs a driver, or drivers, to be able to operate. Nor are there any legal methods that people can be forced to provide the service for which they have licensed the tools from the Council.

What is true for overall use of vehicles and when / where they are used is also true for the length of time people choose to use them. National trends are that drivers are choosing to work hours that suit them and are less willing to work hours when they might risk awkward customers or damaged vehicles. This will be more true for anyone undertaking contracts that have become important to them. Further, contract payments and daytime working (often covering on booking circuits for lack of private hire vehicles / drivers) are often covering the minimum earn set by many drivers.

The pandemic heightened this wish to have better work-life balance across all industries (as demonstrated above by the increased level of drivers saying family commitments were their main reason to choose when they worked). Whilst hackney carriage plates, particularly where, as in Torbay there is a limited number, are meant to be used to service ranks and hailing, there is no stipulation that this must be the case. If people choose to use them to service contracts or not to service ranks, that is their prerogative. If people do not wish to service times when there is a higher likelihood of awkward customers that is only reasonable.

The evidence from the survey is that though overall total demand has not changed, service levels to the public have worsened. This implies there must be a change in supply which is not related to available vehicles per se but to use of those vehicles. This leads to the need to have a larger fleet to meet the same demands, although there is no way drivers can be made to work any particular hours or days.

Conclusion

On the basis of the evidence gathered in this unmet taxi demand survey for Torbay Council, our key conclusion is that there is evidence that the unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent that has been observed is significant at this point in time in the Torbay licensing area.

This has several repercussions:

- care is needed to ensure all available vehicles and drivers feel able to service future demand, as far as this is possible
- hackney carriage vehicles should primarily service ranks and hailing demand particularly given the evidence that service levels are poorer than they should be, but again there is no legal way to enforce this
- public safety must be compromised even if people are more willing to wait (as evidenced by the reduction in latent demand)
- the hackney industry must be harmed by having worse service levels

It would be normal in such situations for a calculation to be undertaken to identify the number of plates that might be needed to reduce the observed unmet demand beneath the cut-off level of 80, or to zero. However, this requires the assumption about vehicle usage being equal across the fleet to be correct, which in the current situation is far from certain, and in fact evidence suggests the principal reason for the strength of the unmet demand is a shortage of drivers' hours, not vehicles. Further, public evidence shows good levels of satisfaction and reduced latent demand that suggests public expectation was generally being met with some acknowledgment that service might not be normal at this time.

It must be reiterated that the present limit provides stability and vehicle retention in the hackney carriage element of the licensed vehicle fleet. On the private hire side, full allowance of market forces has meant vehicle numbers have reduced (and the cost of return to the market of such plates is much greater than if a vehicle is simply stood down). This confirms that retaining the limit is acting in the public interest, ensuring a higher level of vehicle availability than might have been the case had full market forces been able to bear on the hackney carriage element.

The worst issue is clearly partly related to the extra restriction on servicing the only rank in Paignton. We understand that changes coming will imply this restriction will be removed and a rank better located to service general demand provided. However, at best the impact of this change would need to be reviewed perhaps within six months of the change being made. What is not known, however, is when this change will occur and it may not do so. Further, attempts were made in the past to provide non-permit ranks in the area (and in fact some ranks do exist), but these were never used by the trade.

Marshals may need to remain at Paignton longer given that demand there has spread further into the night. Increase of night fares might help encourage more to work those hours.

It must be remembered that the unmet demand has arisen not from growth in passenger demand but at a time when this has remained effectively stable. And that much higher demand in 2018 was serviced by the same fleet without any unmet demand that was significant. This implies the level of patronage each vehicle services must have fallen.

However, the ultimate need is for an appropriate level of service to customers. The index is showing this is not occurring. If it is assumed that the current fleet is no longer able to provide the same level of service, there is argument that the size of fleet needs to be increased.

The conundrum is that new vehicles and drivers cannot be directed at any particular location or time, which could minimise the level of requirement. It also has to be assumed that any issue of plates would be taken up by people observing there was demand to be met. This might occur from the private hire fleet but that might result in simple transfer of supply, although there is no way of knowing if this did result in shortages for booked demand.

There are two routes forward if adding more plates is felt appropriate. One is managed growth, which would allow testing of impacts to ensure negative impacts did not result (which might be the case if new plates chose to service at times there were already sufficient vehicles and therefore reduce viability of the current plates). The other is removal of the limit leaving the hackney carriage system to find its own level (although there are options whereby testing could occur to check the impacts of new plates).

In both cases, public service levels resulting would still need to be reviewed to ensure public safety was maintained. This might take the form of firstly review of the number of applications for new plates, and their actual take-up.

Secondly, review of rank demand particularly at Paignton would be prudent within six months of issue of the new plates and their being in place. With a managed growth option, there is less risk as changes can be made to numbers whereas full removal of the limit would be harder to reverse or modify albeit not impossible.

The issue of requiring new plates to be more sustainable has been raised. Whilst this is laudable it has to be determined if the level of unmet demand is such that action is needed if it is appropriate to replace a numerical limit with a 'quality' one that nonetheless would have the impact of restraining possible needed extra provision. This is a debate for the regulator to determine its priorities. However, on balance we would suggest that improving public service overall is more important now than action to improve sustainability – the latter will occur in due course in any event, but public safety must take priority. Adding extra plates either by a limited number or by total removal of the limit with 'quality' controls (e.g. new vehicles WAV or electric or both) would be counter productive and overly restrictive at this time.

The matter of the level of extra plates needed is not an easy one, given that a wide range of parameters in operation have clearly changed. Were managed growth to be used, we would recommend that a tranche of 20 plates should lead to significant improvements although there is no guarantee this would occur. Further, the Paignton restriction may not allow extra plates to work there in any event, although the availability of the other ranks remains even though they may not be in the most practical location from some points of view.

The suggestion of 20 plates arises from a mix of a rough estimate of how many plates were not active at ranks at the time of the survey allied with the fact that higher levels of demand have been met satisfactorily with the present number of plates (including some being seasonal), although it is hard to judge the impact on active plate hours of the trends in changing driver behaviour which cannot be regulated.

The fact that some increase in plates active in Brixham has seen some improvement in public service is an encouragement, but much more remains necessary in improvement of service even there.

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9 Recommendations

For the reasons explained above:

- Do nothing is no longer a possible alternative as it leaves the regulator open to criticism that it was aware of the potential risks of poor service and had ignored this
- Whatever option is chosen the value of a limited test of unmet demand at a key rank is worth considering (see Options 1 and 3 below)
- The worst location for service levels observed is Paignton, although if the rank there remains restricted testing at that location would be of less value (either Brixham or The Strand might therefore be chosen)
- Considering increasing night fares may assist
- Continuation of the marshals, and their services being extended at Paignton, is essential
- The livery, and promotion to the public of the differences between hackney carriages and private hire, remain essential elements of the future of the trade in Torbay
- Add 20 extra hackney carriage vehicle licences and undertake a further test of level of service within six months of all these new licences being issued. This test would best be applied at Paignton with the rank observed for 72 hours minimum (but not between November and March when demand is lower). The only proviso would be if the Paignton rank remained permit controlled in which case either Brixham or The Strand ranks could be tested (Option 1)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriage vehicle licences but add quality controls such as new plates WAV or electric (Option 2)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriage vehicles and add testing as Option 1 (Option 3)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriages. (Option 4).

Further detail on the rationale behind options is provided in the previous chapter.

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Introduction

In early August 2024, Torbay Council contacted us seeking further elucidation regarding the suggestion of adding 20 further plates to the current Torbay Council hackney carriage fleet. The decision from the committee advised “Members wished to first explore managed growth, as set out as being an option within the LVSA report, though preferred the suggestion of a 10% increase, as put forward at the hearing by the trade representative”. This report seeks to answer if the extra 20 plates will resolve the unmet demand, as the Councillors and trade wish to fix the issue to remove unmet demand.

During the consideration of our 2023 Report further questions had been asked by members of the Regulatory Committee:

- How is the peak factor decided?
- Apparent Torquay discrepancy p80 1.73; p81 1.37 and p57 0.85
- Is the result skewed towards the night-time economy needs?
- Is the result skewed due to the restricted Paignton situation?
- Is the increase of the proportion of travellers travelling in hours greater than a minute from 18.2 to 47.58 derived mainly from results from Paignton and night-time demand? Give p57 and 0.85 average for Torquay (i.e. less than a minute) maybe the solutions are different from the number of drivers?

Brief responses to these questions are provided below. More comprehensive responses are provided in full, later in the document.

- *How is the peak factor decided?*

The peak factor is used to moderate the calculation of the index of unmet demand. Where there is a relatively brief period during the week when demand is significantly higher than other times of the week, then it is deemed unreasonable and unviable to seek to provide sufficient capacity to meet this demand, as this would result in significant over capacity for the remainder of the week. The levels of demand for a few hours on Saturday night is orders of magnitude higher than the average demand through the week. Therefore it is deemed to be peaked. There is a level of professional judgement involved in determining whether demand is peaked. There is no hard and fast arithmetic calculation to derive a threshold value to determine peaked or not peaked.

- *Apparent Torquay discrepancy p80 1.73; p81 1.37 and p57 0.85*
Corrections were identified and applied to correct the discrepancies.

- *Is the result skewed towards the night-time economy needs?*

The methodology to calculate the index value used to identify the level of unmet demand, places more weight on daytime levels of demand and hackney carriage availability than at night. This weighting is applied, in part, as acknowledgement that demand associated with the night time economy tends to be higher than at other times, in many locations. Hence, it could be considered that the result is not skewed towards the night time economy, insofar as it does not consider the levels of demand at night to be the primary driver of the need for improved levels of service.

- *Is the result skewed due to the restricted Paignton situation?*

When the calculation of the index of significant unmet demand is undertaken for all data and for data excluding that collected at Paignton, there is a difference in the result. However, considering the result either with or without Paignton, the conclusions are similar, in that the level of unmet demand is above the threshold which is considered significant. Therefore we would not necessarily agree that the Paignton situation 'skews' the result. However, this clearly has an influence.

- *Is the increase of the proportion of travellers travelling in hours greater than a minute from 18.2 to 47.58 derived mainly from results from Paignton and night-time demand? Give p57 and 0.85 average for Torquay (i.e. less than a minute) maybe the solutions are different from the number of drivers?*

The proportion of travellers travelling in hours when the average delay is greater than a minute is heavily influenced by Paignton. However, there is an overall increase, which is also generally reflected in other locations.

Detailed Response

During discussions it was agreed to undertake further modelling to identify firmer value for the extra fleet numbers required. It was also agreed to cover the issue of 'typical' dates for surveys and if the change of dates of surveys might have impacted the results.

This report covers each questions specifically and then discusses further the modelling and parameters of the unmet demand to help provide confidence in the proposed route chosen moving forward. The results will be presented to a committee meeting in October 2024 to allow further discussion to occur if necessary.

Definitions

Any reference to the 2023 Report quote page numbers from the report top right corner, and not those added by the committee bundle system (lower bottom middle of page).

Strict unmet demand is when a potential passenger arrives at a rank and finds no vehicle waiting to take them immediately. This can then lead to a queue of passengers building up, still waiting whilst vehicles arrive and depart. However, the case of where people wait when vehicles are always there but people always wait for vehicles to move up, geometric delay, is excluded as the delay is not due to shortage of vehicles.

The term 'unmet demand' is now more widely used to reference matters such as people not being able to obtain specific licensed vehicle service when they need it, such as no wheelchair accessible vehicle, or even simply no suitable vehicle.

The term 'significant unmet demand' is a very specific term related to if, when the index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD) is calculated, its resulting value is 80 or greater. The requirement of licensing authorities is that once that threshold is breached and publicised they cannot then refuse to issue new hackney carriage licences. However, our view is that if an authority is considering its response to the existence of unmet demand then issuing licences whilst the consideration is under way would be inappropriate.

This is because the way demand and supply are met, resulting in the ISUD statistic, is very complex. Over-reaction and supply of too many plates can have the reverse effect if this leads to supply becoming uneconomic. What is difficult – effectively impossible – is to remove a plate once it has been issued. This means the authority needs to be certain of its actions, hence the method of 'managed growth' whereby the actual impact of numbers of plates issued can be evaluated and policy modified as necessary. This may not be a fast process.

The aim of issuing more plates is to provide a measurable and appreciable improvement of service to the public. The aim is not to eliminate unmet demand altogether, which is not easy nor desirable, but to take the ISUD value downwards and preferably below the threshold value of 80. However, for the myriad of reasons explained within the context of our discussion below, the only way to actually know the impact of extra plates is a further test of rank performance.

Peak Factor

The peak factor is one of the parameters of the 'ISUD' (Index of significance of unmet demand) equation derived by the University of Leeds not long after the enactment of the 1985 Transport Act Section 16. It is one of two parameters that act as fixed values determined by the situation pertaining at the time of the survey being undertaken.

The peakiness factor is generally either 1 (level demand generally) or 0.5 (demand has a high peak at one point during the week). As the 'Index of Significance of unmet demand' (ISUD) tool was developed in its early years, case law provided dispensation for the effects of peaked demand on the ability of the trade to meet that demand to be allowed. 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 0.5 value is generally when demand at night, usually at weekends, is substantially higher than demand at other times.

This means that the equation impact is deflated if peaky situations occur, in fact overall results are halved. This plays down the impact of the night demand and therefore expectations of the trade.

The graph below, Figure 1, shows total hourly passenger flows across all ranks in the area during the period surveyed, and also covers the last three surveys. All three days show a similar pattern with reduced flows around 18:00 and 19:00 each day after which there were peaks growing in size from Friday to Saturday (no peak on Thursday in evening this survey as there was in 2020). Daytime flows still appeared similar on all three days. There were three other hours Friday morning (two in 2020) but just one hour on Saturday (two in 2020) that saw no passengers at any rank, otherwise there were people using ranks somewhere in the area in all observed hours, even on Sunday mornings.

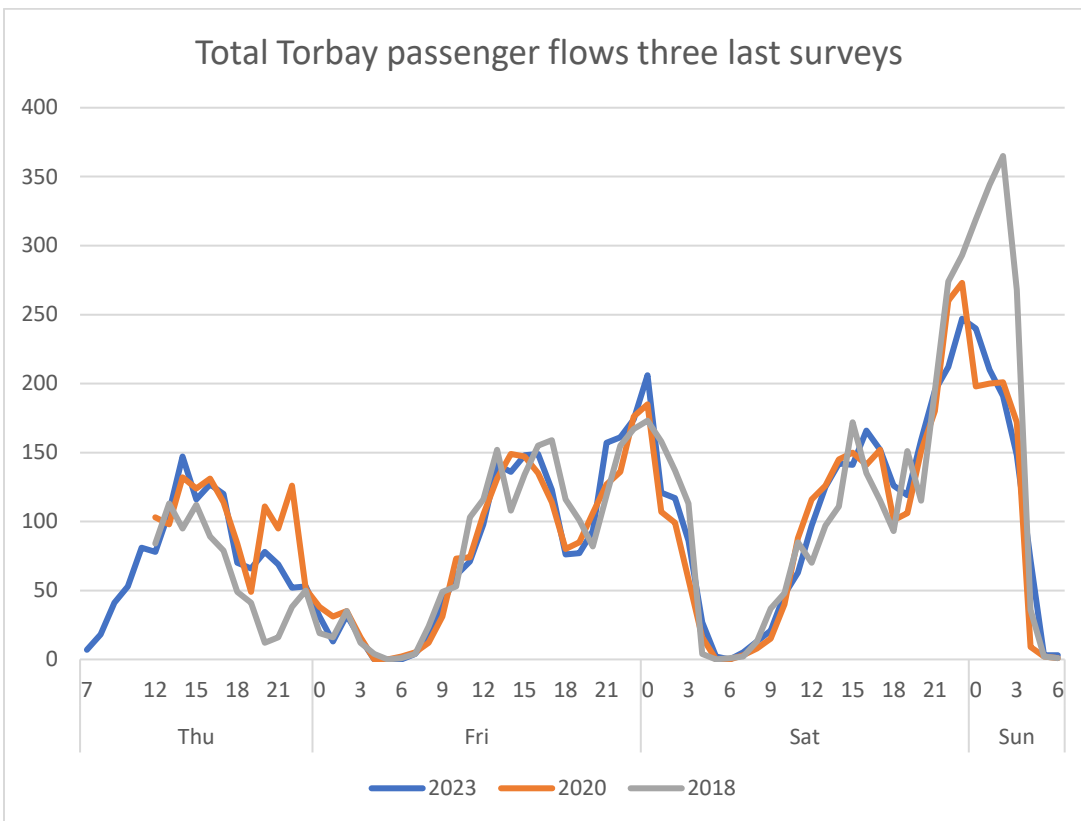


Figure 1 – passenger flows for last three surveys (all observed information)

Average passenger flows in 2023 were 91 (94, 2020, 98, 2018) per hour. (from p26 of 2023 Report). However, the peak to average ratio has continued to reduce, from 3.7 2018 to 2.9 2020 to 2.7 now. The peak was in the same 23:00 Saturday hour as in 2020, which was in the 02:00 hour in 2018. Though the peak in 2023 was again lower, there is evidence that there is a little more early Sunday morning activity, but nowhere near the levels seen in 2018. This suggests that the patterns of usage in 2020 and 2023 are relatively similar, with the hoped-for recovery not yet really observed to any significance. It also demonstrates that the area has a peaky demand profile, which it has retained.

As stated above, although the peak to average ratio has fallen from 3.7 in 2018 to 2.7 now, we consider this remains a peaky profile – as confirmed by the graphs also – so this is why this element is counted as valid. Were this not to apply, the results quoted would all double, making them even more significant.

Value Discrepancies

Tables 1 and 2 below present those from our Report from our pages 50 and 51. The first table compares values from all surveys as available for the full set of survey data in each case, but with two columns for the latest three surveys. 'All' covers all ranks. "Council only" excludes any with supplementary permits, basically the Paignton station rank.

