



THE DATA COLLECTION SPECIALISTS

Warwick District Council Hackney carriage unmet demand survey Final Report

April 2017



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Executive summary

CTS Traffic and Transportation were appointed by Warwick District Council to undertake their "Hackney carriage unmet demand survey" on 14th August 2015. This report presents the results of all investigations undertaken to provide a database of robust information on which a decision can be taken by councillors in regard to the possibility of applying a hackney carriage vehicle limitation policy. All research was undertaken in line with the current Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance (March 2010) and taking advantage of the extensive research undertaken by the Law Commission in their recent review of licensing.

The review was undertaken between September 2015 and February 2016 with most survey work in October or November 2015, followed by a trade survey, with key stakeholder consultation during most of the study period. A final revision was undertaken in February 2017 with a change in council staffing.

Warwick District is one of five district councils operating within the County of Warwickshire. Highway and transport powers are at the County level, who have a relatively unique taxi and private hire vehicle strategy in place within its Local Transport Plan. Warwick District Council applied its power to restrict hackney carriage vehicle numbers up to 1999, since when anyone can obtain a hackney carriage vehicle licence for the District, albeit a new side loading WAV style vehicle. Concerns exist that there are too many vehicles to meet the current demand.

DfT has produced statistics about the licensed vehicle trade comprehensively since 1997, and since 1994 for hackney carriages. Normal practice is to compare vehicle and driver growth over these periods although the 1985 Transport Act first impinged on these numbers around 1988 when the first unmet demand studies occurred. Hackney carriage growth has been the main increase in licensed vehicles over this period, some threefold, whilst private hire vehicles have only increased by 20%, typical where there are no limits on vehicle numbers. Driver growth has been less – 26% - suggesting that much vehicle growth has been people obtaining their own vehicle. All drivers can drive either a hackney carriage or a private hire.

A fairly unique local issue is that the fleet size can appear very much larger than it actually is since lapsed numbers are not re-used. This means the highest fleet numbers are more than the actual number of vehicles, particularly noticeable on the private hire side where numbers start at 500, with the highest plate number in excess of 1,000, but there are in fact just 185 vehicles (at the time of our survey). Hackney carriages have a highest number of 250, but there were only 213 in service.

252 hours of rank surveys were undertaken and analysed. This included all ranks including the private ones on Chiltern Railways land. Of all the vehicle departures observed, 10% were private cars and just 2% were private hire, both figures suggesting relatively low abuse of ranks across the area. Of the hackney carriages observed, 59% were WAV style, in the same order as the 72% that are understood to be in the fleet at present.

No rank was active 24/7. Hamilton Terrace and the Leamington Spa station saw the longest activity hours. Three ranks were dependent on club patronage and opening. Overall passenger demand at ranks was low. Service to ranks was very good to fair.

Most ranks saw excess levels of vehicles compared to passengers. 63% of the fleet was found to be operating in a sample within the survey period.

A high peak at one club used a quarter of the fleet with no passenger there ever having to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

The private Leamington Spa station rank takes 38% of estimated weekly demand followed by 19% at Hamilton Terrace. Although there is unmet demand, this was found to be far from significant in terms of the industry standard index of significance of unmet demand.

250 people were interviewed in the streets across the District. 47% had used a licensed vehicle in the last three months with overall usage 1.6 trips per person per month, dropping to 0.6 for those saying they had used hackney carriages. 33% said they used ranks, a relatively high level compared to many other areas. Despite the bulk of vehicles being hackney carriage, most companies phoned were pure private hire, although there was a high number of companies named and relatively little brand loyalty.

38% of people could not remember using a hackney carriage with 26% not being able to remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area, a relatively high level compared to other surveys. Levels tend to be higher either where there is a fully wheel chair accessible fleet or where there is a livery, or both. People were satisfied with current rank provision and most ranks including those at night clubs were known about. However, the Warwick and Kenilworth ranks tended only to be known about locally.

The proportion of people surveyed needing a wheel chair accessible vehicle was higher than normal, at around 13%, with most saying they needed a wheel chair accessible style rather than any other adapted style.

Key stakeholder response from businesses mainly focussed on usage of private hire although some were aware of ranks their customers used. The response from the hospital, police and disability groups was disappointing (but not unusual for this kind of study). The response by other groups, particularly the town and parish councils, was excellent, as was response from the Warwick University Student Union.

There was a 10% response to our trade survey. 76% were from hackney carriage and 79% owned their own vehicles. Most seemed to work on a one-man basis and by direct calls if they were contactable by phone. The working week tended to be low, five days and 34 hours on average. There was a 79% vote for returning a limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers. Many said this would reduce driver tiredness by holding numbers at the current level and providing stability of income. Most of these told us they noticed every time an extra vehicle was added through further reductions in income.

Although the market for licensed vehicles appears to be strongly technology based, there remain several important rank-based operations in the area, although even within these there are significant different modus operandii. The current estimated level of 5,986 passenger trips for an average week implies 15 jobs per vehicle per week from ranks. However, we also identified that most potential hackney carriage demand is met by hackney carriages rather than by private hire, even at lesser used ranks such as the one in Kenilworth.

Leamington is the main 'hackney carriage country' of the District. Despite relatively low demand for the size of the town, there are two highly active ranks supplemented by other night ranks, yet still having one informal area without a rank active. General waiting times by vehicles at the main Leamington council rank can be high. Service to school contracts can cause shortages here however. The station rank sees commuter usage in both directions and there can be issues when busier trains arrive.

Warwick has just one active rank which is an unusual design with safety concerns. It is also felt it would benefit from better advertising. The Kenilworth rank is only used at very specific times. There are opportunities to grow demand here when the new station opens, although this is now not expected till 2017.

A key issue is safety and operational practise at the Smack rank. Students need better information on what is legal, and stewards are continually needed here for student nights. There is need for better and longer term understanding of the needs of students and this location which have only been touched upon within our study.

There is no significant unmet demand in the area, and the best estimate of excess capacity is that on average there is 20% more supply than demand, although this obviously increases much more in the non-peak times which some members of the trade tend to prefer to service.

1. Introduction

Warwick District Council is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles operating within the council area. At the present time there is no limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers and this has been the case since DfT statistics have been published (1997), although we understand there was a limit which was removed in 1999 in favour of quality restrictions requiring any new vehicle to be side loading WAV style.

Study timetable

Warwick District Council appointed CTS Traffic and Transportation on 14th August 2015 to undertake this survey of demand for hackney carriages in line with our quotation dated July 2015.

The review was carried out between September 2015 and February 2016, with on-street pedestrian survey work undertaken in October 2015. Licensed vehicle drivers were consulted by a letter sent out during November 2015, with other stakeholder consultation between September and March 2016. Rank surveys were undertaken in November 2015. A Draft Final report was submitted and this was reviewed in mid-March 2016 to identify any factual or missing issues.

National background and definitions

At the present time, hackney carriage and private hire licensing is carried out under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (as amended by various further legislation including the Transport Act 1985, especially Section 16) in regard to hackney carriages and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 with reference to private hire vehicles. A number of modifications have been made within more recent legislation and through case law.

The issue of limits on hackney carriage vehicle licences (and other potentially restrictive practices) were considered by the Office of Fair Trading (OfT) (and latterly the House of Commons Select Committee on Transport). The Department for Transport most recently published Best Practice Guidance in March 2010 to cover a number of more recent issues and take on board both the recommendations of the OfT and House of Commons Select Committee (HoC SC).

More recently a further HoC SC has led to the Law Commission (LC) taking on a wide ranging review of vehicle licensing law to be completed over the next few years. The consultation document from the LC was released in mid-May 2012.

The final LC recommendations published on 23rd May 2014 including 84 recommendations (specific recommendation numbers in brackets below from Report) including:

- Retaining the two-tier system (1)
- A statutory definition of pre-booking (3) and a new offence of anyone other than a locally licensed taxi driver accepting a booking 'there and then' (10)
- That the term "hackney carriage" should be replaced in legislation with the word "taxi" (4)
- New duty on taxi drivers to stop in specified circumstances if so determined by the local licensing authority (12)
- Each licensing authority under a duty to consult on the need to alter rank provision, not exceeding every three years (13)
- Introduction of national standards for taxi and private hire services (30)
- Licensing authorities retain power to set local taxi standards over and above national standards (46)
- A more flexible power to introduce and remove taxi licensing zones (57)
- Licensing authorities continue to have power to limit the number of taxi vehicles licensed in their area (58)
- Subject to a statutory public interest test with how this statutory test should be applied determined by the Secretary of State (59)
- Reviewed every three years and subject to local consultation (60)
- Mandatory disability awareness training for all drivers (62)
- An accessibility review at three year intervals (65)

Other recommendations are included of less relevance to this current report. At the time of writing this report, there has still been no further Government response to the report or Draft Bill, although it remains a key think-piece on current industry concerns and potential solutions.

The Deregulation Bill originally contained three clauses impacting on taxi licensing. These cover unlicensed relatives being able to drive private hire vehicles (dropped), operators being able to transfer work across borders and length of driver and operator licences. An opportunity was also given for trade representatives to identify conditions of licence that were felt to be unduly restrictive. None of these really impact on the issue of unmet demand directly but could have some impacts on operations which might move demand from hackney carriages towards private hire more than the current situation might. Both clauses taken forward came into effect in October 2015.

