

HACKNEY CARRIAGE MEETING - MINUTES

18 April 2021 10:00 – Tournerbury Room

ATTENDEES

Licensing Team

Briony Appletree
Sarah Kostl
Penny Rogers
Hilary Smith

Hackney Carriage Drivers / Proprietors

Wayne Chant
Mike Hudson
Brian Sherwin
George Morrison
Peter Burgess
Steve Turner

INTRODUCTION

Ms Appletree opened the meeting with introductions of those present and summary of the reasons for holding the sessions. A brief summary of the legislation that permits the restriction of hackney carriage licences, and the findings of the unmet demand survey, were provided.

DISCUSSION

A number of matters were raised by representatives of the hackney carriage trade, with discussion around how the trade is currently being impacted and how unmet demand could be resolved. In summary:

GENERAL

- Attendees reported that hackney carriage plates are not worth money anymore.
- There are fewer drivers than before the pandemic, but somehow there are more drivers at the taxi rank now.
- There are often 10+ vehicles waiting on the taxi rank during the day, but with fewer passengers due to rail strikes, car sharing etc, this is a real challenge.
- Drivers have tried advertising mobile telephone numbers on their vehicles, with no real increase in the number of customers.
- Overall agreement that the issuing of further plates will not help resolve unmet demand.
- Two wheelchair-accessible hackney carriage licences are available, but nobody wants them because a suitable vehicle costs around £72k.
- Query raised regarding whether passengers waiting for pre-booked vehicles could affect the figures of the unmet demand survey; Ms Appletree confirmed that the survey related only to hackney carriage passengers.
- Overall agreement that there will always be periods of unmet demand, such as when it's time for school runs.
- The vast amount of hackney carriage drivers are older, who do not want to work late night, carry drunk people etc. More could be done to attract younger people into the trade.

- Some hackney carriages exclusively do school runs (school contracts) and therefore don't service the taxi rank. Others are exclusively used for private hire work, which is legally allowed.
- Cross border hiring of private hire vehicles continues to adversely impact the hackney carriage trade.
- Hackney carriage drivers are vulnerable, they don't get the same level of detail about their customers as private hire drivers do, leaving them open to non-payment of fares and abusive behaviour in the evenings.
- Lack of support from police when reporting public order or non-payment of fares.

FARES

- Other licensing authorities offer peak time tariffs on their taximeters. For example, East Hampshire District Council and Portsmouth City Council have calendar-controlled taximeters.
- A fare review, with consideration given to a peak time fare and aligning with neighbouring authorities' fares, may encourage drivers to work later on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Why would drivers put up with drunk customers and abusive behaviour on a Friday or Saturday night, for the same fare as during the day?
- Drivers can wait on the taxi rank for 3+ hours and only get one £5 fare.

TAXI RANKS

- The taxi ranks available are not workable, with the exception of the railway station. The Borough currently has eight taxi ranks.
- Issues raised with private vehicles parking on taxi ranks, with seemingly no support or enforcement from the Council.
- Lack of clear signage and line painting on taxi ranks.
- Taxi rank on Creek Road, Hayling Island and the spaces near the Ferry Boat have not been used for years.
- A taxi rank at Hayling Island funfair could work, but likely only seasonal.
- Possible alternative rank locations discussed: Emsworth station, Emsworth square, Market Parade, Tesco (Havant), Retail Park (Havant), ASDA in Leigh Park and Waterlooville.
- Some drivers concerned that new or additional taxi ranks would further demonstrate unmet demand in future surveys.

SUMMARY

The attendees appeared to collectively agree that the unmet demand survey did not accurately reflect what they are seeing on the taxi ranks, with many drivers waiting hours for just one fare.

Suggestions on how to resolve or improve unmet demand, aside from issuing additional plates, included undertaking a fare review with peak time fares considered, and a review of taxi rank provision in the Borough.