Component	2023		2020		2018		2014	2011	2008
	All	Council only	All	Council only	All	Council only			
Average passenger delay (APD)(mins)	1.73	1.37	0.62	0.48	0.27	0.13	0.7	0.16	0.47
Off peak hours with any delay	43.33	39.77	35.09	31.4	30.59	30.88	8	0	7.2
Proportion of passengers travelling in hours with over a minute APD	47.58	42.24	18.2	16.63	5.40	5.278	5.7	1.42	15.71
Seasonal factor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peak factor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	1	1	1	0.5	1
Latent Demand factor	1.008	1.008	1.01	1.01	1.047	1.033	1.101	1.126	1
Index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD)	1801.26	1157.17	198.89	127.4	46.72	22.39	35.15	Zero	53.16

Table 1 – Full study area ISUD results, 2008 to 2023

Given that our observations confirmed, as in the last survey, that the area tends to operate almost as three separate areas, and that there are also two ranks with further restricted vehicle numbers arising from the station permit system, further tests were undertaken to compare performance of the fleet divided up into the respective operating regimes. The table below presents the results from these tests. (note the value of 1.37 above for all council only ranks and that similar value below for Torquay ranks in 2023 are coincidentally the same and actually for different situations). This is presented below in the Table 2:

Component	Torquay		Paignton		Torquay Station		Brixham	
	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020
Average passenger delay (APD)(mins)	1.37	0.3	3.63	0.93	3.38	3.32	1.32	1.62
Off peak hours with any delay	34.72	27.78	75	53.85	31.25	35.71	62.5	50
Proportion of passengers travelling in hours with over a minute APD	43.11	10.98	74.83	22.78	65.43	45.52	38.01	51.23
Seasonal factor	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Peak factor	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Latent Demand factor	1.008	1.008/1.01	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1	1.008/1.06
Index of significance of unmet demand (ISUD)	1031.12	45.74	10195.3	572.48	3486.71	2698.83	1563.89	2194.9

Table 2 – ISUD detailed results for 2023 study, by area of Torbay

It should be reiterated that the fact that the Torquay council ranks in 2023 have the same average passenger delay value as the overall value for all council ranks across the area is coincidental. The 1.73 and 1.37 measure two different sets of average passenger delay – the 1.73 is for all ranks across the area; the second table value is for just the council-operated Torquay ranks (excludes Torquay station but includes The Strand, Post Office Roundabout, Victoria Parade and Union Street).

The last and last but one paragraphs on our page 27, are incorrect and should be replaced by the following tables, developed to provide more detail pertinent to this discussion (the value of 0.85 and the 37 seconds are therefore not relevant, it should also be noted that 37 seconds is 0.62 minutes and the derivation of the 0.85 is not known):

For clarity, the erroneous and corrected two paragraphs (which arose because we neglected to delete pages that were superseded as our procedure is to edit new reports from the previous to ensure comparability, minimise cost and reduce omissions) are:

“In terms of the overall average passenger delay across the surveyed hours, for all ranks, this is 1.73 minutes (37 seconds, 0.62 minutes) per person shared out over all those using hackney carriages. However, when applied just to those that actually had to wait, the typical wait was 5 minutes and 36 seconds (4 minutes 24 seconds, 2020). 78% of those waiting waited between one and five minutes, 15% six to 10 minutes and 7% 11 minutes or more.

However, the pattern across the area varies. Over the full days observed, Torquay Station saw the worst average passenger delays – 1 minute 26 seconds (over four minutes, 2020) on the Thursday, 3 mins 23 seconds (just under six minutes, 2020) on the Friday and 4 minutes 53 seconds (56 seconds, 2020) on the Saturday. Brixham had 55 seconds (1m51), 1 m 10 (1m11) and 1m 44 (1m 54) respectively. Paignton Station saw 2m12 (1m17), 4 mins =(34 seconds) and 4m12 (1m 4) respectively. All other ranks, all in Torquay, had average passenger delays over each day of up to 3m2 seconds (no more than 51 seconds, with many less than that (e.g. Union Street, Saturday, just one second), 2020).”

Tables 3 and 4 below present the average passenger delay (APD) and the passenger delay only for those who experienced a delay for each of the areas and for each rank within the Torquay set of ranks, for 2023 and 2020 surveys to show how patterns of delay have changed. The latter statistic is important as it would be what those who waited actually experienced, colouring their views more than that for those that did not wait. ISUD works on the delay shared out over ALL passengers, not just those experiencing a delay, which is counted to be a fairer evaluation, given that the ISUD tool is testing the overall impact on the service to all passengers, not just the smaller number that actually experience waiting.

Location	Total		Paignton		Torquay Station		Brixham	
	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020
Average Passenger Delay (APD)								
For all areas – 2023 1:44 2020 0:37								
Thursday			2:12	1:17	1:26	4:03	0:55	1:51
Friday			4:00	0:34	3:23	5:59	1:10	1:11
Saturday			4:12	1:04	4:53	0:56	1:44	1:54
Average delay, only those experiencing delay:								
For all areas – 2023 5:36 2020 4:24								
Thursday			7:46	6:59	11:59	10:37	4:25	5:54
Friday			7:58	3:51	9:02	13:22	6:11	4:49
Saturday			10:20	4:55	8:14	6:09	6:06	5:27
All hours	5:36	4:24						

Table 3 – Average passenger delay (APD) and average delay 2023

Table 3 and 4 values highlighted in yellow present 2023 values in excess of those in 2020. Green highlighted values are those less than 2020, with the main improvement observed for Brixham rank. Table 3 shows that all APD and values for those experiencing a delay have increased on all days in the Paignton observations. Both Torquay station and Brixham have generally seen improvement, more so on the Thursday, although the station situation in Torquay on the Saturday has worsened.

Table 4 below then presents all Torquay council ranks and also drills down into further detail for the Torquay ranks by rank:

Location	All council, Torquay		Strand		Union St		P O Rbt		Cary Parade		Victoria Parade	
	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020	2023	2020
Average Passenger Delay (APD)												
Thursday	0:46	0:29	1:07	0:31	0:20	0:04	1:00	0:51			0:35	0:28
Friday	0:58	0:11	1:10	0:10	0:11	0:16	0:44	0:23	0:29	0:02	2:47	0:06
Saturday	1:52	0:19	1:51	0:22	0:43	0:01	2:59	0:20	3:02	0:05	0:00	0:17
Only those experiencing a delay:												
Thursday	4:40	4:01	5:29	3:27	3:23	9:02	7:00	8:58			3:23	3:52
Friday	4:51	3:26	4:49	2:52	3:51	4:49	3:51	5:04	3:17	3:00	15:20	3:19
Saturday	4:20	2:36	3:55	2:32	3:23	1:10	12:02	7:38	7:39	1:15	0:00	2:35

Table 4 – APD and average delay by each Torquay rank individually

For the Torquay ranks almost all days and locations have seen worsened levels of delay. The change on the Saturday at Victoria Parade reflects its lack of use on that day.

68% (78% in 2020) of those waiting waited between one and five minutes, 21% (15%) six to 10 minutes and 12% (7%) 11 minutes or more. This suggests waiting times have generally increased.

In terms of total time waited by passengers, in 2023 43% of all delay hours were at the Strand (was 13% 2020), with the Saturday seeing 28% alone; Paignton saw 32% (was 37%), Brixham 11% (13%), Post Office Roundabout 5% (8%), Cary Parade 4% (7%), Torquay Station 2% (9%), Union Street 2% (3%) and Victoria Parade 1% (2%). These suggest the main issue for this survey is the level of service and queueing at The Strand rank although all locations remain at poorer levels of service than the index suggests is healthy.

Skewing of results (night time and / or Paignton)

The tables above and the overall application of the index (with the peak factor in action dampening the overall ISUD result) reduce any skew to night time results, and the consideration by area also removes any impact of Paignton. Further discussion below considers the overall fit of each location within the mix.

The total waiting hours were reviewed for all locations. The Strand accounted for 43% of all waiting hours, Paignton 32% and Brixham 11%, some 86% between these three locations. The other ranks accounted for 5% or less (each) of the total. Hence it is The Strand that is contributing most, with Paignton second in magnitude but contributing just under a third of total hours of delay.

Impact of Paignton and night-time on travellers in hours with average passenger delay greater than a minute

The number of hours with passenger delay over a minute and under by rank are shown in Table 5 below, listed in descending order of proportion of the total of hours with APD one minute or more:

Rank	APD 1 minute +	APD less than 1 min	% of total
Paignton Station	37	9	33
The Strand	20	22	18
Brixham	17	15	15
PO Roundabout	10	11	9
Cary Parade	9	3	8
Torquay Station	9	1	8
Union St	5	9	5
Victoria Parade	4	2	4

Table 5 – hours with average passenger delay over a minute and under by rank

This does show that Paignton Station is the location with a third of the hours with a minute or more average passenger delay, with The Strand having 18%. However, as already noted, the value of ISUD being used to define that the area overall has significant unmet demand is the value for all Council ranks only, excluding Paignton and Torquay station observations.

With respect to night-time impacts, as already noted, use of the peak factor of 0.5 deflates the impact although Table 6 below shows that these hours (for the full survey area) do inevitably still impact the overall performance.

Period	APD 1 minute +	APD less than 1 min	% of total (APD+1 min)
Thurs 07:00-21:59	22	16	23
Thurs 22:00-06:59	6	2	6
Fri 07:00-21:59	21	23	22
Fri 22:00-06:59	14	5	15
Sat 07:00-21:59	13	8	14
Sat 22:00-06:59	18	0	19
Total	94	54	148
%	64%	36%	

Table 6 – hours with APD a minute or more by period

This shows that the largest proportion of hours with delay over a minute is actually the daytime hours on Thursday (23%) then the same hours on the Friday (22%). The proportion of hours with delay over a minute increases for the overnight period from Thursday to the weekend as might be expected (6% to 15% to 19%).

This table, however, confirms the widespread nature of the unmet demand. Our typical understanding of this kind of spread is the impact that lower flows at ranks often mean hackney carriages need to find other demand to ensure their ability to make ends meet, which implies contracts or alliance to private hire circuits, or use of booking circuits (or more recently apps), which reduces their activity at ranks, and therefore increases passenger delay at ranks.

Passengers walking away.

A further review was undertaken of the data available from the 2023 survey to identify the levels of change.

The rank surveys do record passengers walking away from ranks. There can be many reasons for this, some legitimate such as groups of friends having seen part of their group safely into a licensed vehicle leaving as they themselves are travelling home another way, people leaving the rank queue having joined it whilst also making a booking, and leaving because their booked vehicle has arrived, or just deciding to travel a different way. Others will be 'giving up' waiting.

The total numbers observed leaving ranks in 2020 and 2023 are shown below in Table 6.

Rank	2020	2023	% increase
Paignton Station	22	75	241
The Strand	58	143	147
Brixham	11	29	164
PO Roundabout	2	8	300
Cary Parade	5	5	0
Torquay Station			
Union St	10	14	40
Victoria Parade			

Table 6 – walk aways

These figures confirm again that the situation between 2020 and 2023 has generally worsened.

Issues of typical dates for surveys

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 (factoring high demand level impacts down) to 1.2 for January / February (inflating the values from low demand levels upwards).

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.

It is accepted that each survey is essentially a snapshot which is determined by a massive range of varying parameters, even down to factors rarely mentioned such as weather at the time of survey. We prefer where possible to undertake surveys at the same time of year, in the same month, although some authorities vary the month in order to better test the robustness of any results.

It is also the point that the decision is primarily if unmet demand is significant or not, not with reference to the exact level of this, but once the first decision is made there is then value comparing and contrasting over years and locations to understand where the issues overall are.

The 2023 survey was undertaken in June. 2020 was undertaken in early September, with a partial test in October, 2018 was May, 2014 was October, 2011 May and 2008 November (but with some other months added, under a different sample regime).

The original plan for the 2023 survey was to undertake the surveys in May but procurement delays led to the rank survey work being undertaken in June. This was agreed to be a better option than further delaying the survey to the September of 2023. Ironically, we understand that had we delayed to September the surveys would have been strongly impacted by the significant road works occurring then.

In data collection, a long-accepted industry standard has been that information should preferably be collected in 'neutral months', when traffic patterns are counted to be 'normal' or 'average'. These months are May, June, July, September, October and November. The protocol and industry standard for demand surveys allows data collection at any time, but would factor down any information collected in December nearer to Christmas, and factor up any collected in January or February, avoiding Summer holidays when schools are not active altogether.

We would therefore believe that all the recent survey periods used to collect rank information in Torbay are within those average neutral months and therefore counted as typical. Further, as far as is practicable, atypical periods such as the Air Show weekend, should also be avoided, and were in all cases. Further, where possible, major roadworks should be avoided although it is not always possible to avoid emergency road works although licensing sections are always asked to advise us of any out of course events during surveys so that we can take these into account in interpreting the results.

ISUD values and their detail

The actual 'ISUD' equation values being used defining the unmet demand and its significance at this point in time are:

Average passenger delay (APD) – 1 minute 22 seconds, or 1.37 minutes

Off peak hours with any delay – 39.77%

Proportion of passengers travelling in hours when APD is one minute or more – 42.24%

Seasonal value – 1 (the survey is in 'neutral' months)

Peak factor – 0.5 (the survey has a peaky profile)

Latent demand – 1.008

For the sake of clarity, these values relate to all council operated ranks – meaning Paignton and Torquay station ranks are excluded (there were no other active council-provided ranks in Paignton at the time of the survey)

All these are combined to provide (using actual and more detailed numbers from the model) an ISUD of 1159.99, a long way beyond the cut-off value for unmet demand to be significant of 80. It must however be remembered that the ISUD equation is exponential rather than straight line.

As already partly discussed, the peak factor dampens the impact by halving the resulting factor.

The seasonal value has no impact.

The latent demand factor only very marginally increases the number of vehicles needed to reduce unmet demand.

If APD is a minute, it also has no impact. If it is more than one, it inflates the ISUD value, and if less than the minute, deflates the value.

The two main parameters are the "proportion values" (ones that are the share of hours or passengers within a total). In the latest evaluation, both are very similar with the proportion of passengers travelling in hours when APD is a minute or more marginally higher. Both of these parameters can be zero, in which case there can be no unmet demand irrespective of the levels of any of the other parameters. This means that there must be some off-peak delay to allow unmet demand to be significant – overcoming any concern or fear that the ISUD statistic is biased to night demand.

Introducing extra vehicles will nearly always reduce APD. If the vehicles service off peak hours, that value would reduce. If they service hours when APD is one minute or more, they will reduce that parameter, and the off peak parameter if that hour is also off peak.

It is very hard – and legally impossible – to restrict any vehicle to meeting demand at any place or time. Further work below makes the assumption that extra vehicles service the hours being considered. Other analyses make the assumption that any new vehicles will all behave in similar distribution manners to the current fleet.

Modelling of reducing unmet demand

We have already defined 'unmet demand' as when a passenger arrives at a rank and finds no vehicles there ready for immediate hire. The level of unmet demand then becomes significant using the ISUD tool calculation if the calculated value is 80 or more. Having terms 'unmet demand' and 'significant unmet demand' can be confusing as they are different in terms of their requirements under Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act. There is no requirement to completely eliminate unmet demand, which is almost impossible in any event, but the key is ultimately the view of the licensing authority regarding if any unmet demand observed is actually 'significant'.

The process by which our estimate of levels of unmet demand occur includes detailed modelling of the matching of passengers and vehicles at each rank. The detailed model can therefore be used to insert additional vehicles to the point at which unmet demand (all passenger waiting) is completely removed from ranks by day or hour for specific periods.

The first important point is to understand what hours and locations actually make up the unmet demand, and then how that combines to become significant.

Whilst our confirmation of the significance of unmet demand relates to the situation excluding Paignton station, our modelling below works using the full set of information gathered during the survey given that Paignton station operations cannot be readily divorced from the overall situation when looking at how extra plates would change the service provided to the public.

It was found that the hour and rank with the highest contribution to the total level of delay was The Strand, Torquay, in the midnight hour Saturday-Sunday. This sole hour provided 5.33% of all delay hours. That same hour saw 4.33% at Paignton Station, 0.78% at Bank Lane Brixham and 0.28% at Cary Parade, giving that hour some 10.67% of all delay hours during the survey period.

When listed by percentage of overall delay by hour by rank, The Strand had eight of the top ten proportions, whilst Paignton Station had the other two. The lowest percentage in this top 10 was 2.3% and this top ten accounted for

over 37% of all delay hours. They were focussed on the period between 23:00 Saturday and 03:00 Sunday.

However, all delay hours were over a total of 183 different rank hours. When times were considered, nearly every hour from 07:00 Thursday through to Sunday 04:00 saw delay at some rank suggesting the issue to be more widespread than focussed.

However, in terms of targeting the key hours where improvement would see the best return, it is clear the period over Saturday – Sunday is the one where the most return would be obtained. Obviously, any extra vehicles in that period would not just operate for a few hours, so other benefit would be obtained in addition.

Two options were taken. The first (Option 1) took the 23:00 and midnight hours at The Strand rank detailed information and inserted sufficient vehicles in order to eliminate all passenger waiting in those two hours at that rank. The number of vehicles that had to be inserted over the two hours was 19. This removed all unmet demand in those two hours in full, completely, providing no passenger waiting at all in those two specific hours.

It is accepted that Option 1 looked at just The Strand rank. The modelled impact purely changing these two hours only actually reduced the level of significance across the full area (but on the value excluding the private ranks) by 30% (from 1159.99 to 814.88). And those extra plates would definitely not just work two hours therefore reducing the index further although it is impossible to predict exactly how.

Assuming those plates also removed delay for the six previous and four post hours on the Saturday/Sunday, and also impacted the worst four hours on the Friday/Saturday, and the worst six hours on the Thursday (all at The Strand) saw the index for the full area (again excluding the private ranks) reduce 88% to 144.86, not far from reducing the level of significance to below 80, and all based on adding just the 19 plates.

Further review seeking to take the index below the 80 value required assumptions much more difficult to have confidence in so was not taken further. However, the value of 80 was almost certainly within the margin of error expected for such modelling, and also the extra plate making the total to 20 would also have an impact across the area, so again there is some suggestion the 20 could achieve an ISUD value below the 80 level of significance.