At the present time, each licensing authority in England supervises the operations of two different kinds of locally licensed vehicle. For clarity, all vehicles able to carry nine or more passengers are dealt with under national public service vehicle licensing and licensing authorities only have jurisdiction over those carrying eight or less passengers. These vehicles are subdivided into:

- Hackney carriage vehicles (sometimes referred to as 'taxis' in legislation), which alone are able to wait at ranks and pick up people in the street (ply for hire). To operate such a vehicle also requires a driver to be licensed to drive within the area the vehicle is licensed to operate. However, such vehicles are also able to operate as private hire.
- Private hire vehicles, which can only be booked through an operating centre and who, otherwise, are not insured for their passengers (often also known as 'taxis' by the public). To operate such a vehicle requires a vehicle and driver licence, and there must also be an affiliation to an operator. Such vehicles can only transport passengers who have made bookings via this operator.

For the sake of clarity, this report will refer to 'licensed vehicles' when meaning hackney carriage and private hire collectively, and to the specific type when referencing either specific type of vehicle. The term 'taxi' will be avoided as far as possible, although it has to be used in its colloquial form when dealing with the public, few of whom are aware of the detailed differences.

There is a further current issue that does impact on demand – the fact that many hackney carriages once properly licensed in an area with a driver then undertake private hire work in other licensing areas, often many miles from their home base. Such vehicles can have cost base advantages and can appear to be available for immediate hire when they are not in fact legally able to do so (e.g. with stickers saying 'this vehicle can be hired immediately', which only applies within their licensing area). Contrariwise, some authorities who have licensed vast numbers of hackney carriages which have ended up working outside that authority area are now attempting to reign this back by various methods.

This particular issue has become more complicated with the Deregulation Bill right of private hire operators to subcontract work to operators in other areas.

Review aims and objectives – national background

Warwick District Council is seeking a review of their current policy towards hackney carriage quantity control in line with current Department for Transport (DfT) Best Practice guidance as published in March 2010. Further background information about previous policy is contained in Chapter 2 to set the context of the current situation.

The “Best Practice Guidance” paragraph 47 states: “Most licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions the Department regards that as best practice. Where restrictions are imposed, the Department would urge that the matter should be regularly reconsidered....”. Our database of taxi regulation, updated to January 2016, shows 92 authorities who openly declare a limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers.

There are other licensing authorities who restrict new plates to various levels of wheelchair accessible vehicles and have various levels of grandfather rights for the remaining saloon vehicles which are effectively often limited in number albeit not in the terms of a formal limit under Section 16 (as this is counted as quality restriction rather than quantity).

Of the 92 authorities in England and Wales with a formal limit on vehicle numbers, four have never seemed to have any formal study of the limit. A further 26 have tested their policy, but on an irregular basis (and not within the last three years). Over two thirds (62 authorities) undertake a regular review, all but three of which tend to undertake this more or less every three years. Many of these authorities are very strict on their repeat cycle.

In recent years several authorities have determined to remove their limit policy – most recently Exeter and Hastings. Others – most recently Cambridge – have returned a limit. In some cases, authorities returning a limit set either a ‘settling limit’ e.g. Watford, or a limit beneath the current level (Chesterfield), whilst others fixed at the level when the decision was made (allowing for vehicles in the pipeline at the time of decision). Some limited authorities (notably Knowsley) have set a new limit lower than the current to take account of dormant licences at time of survey. Some authorities still are found needing to issue plates (e.g. BANES).

Some authorities (three known at present) are presently considering if a limit should be re-applied or applied for the first time given current circumstances in their area. Warwick is one of these authorities. Since the first version of this report, one of these authorities chose to increase quality standards rather than apply any quantity control to its hackney carriages, with the aim of increasing the overall quality of the fleet whilst restraining any further growth to those willing to make this larger investment which the study identified was preferred by the public.

Current Warwick requirements

There is no record of any previous study of demand for hackney carriages in the Warwick District Council (WDC) licensing area.

The key objectives of the independent study of demand are to:

- See if the district has a sufficient amount of hackney carriages
- To see if these are of the right type to meet current accessibility needs of the area

- To identify if there is currently any unmet demand in the area which is significant

Study Requirements

The Council requires the study to:

- Include an assessment of the use of each taxi rank including patent and suppressed usage
- Evaluation of the Warwick district population identifying specific needs and disabilities
- Assess number of taxis licensed against demand of population
- Estimate delays and give comparisons to demand
- Identify peak areas, times and dates of usage
- Consult on rank provision identifying if current ranks should be removed, moved, or new ranks introduced
- Consult with trade, council, general public and other relevant stakeholders regarding the taxi service
- Provide evidence of any issues associated with ranks or peak areas / times of demand for hackney carriages
- Provide recommendations to the required number of licensed vehicles
- Provide observations and evidence to support any conclusions

Study Content

The study includes the following:

- Inception meeting
- Rank review
- Rank observations
- Public attitude interviews
- including face to face interviews supplemented by other council provided opportunities
- Written consultation
- Report (draft and final)

Methodology

In order to meet WDC's objectives, the following methodology was adopted:

- Review of relevant policies, standards etc.: to understand the authority's aspirations for meeting travel needs and social inclusion and provide context to determining overall demand for travel and how this should be met;
- Extensive rank observations and audits of all the ranks in the Authority, including monitoring passengers' waiting time, any illegal plying for hire, use of Hackney Carriages by wheelchair users and rank audits;
- On street interviews: a survey of 250 representative people on street to obtain information about their understanding of the sector, their last taxi journey, their overall levels of taxi use, about quality and barriers to use;

- Consultation: including consultation with all relevant stakeholders – the local authorities, police, trade associations, all drivers, mobility impaired, specific user groups, businesses, and other major generators of taxi trips

In essence, the methodology used follows similar principles to all surveys undertaken by CTS together with all developments of methodology more recently applied to our surveys, particularly including guidance from both the 2004 DfT letter and their 2010 Best Practice Guidance (which includes the 2004 guidance as an appendix), and including the latest knowledge arising from the Law Commission Review and the current status of the Equality Act. This report also seeks to provide compatibility with previous reports provided by other consultants to the Council.

Report structure

This Report provides the following further chapters:

- Chapter 2 – current background to taxi licensing statistics and policy
- Chapter 3 – results from the rank surveys
- Chapter 4 – results from the surveys undertaken with the public
- Chapter 5 – up to date stakeholder consultation
- Chapter 6 – results from consultation with the taxi licensing trade
- Chapter 7 – summary and conclusions of this review
- Chapter 8 – recommendations for policy arising from this review.

2. Background to taxi licensing in Warwick

The Warwick District Council area

Warwick District Council (WDC) is one of five district councils within the Warwickshire County Council area and comprises four towns – Leamington Spa, Warwick, Kenilworth and Whitnash together with numerous villages.

Warwick, Leamington and Whitnash provide an almost contiguous urban area running through the centre of the District. Kenilworth is an almost separate town lying directly between Leamington Spa and Coventry. Warwick University is sited on the border between Warwick District Council and Coventry with much of the formal business part of the University actually outside the borders of Warwick District Council.

In public transport terms, Warwick and Leamington are on the rapidly developing Chiltern Railways route between Kidderminster, Birmingham and London Marylebone. The area includes the more recent station of Warwick Parkway located very near to the M42. There is also a link from Leamington Spa and Warwick onwards to Stratford upon Avon, as well as Leamington Spa being a key station on the Cross Country network which links Manchester and the North East via Birmingham to Banbury, Oxford, Reading and Bournemouth. One train per hour uses the route to Coventry, which although passing through Kenilworth does not currently have any station there. Bus services focus on the Warwick – Leamington urban area but also radiate to Coventry northwards.

In terms of rank provision, whilst most ranks are provided by Warwickshire County Council, there are two private ranks provided by Chiltern Railways at Warwick Parkway and at Leamington Spa railway stations. The former rank at Warwick station is now serviced by a private hire booking office which is within the main station building and subject of a private agreement.

Background Council policy

Warwick is a District Council within Warwickshire County Council, the latter having highway and transport powers for the area. Transport Policy is summarised in the current Local Transport Plan (LTP). The third LTP covers the period 2011 to 2026. Its principal aim is to manage, maintain and improve the transport network across the Warwickshire county area to ensure the transport system meets the needs of those who live, work and visit the County. There are a number of references and policies regarding hackney carriage (called taxi in the LTP) and also private hire vehicles. A summary of these is provided below.

The main reference to “taxis and private hire vehicles” is stating that enhanced facilities for them would be provided at key interchanges consistent with the aims set out in the Public Transport Interchange Strategy. There is a stated aim to develop taxibus services to meet specific demand in the County where conventional public transport is neither operationally or economically appropriate.

There is also comment that any new station at Kenilworth will include appropriate taxi provision to ensure the station is fully part of the overall transport network in the area. Proposals for improvement of the Leamington Spa station public transport interchange will also propose enhanced facilities for both hackney carriage (taxi) and private hire vehicles providing links for rail customers.

The LTP notes that “taxis and private hire vehicles” are key providers of surface access from the area to aviation facilities. It acknowledges that fares to such locations are generally expensive but often the only viable form of alternative to the car for local residents.