HACKNEY CARRIAGE MEETING - MINUTES
27 April 2023 17:00 – Tournerbury Room

ATTENDEES

Licensing Team

Hackney Carriage Drivers / Proprietors

Briony Appletree
Sarah Kost
Hilary Smith

None

INTRODUCTION

Due to no representatives of the hackney carriage trade attending the session, no matters were discussed and the meeting was closed at 17:15.

HACKNEY CARRIAGE MEETING – MINUTES

28 April 2023 13:30 – Tournerbury Room

ATTENDEES

Licensing Team

Briony Appletree
Penny Rogers
Hilary Smith

Hackney Carriage Drivers / Proprietors

Ian Perkins
Geoffrey Wilson

INTRODUCTION

Ms Appletree opened the meeting with introductions of those present and summary of the reasons for holding the sessions. A brief summary of the legislation that permits the restriction of hackney carriage licences, and the findings of the unmet demand survey, were provided.

DISCUSSION

A number of matters were raised by representatives of the hackney carriage trade, with discussion around how the trade is currently being impacted and how unmet demand could be resolved. In summary:

GENERAL

- Mr Perkins reported that the trade are concerned about not being able to make a living in the limit on hackney carriage licences is removed.

POST-PANDEMIC CHANGES

- There has been an overall reduction in footfall at the train station; how can the trade survive without a functioning railway service and bus service?
- Mr Wilson recently waited for around five hours on the taxi rank and only got two fares. He works five days a week, 17:00 to 01:00 and averages only three jobs per night. This doesn't indicate any unmet demand.
- Society has changed – loss of pubs, reduced footfall, use of mobile phones to arrange lifts with family or via private hire services, change in working culture from office work to home working, no night time economy, and an increased cost of living.
- Many of the hackney carriages had regular customers, but these have all disappeared after many moved from office work to home working.
- Mr Perkins believes that the taxi trade feel unsupported by the Council as a whole following the pandemic, with seemingly no regeneration and a failing night time economy.
- The reduced footfall at the Park Parade shops has made the taxi rank in that location unviable.

FARES

- It wasn't felt by the trade representatives in attendance that a fare review would make any difference to unmet demand.
- It was discussed that the amount of money needed to purchase and run a vehicle isn't worth the monetary return in fares.
- There are no customers after the last train, so a late night fare wouldn't have any impact.
- Increased fares can be beneficial to the driver if there are no other transport options available to the customer, as taking a taxi is their only choice. Lower fares encourage more customers, but the driver has to work longer hours and take more jobs to make a living.

TAXI RANKS

- Drivers have allegedly been asking for additional ranks where opportunity arises, but unfortunately never got anywhere.
- The taxi rank at Havant railway station is the only one used by taxis, and it's on land owned by South Western Railway. Suggestion that the Council could review other taxi ranks within its control, ensuring they are fit for purpose.
- Suggestion of a taxi rank at the bus station in Havant, where hackney carriages could wait without paying an annual permit to South Western Railway. Annual permits to use the railway station taxi rank are currently £683.
- However, additional ranks wouldn't be of any use if all of the trade is at the railway station, as the drivers will just wait there anyway.
- Additional taxi ranks near Tesco and the Retail Park in Havant could be good locations, but note that these are private land.
- Extra taxi ranks might not help at all, given the increase in people using their own transport or private hire vehicles.
- The taxi rank on Leigh Road is not monitored and is often used by private hire vehicles.
- There used to be a taxi rank on Market Parade, Havant, which could be a good location if an additional rank was considered.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- The public's perception of hackney carriages was discussed. There is some suggestion that younger customers prefer to use private hire vehicles because they're app based, you can see the driver and vehicle details prior to the journey beginning, and some apps have a function where you can share your journey with a family member or friend for reassurance.
- Mr Perkins described hackney carriage drivers as being more knowledgeable of the local area. He has personally installed cameras in the front and rear of all his vehicles for safety reasons.
- Discussed the Council running a public safety campaign to increase overall public confidence in hackney carriages. Collaboration with charities and trade organisations could achieve this.