Option 2 considers the four ranks across the area which at midnight on the Saturday-Sunday had observed unmet demand. This option is based on the full model, including all ranks and therefore the private ones. Most of the unmet demand was at The Strand and Paignton Station. A total of 150 passengers were observed having to wait. Using a 1.9 occupancy suggests 78 more vehicle departures (not vehicles, see below) would be needed to remove the unmet demand fully at this time. Based on the observed return to rank time (see below), this led to the suggestion that 26 more vehicles within that hour across the whole area although this would again also totally extinguish unmet demand at this time, i.e. no passenger delay at all in that hour at all four ranks. Again, the modelled 'pure' impact on the full set of observations (i.e across the full survey period) reduced the index from 1801 to 1490, a 17% reduction just using the change introduced for these four hours (the same hour at each of the four locations), and again this is an underestimate given those would certainly cover other hours and ranks.

For this option, moving on to clarify the impact of the 26 across the full survey was not modelled given the potential choices required were less easy to make, but in both cases, the extra vehicles will certainly service and reduce unmet demand in other hours. This means these estimates can be used as proxies. These numbers therefore suggest that the recommended 20 is more appropriate than 17 (10%) but that 26 is not necessarily better than 19. (based on the very specific two-hours at one rank against four locations for one hour, but tested against the full relevant total for each option).

Another calculation on a broader level suggested that total elimination of unmet demand might need up to 115 vehicles more based on an estimate of the maximum possible number of trips per active vehicle, although again the requirement is to reduce the index to under 80, not totally eliminate unmet demand, given that it is accepted there will nearly always be some unmet demand arising from mismatches between vehicle and passenger arrivals.

On these bases, given that the ISUD index is exponential, the final number to reduce ISUD to less than 80 would probably be in the order of 35. The benefit of adding a given number of plates (and by this we mean 20, not 115) is that their impact can be seen and tested and further policy options then considered and moved forward based on evidence gleaned. This also allows the identification of any unexpected or unintentional consequences that might arise in the complex world of licensed vehicle operations. This means to say that our estimates suggest 20 could be sufficient if all provided favourable improvements, but might not do so for a myriad of reasons.

These include:

- Release of suppressed passenger demand
- Some drivers seeing reduced income working longer
- Some who rent vehicles gaining their own vehicle and choosing not to work hours when those vehicles effectively reducing supply at critical periods
- More off peak drivers moving to booking circuits

From our understanding of trade reactions the benefit of introducing 20 then perhaps more in due course is likely to be higher than a direct introduction of 35 now, as the higher the number of plates the bigger the 'shock' introduced to the industry and therefore the more negative a reaction by those currently within the providing trade.

Specifically, we would not recommend adding 26 or 35 at this time as the principal is that once issued plates cannot easily be removed, so it is better to err on the side of caution to prevent too much economic or operational shock to the current trade which would lead to unforeseen impacts some of which might reduce overall impact.

Other comments:

The modelling also requires some of the general operational parameters of the current service to the public to be confirmed. As explained in the main report, sample plate observations were undertaken to identify the number of vehicles active at key times. This information can also be interrogated to identify the return to rank times.

Over the three-day sample, 72% (53% over two days last time) of the active available fleet (AAF) was observed. The comparison suggests vehicles are servicing more of the whole area now than in 2020. There appear to be more vehicles servicing Paignton and Brixham now, but as shown below including more vehicles servicing beyond Torquay. It must be remembered that this survey is a sample and that it is not at ranks but nearby, so it will capture vehicles passing through or undertaking non-rank based trips, or trips from ranks in other locations passing this site, as well as those working at the ranks.

Further analysis was undertaken considering what the plate data told us with regard to return to rank times. A review was undertaken of the three 23:00 to 01:00 periods on the Thursday-Friday, Friday-Saturday and Saturday-Sunday of the rank survey, at the Cary Parade plate observation point. This was the point with the most plates observed and identified most vehicles servicing The Strand rank.

Plates were listed by time observed. Given that these hours mainly saw vehicles arriving at ranks being directly taken by customers with minimal wait times at the rank, the observed return to rank times effectively show long a vehicle was out and back from the rank, and therefore available for further service. The Thursday average return to rank time for a vehicle was 23 minutes and 44 seconds. That for Friday was very similar at 23 minutes 27 seconds. The last set of observations suggested the return to rank time per vehicle was on average 21 minutes 29 seconds.

These times suggest that a vehicle can undertake about 2.6 trips per hour. This value can be used to identify the extra number of vehicles that might be required to move a given excess of passengers (in terms of trips, i.e. divided by the typical passenger occupancy).

Other pointers to number of plates to issue:

A review was undertaken of the plates not seen. It must be remembered the plate survey is a sample, covering Thursday / Friday / Saturday during the rank observation period which may miss vehicles whose work patterns do not include the surveyed hours. However, the sample hour structure has been developed over time to maximise the results obtained, so the level of missed working vehicles should be low.

Of the 48 hackney carriage plates not seen it was suggested by licensing that 10% (5) were in the process of being transferred at the time of the survey due to driver retirement for a range of reasons and a third (16) were known either to only service school contracts or other specific client bases. A further 29% (14) were known to service school contracts but were still believed to service ranks, with the final 27% (13) unclear why they were not seen.

One of the two hcv wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAV) were not seen in the plate review although the vehicle is believed to service ranks but mainly services school runs so was probably operating out of the time period the plate survey covered. On this basis, it is clear there are definitely 21 plates that were almost certainly not active at ranks over the survey period.

A further test was to compare the impact of the extra vehicles seen at Brixham to the improvement to the ISUD index. Between the last survey and the 2023 survey, the number of vehicles observed at Brixham (albeit over two days) increased from 29 to 33 different vehicles, a total of some 14% more. The change in the ISUD index between the same two surveys for Brixham was a 30% reduction. The suggested 20 plates are 12% of the fleet.

Estimating the extra numbers of vehicles is difficult because:

- There is no means by which vehicles can be expected to work 24/7
- There is certainly no way that drivers can be expected to work long hours even though the working time requirements have been opted out from
- There is no way any authority can require any hackney carriage vehicle only to be used for rank work
- A known benefit of licensed vehicle work is the element of choice given to people when they prefer to work
- Since the pandemic, drivers have tended to focus on work-life balance more than before
- Any assumption on extra vehicles assumes new vehicles will behave as the present vehicles do
- Total service levels are the sum of choices made by different drivers about their different vehicles
- Public demand is partly known in terms of from the operation of venues that might provide such demand and partly unknown again due to the range of decisions people might make culminating in their arriving at a rank
- If a new vehicle is given to someone currently renting a share of a plate, they will then have the option of working different hours to their current, if that includes the choice to move away from hours with unmet demand, that extra plate will not improve the situation

What is known is that rank and plate observations will provide a snapshot of performance of the set of parameters at play for those locations covered by any chosen survey. The elements of the ISUD equation were derived specifically to test not just one element but a range of different but related elements of hackney carriage performance to the public.

The worst issue is clearly partly related to the extra restriction on servicing the only rank in Paignton. We understand that changes coming will imply this restriction will be removed and a rank better located to service general demand provided. However, at best the impact of this change would need to be reviewed perhaps within six months of the change being made. What is not known, however, is when this change will occur.

Further, attempts were made in the past to provide non-permit ranks in the area (and in fact some ranks do still exist), but these were never used by the trade.

It must be remembered that the unmet demand has arisen not from growth in passenger demand but at a time when this has remained effectively stable. And that much higher demand in 2018 was serviced by the same fleet without any unmet demand that was significant. The growth of unmet demand in 2023 must therefore be the result of the level of availability of hackney carriages at the ranks having reduced. This less frequent attendance at ranks by the same fleet of hackney carriages can be associated with several factors, such as reduced levels of multi-shifting (fewer vehicles with multiple drivers), more of the fleet engaging in pre-booked hires, or more focussing on corporate work such as airport transfer or contract work such as for schools, rather than public facing work such as rank hires or hailing pick-ups.

The conundrum is that new vehicles and drivers cannot be directed at any particular location or time, which could minimise the level of requirement. It also has to be assumed that any issue of plates would be taken up by people observing there was demand to be met. This might occur from the private hire fleet but that might result in simple transfer of supply, although there is no way of knowing if this did result in shortages for booked demand. Licensing have advised us that a number of applications are waiting.

We now understand that revision of rank provision in Paignton is under consideration. Whilst details are far from being agreed or made public, the essence will be broadening provision both geographically and in terms of making provision of ranks that will be available to all Torbay hackney carriages without additional fee. Both elements will improve the opportunity to enhance service to those wishing to use hackney carriages in Paignton although inevitably a time of people and drivers getting used to the new situation will be necessary.

As an aside, in our experience, use of the data from the rank surveys can be made by the trade to understand when issues were identified and allow them to also attempt to make remedial action. This was effective in one study (albeit before COVID) in the South East. Again, the only way to test any such actions would be through the survey.

Level of certainty of impacts

We are confident that adding a further 20 plates at this time will reduce the level of unmet demand in Torbay and do so to a noticeable degree. Our model test shows that were 19 of these to service the worst case two hours of unmet demand, they would eliminate the unmet demand at that point, which accounted for just under 10% of total waiting time for the full survey period. Those plates would also service other hours and therefore reduce other total waiting times, and therefore further reduce the level of unmet demand. The chance of them reducing unmet demand is high given the overall wide spread of unmet demand that was observed.

We cannot, and do not believe it is possible or practicable, to confirm a number that will take the level of unmet demand to a calculated ISUD value less than 80. As stated above, adding 20 plates should reduce unmet demand to a noticeable degree although in the complex world of licensed vehicle demand even this cannot be firmly promised (for example, emergency road works might occur during any test survey which could not be foreseen, there could be an issue with vehicle availability such as spare parts, train strikes..).

Hence although the extra plates should reduce unmet demand, in reality the only way (in the absence of public complaints, or intelligence from the trade) to know this has occurred is to undertake further rank observations and also ensure these are not known about by the trade to ensure they observe typical observation. And to ensure all potential influencing parameters are noted and a reasoned view taken of their impact.

Our experience suggests that the impact of adding new plates tends to take six months or more from adding of the last plate to their full impact on demand.

Hence, were a decision made at committee with immediate effect, it could be perhaps the end of November when all 20 new vehicles were in place. This would allow repeat surveys in May or June 2025, which we would advise should cover all ranks over three days including the plate observations to ensure robust information. The only issue might be timing of the Paignton changes but that could be considered closer to the time.

The report produced following the repeat survey data collection would provide a clearer indication of the overall impacts as well as any unintended consequences and would allow the committee to have an up to date assessment of the significance of unmet demand at that point and a much better understanding of how the local hackney carriage operation and public service have stood up.

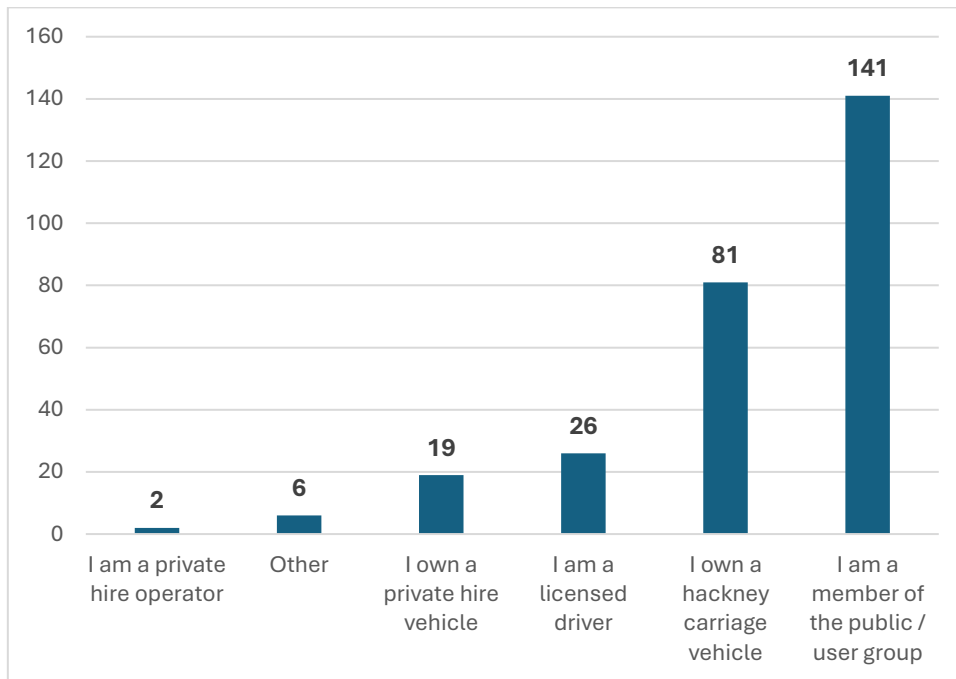
Appendix 3: Results of the Second Public Consultation - Hackney carriages and unmet demand Survey

Survey responses: 275

Question 1

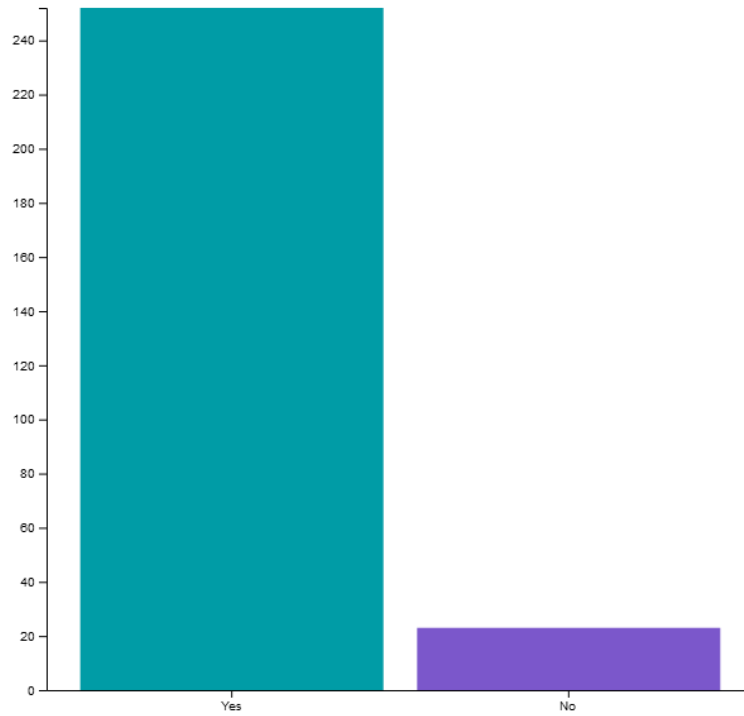
Which of the following best applies to you? (choose one)

There are 275 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
I own a private hire vehicle	19	6.91%
I own a hackney carriage vehicle	81	29.45%
I am a licensed driver	26	9.45%
I am a private hire operator	2	0.73%
I am a member of the public / user group	141	51.27%
Other	6	2.18%

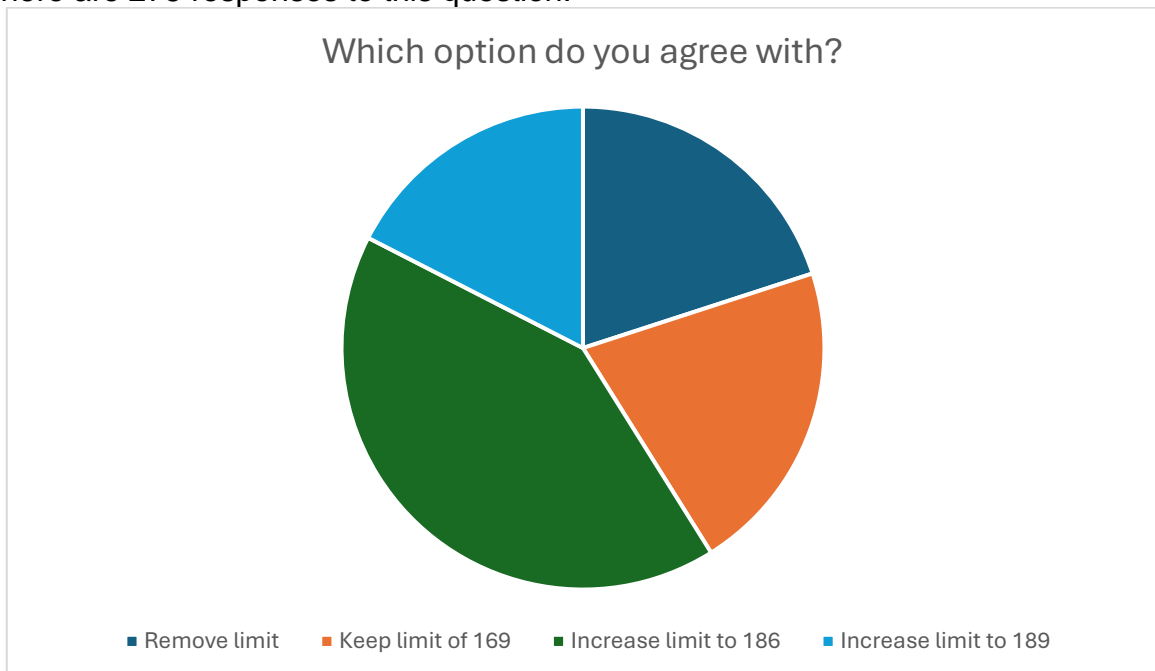
Question 2: Have you read the unmet demand study carried out by the LVSA?
There are 275 responses to this question.