The LTP identifies that hackney carriage and private hire will be an appropriate part of access opportunities either as a single mode or within an appropriate combination allowing people the access they need. It points out that the Warwickshire county area statistics in the West Midlands Travel Survey 2001 stated “people without access to a car are four times more likely to use a public transport service, including taxis and private hire vehicles than people with access to a car. This is particularly true when bus and rail services are not operating, either by temporal or geographical constraints on their operation.

Chapter 30 of the LTP provides a specific “taxi and private hire vehicle strategy” for the overall Warwickshire county area. The aim is to ensure that they play their full role in helping meet the needs of current and potential passengers in all of Warwickshire county. It quotes the 2004 Government Action Plan for taxis and private hire vehicles. This recognised the role in providing both the first and last stage of journeys by other modes as well as providing people in lower income groups with access to vital services and an enhanced quality of life.

It acknowledges that the County makes extensive use of taxis and private hire vehicles to meet certain school / college / Social services journeys, but that the main responsibility lies with the relevant district council. Problems include:

- High cost of fares compared to bus (three to four times more)
- Wide variation by district and by operator
- Large numbers of vehicles not within the DDA guidance
- Rogue operators affecting reputations

Taxis and private hire vehicles are known to provide a flexible service, and a thriving, efficient and affordable taxi service clearly contributes to a towns' economy and benefits both local residents and tourists. They provide specialist provision for people with various impairments. They provide a 24/7/365 service, security, local knowledge, assistance for those with luggage, and a mode able to provide for any destination or origin.

Warwickshire County Council states its vision for taxis and private hires as:

"an affordable, accessible, safe, convenient and environmentally friendly provision across the County, capable of meeting local demand, improving accessibility and reducing social exclusion, contributing to the achievement of the objectives in the LTP". A key matter is working in partnership with the Districts to deliver aims and objectives (Policy PTT1). Policy PTT2 states "the County will work in partnership to encourage the provision of taxis and private hire vehicles in the County which are affordable, accessible, available and acceptable." However, as a rider in regard to the Warwick District references use the word 'considered' and enhancement is principally related to rail developments.

The LTP states that it is important that information should be readily available, easy to understand and simple to use, including typical charges likely. Signage to taxi facilities is also important. Policy PTT3 supports taxibus development. Policy PTT4 supports improvements at public transport interchanges for taxi and private hire. There is a stated aim to include taxi options within the Traveline facility. The County would also wish to encourage 'greener' taxi vehicles.

In conclusion, the County seeks to support taxi service provisions (both hackney carriage and private hire) within a framework that works with the local District.

Policy of restricting hackney carriage vehicle licences

Warwick has a power to restrict the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences it grants when it is satisfied there is no unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages which is deemed to be significant. This power has been in this format since the introduction of the 1985 Transport Act, Section 16 (before which the power to limit was unfettered). Warwick does not currently exercise this power.

At the present time, overall government taxi policy is under review by the Law Commission (LC) (see Chapter 1, page 1 for more detail). The current status is that the LC recommended that councils are able to retain the option of limiting their number of hackney carriage vehicles, although any change will have to be agreed by Government and then taken through any appropriate legal process. Formal Government encouragement remains towards the minimisation of restrictions, including limit policies.

There is no record of any previous survey of demand within Warwick District Council area. Since initial writing of this report, reference has been found to a committee report referring to a cap rescinded in 1999, and to quotes being sought for a demand survey in 2003. No further information has been forthcoming. Further, when the cap was removed, the quality control was introduced that all new vehicles must be wheel chair accessible, and further that they must all be side-loading WAV.

The background to this current survey is that the Council received a petition stating there were too many taxis for the community. Over 75% were in favour of a survey being undertaken. This Report is undertaken within the context of these requirements.

Background statistics

Information was obtained to demonstrate the current make-up of the licensed vehicle fleet in the Warwick area, including current vehicle trends. The table below shows the historic level of vehicle numbers in this area. These statistics are taken from the national Department for Transport database which is comprehensive from 1997 and also provides hackney carriage details from 1994. Impact of the 1985 Transport Act which introduced the need for unmet demand surveys was first noticed in around 1988 when the first of these surveys were undertaken to justify the level of vehicle numbers at that time. Prior to that, councils could limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers in an unfettered manner, in other words, without any formal need to justify their policy, and therefore without any need for independent review of the impacts.

The statistics below utilise the full DfT database in a way normally undertaken within our unmet demand studies, allowing comparison over the longest formally available period. It does not preclude other comparisons within the data set, but does leave the full picture available.

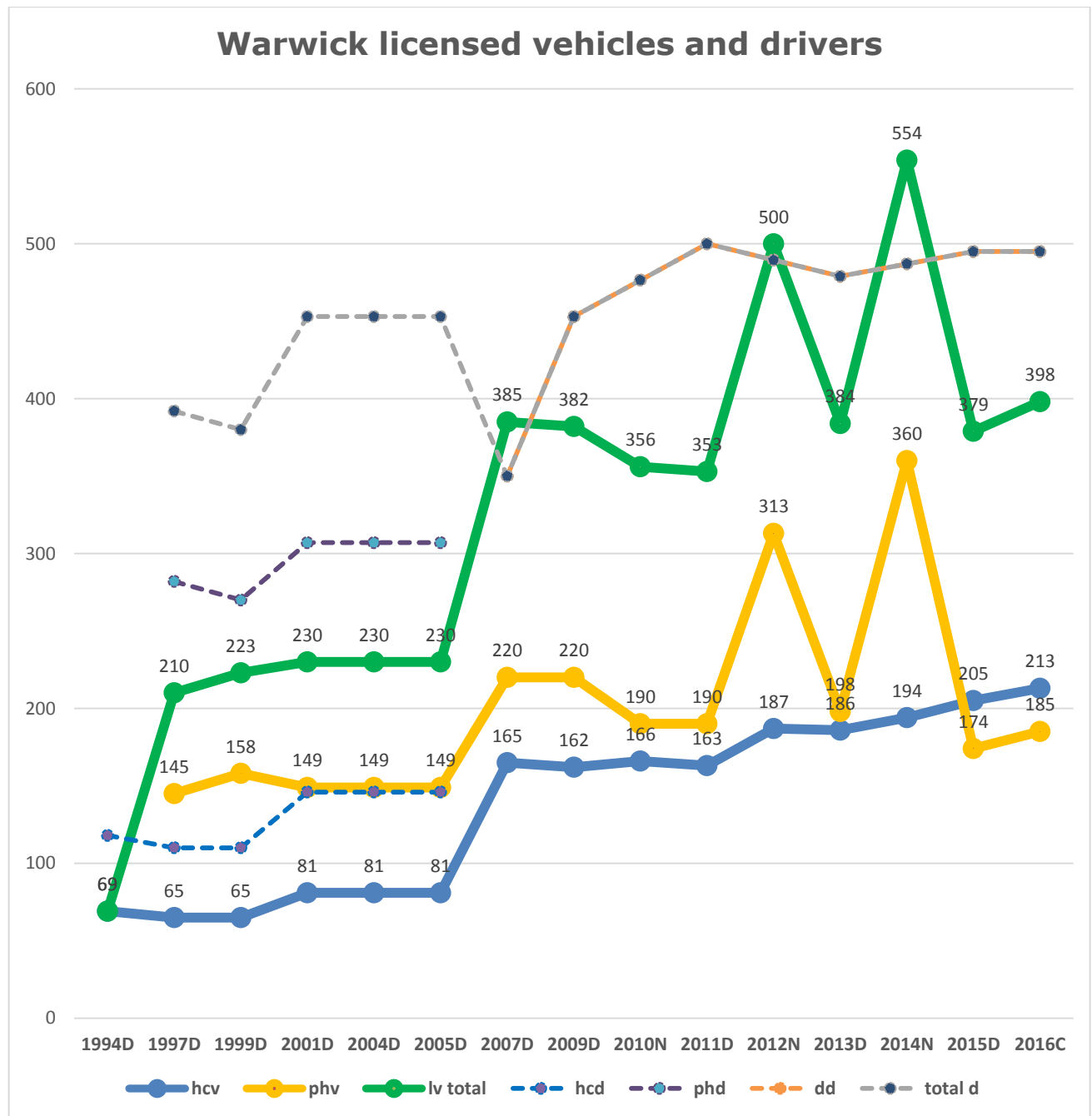
	Hackney carriage vehicles	Private hire vehicles	Total licensed vehicle fleet	Driver numbers				Operators
				Hcd	phd	Dual	Total	
1994	69	unknown	n/k	118				
1997	65 (6)	145	210	110	282	0	392	
1999	65 (6)	158	223	110	270	0	380	25
2001	81 (25)	149	230	146	307	0	543	25
2004	81 (11)	149	230	146	307	0	543	25
2005	81 (25)	149	230	146	307	0	453	25
2007	165 (79)	220	385	0	0	350	350	35
2009	162 (63)	220	382	0	0	453	453	55
2010	166 (60)	190 (11)	356	Not collected				
2011	163 (66)	190 (16)	353	0	0	500	500	53
2012	187 (66)	313 (8)	500	Not collected				
2013	186 (67)	198 (0)	384	0	0	479	479	57
2014	194 (68)	360 (7)	554	Not collected				
2015	205 (67)	174 (0)	379	0	0	495	495	68
2016	213 (72)	185 (2+)	398	0	0			68

Note: DfT statistics used from 1994 to 2009, 2011, 2013.