SUMMARY

The two attendees appeared to collectively agree that the coronavirus pandemic has had a significant adverse impact on the hackney carriage trade, and that the unmet demand survey did not accurately reflect what they are experiencing. Many drivers are waiting several hours for a fare and others would have to work 80+ hours a week to make a living.

Suggestions on how to resolve or improve unmet demand, aside from issuing additional plates, included reviewing taxi rank provision in the Borough and running a public safety campaign to improve confidence in the hackney carriage trade.

19/04/2023

Brian Sherwin
DVR 306

Hi Briony

Thanks for sending over the taxi unmet demand survey.

I have read over the survey and as you say the survey found a unmet demand on a Saturday Night, i have worked the train station for the last 23 years and i have worked most of the Friday and Saturday night for them years. I can say that most of the Friday and Saturday you would have had an unmet demand as up until about 12 years ago at 11.15 on said days you would of had about 30 to 40 people waiting for taxi's and some time waiting for over 30 mins to 45 mins but as most of the pub trade in Havant has gone that is not the case anymore. Most of the time there is a queue of taxi all be it only about 8 as in the olden days around 18 of a weekend nights.

we dont know if the Saturday Night in question of the unmet Demand there was an high demand for taxi's because of a special event going on eg ruby match, football match or just a problem with the train.

The problem you have is getting Drivers to work on a Friday and Saturday evenings as we mentioned at the meeting is [Risk vs Reward]as both night are at a higher risk of getting your car damaged some one being sick in you car or just not getting paid most of this is down to Drink and most of the older drivers would rather be at home with family than take the risk.

As the survey states the taxi demand at Havant train station has Dropped significantly from the 2016 survey and i would say over the whole Havant Borough shown by the drop in private hire cars licenced compared to 2017/2018 to 2023 as driver as not able to make a living. In the last 2 years taxi drivers have been giving plates back to the council as no one is interested in buying the plates these days, never in my years as a taxi driver has any driver that i know of given a plate back to the council, there used to be a long list of people waiting for Taxi white plates but as the council still has some plate that they can't issue ,making more available would not solve anything.

Yes the survey said there is an unmet demand for hackney carriage Taxi's in Havant but issuing more plates would not solve the problem.

It also stated

(The Committee is therefore able to choose to retain the limit, at the level of active plates at the time of the survey, and would be able to support this decision if necessary)

Any information on the other pieces of the puzzle that you can share with us would be Grateful.

regards Brian

FAO: Briony Appletree
Interim Licensing Team Leader
Havant Borough Council
Public Service Plaza
Civic Centre Road
Havant, Hants
PO9 2AX



Ref: HC38

23rd March 2023

Dear Briony

I am writing in response to your letter dated 17 March 2023, regarding unmet demand serviced by Havant Hackney Carriages.

I personally have worked on either a Havant Hackney driver or telephone operator at Havant train station for nearly 25 years. Unmet demand on a weekend evening has always been an issue. However, this is a local and probably a national issue, having attempted to order a cab via Andi cars, Alpha cars and Uber, every local company struggling, as the majority of the people who go out to socialise do so at a weekend.

I am somewhat surprised by your findings, as I do work on a Saturday night and have found trade significantly down on previous years, mainly caused by lack of footfall on the trains and strikes by the various trade unions. I will increase my hours to provide extra cover on weekend evenings.

If additional plates are issued by Havant Council to address this issue, this will result in extras drivers working in the quieter times, (unless of course the council put in a caveat stating that the additional plates are for the use between 6pm on a Friday to 2am on a Sunday).

We are drivers are already under pressure due to strike action and low footfall at the station.

I hope this addresses the issue raised in your letter.

Thank you

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "Stephen Harrison". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Stephen Harrison