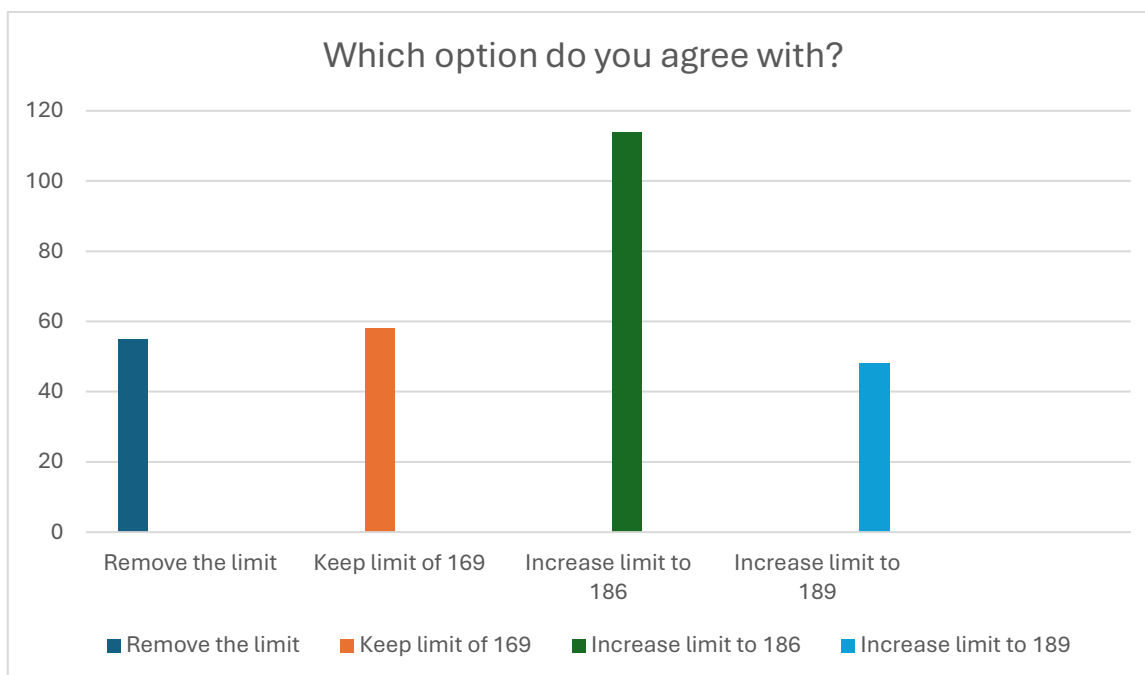


Option	Total	Percent
Yes	252	91.64%
No	23	8.36%

Question 3: Which of the following options do you agree with? (you can only choose one)

There are 275 responses to this question.





Option	Total	Percent
To remove the limit	55	20.00%
To keep the current limit of 169 hackney carriage vehicle licences in Torbay	58	21.09%
To increase the limit to 186 hackney carriage vehicles (an addition of 17 licences) as proposed by the trade, with a further survey within 6 months thereafter to determine whether the unmet demand is now met	114	41.45%
To increase the limit to 189 hackney carriage vehicles (an addition of 20 licences) as suggested to be an option by LVSA, with a further survey within 6 months thereafter to determine whether the unmet demand is now met	48	17.45%

Question 4: Is there anything else you'd like to add?

Comments received:

1	The ridiculous black car livery should never have been introduced, as that was the beginning of the issues. Remove this restriction, and allow already registered cars and drivers to switch between Public and Private Hire, as it was before.
2	Removing the limit doesn't guarantee the Unmet Demand would be met either. At least with managed growth you can still monitor if additional plates are needed. Like with everything in life there is never always a guarantee. The trade have been affected a lot in the last couple of years.
3	As previously stated, there are not currently enough Hackney Rank spaces to accommodate the Hackney trade as it stands as of today. I understand due to the flooded and now outdated unmet demand survey, doing nothing is not an option. We need to get the Stand completed and work together with council to agree additional rank space for the existing Hackney trade.

4	<p>Please do not reduce the number of taxis permitted to park on the taxi rank in Paignton by the train station.</p> <p>Given my disabilities I rely on these to get me home once I got off the bus from work at the bus station in Paignton.</p> <p>Several of the drivers have mentioned that the limit will be two taxis on the rank which is not sufficient to cater for the long queues that can occur.</p>
5	<p>Please don't cut taxi numbers in station square paignton. Being over 80. We rely on these taxis 3 or 4 times a week & so do our many friends. If cut down it means we can't come into town as much</p>
6	<p>It's obvious that IN the summer months demand will be higher given the influx of people so the level set could be to high for the winter</p>
7	<p>Everywhere is busier, time waiting for a cab is getting frustratingly longer</p>
8	<p>As I am unable to drive any longer I have to rely on taxis. They are taking longer to arrive because of their busy schedules. This impacts on hospital appointments especially.</p>
9	<p>Better signage on taxi ranks and location of ranks to make it clear to the public where they are.</p>
10	<p>To release more plates would mean a wage cut for the drivers . there is enough taxis to meet the demand.</p>
11	<p>In Exeter it is easy to tell the difference between a Hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle. The Hackney carriages are a distinctive red colour and look quite different from private hire vehicles.</p> <p>It would be helpful if there was a similar distinction in Torbay. If you are seeking to hail a cab, by the time you've worked out whether it is a private hire or Hackney cab it's too late. I accept that they are differences between them in Torbay – but not nearly distinctive enough!</p>
12	<p>Please can we have more rank space, tariff increase, Marshall's on Friday and Saturday nights. As promised</p>
13	<p>Ban Uber</p>
14	<p>I can't understand how there is an unmet demand? The ranks are packed the majority of the time. The only quiet spells are on school pick-ups. You will never ease that because those extra plates will just get a school run too as it's guaranteed money. The town is on its knees and does not get the foot traffic as it once did.</p> <p>This summer has been dire for a season and will probably continue into the foreseeable future. Next year will probably follow suit.</p> <p>6 months is not enough time to review the numbers. It needs to be 18 months.</p>
15	<p>I believe any new plates issued should be to people who are going to work them and not to people who already have a number of plates and rent them out for school runs and don't bother to work them selves as this will not help to keep rank's moving.</p>
16	<p>I would like assurance that the taxi rank review will be done before the next survey is completed. Can the next survey be done inline with the survey done in 2020. Can all ranks have adequate signage and lighting, also marshals on Friday and Saturday nights.</p>
17	<p>Torquay & Paignton rail ranks should not be included in the unmet demand survey, as they are not Torbay Council ranks. Also, there is a very small number of hackneys with permits to work Torquay rail.</p>
18	<p>I use taxis very regularly as my bus route is very unreliable when I need to be on time for trains or for appointments.</p>
19	<p>The over ranking at present is a problem. There is also a huge issue with Rank space and now we are faced with even more ranks being taken away from us i.e Paignton Rail, this rank is being taken from 18 spaces to 2!!!! We have been given temporary ranks which aren't fit for purpose. No clear signage, which means they aren't recognised as official ranks. Therefore no enforcement can take place. Thus meaning the general public can park on there, stoping us from working.</p>

20	It's been a real struggle being by the pavilion and out the way.. as no one still seem to know where we are. Cant get onto the Torwood rank as public are always parked up.. And the fleet walks always occupied by either red plates or the uber eat deivers
21	Over the years, holiday makers travel to Torbay by there cars. So we don't have much extra work. But because the holiday makers take to the roads, the traffic plus work works, make it longer to return to the ranks. If there is a queue this is the reason & no one waits that one
22	I do not think that you should be issuing hackney licenses to drivers that predominantly do school runs as this will not help with the demand in anyway
23	I use taxis for visits to the Theatre, restaurants, nights out etc and do not have problems in getting a taxi.
24	There isn't enough rank space as it is to remove the limit, certain rank spaces are dated eg chestnut rank never is it used by Hackney drivers the private hire companies pick up the trade there from the hotels Eg 2 the island is never used either it used to be when there was a night trade at the top of town with clubs and pubs open but this trade went years ago so that in its self is 7 spaces, if these was active ranks we as a trade are still short on rank space what is needed is more rank space and the survey doing in the winter as well as the summer then u can truly measure the waiting times of customers over busy and quiet times
25	I have never seen a cab that you can hail down in Torbay. Only been able to use the rank
26	New survey to only be carried out after adequate signage and lighting on all ranks. A rank review has been completed Please arrange for marshals on the pavilion rank on Friday and Saturday night asap
27	The reason for my option to increase taxis in the bay is 1. Competition and 2. Many of my guests are waiting upto an hour for a taxi which for a seaside resort is unacceptable.
28	If you want to ensure that people are having shorter waits then the new licenses should only be issued to people that must work off the rank not given to people who predominantly do school runs.
29	Waiting times for taxis for a home pick up is often at least 20 minutes and booked taxis can often run late.
30	There's Hackney carriage taxi that souly do school runs, which do not work the ranks at all, this impacts on the ranks on a daily basis. Maybe these should be on a private hire vehicle rather than Hackney carriage plate.
31	I'd like to see accountability for correct conduct and cleanliness as well as safe driving. Currently, there are a lot if rogue drivers out there.
32	I believe the extra Hackney licences should be for evening only as it only seems the problem is the evening I also think someone that already had a liscence unless they are using it themselves should not be allowed one for them to gain out of it for hiring it out
33	As a user, establishing the difference between hackney carriages and private hire by a suitable delivery or standardisation of vehicle would be highly beneficial. Exeter is an excellent example where the differentiation is clear.
34	Please keep numbers up in station square. As an elderly resident I rely on these taxis after shopping etc to get home.as do many people I've spoken to.
35	The holiday makers don't use taxis much because they travel to the bay by their own cars & between this & roadworks. It's been a very poor financial year
36	We use taxis from time to time often in conjunction with going to the station. We would like to see more available. Also, we are told that the current arrangement outside Torquay station involves the operators having to pay a charge to wait there. This means there is always a need to phone and wait for a taxi from the station.
37	I need taxi s as I have mobility issues
38	To de-limit would be detrimental to the trade. If the was no limit, how would you know if any demand remains. With managed growth you release 17 plates each time until the demand is below the required level

39	There are not currently enough Hackney rank spaces as it is. We've been advised by the council that to do nothing is not an option. So adding 17 more licenses seems to be the best option. It is in my opinion already flooded with Hackney's with nowhere near enough spaces for the trade as it is.
40	More rank space and Marshall's please
41	An unmet demand survey should not be carried out when so many roadworks were taking place ...and Paignton rail is a private rank that is not accessible unless you have a permit so it was ridiculous to use this rank anyway. There are plenty enough Hackney carriages within Torbay unfortunately we have to contend with one set of major roadworks after another...maybe the survey should be if people think the council's planning and highways team are doing a good job ??
42	Not enough trade about, town hasn't got a lot of shoes left.
43	The trade is still recovering & needs incentives for drivers to work at peak times, an increase in meter fares & a higher tariff for 6/8 seaters
44	There appears to be no mention of pricing in the survey. Blue Plate cabs overcharge. What we really need are more taxis particularly in Brixham
45	I have noticed that the rank at Paignton station often has no taxis there at all.
46	I am a street pastor and there are insufficient taxis available most Saturday nights for the public resulting in long queues and frustration.
47	The waiting times for taxis is currently ludicrously long on taxi ranks. I cannot believe there are as many as 169 Hackney carriage licences in Torbay; perhaps most of them operate in Paignton and Brixham as the queues whenever I'd like a taxi in Torquay involve a long wait. And, of course, there are simply no taxis available during school term time between about 7.30 and 9.30 in the morning, and again between about 2.30 to 5.30 in the evening; this applies to both Hackney carriages and private hire taxis. Given that all the children using these taxis must be going to the same schools, perhaps there should be minibuses that drive routes to collect these children from home and then deliver them back again. It cannot be more expensive for the local tax payer, and would free up taxis for non-school customers.
48	If the survey in 6 months shows that there continues to be an unmet need, I would remove the cap altogether.
49	Why only Hackney carriages, when will Torbay open up to Uber??
50	nothing to add
51	Keen to encourage the use of electric vehicles (with suitably located charging points)
52	No
53	Booking accessible taxis is really difficult. Many are used for 'school runs' and therefore not available for daytime usage by other wheelchair users.
54	For some time now it has been essential to pre-book a taxi, or private hire, in the evenings as not doing so could you leave you stranded!
55	N/A
56	There are only enough taxis if the weather is good and they are pre-booked in advance. It's almost impossible to just call and get a taxi straight away at peak times in summer. If it then rains, lots more people need taxis and there are just not enough. I didn't even realise there was a limit until recently. Surely it's stifling competition? No wonder there is no Uber here. Tourists think our taxis are expensive.
57	A review of their pricing would also be useful. It costs more to take a taxi three miles down the road here in Torbay than it does to take a taxi to get across Birmingham and the black country.
58	The report makes little to no mention of nighttime economy at the weekend when demand is naturally higher or of events such as the Pirate Festival in Brixham. In the past 3 months my wife and I have used taxis on 4 separate occasions. The first was during the Pirate Festival in Brixham in May, the buses were full and we had to book a taxi, of the 4 companies we rang, none were free for over an hour. The next time was in June on Armed Forces Day, booking during the day was fine travelling within Paignton, but it was more difficult

	<p>to get a taxi in the evening so we took a bus. The other occasions was at night travelling home from Brixham, each time we struggled to get a taxi from the rank and had to wait for nearly 30 mins all the taxi companies we rang were booked up.</p> <p>Increasing the number of plates will only be useful if the taxis are available at periods of peak demand; something I didn't see referenced within the report.</p>
59	No
60	I understand that there's a requirement for the vehicle to be less than 3 years old in Torbay - this could be prohibitive to new drivers. Other councils have a higher threshold, perhaps reviewing that would help increase numbers. Also, all taxi companies seem to be focusing on Torquay. It's VERY difficult to get a taxi in Paignton.
61	I live in Brixham. In recent years there has been a significant drop in the availability of taxis in the area. There always use to be taxis on the Brixham rank but now, no matter what time of day, what season, there are hardly any. I understand many taxis now do contracts for the council running school children to school and back which decreases the availability even more and Ive even heard some drivers say that with these contracts, they feel they dont have to work on the rank/call outs as they are earning enough doing these contracts to live on. When it comes to phoning for a taxi, there are often none available. With the increase of tourists during the summer months, the pressure this puts on local bus services often means you cannot even get on a bus because as they are full and because of the situation with the taxis, people often get stranded.
62	A incremental increase with further monitoring I feel is the best way Forward at this time. Trying also to disperse rank in other areas would help. These have to be well signposted so the public know where they can find a taxi. key places like out of town shopping areas, transport hubs ie coach station & train stations would help unmet demand
63	Not sure if it needs to be a permanent thing or is it seasonal through peak holiday season
64	Removing the limit removes much of the control. Find another place for an additional taxi rank in Paignton, whether it is where Crossways was demolished or off Hyde Road behind Poundland. One rank is insufficient.
65	Because of long waiting times on previous occasions, we rarely try to hire a taxi anymore.
66	There are too many taxis waiting in the town centre during the day and not enough at night at the harbourside. This is not great for safety of women at night especially as it is dark at the taxi rank.
67	It has become increasingly difficult to get a taxi in the evenings without pre-booking.
68	Taxis in Brixham in the evenings are few and far between so an increase would be welcome especially as the local buses stop running ridiculously early
69	Uber and its ilk has to be excluded wherever possible
70	There is a need for more drivers in the evenings and at weekends. Too many drivers work Mon to Fri 9 - 5. I work as a PH driver working evenings & weekends & notice the queues waiting on the rank.
71	There are no where near enough taxis, especially in Brixham. We have had so many occasions where we tried to get taxis and couldn't because they had only 1 or 2 on. On one occasion our son was on crutches after breaking his leg and we were not going to be able to park in town for the fireworks. He was only 9, and we managed to get a bus into town but afterwards there was no bus and we couldn't get a taxi even though we tried.
72	Local authorities to make the value of the plate £0

	<p>1. I don't think opening up licensing to anyone is a solution. This would mean a surfeit in the summer months and a drop off in the winter which wouldn't be a solution. It would be difficult to keep track of who is supposed to be licenced and who is not. This could be detrimental the safety and well being of the customers.</p> <p>2. 169 licences is not enough, people like me over 60 walk because late at night I cannot get a taxi. This is not safe through Winner Street late at night.</p> <p>3. Increase limit to 186 licences is cautious but I feel it is not enough though the additional survey after 6 months is acceptable.</p> <p>4. I prefer the increase to 189 licences with a survey after 6 months. 20 more taxi's should meet the unmet demand. Mostly the deficit is Paignton and mainly at 11.00pm or thereabouts and an optional 20 cans should be able to cover the need from Torquay and Paignton.</p>
73	In the winter there are far too many drivers sat on all the ranks in torbay and since the new layout at the seafront the ranks have moved got smaller so there will be even more taxis blocking roads waiting for fares as torbay is a seasonal destination
74	The reason why it's difficult to get a taxi is because there is very little taxi ranks now most of them have been closed down. There is no TAXI ranking painting apart from private ones and the ones in the harbour no one knows where they are.
75	In my opinion, taxi drivers need their driving abilities and skills monitored in Brixham. They don't adhere to the speed limits around the town, they are tailgating other vehicles and whilst waiting in Bolton Street recently I saw three taxis in the space of 10 minutes taking prohibited left turns up to Mount Pleasant Road and Windmill Hill. There are road signs specifically saying no left hand turns but it doesn't appear to be adhered to by taxi drivers. I'd like to know how often their driving standards are monitored as quite honestly I wouldn't like to be one of their passengers and pay for the privilege. I'm a regular driver and road user, not an old fuddy duddy with nothing else better to do than complain but their driving standards do concern me. Thank you for considering my opinion.
76	I feel there are too many taxis' in the bay and i think it needs to be reduced.
77	There's not enough rank space for additional cars
78	Would like to know where are all the taxi going to go as there is not enough rank space for everyone to sit and if you open up to more drivers you will be opening up for drivers to brake the law with parking anywhere and you are taking my living away?????
79	You are talking my my chance of working because you don't have the rank space for other cars make trying to make a wage impossible
80	There are plenty of taxis on the rank and meets the demands of the public.
81	It's not there's too many cans there is not enough taxi rank for the cabs to park.
82	As a Brixham resident it's easy to get a taxi on the town centre rank during the day but much more difficult in the evening. Maybe a minimum number of taxis can be compelled to operate later?
83	The only time there is a greater demand for taxis is on a biusy Saturday night most of the time you are struggling to get on a taxi rank
84	If you do give extra licenses maybe put them to evening only as I believe it's evenings that are most probably needed rather than days. If too many people have Hackney plates you won't fit everybody on the ranks they only hold so many cars.
85	It seems shortsighted to increase plate numbers without rank space to park on or marshals for safety of drivers & customers. Clear spaces to turn round & enforcement of illegal parking blocking ranks..
86	If they raise the number of licenses where are they going to work because at the moment they're is not any Rank space in Torbay TBC expect new drivers to buy a new car plus all the extra costs too find out when they go out to work there's no where to park.
87	The demand for extra taxis is really only needed between afternoon school run times, summer Friday & Saturday nights. The fact there is less work midweek daytimes due to shops & pubs in