National Private Hire Association survey for 2010 / 2012/ 2014.

Council statistics for time of survey (Autumn 2015) and at March 7 2016

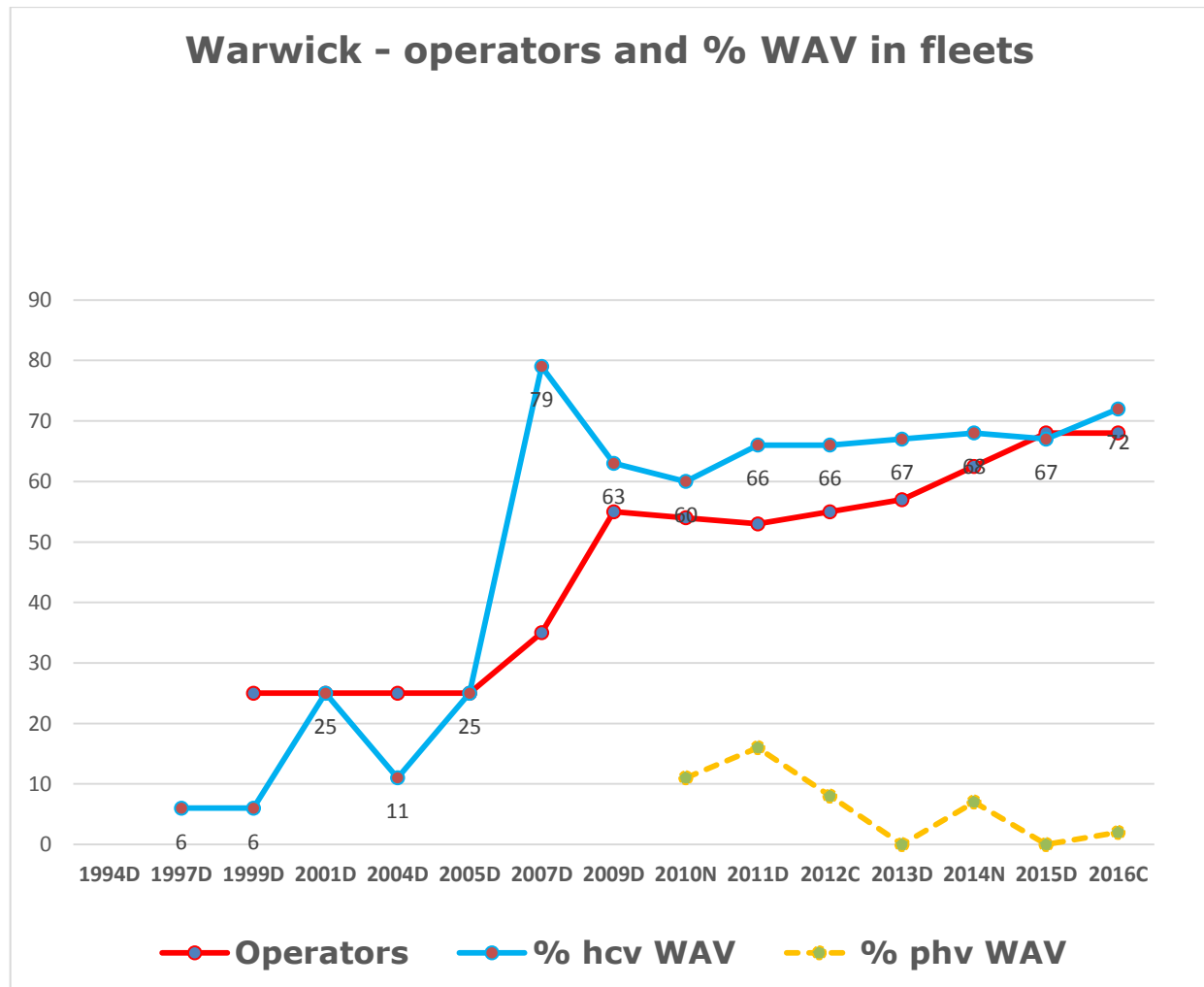
These figures are shown graphically below:



Since 1994 when DfT statistics were first published, there has been almost a threefold growth in hackney carriage vehicle numbers. From 1997 the overall private hire growth has been just 20% given the lack of restriction on hackney carriage vehicle numbers in the area – i.e. people appear to be choosing to use hackney carriages for the generic taxi trade rather than private hire. There have been some apparent increases of private hire vehicle numbers but it is understood these are issues with the data provided rather than actual increases. The overall growth in fleet size from 1997 to date is about 80%. It has to be noted that growth of the hackney carriage fleet since 2007 has been just 29% in which period the private hire fleet actually decreased by 16%, tipping the balance towards hackney carriages in the area further.

The fact that most growth in an unrestricted vehicle policy environment is hackney carriage may also imply that many of these hackney carriage vehicles rarely see regular ranks, but do have the option of meeting demand on a non-prebooked format when necessary (such as being able to pick up outside busy night venues).

Dual driver licensing was introduced in 2007. Since 1997 overall driver numbers have increased about 26% - less than the overall growth in vehicle numbers although there are still about 31% more drivers than vehicles in total, suggesting some element of double shifting or renting does occur.



The level of operator numbers is very high – with just over 2.5 private hire vehicles per operator on average. Even if it was assumed all hackney carriages were part of private hire operators, the average fleet size would only be just under 6 vehicles per company. This potentially suggests a high level of competition in the area

It is also noted that plate numbers run from 1 to 499 for hackney carriage. The highest current plate number is 250, but numbers are not re-used so there are many numbers not in use. The same is true on the private hire side. There, numbers run from 501 upwards, with the highest number now being over 1000 (but the same applies, there are many gaps and nowhere near that level of vehicles). There is some thought that having such a numbering system gives a false sense of the level of plates on issue.

Vehicle Accessibility

The level of vehicles which are wheel chair accessible (WAV) is moderate – but also appears to have fallen from potentially higher levels which may be issues with the information. There are around 2% of WAV style vehicles in the private hire fleet according to the latest information.

3. Results from rank surveys

During the course of preparation of our bid for this survey, a list of ranks was identified provided on the Warwick District Council website. This list was used as the basis for our proposed rank surveys. The list and the detailed specification for the survey were updated at the inception meeting.

The council list identifies seven ranks in Leamington. Of these, the main all-day rank is that located 'opposite the Leamington Police Station, Holly Walk'. This rank is actually located along the northern edge of Hamilton Terrace opposite the Police Station. It provides a significant amount of capacity although often over-spilling into the parking spaces provided further along Hamilton Terrace. The other all-day rank is located outside Boots, again on the northern side of Warwick Street, but we were advised this location is little used. The only other all-day rank listed is that at Leamington Spa railway station, although this is a private rank requiring an extra permit from Chiltern Railways.

The other four listed Leamington ranks are in fact night only and outside pubs or clubs. The Copper Pot rank (Warwick Street) (formally listed as outside Duke on the internet list) tends to service a wider clientele but we were advised that it was dissuaded from being used by the marshals when the main night club was in operation since vehicles using this rank could cause safety issues. The remaining three ranks relate to specific clubs – The Assembly, Rio's and Smack (formerly known as Sugars and listed as such on the internet list). All operate only when the night clubs operate. There is a further location not on the current internet list, a two space rank operating from 20:00 onwards outside Vialli's on Lower Parade, a busy bus stop during the daytime hours.

We were advised that there is one other location where hackney carriages tended to form informal ranks in Leamington Spa at night – near another club (Moo Bar).

There is a rank at Abbey End, Kenilworth, and another adjacent to Costa Coffee in Warwick. Warwick Parkway has a private rank again under contract to Chiltern Railways. It was identified that the former rank at Warwick Railway station was now superseded by a private hire office whose base was located within the buildings of Warwick station and who used the area outside the station as parking. Any person wanting to travel onwards from this location by 'taxi' would automatically use the private hire company located here.

The above information was utilised to revise the rank observation specification to better cover the observed use of ranks. Rank surveys were undertaken and some further changes applied arising from issues with the equipment used for data collection.

During our research we did not find evidence of any other ranks within the Warwick area and understand our rank coverage is therefore comprehensive as required by the Department for Transport's Best Practice Guidance on taxi and private hire licensing (BPG). The only private ranks we are aware of are the two provided by Chiltern Railways at Warwick Parkway and Leamington Spa stations.

Surveys were proposed during the tender stage of the project (as informed by information received from the Council before tendering), and were modified at the inception meeting to take account of current expectation of times of use of ranks and informal rank locations. The proposed level of rank observations was set to 250 hours. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the hours covered over the weekend of Thursday 5th November 2016 through to Sunday 8th November. An additional set of information was obtained on Tuesday 15th December (actually more into the early hours of Wednesday 16th) at the rank near the Smack night club given that we were advised that Tuesday evening was the main usage of this location. In the event, some 252 hours of video were collected and analysed (including the four hours at Smack on the Tuesday night). The coverage is shown in detail in **Appendix 1**. For the sake of completeness this also shows the proposed hours which were lost although the additional hours added are not identified separately.