	Torquay town closing all the time shows that with more Hackney's released means even less work. Plus the loss of rank space also effects us
	<p>Increasing the limit for Hackney drivers is not the right approach to address the demand issues.</p> <p>Hackney drivers often lack long-term vision, focusing more on immediate gains rather than considering the broader implications. Unlike Private Hire (PH) drivers, who typically work for reputable companies operating 24/7 with strict standards, Hackney drivers operate independently. They are only required to follow the Taxi Policy, which is poorly enforced by the council, and do not have a company holding them accountable. PH companies can respond to demand patterns effectively, alerting drivers when busy periods are expected and mobilizing a large pool of drivers as needed—something independent Hackney drivers cannot do.</p> <p>To truly meet the demand highlighted in recent reports, the focus should be on supporting Private Hire Drivers and helping PH companies attract and retain drivers. The process of becoming a PH driver is increasingly difficult due to stringent requirements, such as newer vehicles, shorter vehicle life spans, additional MOTs even for new cars, and advanced driving tests that must be completed during the application stage. These requirements could be adjusted, such as allowing advanced driving tests to be completed 6-12 months after obtaining a license. Additionally, outdated area knowledge tests, which are less relevant in the age of GPS, should be re-evaluated, especially given that modern dispatch systems come with integrated maps. It costs hundreds if not thousands of pounds to set up as a driver.</p> <p>The licensing team should provide clear, accessible information for those interested in joining the taxi trade. Currently, the available resources are inadequate, with poorly organised information and slow response times from the licensing team, which takes 5-7 working days to reply to emails and offers no phone support. This lack of support can unnecessarily delay the application process for potential drivers who encounter issues or need guidance.</p> <p>The solution is PH drivers that can work with a PH company, increasing the Hackney limit, will only flood the ranks at the wrong times, and will not necessarily improve the situation at times that have been pointed out in the LVSA document.</p>
88	As you must know, Taxis and Private Hire vehicles are only busy in the summer and Christmas & New year, but have to work long hours to make it worthwhile. Increasing the number of taxis will only dilute the slim profit drivers and proprietors make at the moment, and together with the costs and obstacles imposed by Torbay Council, it is doubtful whether any new people will be attracted to the taxi trade in Torbay.
89	Struggling now to get on a rank having to keep driving round to get on one.
90	Make the rank in town bigger so more taxis can get on it.
91	How can we sustain more hackney carriage vehicles in the bay, when you are cutting down on the rank spaces in both Paignton and Torquay.
92	I don't believe that the unmet demand survey in 2023 should be compared to the one done in 2020 during the pandemic. Of course waiting times etc are going to be longer ? And now we are losing rank spaces in both Paignton and Torquay making waiting times even longer so releasing more plates is going to benefit who? Maybe looking in to why the ranks are being taken away would be more advantageous to help the public in minimising waiting times?
93	More plates aren't required when you sit on a rank for 45 minutes to mostly go local for average £4.50. 20 more plates mean 20 more drivers and the already sparse work being diluted further. Short on rank space as it is with no help clearing the public from parking on taxi ranks. They are only busy for a couple of hours on a Friday/Saturday night at kick out time. During the day and week nights it's a struggle and there will be more plates vacated by drivers who just can't survive.

94	The last few years have challenging for our trade and others in the bay . Road works all year round causing long to get to destinations and return to ranks . Visitor numbers are vastly down meaning longer to wait, more taxis will mean more diluted work meaning lower income . You want high standards of vehicles, if we are not earning the money that will go out the window. This a small town not a city . I feel remove the road works during the summer as it use to be would make life a lot easier for everyone in the industry. If you remove the limits fares would have to increase by 25 % because we would be sat a round a lot longer earning no money. Winter is bad enough with the number of taxis now. Rank spaces are limited and we have to fight to get them. You will drive people away from the industry faster than solving the unmet demand.
95	I never see people waiting for long at ranks, and apart from a couple of months in the summer, Torbay goes really quiet and it is a struggle to get on the ranks. Perhaps they should be doing a survey in the winter aswell. Without contract work I would struggle to make a living from just rank work alone.
96	This is totally unnecessary. Lots of anguish has been caused. Lots of money has been wasted and there is no need really to touch anything same as when you turn the cars to black totally unnecessary and costing
97	I don't see how you can warrant issuing more plates when ranks are being taken away in both Torquay and Paignton
98	To make sure that all drivers have name badges of the company on them and showing at all times. That would make women feel safer.
99	There are private hire companies providing an excellent, reliable and cheaper service. They do not need the competition that more hackney carriages would bring.
100	The number of licences isn't the issue in my opinion, the number of drivers is the problem. As a hackney carriage licence holder, I've been looking for a long time for a driver to use the vehicle when I'm not working myself with no luck.
101	There is only demand for extra Hackney taxis after midnight Saturday nights The town centre is losing shops every week & these are major shops too which are not being replaced so footfall in town is down. This summer has been one of the worst ever and I find it ridiculous that there's an option to extend the Hackney fleet. 100% no
102	No need for more plates on the ranks there's not enough room or work for the existing cars
103	I think you should think about more rank space before you think about actually getting more cars on the road there's enough cars in Torbay not enough rank space
104	I have been a hackney driver for over 27 years, business has declined nearly every year Shopping and nightlife, apart from 1, when all the airplanes were grounded because off covid and everyone had to holiday in the UK if they wanted a holiday.
105	To increase the number of Hackney Carriages in Torbay you would need to increase the number of rank spaces. If this is not done, and more taxis are licensed, drivers would be forced to drive around from rank to rank looking for a space. Unmet demand seldom occurs and drivers are only too keen to get back to the ranks after dropping customers off.
106	I don't believe there needs to be more taxis on the ranks. The only time public are left waiting for a taxi is late in the night on a weekend and even then the taxi wait time is not astronomical. 90 percent of the time taxis are queuing for a fare. By adding more Hackney taxis to the road the ranks will struggle to accommodate them.
107	I think there's more than enough taxis just no advertising where your taxi ranks are and the fact that your drivers need to be educated if somebody flags you down in the street you can stop I don't think there's a demand for more taxi as such you have wide range of minicab services which I must say are grossly overpriced I'm not as professional as you're hackney carriage fleet

108	<p>Increasing the limit for Hackney drivers is not the right approach to address the demand issues.</p> <p>Hackney drivers often lack long-term vision, focusing more on immediate gains rather than considering the broader implications. Unlike Private Hire (PH) drivers, who typically work for reputable companies operating 24/7 with strict standards, Hackney drivers operate independently. They are only required to follow the Taxi Policy, which is poorly enforced by the council, and do not have a company holding them accountable. PH companies can respond to demand patterns effectively, alerting drivers when busy periods are expected and mobilizing a large pool of drivers as needed—something independent Hackney drivers cannot do.</p> <p>To truly meet the demand highlighted in recent reports, the focus should be on supporting Private Hire Drivers and helping PH companies attract and retain drivers. The process of becoming a PH driver is increasingly difficult due to stringent requirements, such as newer vehicles, shorter vehicle life spans, additional MOTs even for new cars, and advanced driving tests that must be completed during the application stage. These requirements could be adjusted, such as allowing advanced driving tests to be completed 6-12 months after obtaining a license. Additionally, outdated area knowledge tests, which are less relevant in the age of GPS, should be re-evaluated, especially given that modern dispatch systems come with integrated maps. It costs hundreds if not thousands of pounds to set up as a driver.</p> <p>The licensing team should provide clear, accessible information for those interested in joining the taxi trade. Currently, the available resources are inadequate, with poorly organised information and slow response times from the licensing team, which takes 5-7 working days to reply to emails and offers no phone support. This lack of support can unnecessarily delay the application process for potential drivers who encounter issues or need guidance.</p> <p>The solution is PH drivers that can work with a PH company, increasing the Hackney limit, will only flood the ranks at the wrong times, and will not necessarily improve the situation at times that have been pointed out in the LVSA document.</p>
109	I think that it would be good to keep the numbers as they are, because in the winter it is very quiet and difficult enough to access the ranks without having extra vehicles added to the mix.
110	Lack of available rank space..particularly with the harbour redevelopment and possible alterations in Paignton..and current regulations being stricter than neighbouring towns.
111	I think taxi waiting time on the ranks is very minimal if any at all the only time I can see a wait is late Saturday night apart from railway stations which are permit holders only and shouldn't be included in the statistics and if plates are going to be issued should only be to people who are going to work them and not rent them out for school runs as will not help to keep ranks clear.
112	There's not enough rank space as it is for anymore plates
113	Don't decrease the number of taxis at paignton rank
114	We might be able to obtain taxis all through the day and night then not just at convenient times for the owners
115	<p>Why has this not been decided upon?</p> <p>There is clear evidence of unmet demand and whilst it working it is clear there are not enough taxis on our table to service the general public.</p> <p>In the last meeting councillors were to afraid to delimit in fear for their reputation. The evidence is clear.</p> <p>Allow delimit and let people who actually want to use the ranks a chance to create a business. This reminds me of Maggie Thatchers closed shop conservative party in the 80's. Oh wait we still have the conservative party in power at Torbay council ????</p> <p>The hackney trade is a mess and needs an overhaul starting with de-limiting and allowing entry to get a licence by anyone</p>
116	<p>Most taxi drivers seem to think they are doing you a favour not providing a paid for service.</p> <p>The ones based at Paignton railway station are a disgrace none of them were prepared to drive</p>

	around the block to pick up a disabled elderly lady with shopping outside Poundland. The sooner Uber operates in Torbay the better.
117	I regularly find it impossible to get a taxi at Torquay Station in the evening, at around 8 and 9pm. The last two times when I've telephoned for one to pick me up, I have had to wait for 40 minutes. This is unacceptable.
118	I'm a private hire driver and have been for 18 years in Torbay. I'm constantly being told by customers that there isn't enough Taxis in the bay. Especially from the ranks!. Therefore I think there shouldn't be a limit on Hackney plates.
119	We need a professional company such as Uber, if we stick with what we have we will never move forward we'd will be held to ransom with the old pals act, I can say this with 24years in the industry. They are more interested in keeping their jobs instead of working. My wife on a hospital visit was told she would have wait 1 1/2 hours for a return. I worked for the company who once had the contract and that would never have happened. It not just the Hackney who are found wanting it is private iras well.
120	Removing the limit would give opportunities to new drivers to enter the industry. It seems wrong that a few lucky plate owners can own and rent out plates for personal profit
121	I find it very difficult to get a taxi home when dining in Torbay. I actually favour introducing UBER.
122	Big thank you to the Licensing department for starting to tackle some historic issues and looking to update and improve the future of our trade.
123	I would actually regulate the current number to the actual number as I believe is somehow relevant, let me explain why it is enough for a hard working individual to have this with two regulatory lines: 1. no less than 40k miles per year(provided by MOT certificate), supplying the demand for the people will be met and for the driver to do the work and eliminating the cars that are just sitting in driveway ready to be rented for 270£ pw, or only doing school runs and weekends jobs. 2. Hackney carriages should not be able to take any contracts with any entity but to be bounded to the rank jobs, raise the starting fare after 400 yards and have all the cars have cctv in them to prevent incidents and promote safety in public transportations. Private hire licences should be able to take private hire jobs.
124	Please remove the limit. Trying to get a taxi in Torbay is a bit of a nightmare compared to many other areas. Especially considering it's a seaside town.
125	Remove the limit and allow me workers into the trade and improve the quality of the drivers and vehicles which are currently poor
126	There are never any taxis in Paignton or Brixham and we need more. Bring in Uber and that will sort the problem out. Taxis are too expensive
127	There is a need for more Hackney Carriages in the Torbay Area. Having driven in the Torbay area for 7 years plus as a Private Hire Driver. I see the demand in the Evenings and Weekends need to be met to meet the Public Demand.
128	I have been a PH driver for 2.5 years and have seen a need for more HC drivers in the evening and weekends.
129	I can never get a taxi from a rank in Torbay. Shocking service being provided. I now call for taxis from Totnes to come and pick me up when out in Torbay
130	It is rare if ever you can get a cab when you call. It is inevitable always a 30/40 minute wait. Guests at our B&B are always surprised that there are so few cabs
131	This would lead to a significant increase of taxi availability, some of my guests are waiting up to an hour for a taxi at this moment in time
132	We are elderly, can no longer drive, have had countless occasions when no taxi has been available to pick us up at railway and coach station or from the Willows or other out of town shopping areas, or after theatre or dining out, etc. It severely restricts our ability to go anywhere that doesn't have a bus service either at all or after hours. We need more taxis!!
133	Since Covid, there is not enough Taxis working Nights and weekend evenings

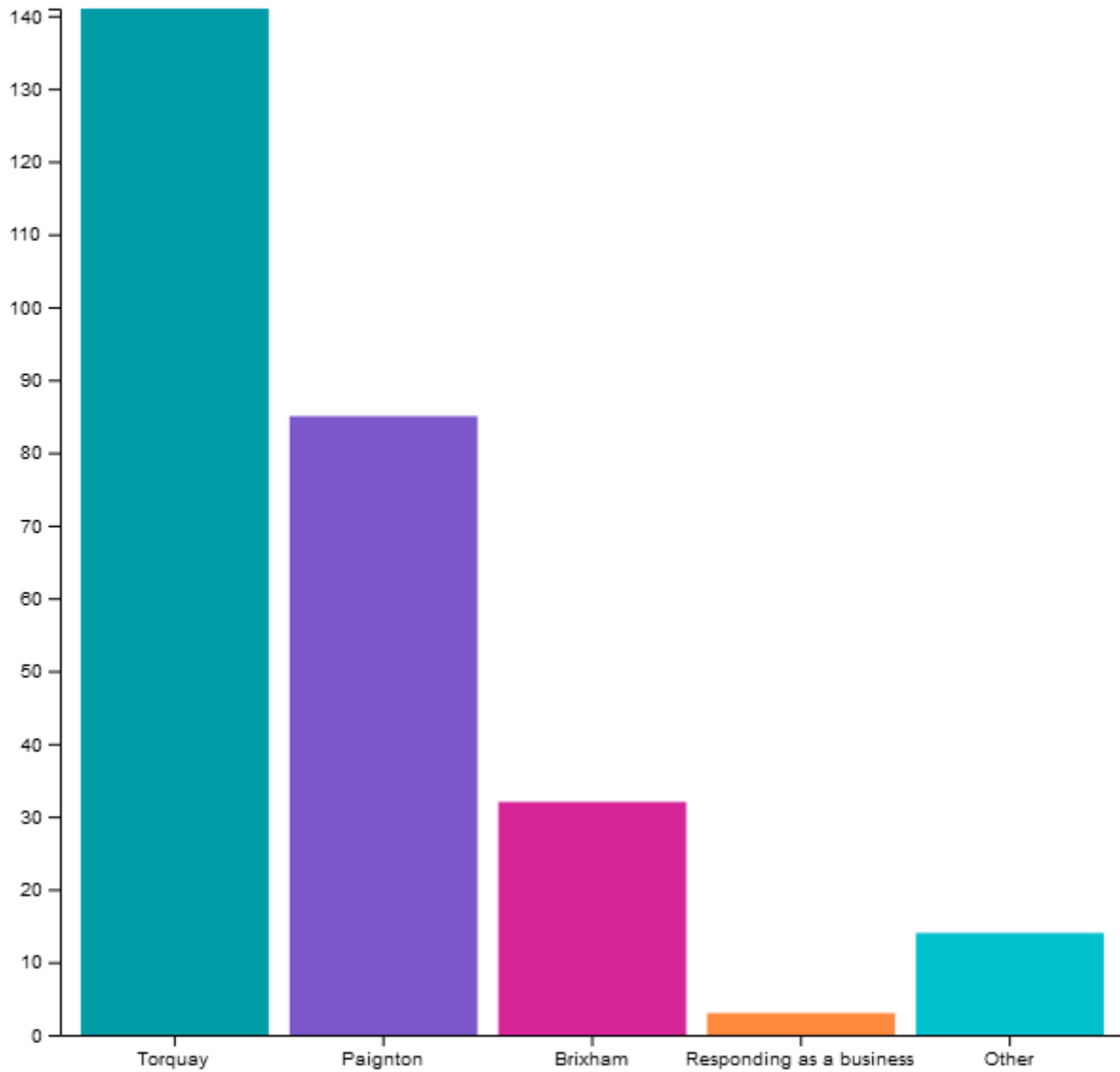
134	I work in a restaurant - wait times in the evening can often be 45 minutes to an hour both taxi and private hire. Not good for people with mobility issues and the tourist offering
135	In the last 12 -24 months I have visited town on a number of occasions, where there has been zero taxi's at any ranks and when phoning multiple taxi companies told there is an hour wait. Consequently, I have had no choice but to walk home (to St Marychurch). I feel people are 'put off' visiting town due to the lack of available taxi's at the end of the night. On top of this, I feel there is an increased risk to people (especially females) who are potentially left stranded in town, with no means of getting home. I presume the lack of taxi's at ranks is a direct result of the limiting of hackney carriage licenses.
136	Living in Brixham, we are really poorly served for taxis in the evenings. This really needs to improve for the survival of what little nighttime economy we have
137	There is still a lack of taxi's available operating in the night time economy given many taxi's choose not to operate at night. A HC is considered a safe method of transport home for many that havent booked private taxi home.
138	There is a general shortage of cabs in Torbay, especially in the evenings and at night. More cabs would make Torbay a safer place to live. The Council should be doing everything in its power to improve the safety of its citizens. Providing for many more evening and night cabs would be a big step in the direction of a safer Torbay.
139	The limit is anti-competitive and there is no good reason for its retention. If a limit is to be retained, it should be increased to 189 taxis - and the limit reassessed. But the reassessment needs to take place in the summer, when taxi use is greater due to tourism.
140	Should new Hackney plates be issued the proprietor should not be able to transfer licence plate to a third party. The plate must be returned to TBC and issued to a new applicant if granted. No grandfather rights. (similar to the Private Hire issue policy). Changes to future licence conditions, all new applications and renewals (HC & PH) should present EV/PHEV/ or Hybrid self charging vehicles.
141	I see no reason why the difference between hackney carriage licences and private hire vehicles is retained. In other areas, where all taxis are hackney carriages, the availability of taxis has increased due to increased competition.
142	Trying to get a taxi in Torbay is a nightmare unless you are allowed to pre book. This is a tourist destination! Being able to flag down more Hackney carriages will surely help people get home quickly and safely.
143	Hi Yes there is 100% not enough taxis the wait times for one are absolutely pathetic you are always told anything from 1 to 2 hrs wait like a tues night 9pm want a tax told it will be 1hrs wait how pathetic is that.
144	I work in a harbourside bar. wait times are unacceptable and we send vulnerable people to stand and ranks late a night. It does the tourist industry no good. There needs to be true competition to improve services.
145	I think private hire vehicles should be allowed to pick up from ranks if there are passengers waiting not to queue in rank spaces
146	In the winter taxis are easy to get but summer you can wait at the rank(Brixham) for a long time.
147	Just increasing the number of hackneys will not solve the unmet demand on its own. It is imperative that increasing driver safety through encouraging uptake of CCTV having trained marshals at key times and ta robust review of he lbest location of ranks across the bay especially Paignton be implemented. Drivers also need a cash incentive to work the more challenging night time hours if we are going to tackle some of the night time economy issues. Also imperative is a high profile public publicity campaign around safe use of Taxi and private hire location of ranks and highly visible signage directing the public to nearest rank especially important around transport hubs. It is clear from the report the disabled in Torbay do have a major issue accessing taxis at key times like school run hours and especially weekends and night time. They have to adjust their live choices around availability far too often. This needs recognizing and addressing they may be a small part of the overall user group but it is essential Torbay is seen as an inclusive authority as this is morally and economically important.