Ranks were observed, using video methods with the recordings observed by trained staff, and analysed to provide details of the usage and waiting times for both passengers and vehicles. Passenger waiting time was kept to that which was true unmet demand, i.e. when passengers were waiting but no hackney carriage vehicle was there. Full details of the observed volumes of passenger and vehicle traffic are included in **Appendix 2**. Our observations always take account of feeder ranks where necessary to ensure true estimation of the hackney carriage waiting times at ranks for passengers (although there were no such locations amongst the ranks observed in Warwick).

Overall comments on ranks

A total of 22 different rank locations / days were observed (each termed a sample). In total, 1,979 vehicle departures were recorded. Of the total vehicle departures observed, 10% were private cars at or near the ranks. 1% was goods vehicles. 2% were private hire vehicles and there was just one case where emergency vehicles stopped at a rank. A further site was observed manually at Smack on a Tuesday (making a total of 23 sites/days).

No people accessed hackney carriages at ranks in a wheel chair across the area during our survey. One person was noted as being visibly disabled but not in a wheel chair. A further 16 people across the area were seen to be assisted by the driver to get into a vehicle.

Of all the hackney carriage observations (87% of the overall sample), 59% were believed to be wheel chair accessible (WAV) style. This is very similar to the level of such vehicles within the current fleet.

Detailed rank performance

The Table below summarises the time periods observed at each location as well as providing overall operational statistics for each location during each period of observation. A detailed description of the observations follows below.

Rank	Period (2015)	Total passengers observed	Total loaded vehicle departures	Passengers per loaded vehicle	Empty vehicle departures	% of vehicles leaving empty	No. of passengers having to wait for vehicle to arrive
Leamington Spa ranks							
Hamilton Terrace	Thursday 5 th Nov	94	67	1.4	44	40	2
	Friday 6 th Nov	251	160	1.6	68	30	13
	Saturday 7 th Nov	284	150	1.9	68	31	0
	Sunday 8 th Nov	39	23	1.7	24	51	0
Boots	Saturday 7 th Nov	2	1	2	6	86	0
Copper Pot	Thursday 5 th Nov	92	37	2.5	38	51	0
	Saturday 7 th Nov	120	55	2.2	40	42	2
The Assembly	Friday 6 th Nov	74	32	2.3	69	68	1
	Saturday 7 th Nov	7	2	3.5	12	86	0
Rio's	Thursday 5 th Nov	0	0	0	2	100	0
	Saturday 7 th Nov	52	29	1.8	29	50	7
Smack	Thursday 5 th Nov	40	12	3.3	15	56	0
	Friday 6 th Nov	34	13	2.6	13	50	0
	Saturday 7 th Nov	9	4	2.3	1	20	0
	Tuesday 15 th Dec	161	59	2.7	11	16	0
Vialli's	Friday 6 th Nov	35	18	1.9	80	82	1
Kenilworth rank							
Abbey End	Friday 6 th Nov	92	43	2.1	10	19	1
Warwick rank							
Costa	Friday 6 th Nov	122	59	2.1	9	13	3
	Saturday 7 th Nov	40	17	2.4	12	41	2
Informal rank							
Moo Bar	Friday 6 th Nov	0	0	0	5	100	0
	Saturday 7 th Nov	9	4	2.3	15	79	1
Private ranks							
Warwick Parkway	Friday 6 th Nov	64	64	1.0	3	4	0
Leamington Spa Station	Friday 6 th Nov	349	243	1.4	118	33	42
TOTALS – all areas		1981	1033	1.8	681	40	75

For each rank, we conclude with an overall qualitative appreciation of the performance of the rank over the days observed:

- Poor – major issues with service to rank resulting in long passenger queues;
- Fair – rank deals with high volumes but sees some passenger queueing at times;
- Good – no passenger queueing observed but nothing else of note in way rank operates;
- Excellent – very high turnover with no passenger queueing and clear examples of drivers helping passengers use rank;
- Developing – rank of recent origin but clearly growing in use

Hamilton Terrace rank

This rank is located on the northern side of Hamilton Terrace at the end towards The Parade and opposite the local Police Station. Passengers would enter vehicles from the driver side, and passenger side loading would be dangerous given the traffic passing by. The rank extends back some way but still regularly sees over-ranking which can often extend into the parking spaces behind the rank. The rank is located on the central traffic island although this is part of the main walking route from north to south in the town centre.

This rank was observed from Thursday 5th November 2016 at 15:00 right through to 16:00 on Sunday 8th November 2016. Apart from a late start to the observations no planned data was lost.

Thursday observations

During the Thursday observations 94 passengers were observed leaving in 67 vehicles, giving vehicle occupancy of 1.4 persons per vehicle – low. 44 vehicles left empty (40%), with just two passengers having to wait for a vehicle to arrive. These passengers were in the 01:00 and 02:00 hours with one waiting a minute and another four minutes. Shared over all passengers the average expected wait is just three seconds.

In passenger terms, flows were low – never more than 13 passengers in any hour, and occasionally as low as one passenger. There was no demand at all from the 03:00 hour onwards.

Average vehicle waiting times for fares were very long – between 41 and 96 minutes with one vehicles seen to wait for nearly 2.5 hours at one point.

Friday observations

During the Friday observations (a full 24 hours) 251 passengers were observed leaving in 160 vehicles, giving vehicle occupancy of 1.6 persons per vehicle – moderate. 68 vehicles left empty (30%), with 13 passengers having to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger waits occurred in the 11:00, 13:00, 14:00, 17:00, 21:00 to 23:00 and 02:00 hours. In most cases the wait was just one minute, but there was one case of a four minute and another of a three-minute wait.

When averaged over all passengers, the wait was an average of just four seconds.

In passenger terms, flows were between two and 10 from 07:00 until the 12:00 hour. After this, flows were between 10 and 21 up until the 20:00 hour. The 21:00, 22:00 and 23:00 hours were busier with 27, 35 and 27 passengers respectively. After this flows dropped until the 04:00 and 05:00 hours were quiet.

Average vehicle waiting times for fares were much less than on the Thursday. However, there were still longest waiting times up to an hour, and beyond this from 23:00 onwards.

Saturday observations

During the Saturday observations (which also covered a full 24 hours) 284 passengers were observed leaving in 150 vehicles, giving vehicle occupancy of 1.9 persons per vehicle – high. Some 68 vehicles left empty, 31% of those arriving. No passengers had to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

In passenger terms, flows again were low, between one and eight, in the hours from 07:00 through to 12:00. After this flows were between eight and 19 until the 17:00 hour which saw a peak of 33 passengers. The rank increased in patronage with the peak of 50 seen in the 23:00 hour. Flows were very low from the 02:00 hour onward although only the 04:00 hour saw no passengers at all.

Average vehicle waiting times for fares were between once again extended with some vehicles waiting quite long times before obtaining a fare.

Sunday observations

During the Sunday, 39 passengers were observed leaving in 23 vehicles, a moderate occupancy of 1.7 per vehicle. 24 vehicles, 51% of those arriving, left without passengers. No passenger arrived when there was no vehicle available to service their needs.

Overall passenger flows were between one and nine – with no passengers in either the 06:00 or 09:00 hours. Vehicles again waited quite long times to obtain fares.

Summary

Overall, service to this rank is **fair**.

Boots

This rank is located outside Boots on the northern side of Warwick Street just east of The Parade. It was observed on Saturday 7th November 2015 from 09:00 through to 09:00 on the Sunday morning.

During this period there were just two passengers observed, leaving in the same vehicle. A further six vehicles left empty (86%). No passengers ever arrived when no vehicles were there. Vehicles did not tend to wait at the rank long.

Summary

This rank is not really used and no service level can be sensibly given.

Copper Pot

This rank is directly outside this bar / club and vehicles load from the passenger side. It is on the northern side of Warwick Street but on the eastern side of the Parade rather than on the West as the Boots rank is. The nearby road is quite busy so it would not be safe for any driver side loading. The rank is also near the access route to the Smack night club rank and is often discouraged from being used by marshals as movements from this location towards the Smack rank can be dangerous. Unlike the following ranks that are very closely allied to single clubs, this rank is much more central to overall night life in the central Leamington area.

The rank was observed on two nights – Thursday 5th November 2015 from 20:00 to 05:00 and on Saturday 7th November 2015 from 20:00 to 06:00.

Thursday observations

On the Thursday a total of 92 passengers used this rank, leaving in some 37 vehicles, a very high occupancy of 2.5 people per vehicle. A further 38 vehicles – just over half of those serving this location left empty. During the course of the observations no passenger ever arrived when there was no vehicle available for immediate hire.

In passenger terms the rank was only used in the hours starting from the 22:00 hour and ending in the 03:00 hour. The peak flow – of some 47 passengers – was in the 02:00 hour. The occupancy of vehicles leaving at this time was incredibly high – 3.6 persons per vehicle suggesting groups leaving together.

Vehicle waits for passengers were relatively long early on, but much less in the peak hour and afterwards. Some vehicle waited here up to 51 minutes for a fare.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday a marginally higher 120 passengers left the rank, using 55 vehicles, a relatively high occupancy of 2.2 per vehicle. A smaller level of vehicles left empty – 40 vehicles or 42% of those arriving. There were two passengers who arrived when no vehicle was immediately available. One waited 12 minutes in the 04:00 hour whilst another waited just two minutes in the 05:00 hour. Averaged over all passengers, the average typical wait was just seven seconds.

On this night, every hour observed saw passengers use the rank. Flows were often between one and six, but the 22:00, midnight, 01:00 and 02:00 hours all saw between 16 and 30 passengers with the peak observed in the 02:00 hour, after which the rank became quieter but still saw some activity – and leading to the two passenger waits that were observed.

When passenger numbers were low, the average vehicle wait for them was quite high. When the rank became busier, vehicle waits fell to between five and ten minutes and a maximum wait of 35 minutes (at the end of the busy spell).

Summary

Overall service to this rank is **good** and it is clear that people expect to obtain a vehicle from this location (hence the willingness to wait here for 12 minutes).

Leamington Club focussed ranks

There are three ranks in Leamington which focus very much on the exits from three specific clubs. One of these has changed its name since the formal internet listing. All are very dependent on the activity at the specific clubs which they service.

The Assembly (Spencer Street)

This rank services The Assembly in Spencer Street. Although not far away from the main traffic junction at the lower end of Leamington Parade it is almost exclusively dependent on the clientele from the one club. The rank is in two parts right outside the club exit, and loading would be from the passenger side. The nearby road is very busy and driver side loading would be dangerous.

This rank was observed on Friday 6th November 2015 from 22:00 through to 04:00 and again on Saturday 7th November 2015 from 19:00 through to the 23:00 hour. From midnight onwards, data from the site was lost due to equipment issues (the memory card used to collect the data failed) although there was some activity before that time which was analysed.

Friday observations

On the Friday 74 passengers left in 32 vehicles, a relatively high occupancy of 2.3 people per vehicle. A further 69 vehicles, 68% of those servicing this point, left the location empty. One person in the 03:00 hour had to wait just a minute for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger flows began at midnight and ended in the 03:00 hour. The peak flow was 32 in the 03:00 hour. Some vehicles did wait here for passengers although the wait time was reduced for the peak hour.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday, seven people used the rank in the 23:00 hour (earlier than on the Friday). They left in just two vehicles – a very high occupancy of 3.5. The vehicles servicing them did not wait long possibly suggesting these might have been booked trips. None of the passengers arrived when there was no vehicle available for hire. No further information was available from this site on this evening.

Summary

Service to this rank is **good** although it is clearly linked strongly to the club operating hours and days.

Rio's, Bedford Street

This rank is at the rear of many of the shops on the Parade but only accessible from Rio's club. It is directly outside the exit of the club towards the bottom end of the Parade. Passenger loading would be from the driver side of the vehicle although loading from both sides would be relatively safe as the road sees relatively little traffic.

The rank was observed from 21:00 on Thursday 5th November 2015 through to 05:00 the next morning and then again from 22:00 on the Saturday 7th November through to 06:00.

Thursday observations

No passengers were observed at all during the Thursday observations and just two vehicles so it is assumed that the club was not operating that night.

Saturday observations

During the Saturday a total of 52 passengers left in 29 vehicles, a high occupancy of 1.8 persons per vehicle. A further 29 vehicles left empty (50%).

During the operating period some seven passengers arrived when there were no vehicles at the rank. The longest wait was 17 minutes in the 02:00 hour, with just one person waiting in the midnight hour for four minutes, and others waiting other lengths of time in the 02:00 hour. When the total waits are shared out between all passengers using this site this night, the average typical wait was 46 seconds.

Passenger flows started at three in the midnight hour and rose to a peak of 34 in the 02:00 hour, dropping back to five and then zero in the 04:00 hour onwards.

Corresponding vehicle waits for passengers tended to be relatively short, in the order of one to seven minutes, though one vehicle was observed waiting a maximum of 16 minutes.

Summary

Overall, service to this rank is fair, though very dependent on this one location.

Smack, Tavistock Street

This rank is directly outside the exit from Smack (formerly known as Sugars on the internet listing). This club is one of the main student outlets servicing Warwick University students. It is located on Tavistock Street towards the top end of the Parade. Loading is from the driver side of vehicles although a false one-way does allow vehicles to leave the location without having to turn round – though many still u-turn which can lead to safety issues here. We also understand that one of the key nights for this establishment is Tuesdays, but the club also opens Thursdays to Saturday nights, but not necessarily every week.

The rank was observed on Tuesday 15th December 2015 from 23:00 until 05:00, on Thursday 5th November 2015 from 20:00 to 05:00, on Friday 6th November 2015 from 22:00 to 06:00 and finally on Saturday 7th November 2015 again from 22:00 to 06:00. It is accepted that the Tuesday night would likely be a peak of peaks but it was felt important to understand how the rank performed at its busiest. We were also later advised that most students had in fact returned home by this date so the results are felt to be inaccurate – with the next possible date for ‘typical’ usage by students considered by the Council to be mid-October 2016. During none of the observations were any passengers ever seen to have to wait for a vehicle to arrive – in fact in many cases vehicles appeared to be waiting here for passengers for some while (see below for individual days).

Tuesday observations

On the Tuesday evening (into the early hours of Wednesday) some 161 persons left using this rank in 59 vehicles – a very high occupancy of 2.7 persons per vehicle. Passenger numbers were light in the midnight and 01:00 hours and rose to the peak of 105 in the 03:00 hour, with 16 leaving in the 04:00 hour after which the site became quiet.

We were advised by those watching the location that passengers had plenty of vehicles to choose from. No passengers ever waited for a vehicle to arrive, but a large number clearly moved between vehicles. They told us they were negotiating prices and availability of a vehicle to take them. None appeared to end up without a vehicle although this was difficult to tell with some clearly going to nearby food outlets as their first port of call, mainly returning to a vehicle later. There was no clear rank protocol in people taking the first vehicle available at all.

On first presentation of these results to the Council we were advised that the main student body had all returned home by the time this survey was undertaken. This set of results are therefore considered not to be a true reflection of the Tuesday night demand here – with the next likely true date now mid-October 2016.

Thursday observations

On the Thursday, first departures were in the 01:00 hour with a peak of 24 in the 02:00 hour and 11 in the 03:00 hour. A total of 40 passengers left in 12 vehicles – an incredibly high occupancy of 3.3 per vehicle. 15 vehicles (56%) left the area empty. Although most vehicle waits were short there were some vehicles appearing to wait some while. There were no passengers in any other hour observed.

Friday observations

On the Friday some 34 passengers left in 13 vehicles, again a very high occupancy level of 2.6 per vehicle. 13 other vehicles, 50% of those arriving, left without passengers. Passenger flows were much lower, with 10 in the 01:00 hour, 13 in the 02:00 and 10 again in the 03:00 with no other passengers observed apart from one person in the 22:00 hour. Again vehicle waits for fares were relatively short apart from some vehicles which appeared to arrive in the 23:00 hour and wait to return.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday just nine passengers left using four vehicles, still a relatively high occupancy of 2.3 per vehicle. Just one other vehicle left empty – 20% of those observed. There were two passengers in the 02:00 hour and the balance of seven in the 03:00 hour. Vehicle waits were just six to ten minutes.

Summary

Overall service to this rank is **excellent**. Whilst all vehicles observed were hackney carriages from the Warwick district, it is not clear how many were booked repeat journeys and how many were speculative waits – some of the evidence of vehicles waiting does suggest some might be booked return trips. It is also still unclear what a typical 'student Tuesday' might look like since our observations, which showed very high demand, were inaccurate as students had ended their term, yet were still very much higher and different to the other three nights observed which were within term time.

Lower Parade – near Vialli's

This area of Lower Parade has several bus stops and food establishments. It is also just north of the gyratory servicing the station and fairly close to one of the night clubs that has its own rank. However, it is a key location where people gather wanting to get home. A two space rank was established here in November 2004. It operates from 20:00 until 05:00 and is not currently on the internet listing of ranks.

The location was observed from 21:00 on Friday 6th November 2015 right through to 04:00 on Saturday 7th November. Hackney carriages were observed waiting through the entire period. However, one person did have to wait 11 minutes for a vehicle in the midnight hour. In total some 35 passengers left the area in 18 vehicles, an average occupancy of 1.9 per vehicle. 80 hackney carriage vehicles, some 82% of those arriving, left the area empty.

Summary

This rank sees **fair** service and is probably a pausing point for vehicles generally heading towards the other night ranks more towards the centre of Leamington. Given the relatively low demand it appears to have about the right capacity although with just two spaces and being near both bus stops and a busy junction corner, any over-ranking could have serious effects. Were there issues later on, once buses stopped running, consideration could be given to making the bus stop beyond a part time location perhaps after midnight. This is not necessary on the present evidence, however.

Abbey End, Kenilworth

This rank is located on the off-side of a separated carriageway to the north end of the Kenilworth shopping area, with the opposite side being bus stops. Passenger loading would be from the driver side although only a small number of buses use the stops allowing potentially safe access for passengers from either side of the vehicle. However, it is necessary for any passenger either to cross the main road, or the bus / taxi traffic lanes to access the rank itself.

There is a Holiday Inn opposite the rank and the bus stops / ranks also service a shopping area, albeit to the northern end of the main shopping area and some distance from the main supermarket in the town.

The rank was observed on Friday 6th November from 08:00 until midnight. During this period a total of 92 people were observed leaving in 43 vehicles – a relatively high occupancy of 2.1 persons per vehicle. A further ten vehicles, 19% of the total arriving, left empty. During the observations just two people were observed waiting (together) four minutes for a vehicle to arrive.