148	We need to fulfill the needs of the Public in Torbay Area the need for more Taxi's evenings and weekends especially as this work is not 09.00am to 17.00 pm. MON_FRI. There appears to be a need for more drivers who are willing to work Evenings and Weekends to secure the future of Taxi's in the Bay Area
149	to get a taxi in brixham is impossible during school times after 4.30pm and before 8am
150	I would vote to remove any limit. Supply and demand will sort itself out, and an over supply will keep costs lower.
151	<p>There is a significant unmet demand with disabled users and their Carers especially those in wheelchairs, this is an area the local authority needs to look at. Taxi drivers are understandably driven by income, they are aware that a customer with a disability will need extra time to get in and out of the vehicle and may well need extra assistance this is not as cost effective, also there would be a cost involved in adapting their vehicle to accommodate a wheelchair.</p> <p>Currently there is no incentive for drivers to support this client base, which is causing blanket discrimination for this vulnerable user group, the local authority needs to address this issue. With a large reduction in hospital transport available and those who qualify to use it, this is an increasing problem and a source of great distress to those who need it and their Carers. As they already know they will be unable to arrange adequate transport especially at certain times of the day between 8-10am, 2-4pm or after 5.30pm they are force to make any necessary trips within the reduced timeframes and are denied the ability to engage in outdoor social interaction during the evening.</p> <p>While not directly part of this consultation, the current systems failure to acknowledge and address this gap in service causes a knock on effect to other areas of Torbay's infrastructure and this cohort's wider determinant of health. As it puts pressure on GP practices and Torbay hospital to accommodate demand for medical appointment in a reduced time window, patients are missing routine medical appointments which then lead to more acute care being required often needing the ambulance service to take them, and increased Carer stress and breakdown leading to the need for adult social care intervention.</p> <p>Most of this client group are on a low income and are often elderly. One option the local authority should consider is to offer a dispensation incentive to drivers when supporting this user group, with the proviso that the customer has a lower tariff rate. Torbay's demographic shows an increasing ageing population and large areas of high deprivation, this will then help support better those residents which are most in need.</p> <p>One way this could be achieved would be to allow drivers who have a disability adapted vehicle to be licenced for longer, 5 years instead of the current 3 subject to vehicle conditions. A tariff set slightly lower used when taking this client group offset by a tax break. There should be a taxi rank on the Torbay hospital site and priority, but not exclusive use given to those who have adapted vehicles. Any taxi using this rank will use the lower tariff, and signage will show this to service users, this would also help to have an impact on the parking issues for the hospital.</p> <p>Also under the current system the only way for new drivers to obtain a hackney plate is to lease it from the existing owners. As taxi drivers are self-employed this adds a substantial increase to their outlay and financial risk. By removing the current limit it will remove this cost burden, as new drivers will be able to apply for their own license direct from the local authority also ensuring greater control over driver fitness in line with the current Hackney Carriage (Taxi) and Private Hire Policy and in turn help fill the unmet demand.</p>

Other Optional Questions

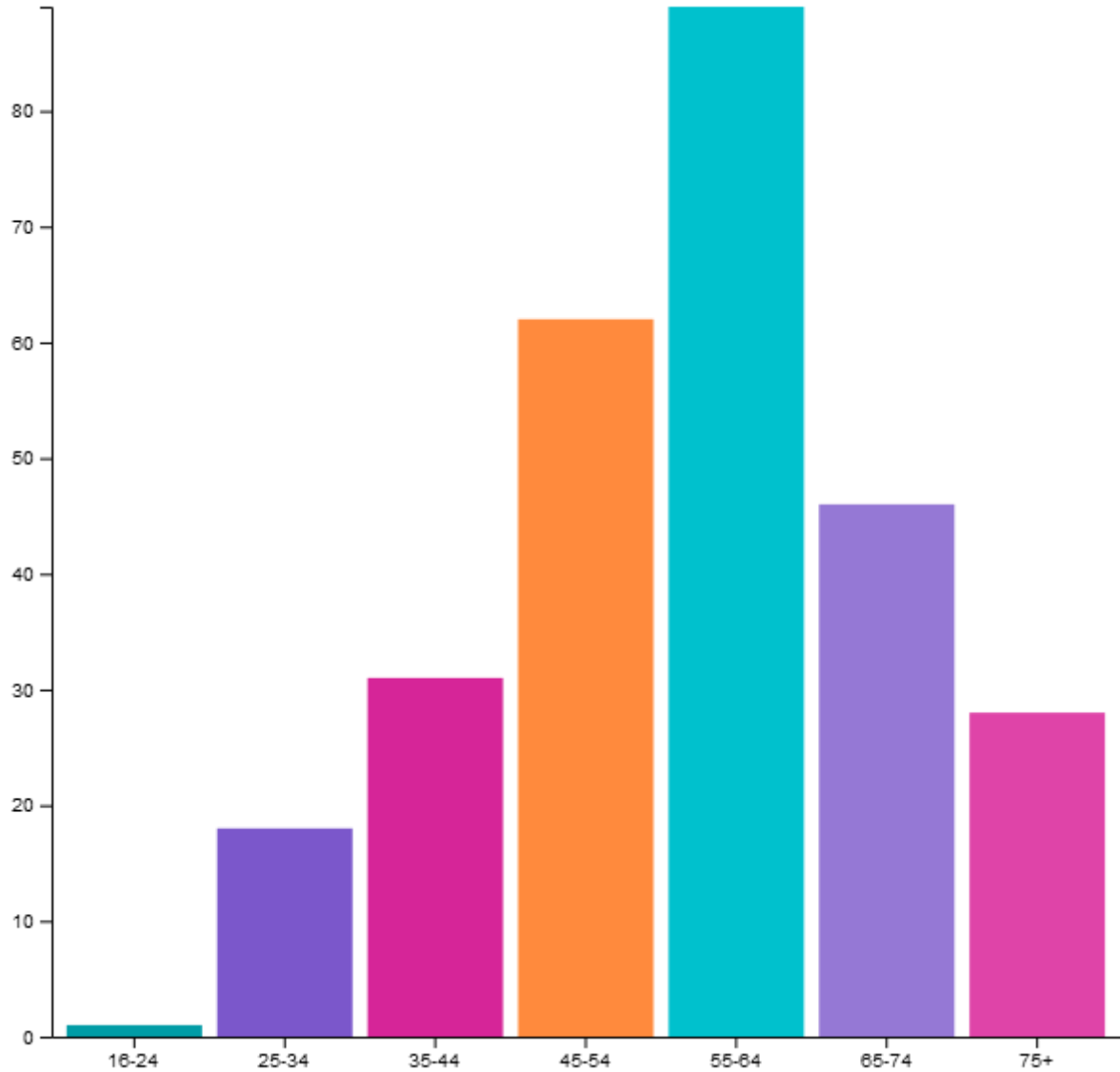
Which town do you live in? Select only one.

There are 275 responses to this question.



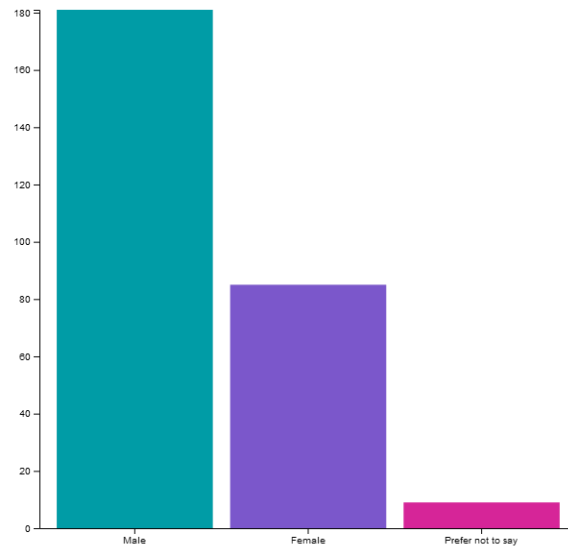
Option	Total	Percent
Torquay	141	51.27%
Paignton	85	30.91%
Brixham	32	11.64%
Responding as a business	3	1.09%
Other	14	5.09%

Which of the following age groups apply to you? Select only one.
 There are 275 responses to this question.



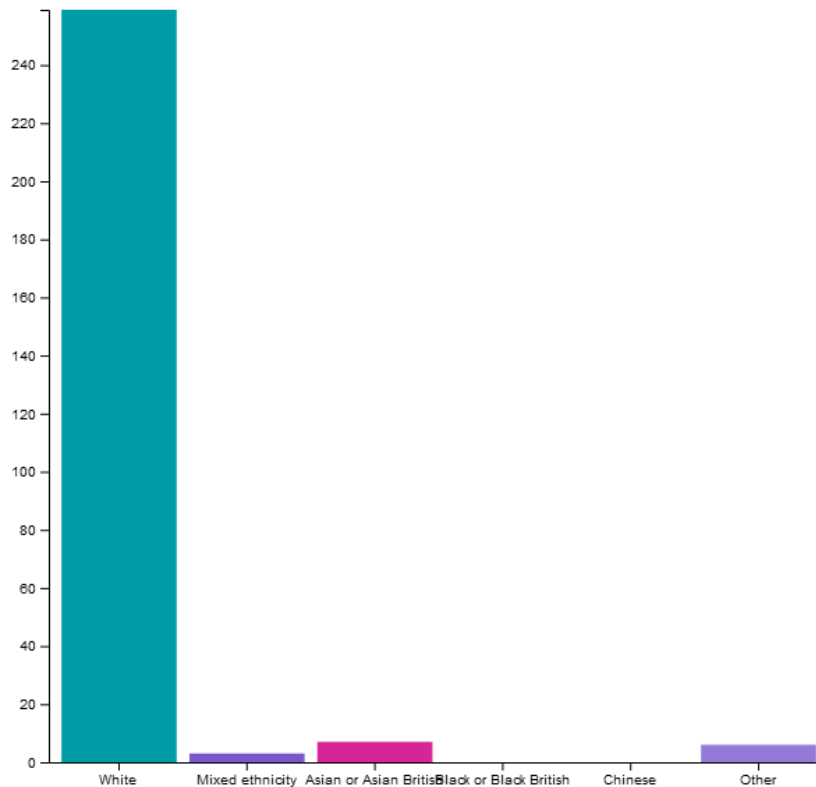
Option	Total	Percent
16-24	1	0.36%
25-34	18	6.55%
35-44	31	11.27%
45-54	62	22.55%
55-64	89	32.36%
65-74	46	16.73%
75+	28	10.18%

What is your gender? Select only one.
 There are 275 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Male	181	65.82%
Female	85	30.91%
Prefer not to say	9	3.27%

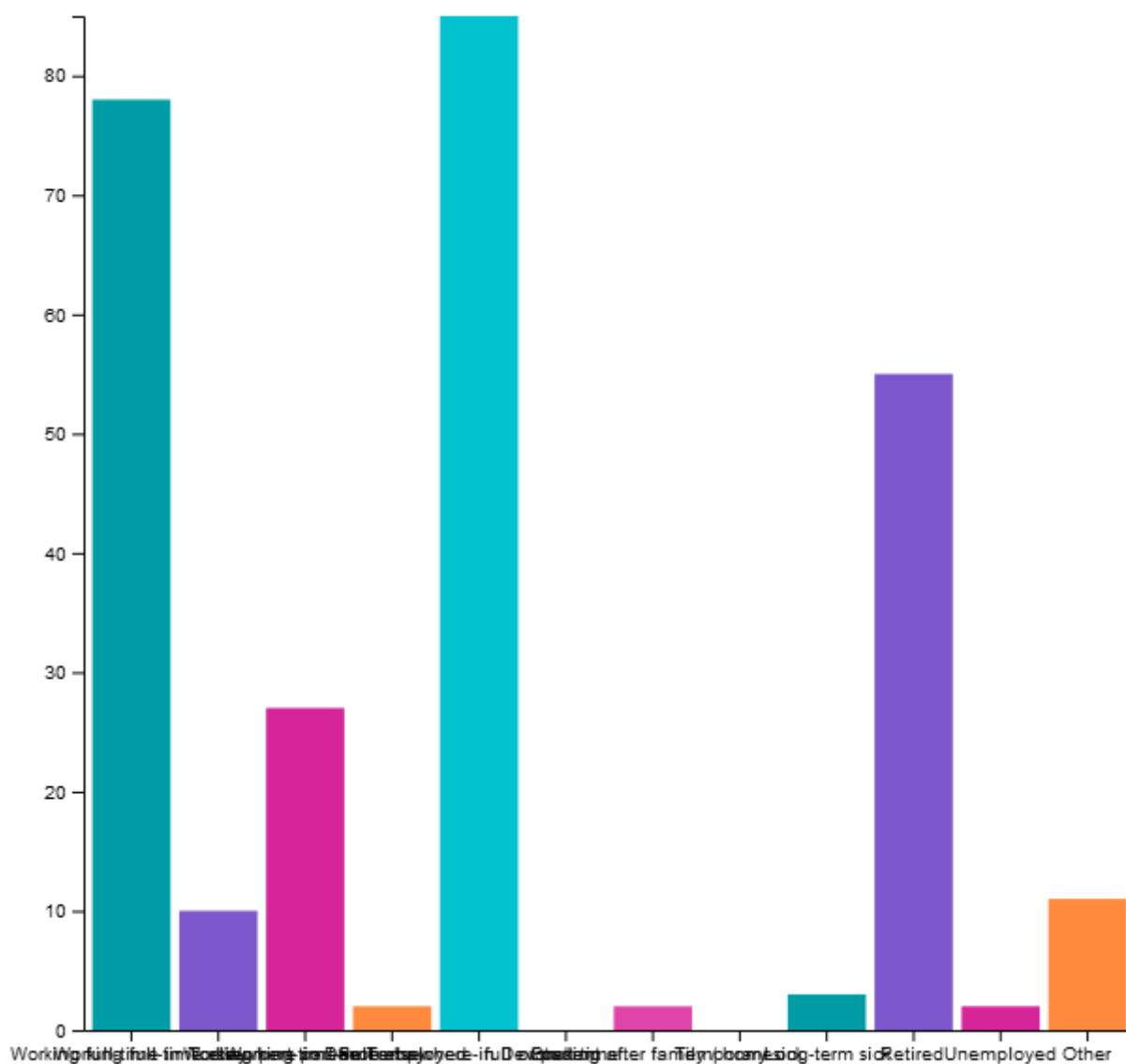
Which of the following best describes your ethnic background? Select only one.
 There are 275 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
White	259	94.18%
Mixed ethnicity	3	1.09%
Asian or Asian British	7	2.55%
Black or Black British	0	0.00%
Chinese	0	0.00%
Other	6	2.18%

Employment status. Select only one.

There are 275 responses to this question.

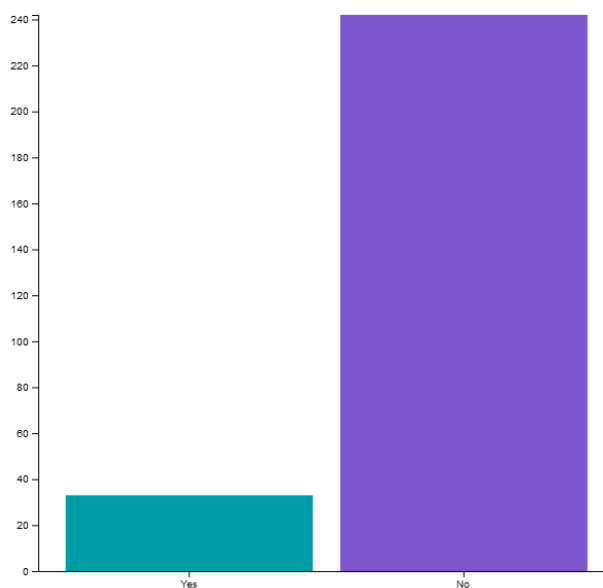


Option	Total	Percent
Working full-time in Torbay	78	28.36%
Working full-time elsewhere in Devon	10	3.64%
Working part-time in Torbay	27	9.82%
Working part-time elsewhere in Devon	2	0.73%

Self-employed - full or part time	85	30.91%
Student	0	0.00%
Looking after family / home	2	0.73%
Temporary sick	0	0.00%
Long-term sick	3	1.09%
Retired	55	20.00%
Unemployed	2	0.73%
Other	11	4.00%

Do you consider yourself disabled in any way?

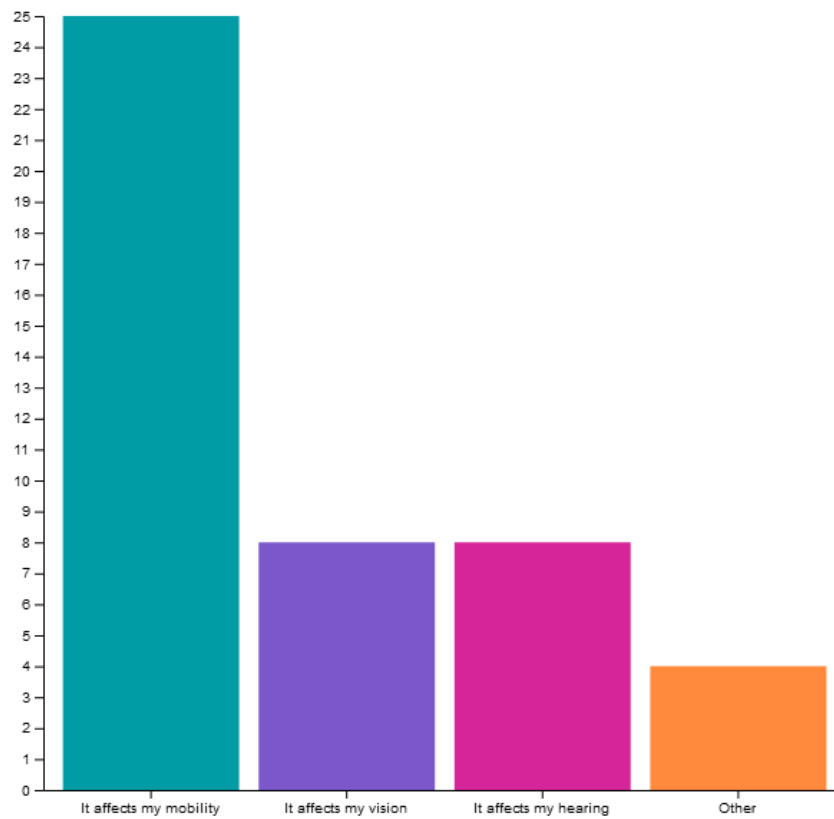
There are 275 responses to this question.



Option	Total	Percent
Yes	33	12.00%
No	242	88.00%

If you answered yes, please tell us how it affects you.

There are 32 responses to this question. Multiple selections were allowed, and there are 45 selections.



Option	Total	Percent
It affects my mobility	25	55.56%
It affects my vision	8	17.78%
It affects my hearing	8	17.78%
Other	4	8.89%

Meeting: Regulatory Committee **Date:** 18 July 2024

Wards affected: All

Report Title: Results of Unmet Demand Study of Taxis in Torbay 2023 and the public consultation in 2024

Cabinet Member Contact Details: Councillor Tranter, Cabinet Member for Adult and Community Services, Public Health and Inequalities.

Director Contact Details: Joanna Williams, Director of Adults and Community Services

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 This report details the outcome of an unmet demand survey commissioned by Torbay Council in response to the guidance issued by the Department for Transport (DfT). At the time of commissioning this survey, the Best Practice guidance stated that a quantity control study of unmet taxi demand should be undertaken every three years. Section 9.3 of the updated Best Practice Guide has since been updated and now states that this should be undertaken at least every five years.
- 1.2 Members are asked to consider the recommendations contained within the consultant's report in respect of quantity control and the results of the 12-week public consultation and make a decision whether or not to deregulate the current quantitative (numerical) limit on hackney carriages in Torbay.
- 1.3 Members are also asked to consider amending the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing Policy, (hereinafter referred to as 'The Policy'), dependant on the outcome of their decision at 1.2. This includes not enforcing a section of the Policy, along with Appendix K from the Policy (criteria to be considered in the allocation of Hackney Carriage vehicle proprietors licence waiting list).

2. Reason for Proposal and its benefits

- 2.1 In June 2004 the Department for Transport wrote to all Local Authorities who had a quantitative limit on the number of hackney carriage taxi licences it issued, to require them to review this restriction and publish an outcome by 31 March 2005. Torbay Council conducted a thorough review and it retained a numerical limit.
- 2.2 Where a Council continues to restrict the numbers of hackney carriages, the Department for Transport requires a three yearly review of its Policy, with published conclusions and a justification of the Policy in the five-yearly Local Transport Plan process. To meet this requirement, further studies have been carried out every three years from 2007 to date.
- 2.3 To comply with the three yearly requirement, Torbay Council engaged the services of a company called Licensed Survey Vehicle & Assessment (LVSA) to undertake the seventh of these unmet demand studies in 2023. Their study included rank observations, on street interviews, discussions with user groups and stakeholders and a questionnaire sent to all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and vehicle licence holders.
- 2.4 From the results of this survey, it has been identified that passenger demand has fallen by 0.4% from the last survey carried out in 2020. However, 48% of those passengers experienced a delay of over a minute compared to just 18% in 2020. In 2018 when there was no unmet demand, passenger delay was 5%.
- 2.5 A definition of significant unmet demand is covered in section 7 of the unmet demand survey, at Appendix 1.

Significant Unmet Demand (SUD) has two components:

- Patent demand – that which is directly observable; and
- Latent demand – Where somebody has not waited, due to unavailability at time of need

Patent demand is measured using rank observation data. Latent demand is assessed using data from the rank observations and public attitude interview survey. Both are brought together to provide an Index of Significant Unmet Demand (ISUD).

If the ISUD value rises above the cut-off figure of 80, it indicates there is Significant Unmet Demand and steps must be taken to ensure public service is returned to levels agreed by the ISUD methodology.

- 2.6 The results of the 2023 survey have found that the ISUD level is currently at 1801.26, well above the cut-off figure of 80. This is an 806% increase on the ISUD figure from the 2020 survey and an increase of 3755% from the 2018 survey when there was no significant unmet demand. The conversion of the 7 seasonal Hackney Carriage licences to full time licences following the 2020 survey was an attempt to bring the ISUD figure down to the cut-off figure of 80. This has not succeeded, and unmet demand has risen significantly further.
- 2.7 A public consultation was undertaken for 12 weeks from 26 February 2024 to 19 May 2024. 200 people responded to the consultation and 57% responded that the limit should be removed.

3. Recommendation(s) / Proposed Decision

1. That the current quantitative limit of Hackney Carriage licences be removed, and the wording found at section 14.1 of the Policy is not enforced and removed, following a full review of the Policy which is due at a later date in 2024.
2. That Appendix K from the Policy (criteria to be considered in the allocation of Hackney Carriage vehicle proprietors licence waiting list) not be enforced and removed, following a full review of the Policy which is due at a later date in 2024.

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Torbay Council unmet taxi demand survey November 2023
- Appendix 2 Torbay Council unmet taxi demand consultation results and comments

Background Documents

The following documents/files were used to compile this report:

Torbay Council's Hackney Carriage & Private Hire Licensing Policy 2022

DFT: Statutory Taxi and Private Hire vehicle standards 2020

DFT: Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Licensing: Best Practice Guidance

DFT: FS13 Future of Transport – Equalities and access to opportunity September 2020

1. Introduction

- 1.1 There are 314 Local Authorities in England. The Taxi and Private Hire Statistics England 2023, advised that 72 licensing authorities (25% of licensing authorities with taxi's) applied a limit on the numbers of licensed taxi's with a further 8 setting limits either for some of the areas they covered or some vehicle types (Taxi and private hire vehicle statistics, England: 2023 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)).
- Torrige is the only one of the eight district authorities in Devon that has retained a limit (49 HCVs). The unitary Authorities in Cornwall and Plymouth have removed their limits in the last two years.
- 1.2 In June 2004, the Department for Transport wrote to all Local Authorities who had a quantitative limit on the number of hackney carriage taxi licences it issued, to require them to review their restriction and publish an outcome by 31 March 2005. Torbay Council conducted a thorough review and it retained a numerical limit of 162 hackney carriage licences (plus 7 seasonal licences).
- 1.3 The Department for Transport makes clear the Government's position on quantity restrictions within section 9 of the Best Practice Guidance and advises that *'the grant of a taxi licence may be refused for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed taxis if, but only if, the licensing authority is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for taxi services in their area. In the event of a challenge to a decision to refuse a licence, the authority concerned would have to establish that it had, reasonably, been satisfied that there was no significant unmet demand'*. It also advises that *'Most licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions. The department regards that as best practice'*.
- 1.4 The Department for Transport outlines in section 9.2 of the guidance, that where restrictions are imposed, the department would urge that the matter should be regularly reviewed and should be approached in terms of the interests of the travelling public. Section 9.5 advises that Licensing authorities should consider a number of questions when considering quantity controls. These questions have been covered by the Unmet Demand Survey and the findings of the public consultation as outlined in this report and the recommendation to remove the limit has been proposed as a result.

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- 1.5 The Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) became the UK's lead competition and consumer body. The CMA brought together the competition and consumer protection functions of the Office of Fair Trading and the Competition Commission in April 2014. In April 2017, the CMA was clear in their guidance on the Regulation of Taxis and Private Hire vehicles: *Understanding the impact of competition that quantity restrictions are not necessary to ensure the safety of passengers, or to ensure that fares are reasonable and that they can harm passengers by reducing availability, increasing waiting times and reducing the scope for downward competitive pressure on fares.*

A delimitation would allow free entry to the market and may reduce the rental costs of vehicles, thereby reducing overheads and assist in obtaining a sustainable income for drivers. CMA and Department for Transport have claimed that increased competition would reduce fares for passengers, improve availability, and reduce waiting times.

- 1.6 In order to comply with the three yearly requirement, Torbay Council has continued to carry out unmet demand surveys, with surveys being carried out in 2011, 2014, a delayed survey in 2018 and its last survey being carried out in 2020. All the surveys up to and including 2018 found no evidence of significant unmet demand, however, in the 2020 survey significant unmet demand was found. The numerical limit was retained, but the 7 seasonal hackney carriage licences were extended to full time licences meaning the limit went from 162 full time licences and 7 seasonal (1 May – 30 September) to 169 full time licences, this was done in an attempt to reduce the significant unmet demand.
- 1.7 In 2023 the seventh unmet demand survey was commissioned. LVSA were successfully appointed and have a wealth of experience having carried out surveys for 106 different Local Authorities since 1989. Their survey included 607 hours of rank observations, 128 on street interviews, discussions with user groups and stakeholders and a questionnaire sent to all Hackney Carriage and Private Hire drivers and vehicle licence holders.
- 1.8 Rank observations were taken across the 10 most used ranks, 8 in Torquay and 1 in each of Paignton and Brixham. The total hours of observations were 607, which comprised of 466 hours in Torquay, 71 at Paignton Station and 70 at Brixham, Bank Lane.
- 1.9 Section 3 of the unmet demand survey highlights the results of the rank observations. The rank observation programme covered a period during June 2023, and this showed an estimated passenger demand of 13,713 passengers, representing a 0.4% reduction on the 2020 survey. Passenger numbers have not increased as expected following the last survey carried out in 2020, which was taken during the pandemic with restrictions on key businesses.
- 1.10 It should be noted that in section 7 of the report, it identifies a further increase in off peak hours, where there is a delay. This has risen from 30.6 hours in 2018 to 35 hours in 2020

and has increased further in 2023 to 43.3 hours across all ranks. Additionally, 48% of passengers experienced a delay of over a minute (the level where unmet demand may be considered significant), this is significantly up on the last survey in 2020 which was 18% and in 2018 which was 5%.

- 1.11 When the survey in 2023 was undertaken there were a total of 169 hackney carriages available. During the three-day rank observations, a total of 72% of the active available fleet were observed as part of the survey. This was an increase of 19% compared to 53% observed over a two-day period during the 2020 survey.
- 1.12 Section 7 of the report provides a definition of significant unmet demand derived from experience of over 255 unmet demand studies since 1985. This leads to an objective measure of significant unmet demand that allows clear conclusions regarding the presence or absence of this phenomenon to be drawn. Significant Unmet Demand (SUD) has two components:
- Patent demand – that which is directly observable; and
 - Latent demand – Where somebody has not waited due to unavailability at time of need
- Patent demand is measured using rank observation data. Latent demand is assessed using data from the rank observations and public attitude interview survey. Both are brought together to provide an Index of Significant Unmet Demand (ISUD).
- If the ISUD value rises above the cut-off figure of 80, it indicates there is Significant Unmet Demand and steps must be taken to ensure public service is returned to levels agreed by the ISUD methodology.
- 1.13 The findings from the 2023 survey have found that the ISUD level is currently at 1801.26, well above the cut-off figure of 80. This is an 806% increase on the ISUD figure from the 2020 survey where the ISUD level was 198.89. This also shows an increase of 3755% from the 2018 survey when there was no significant unmet demand. The conversion of the 7 seasonal hackney carriage licences to full time licences following the 2020 survey was an attempt to bring the ISUD figure down to the cut-off figure of 80. This has not succeeded, and unmet demand has risen significantly further.
- 1.14 A summary from the consultant can be found in section 8 on page 64 and states the following: *‘Use of the industry standard index of significance of unmet demand for the full main data set shows that all elements of the index apart from the latent demand factor (which has reduced) and the peak and seasonal factors (that have remained the same) have worsened in terms of identifying higher levels of unmet demand. The proportion of those travelling in hours when average passenger delay is over a minute is the element that has worsened most. The full data set has unmet demand that in terms of the ISUD tool is well beyond 80 and therefore significant. This remains true when the two ranks with additional limits not under the control of the authority are removed, although the level reduces by around a third’.*

1.15 Page 64 of the unmet demand survey, states “... *there is evidence that the unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent that has been observed is significant at this point in time in the Torbay licensing area.*” And on page 68: “*It must be remembered that the unmet demand has arisen not from growth in passenger demand but at a time when this has remained effectively stable. And that much higher demand in 2018 was serviced by the same fleet without any unmet demand that was significant. This implies the level of patronage each vehicle services must have fallen. However, the ultimate need is for an appropriate level of service to customers. The index is showing this is not occurring. If it is assumed that the current fleet is no longer able to provide the same level of service, there is argument that the size of fleet needs to be increased.*” A full copy of the LVSA report can be found at Appendix 1.

1.16 Recommendations from the consultant can be found at section 9 (page 71) and states the following:

- Do nothing is no longer a possible alternative as it leaves the regulator open to criticism that it was aware of the potential risks of poor service and had ignored this.
- Whatever option is chosen the value of a limited test of unmet demand at a key rank is worth considering (see Options 1 and 3 below)
- The worst location for service levels observed is Paignton, although if the rank there remains, restricted testing at that location would be of less value (either Brixham or The Strand might therefore be chosen)
- Considering increasing night fares may assist.
- Continuation of the marshals, and their services being extended at Paignton, is essential.
- The livery, and promotion to the public of the differences between hackney carriages and private hire, remain essential elements of the future of the trade in Torbay.
- Add 20 extra hackney carriage vehicle licences and undertake a further test of level of service within six months of all these new licences being issued. This test would best be applied at Paignton with the rank observed for 72 hours minimum (but not between November and March when demand is lower). The only proviso would be if the Paignton rank remained permit controlled in which case either Brixham or The Strand ranks could be tested (Option 1)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriage vehicle licences but add quality controls such as new plates WAV or electric (Option 2)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriage vehicles and add testing as Option 1 (Option 3)
- Remove the numeric limit on hackney carriages. (Option 4).

1.17 Further to the recommendations as listed above, the consultant states the following:

- **Adding 20 additional hackney carriage vehicle licences**

“The matter of the level of extra plates needed is not an easy one, given that a wide range of parameters in operation have clearly changed. Were managed growth to be used, we would recommend that a tranche of 20 plates should lead to significant improvements although there is no guarantee this would occur. Further, the Paignton restriction may not

allow extra plates to work there in any event, although the availability of the other ranks remains even though they may not be in the most practical location from some points of view. The suggestion of 20 plates arises from a mix of a rough estimate of how many plates were not active at ranks at the time of the survey allied with the fact that higher levels of demand have been met satisfactorily with the present number of plates (including some being seasonal), although it is hard to judge the impact on active plate hours of the trends in changing driver behaviour which cannot be regulated.”

There is no guarantee that the additional 20 hackney carriage vehicle licences will meet the public demand and ensure that a satisfactory public transport service is being provided. In 2020 the 7 seasonal hackney carriage vehicle licences were converted to full time licences to reduce the rising ISUD figure, however, this has not rectified the problem. The problem has increased by 806%.

Further to this, the Licensing Authority cannot direct those additional hackney carriage vehicle licences to work at certain ranks, or, at certain hours of the day to meet the public demand.

- **Remove numerical limit on hackney carriage vehicle licences but add quality controls.**

We have considered two types of quality controls below:

1. Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAV's)

Page 18 of the Torbay Unmet Taxi Demand Survey 2023 advises “This confirms that, although the level of WAV provision appears to be low in number, in reality the focus of those vehicles that are available on the actual needs means that the majority of requirements were well-met suggesting no need for any further action on this matter. We believe this conclusion remains correct for this latest review (see further evidence in rank chapter below). We would therefore confirm that the level of provision and manner of provision of WAV style vehicles across the full licensed vehicle fleet in Torbay seems to be appropriate and sufficient for the bulk of current need, and that this statement from the previous survey remains correct. The issue of out of weekday hour service, and the issue that there are several vehicles that appear to be WAV but are not actually WAV-capable also remains.”

The Council could look at increasing the number of WAV vehicles in its fleet, however these are very expensive vehicles to purchase and run. They also have higher emissions and there are currently very few affordable electric WAV vehicles. Wheelchair users account for less than 8% of the 11 million people in the UK with a disability and less than 1.9% of the

general population. Not all wheelchair users are completely bound to their chairs. Some people require one not because they are unable to walk but because they are unable to walk very far. They often prefer the comfort of sitting in a normal car seat. They may require assistance getting in and out of the car with the wheelchair being stowed in the boot but not as much as a wheelchair bound passenger who would require the driver to wheel them into the vehicle using the ramp and securing the chair in the vehicle. Some people with a disability find it hard to enter a WAV vehicle due to the high ground clearance, making boarding and alighting from the vehicle more difficult (PHTM Dec 21 - [PHTM December 2021 Issue 351 :: 30 \(yudu.com\)](#)).

It is likely that by removing the limit, this will assist disabled passengers accessing a vehicle in addition to the rest of the public, and it is hoped that it may encourage more investment in some larger WAV vehicles in the future.