Passenger flows at this location were generally as expected, very low. During daytime hours there was only one passenger, in the 10:00 hour. This vehicle had waited ten minutes before obtaining a fare. One vehicle was observed pausing at the rank in each hour until the 16:00 hour but all others left without passengers. In the 16:00 hour two people arrived and left in one vehicle after the four-minute wait. There were a few more passengers from the 18:00 hour onwards. Between that hour and the 22:00 hour there were between three and nine passengers in each and every hour. Vehicles tended to wait around the rank at this period – some for extended times with a small number leaving empty.

The peak hour at the rank was the 23:00 hour when some 64 people left in 26 vehicles – and just one vehicle left without passengers. None had to wait for a vehicle to arrive and vehicles tended to wait around for some six minutes.

Summary

Overall service to this rank is **good** although it is clearly only used in evenings when there seems to be more customers around – and not at all in the daytime.

Warwick - Costa

This rank is located outside the Costa coffee shop in the centre of Warwick. The rank is a unique arrangement within the District, being reverse on, drive-off parallel bays. This leads to interesting and potentially dangerous movements of vehicles to be in the right place for passengers to hire them. The general road area is relatively quiet although all passengers have to enter the vehicles from the roadside in one way or another. There is little additional space for extra vehicles to wait.

The location was observed from 11:00 on Friday 6th November 2015 until 02:00 on the Saturday morning, and again from 07:00 on the Saturday morning until 18:00 that evening.

Friday observations

During the Friday some 122 passengers left the rank using 59 vehicles – a relatively high occupancy of 2.1 per vehicle. Just nine vehicles left without passengers – 13% of those arriving. There were two people who had to wait for a vehicle to arrive in the 01:00 hour, waiting up to two minutes. When shared over all passengers, this average wait was just six seconds.

Passenger flows at this location were only two to four per hour between 12:00 and 20:00 hours. After this, flows increased to a peak of 42 in the midnight hour, after which they dropped again to just 10. Vehicles tended to wait long periods for fares, and then ended up leaving when flows increased.

Saturday observations

On the Saturday just 40 passengers used the rank leaving in 17 vehicles- a very high occupancy of 2.4 persons per vehicle. 12 – some 41% of those arriving - left the rank without passengers.

Passenger flows again did not begin until the 12:00 hour with just a few vehicles arriving and departing empty in those hours. Flows were generally between four and eight in the observed hours from 13:00 to the 17:00 hour, but there was a peak of 15 people in the 16:00 hour. In the 14:00 hour one person waited ten minutes whilst in the 16:00 hour one person waited seven minutes. Shared over all the passengers using the rank, the average wait was 26 seconds.

When the rank was active, vehicle waits tended to be between one and 23 minutes for fares.

Summary

The overall service summary for this rank is a **good** service. In a similar manner to Kenilworth the rank has specific periods when it is used – principally afternoons and evenings.

Informal rank – Leamington

We were advised at inception of an area in Leamington Spa where hackney carriages tend to pick up informally near to one specific location.

Near Moo Bar (Russell Street)

This location is near to the Smack rank but in a parallel road not easy to get through to the other rank from. This location was observed on Friday 6th November 2015 from 22:00 until 01:00. During that period five hackney carriages were observed pausing briefly but not taking any passengers.

Further observations on the Saturday night, from 22:00 again to 01:00, saw nine people leave the area in four hackney carriages. This is a relatively high occupancy of 2.3 per vehicle. A further 15 vehicles were observed pausing in this area for short periods. One person had to wait two minutes to obtain a vehicle – which could be a booking.

Summary

There is no valid service level for this location although it is clear that it is a location people do meet with hackney carriages although not to any significant extent.

Private ranks – Chiltern Railway stations

There are two private ranks within the Warwick District. Both are located at Chiltern Railway operated stations.

Warwick Parkway

This rank is located on Chiltern Railways land immediately outside the booking office of the station. It did not prove possible to find a location for any camera to watch the actual rank, so records were made of hackney carriages arriving and departing from the location.

Records were taken from 07:00 on Friday 6th November 2015 until 01:00 the next morning. During this time 64 hackney carriage vehicles serviced the area, waiting between two and 21 minutes before leaving. Peak departures were eight in both the 14:00 and 15:00 hours, with no departures between 20:00 and 23:00 hours, but two in the midnight hour. There were flows in all other hours from 07:00 to 19:00 but varying from one to seven (other than the two peaks).

Summary

As this is a private rank, with supplementary service rules outside the control of the Council, it cannot be included in the ISUD calculation nor is it appropriate for any service level indicator to be given.

Leamington Spa Station

This rank needs a supplementary permit from Chiltern Railways, currently paid on a per-driver basis. It is located immediately outside the station exit, providing double-banked waiting space and some feeder space the other side of the station exit (although there are potential issues here clashing with other vehicles). The location was observed on Friday 6th November 2015 between 06:00 through to 02:00 on the Saturday morning. During this period, some 349 people left the rank in 243 vehicles – a low average of 1.4 persons per vehicle. A further 118 vehicles left the rank without passengers (a third of those observed).

During the course of the day a total of 42 passengers ended up waiting for vehicles to arrive. The longest wait was two people up to 16 minutes in the 16:00 hour. The most people waited in the 09:00 hour, when 15 people had to wait – with one waiting six minutes. Overall all passengers during the period observed, the average expected wait was 33 seconds.

Passenger flows at the station varied between two and 35. The peak flow was in the 23:00 hour. Two other hours saw 30 passengers each – the 08:00 and the 20:00 hours. 09:00 and 19:00 were the only other two hours with passenger numbers in the twenties.

Average vehicle waits were between three and 47 minutes. Longest waits were just under an hour apart from a vehicle waiting just over an hour which arrived at the end of the 23:00 hour.

During the course of a January 2017 visit to the client, arriving half way through the peak 08:00 hour, we observed no hackney carriages available at this rank and several people waiting. Whilst observing how long it might be before a vehicle arrived, two passengers approached us to ask where they could obtain hackney carriages. On advising them one would come to the rank shortly, they walked back to the rank and a vehicle did arrive almost immediately. This suggests it may be prudent for the council and Chiltern to agree some provision of signing at this rank which mentioned the possibility of delays and a need to wait for vehicles to reduce passengers potential concern levels.

Summary

Overall, service to this rank is **fair**

Overall comments on rank performance and adequacy

Generally, performance and behaviour of both drivers and passengers at ranks in the Warwick District area is very good, with a few key exceptions:

- Operation of the Warwick Costa rank – needs significant thought arising from the need to reverse and the method of moving between spaces
- Hamilton Terrace – needs extra space to rear for feeder at busy times to ensure sufficient vehicles available
- Smack – need to discourage lack of use of the false one-way and also stop any cherry picking of fares from this location

The private ranks are not the responsibility of the Council although the only issue arises from shortage of space at Leamington Spa station which can cause issues at some points with other traffic there.

Comparison of overall supply and demand

The Table below provides a slightly different summary of supply and demand, comparing average vehicle arrivals per hour with average loaded departures per hour, i.e. seeing how supply and demand match on average.

Rank	Period	No of hours rank active	Average veh arrivals / hr	Average loaded dep/ hr	Overall judgment of service provided
Leamington Spa Ranks					
Hamilton Terrace	Thursday 5 th Nov	12	10	6	Fair
	Friday 6 th Nov	20	11	8	
	Saturday 7 th Nov	22	10	7	
	Sunday 8 th Nov	8	4	3	
Boots	Saturday 7 th Nov	1	7	1	N/A
Copper Pot	Thursday 5 th Nov	6	13	6	Good
	Saturday 7 th Nov	10	10	6	
The Assembly	Friday 6 th Nov	4	25	8	Good
	Saturday 7 th Nov	1	14	2	
Rio's	Thursday 5 th Nov	0	0	0	Fair
	Saturday 7 th Nov	4	15	7	
Smack	Thursday 5 th Nov	3	9	4	Very good
	Friday 6 th Nov	4	7	3	
	Saturday 7 th Nov	2	3	2	
	Tuesday 15 th Dec	5	14	12	
Vialli's	Friday 6 th Nov	7	14	3	Fair
Kenilworth Rank					
Abbey End	Friday 6 th Nov	8	7	5	Good
Warwick Rank					
Costa	Friday 6 th Nov	14	5	4	Good
	Saturday 7 th Nov	6	5	3	
Informal Rank					
Moo Bar	Friday 6 th Nov	0	0	0	N/A
	Saturday 7 th Nov	2	10	2	
Private Ranks					
Warwick Parkway	Friday 6 th Nov	14	5	5	N/A
Leamington Spa Station	Friday 6 th Nov	21	17	12	Fair

Twelve different ranks or locations were observed. Of these, none were really active 24/7. The closest two locations to 24/7 operation were Hamilton Terrace and Leamington Spa Station. Three ranks were directly related to specific club operations.

A total of 23 locations / days were observed. When ranked by passengers per hour just two of these observation periods had an average active level of passengers per hour of 12 persons. The next highest usage, at two locations was eight. Two observation periods had no passengers at all.

All observations sets with passengers always had a significant level more vehicles available than passengers – which when occupancy is allowed for suggests a high level of excess vehicles for the demand available. There is even more than enough available for the high peak just before Christmas at Smack.