2. Electric (zero emission) vehicles

Page 58 of the Torbay Unmet Taxi Demand Survey 2023 states *“The level of hybrid, low or zero emission vehicles is low but growing. Further detailed analysis was not part of this Brief.”*

Appendix K was added to the Policy in 2020 allowing potential applicants to register for the hackney carriage waiting list for new, or re-issued vehicle proprietor licences which would allow zero emission vehicle only onto the fleet. At the time of writing this report, there is only one applicant on the waiting list showing there isn't currently a desire for proprietors to purchase electric or zero emission vehicles. There are currently very few electric charging points in Torbay. There are some chargers planned to be installed this year, however the majority of the planned chargers will not be in place for at least the next 1 – 2 years.

Further to this the author of the Survey goes on to say on page 69:

“The issue of requiring new plates to be more sustainable has been raised. Whilst this is laudable it has to be determined if the level of unmet demand is such that action is needed if it is appropriate to replace a numerical limit with a ‘quality’ one that nonetheless would have the impact of restraining possible needed extra provision. This is a debate for the regulator to determine its priorities. However, on balance we would suggest that improving public service overall is more important now than action to improve sustainability – the latter will occur in due course in any event, but public safety must take priority. Adding extra plates either by a limited number or by total removal of the limit with ‘quality’ controls (e.g. new vehicles WAV or electric or both) would be counter productive and overly restrictive at this time.”

2. Options under consideration

- 2.1 The options in relation to the unmet demand survey are:
- (i) To do nothing and retain the 169 hackney carriage vehicle licences, if satisfied the numerical limits are correct and public demand is being met; or
 - (ii) To remove the numerical limit of hackney carriage vehicles
- 2.2 The options in relation to changing the Policy at section 14.1, are as follows (dependant on the outcome of the decision made at A3.1 above):
- (i) Disregard the wording at section 14.1 of the Policy and remove this during a full Policy review at a later date in 2024, as recommended.
- 2.3 The options in relation to Appendix K from the Policy (criteria to be considered in the allocation of hackney carriage vehicle proprietors licence waiting list), are as follows (dependant on the outcome of the decision made at option A3.1 above):
- (i) Disregard Appendix K from the Policy and remove this during a full Policy review at a later date in 2024, as recommended.

3. Financial Opportunities and Implications

- 3.1 If the limit remains, then there will be financial implications for the hackney carriage vehicle proprietors as an additional unmet demand survey will have to commence, which will cost around £15k and this will result in an increase in the fees to cover this cost.

4. Legal Implications

- 4.1 The unmet demand survey shows there is a significant unmet demand and therefore if the limit remains, this is open to challenge if the Council refuse to grant a hackney carriage vehicle licence and any appeals would be a costly process.

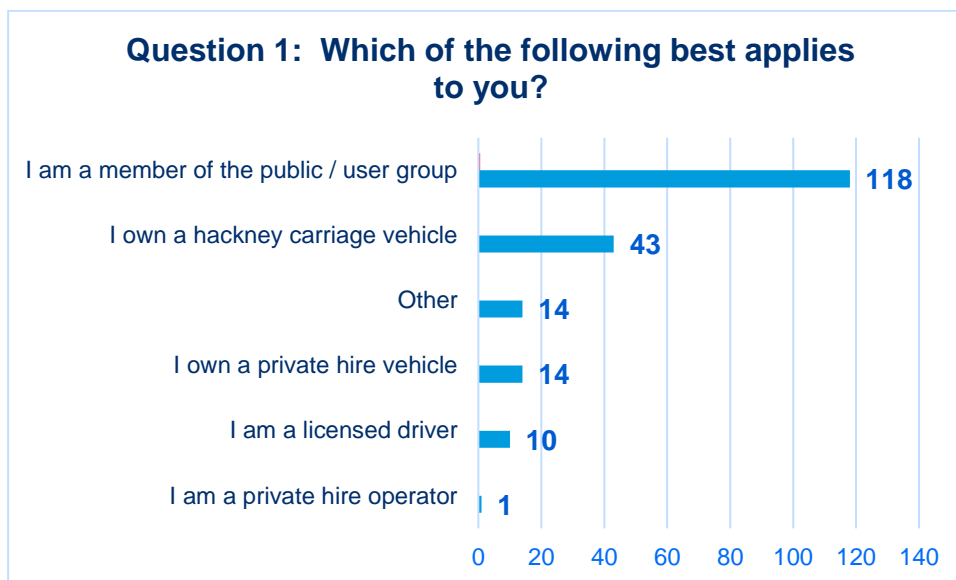
5. Engagement and Consultation

- 5.1 On 26 February 2024, Torbay Council launched a 12 week consultation which ran until 19 May 2024 with the taxi and private hire trade, businesses in Torbay, stakeholders, disability groups, groups that represent passengers with special needs, school transport, resident associations, street pastors, faith groups, the Police, and the general public. The purpose of the consultation was to get the views on the preferred two options from the consultant's

recommendations found at section 9 of the unmet demand survey. Those two options are to retain the numerical limit of 169 hackney carriage licences or remove the numerical limit.

The consultation received a total of 200 responses.

Question 1 asked what position best applies to them. The largest response was from members of the public and user groups with 118 responses which accounted for 59% of the total responses. Only 25% (43) of the 169 hackney carriage vehicle owners responded.



Option	Total	Percent
I own a private hire vehicle	14	7%
I own a hackney carriage vehicle	43	21.5%
I am a licensed driver	10	5%
I am a private hire operator	1	0.5%
I am a member of the public / user group	118	59%
Other	14	7%

Question 2 asked 'Have you read the unmet demand study carried out by LVSA?'. 169 out of 200 people responded saying yes, which accounts for 85% of the total responses.

Option	Total	Percent
Yes	169	85%
No	31	15%

Finally, **question 3** asked if the limit of 169 hackney carriage vehicle licences in Torbay should be changed? Out of the 200 responses, 113 people responded saying to remove the limit, this is 57% of the total responses.

Option	Total	Percent
No - retain the limit	87	44%
Yes - remove the limit	113	56%

5.2 Whilst it is not unlawful to remove the limit on Hackney Carriage Vehicle numbers; we do need to ensure this decision was not unreasonable on 'Wednesbury' grounds and consider the following matters in line with the responses received through the consultation.

A full list of the results and comments from the consultation can be found at Appendix 2.

- **A full and genuine consultation must take place before the decision to delimit is taken.**

A 12-week public consultation has been undertaken and the results are contained within this report.

- **Consideration to the financial impact on an existing licence holder who may have invested in their licence, however provided that is done, commercial impact alone is not a ground for challenge.**

In the past, there were concerns that existing vehicle proprietors would lose the unofficial premium placed on their vehicle licence if delimitation occurred. For many proprietors this is seen as an investment to be realised on retirement or when leaving the trade. Those with multiple vehicles will have made a substantial investment. However, based on officers' conversations with vehicle proprietors, the current monetary value of the plates has significantly dropped over the last fifteen years. However, people do continue to purchase the plated vehicles at a premium and this indicates that there are people who want to enter the taxi market and provide a service to the public, but who are being prevented from doing so by the quantity restrictions. We currently have one person on the waiting list for a hackney carriage vehicle.

- **The potential reduced custom for existing licence holders**

There is a demand during the day and night-time hours across Torbay. Page 28 of the LVSA report advised that '*passengers experienced waits for Hackney Carriages suggested this was spread over time and not concentrated on anyone period of the day or week*'. This is supported by the comments in the consultation including a number of hotels and bed and breakfast owners who have advised they have struggled to get taxis

for their guests and the wait times have been unacceptable. Therefore, any new licence holder would need to consider the work available and decide the best hours and town to work to suit themselves and the customer demand.

- **Congestion on Hackney Carriage stands**

An increase in Hackney Carriage Vehicle's may give a potential for congestion and over ranking, however this is unlikely due to the lack of Hackney Carriage Vehicle's across the three towns in Torbay and the lack of availability during the day and night and the market would settle out over time. There are a number of ranks across Torbay that are not used and regular reviews will be undertaken to ensure a suitable number of ranks are provided in the best location to meet the needs of the drivers and the travelling public. Officers will continue to work with other Council departments to ensure that taxi rank provision is considered for any new major developments.

- **Congestion on roads generally**

There is currently no limit on Private Hire Vehicles. There has been a 15% (41) increase in vehicle licences in the past 2 years and a 21% increase (54) in vehicle licences since 2017, therefore any further increase is unlikely to affect congestion especially as the vehicles can work across the three towns.

- **Benefits to the travelling public of additional vehicles**

By removing the limit, this will increase the availability of vehicles. If there are more vehicles available, then it is hoped that there would be more drivers willing to work and would reduce the length of time that customers have to wait at ranks and would encourage customers to use public transport to get home safely.

There were also a number of comments about not feeling safe when having to wait long periods for taxis. Some comments referred to a lack of wheelchair accessible vehicles, especially during the day when many undertake school transport work.

As advised in 1.21 above, fully Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles are very expensive and there is currently limited funding available to support proprietors to purchase these. However, it is likely that by removing the limit, this will assist disabled passengers accessing a vehicle in addition to the rest of the public, and it is hoped that it may encourage more investment in some larger WAV vehicles in the future.

- **The opportunity for others to become involved in the trade as a means of securing a livelihood**

Since Covid-19, a number of drivers have left the trade. If they wish to return in the future as a licensed driver operating a Hackney Carriage Vehicle, then they will be able

to without having to rent or find a plated vehicle to purchase, which they would currently due to the quantity restrictions. We also want to encourage new drivers to join the trade and this would give drivers the choice of whether they wish to drive a private hire or hackney carriage vehicle. Delimitation would allow free entry to the market and may reduce the rental costs of vehicles, thereby reducing overheads and assisting in obtaining a sustainable income for drivers.

- **The costs of commissioning a survey**

There are cost implications if we wish to keep the limits on the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicle's and another unmet demand survey would need to be completed within 5 years. The report also recommends carrying out another survey in 6 months if the limit is kept. This costs approximately £15,000 every five years and would need to be funded through the Hackney Carriage Vehicle account, which is paid for in the vehicle licence fee by vehicle proprietors.

- **The costs of defending appeals against refusals to grant licences either with or without a survey.**

Defending any appeal is a costly process. We would not have to be concerned about this if a limit did not exist.

- **The effect on Hackney Carriage Vehicle quality**

The current Taxi Policy is working towards a cleaner emissions Policy. The market will find a level for the number of hackney carriages which Torbay can sustain.

6. Procurement Implications

- 6.1 There are no procurement implications, however if a further unmet demand survey was decided to be required, the procurement process will be followed as required for all surveys.

7. Protecting our naturally inspiring Bay and tackling Climate Change

- 7.1 The current Taxi Policy is working towards a cleaner emissions Policy and is due to be reviewed to ensure it is in line with government recommendations.

If the limit is removed, there is the potential to have an impact on the climate due to an increase in hackney carriage vehicles across Torbay. However, there is no limit to the number of private hire vehicles, nor restrictions of any other public vehicles. Any new vehicles would have to meet our vehicle specifications and be no more than 4 years old and a maximum mileage of 50,000 miles. From 1 May 2030, our current policy requires all new vehicles must be electric. We currently have a suitable infrastructure of electric

chargers to support the taxi and private hire trade and therefore it would not be appropriate to restrict any new licences to be electric vehicles if the limit was removed. A number of vehicle proprietors purchase hybrid vehicles and those less than 4 years old will be much cleaner and more efficient to run than existing older vehicles.

8. Associated Risks

- 8.1 Approval to remove the numerical limit of hackney carriage vehicles and amend the Policy accordingly is a Licensing Committee decision. Any challenge to the Policy would have to take place within three months of it being adopted. Such challenge would be by way of Judicial Review.

The findings of this unmet demand survey have been calculated using a tool developed by Leeds University in 1985 and has been added to over time following specific court cases. In 2019 there was three challenges with respect to surveys of unmet demand. All three found in favour of the current methodology being undertaken, the same methodology which was used in producing the outcome of this latest survey.

- 8.2 As outlined in 4.1 above, the unmet demand survey shows there is a significant unmet demand and therefore if the limit remains, this is open to challenge if the Council refuse to grant a hackney carriage vehicle licence and any appeals would be a costly process.

9. Equality Impact Assessment

Protected characteristics under the Equality Act and groups with increased vulnerability	Data and insight	Equality considerations (including any adverse impacts)	Mitigation activities	Responsible department and timeframe for implementing mitigation activities
Age	<p>18 per cent of Torbay residents are under 18 years old.</p> <p>55 per cent of Torbay residents are aged between 18 to 64 years old.</p> <p>27 per cent of Torbay residents are aged 65 and older.</p>	<p>Public transport, including taxis play a crucial role in helping people to stay connected and maintain independence when they are unable to drive, and are therefore of particular significance to older residents aged over 65 and to younger people who may not have access to a car. Aging is linked with reduction in personal car use and people being more reliant on taxis especially as it is a door-to-door service. The availability of public transport is also very important to all adults and parents who do not have a car for work and social activities.</p>	None	N/A
Carers	<p>At the time of the 2021 census there were 14,900 unpaid carers in Torbay. 5,185 of these provided 50 hours or more of care.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however those caring for others with protected characteristics may be affected with this proposal as outlined in this table. Removing the limit will mean there are more taxis available and are likely to assist carers.</p>	None	N/A

Disability	<p>In the 2021 Census, 23.8% of Torbay residents answered that their day-to-day activities were limited a little or a lot by a physical or mental health condition or illness.</p>	<p>It is hoped that by removing the limit, there will be more taxis available for the public including those with a disability. The Council have a register of all wheel chair accessible vehicles at Helping disabled passengers - Torbay Council</p> <p>All licensed vehicles must also carry assistance dogs.</p> <p>Taxis are particularly important method of transport for people with a disability because of the door-to-door nature of the service.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>Page 161</p>	<p>In the 2021 Census, 0.4% of Torbay's community answered that their gender identity was not the same as their sex registered at birth. This proportion is similar to the Southwest and is lower than England.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group. The DFT FS13 report highlights how discrimination is part of daily life for trans people and generates 'behaviours of avoidance', particularly to using public transport. This can potentially reduce this groups pool of wider employment, educational, health and recreational opportunities. Removing the limit and increasing the number of taxis may improve confidence in travelling safely.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Marriage and civil partnership	<p>Of those Torbay residents aged 16 and over at the time of 2021 Census, 44.2% of people were married or in a registered civil partnership.</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all.</p>	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

Pregnancy and maternity	Over the period 2010 to 2021, the rate of live births (as a proportion of females aged 15 to 44) has been slightly but significantly higher in Torbay (average of 63.7 per 1,000) than England (60.2) and the South West (58.4). There has been a notable fall in the numbers of live births since the middle of the last decade across all geographical areas.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all. The DFT FS13 report identified that public transport plays a vital role in supporting social inclusion for many parents with young children.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated.	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Race	In the 2021 Census, 96.1% of Torbay residents described their ethnicity as white. This is a higher proportion than the South West and England. Black, Asian and minority ethnic individuals are more likely to live in areas of Torbay classified as being amongst the 20% most deprived areas in England.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however, the DFT FS13 report identifies that ‘people from BAME background are less likely to have access to a private vehicle, be more reliant on public transport to access employment and live in densely populated urban areas – increasing their exposure to air pollution’. Furthermore ‘for many people from a BAME background having regular, affordable, clean and efficient transport is essential’. Fear of safety, from racially motivated attacks, is also reported to be a barrier to using public transport networks. Removing the limit and making more taxis available may assist.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Religion and belief	64.8% of Torbay residents who stated that they have a religion in the 2021 census.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however the DFT FS13 report identifies that certain groups of people, face an increasing risk of being victims of religious hate crime. For people who have a marked religious	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers

		<p>identity through clothing there is a heightened risk for harassment or discrimination. It is reported that this is particularly true for women who are already more vulnerable regardless of the way they dress. Removing the limit and increasing the number of taxis will hopefully assist.</p>		
<p>Sex</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 163</p>	<p>51.3% of Torbay's population are female and 48.7% are male</p>	<p>These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group.</p> <p>However, the DFT FS13 report identifies that 'as women are more likely than men to live on low incomes, work part time and undertake paid work in the home and in the community, such as being carers for dependent relatives, poor quality unreliable and expensive transport has a far bigger impact on the lives of women'. The report also identified that women may not have access to a car during the day as they 'either cannot afford one or the family car is being used by a partner'. The F13 report also identifies women make greater use of taxis than men, increasing with age, where women over 70 make double the amount of trips than men.</p> <p>Removal of the limit is particularly important in the evening and night time economy and to protect violence against women by providing a safe means of transport home, instead of other less</p>	<p>Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated</p>	<p>Licensing Officers and Police Officers</p>

		safe methods such as walking alone late at night or using unlicensed vehicles.		
Sexual orientation	In the 2021 Census, 3.4% of those in Torbay aged over 16 identified their sexuality as either Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or, used another term to describe their sexual orientation.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group. However the DFT FS13 report identifies that safety and security (and perceptions of them) are key for lesbian, gay and bisexual people and may influence how they choose or prefer to travel. It also says that a 2018 LGBT survey pointed to public transport as the most common place where respondents avoided being open about their sexual orientation and that it may even be avoided altogether. Removing the limit and making more taxis available may assist.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Page 164 Veterans	In 2021, 3.8% of residents in England reported that they had previously served in the UK armed forces. In Torbay, 5.9 per cent of the population have previously serviced in the UK armed forces.	These proposals are not intended to impact on this client group, however increasing the number of taxis by removing the limit, will make transportation more available and safer for all.	Any discriminatory complaints received are fully investigated	Licensing Officers and Police Officers
Additional considerations				
Socio-economic impacts (Including impacts on child poverty and deprivation)	N/A	Taxis are one of the more expensive forms of public transport. However an increase in taxis may help keep the costs down as currently there is a high demand so private hire vehicles in particular increase their rates on a frequent basis. The taxi tariff (table of fares) is reviewed	N/A	N/A

		regularly to ensure it provides a viable income but also a reasonable cost to the public.		
Public Health impacts (Including impacts on the general health of the population of Torbay)	N/A	There is no differential impact.	N/A	N/A
Human Rights impacts	There are no human rights impact with regards to the taxi tariff.	No negative impacts on human rights have been identified.	N/A	N/A
Child Friendly	Torbay Council is a Child Friendly Council and all staff and Councillors are Corporate Parents and have a responsibility towards cared for and care experienced children and young people.	There is no differential impact.	N/A	N/A

10. Cumulative Council Impact

None

11. Cumulative Community Impacts

None