Overall service levels to ranks tends to be between very good to fair – with quite a number of locations seeing good service to customers. Interestingly one of those with poor service is the Leamington Spa station rank where there is quite a bit of waiting by customers – which may relate to less vehicles being available arising from the permit system. It may also relate to peaks caused by train arrivals.

Summary of Total demand

The table below calculates a typical week from the observations undertaken in 2015. Ranks or pick-up locations are listed in descending order of passenger usage in 2015.

Rank	Passengers per week 2015 survey
Private – Leamington Spa Station	2269 (38%)
Leamington, Hamilton Terrace	1120 (19%)
Warwick, Costa	804 (13%)
Leamington, Copper Pot	456 (7.6%)
Private – Warwick Parkway	450 (7.5%)
Kenilworth, Abbey End	368 (6.1%)
Leamington, Smack	244 (4.1%)
Leamington – Vialli's	105 (1.8%)
Leamington, The Assembly	81 (1.4%)
Leamington, Rio's	52 (0.9%)
Leamington, Boots	24 (0.4%)
Leamington – informal – Moo Bar	14 (0.2%)
Total	5,986

Note – Total includes all observations at relevant points as available, factored to full week from detail available.

The table above shows that the Leamington Spa station rank is the dominant rank in the area – providing some 38% of all demand in a typical week. Second is Hamilton Terrace providing 19%. The Warwick rank provides 13% of passengers. All other ranks provide 7.6% or less in demand terms. Warwick Parkway provides around 7.5% (this might be an underestimate) as we could not record actual passenger departures), with the general night Copper Pot rank taking 7.6%. With the Friday night peak, Abbey End at Kenilworth is next, taking some 6.1% of total passenger demand.

Smack dominates the club demand, although this estimate is possibly on the high end due to the date of the Tuesday observations – which are the main provider of demand at this point.

The rank at Vialli's does provide more than the other two formal club ranks – 1.8% compared to 1.4% for The Assembly and 0.9% for Rio's.

The total passengers estimated in a typical week is just 5,986. Using the average occupancy of 1.8 per vehicle, this equates to 3,326 jobs per week from ranks. With 212 plates sharing equally this would be just 15 jobs per vehicle per week from ranks.

Plate activity levels

A sample of plate numbers were collected during the rank surveys to identify the level of activity of the fleet during the survey. Observations covered each part of the area near to key ranks (but not at the ranks) – covering a total of 8.5 sample hours ranging from 12:00 to 02:00. This included samples in Kenilworth and Warwick as well as around Leamington Spa.

These observations were collected on the Friday of the rank survey work and a total of 417 records were observed. Of these, 133 were identified as different Warwick hackney carriage vehicles. This is 63% of the 212 vehicles active at the time of the survey. This seems a reasonable level allowing for other vehicles not working, but not as high as to suggest any significant playing up to the survey by the trade.

The most frequently seen vehicle was observed 11 times, three vehicles were observed 9 times, two eight times, two vehicles seven times, twelve six times, six vehicles were observed five times, and the remaining 107 vehicles four times or less.

Application of the ISUD index

The industry standard index of significant unmet demand (ISUD) has been used and developed since the initial Government guidance that limits could only apply if there was no significant unmet demand for the service of hackney carriage vehicles. Initially developed by a university, it was then adopted by one of the consultant groups undertaking surveys, developed further by them in the light of various court challenges, and most recently adopted as an 'industry standard' test utilised by most current practitioners of unmet demand studies.

The index is principally used to identify a statistical guide if observed unmet demand is in fact significant. Early in the process of developing the index, a cut-off point of 80 was identified beneath which no conclusion of unmet demand being significant had been drawn, and over which all studies had concluded there was significant unmet demand. This level has become accepted as the guide.

Once unmet demand has been identified as significant it is usual for a calculation to be undertaken to identify the exact number of new licences needed in order to reduce the significance of the unmet demand below the threshold – although this cannot be an exact science in terms of outcomes due to the high number of parameters involved in determining where new licences actually end up working – there is no way to guarantee that licences will focus on reducing the unmet demand at all.

The ISUD calculations draw from various elements of the work, reflecting statistics which seek to capture components of 'significant unmet demand' although principal inputs are from the rank surveys, factored to produce a typical week of observations based on the knowledge available to us.

The current index has two elements which can negate the need for use of the index by setting the value to zero. The first test relates to if there are any daytime hours (Monday to Friday 1000 to 1800) where people are observed to queue for hackney carriages. Using the direct outputs from the survey a value of 23% is estimated.

The other index that could be zero – proportion of passengers in hours in which waits occurred which was over 1 minute – was 4.5%.

The seasonality index is 1.0 since the surveys were undertaken in November 2015.

The area exhibits peaked demand, so this factor is 0.5.

Average passenger delay in minutes across the whole survey is 0.05 minutes (or 3 seconds).

From the public attitude work, the latent demand factor is 1.028, assuming all who did not give an answer had not ever given up waiting – i.e. there were no hackney carriage relevant responses.

The ISUD index is the multiple of all the above. Using detailed numbers (but then rounding) the calculated value is 2.66. This is well short of the cut-off value of 80 suggesting there is no unmet demand in the Warwick area which is significant at this point in time. This result takes on board both patent (measurable) and latent demand. This needs to be considered with other evidence to understand the right course of action with plate numbers but it is unlikely that this guide value would be reversed by other evidence.

Further discussion occurs below to make use of this information in the decision regarding the significance or otherwise of unmet demand.

Summary of incidence of unmet demand

Unmet demand is defined as any time when a passenger arrives at a clearly designated rank location and finds there is no vehicle available for immediate hire. Patent unmet demand occurs at ranks which regularly see vehicles so that the passenger eventually leaves in a hackney carriage.

Latent unmet demand is signified when a person either chooses to walk off before a vehicle arrives, or when they use a location which is marked but which rarely sees vehicles, so again they walk away. This is captured principally in the public attitude on-street interviews.

Unmet demand observed in this survey occurred both in off peak hours (where any people having to wait for any length of time is counted towards the significance of the unmet demand). In this survey, off peak hours saw patent unmet demand at Hamilton Terrace in the 11:00, 13:00, 14:00 and 17:00 hours on the Friday of the survey. Abbey End, Kenilworth saw one incidence in the 16:00 hour on the Friday. There were more instances at Leamington Spa station on the Friday in the 11:00, 13:00, 15:00, 16:00 and 17:00 hours, but these could not be included in the ISUD calculation as there is a supplementary permit fee and restriction on vehicles that can service this rank out of the control of the local authority.

In terms of other hours when there was unmet demand that resulted in an average waiting time for passengers in the hour over a minute, there were nine incidences during this survey. Hamilton Terrace saw incidences in the Thursday observations in the 01:00 and 02:00 hours (early Friday morning), the Copper Pot rank saw issues in the 04:00 and 05:00 hours in the early hours of Sunday, Rios similarly in the midnight and 02:00 hours, Kenilworth Abbey End (the same 16:00 hour as above) and Costa, Warwick on Friday in the 11:00 hour and Saturday in the 14:00 hour. In total, 58 people arrived when no vehicle was available.

As in the off peak sample, Leamington Spa station saw four hours where average passenger waiting exceeded a minute, but only one of these hours was also an off peak hour. Again, these cannot be included in the ISUD calculation.

Overall, though the above seems to be a large amount of unmet demand, in reality the actual extent and numbers involved were relatively small and the ISUD calculation confirms these are not significant. Whilst the trade may be able to give clear reasons for these incidences, and possibly react to improve service, the overall level is not such that the council is required to take any action whatsoever. The ISUD index is a long way from the point at which this would be considered significant.

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4. Public Consultation results

A thirteen question survey was undertaken with 250 persons in the Warwick District Council area. Surveys were undertaken on Thursday 29th October in the shopping areas of Kenilworth, Leamington, South Leamington (near student accommodation) and Warwick. Responses were mainly from those available during the day time, following standard practise for these interviews. The Table in **Appendix 3** summarises the overall responses.

47% of those interviewed had used a licensed vehicle in the Warwick District Council (WDC) area in the last three months, a moderate level of recent usage. Values were between 31 and 53% across the areas with the lowest value in the South Leamington area and the highest in Warwick.

Of the respondents who told us they had used a licensed vehicle recently, 54% said how often they used a licensed vehicle. We have assumed the remaining non-respondents do not use licensed vehicles and calculated the average level of licensed vehicle trips per month. On average, there are 1.6 person trips by licensed vehicle per month based on these assumptions, again a moderate level. The level of usage varies from 0.7 in Leamington through 1.4 in South Leamington to 1.7 in Kenilworth and up to 2.0 in Warwick (this value is for hackney carriage and private hire together).

58% of interviewees told us how they obtained licensed vehicles in the Council area. By far the highest percentage got taxis by booking them by telephone (44%), followed by mobile or smart phone (18%), with the total by phone methods being 63%. 33% said they got them from ranks (quite high) and 1% said their normal method was hailing. The final 3% said they used online or internet methods to obtain their licensed vehicles.

For this sample, rank usage was highest in Kenilworth and lowest in Leamington – seemingly perverse given the spread of ranks. Second highest rank usage was for those interviewed in South Leamington. However, overall the level of interest in answering this question was not high.

The use of phones was queried further, seeking to understand the companies that people used. Across the full survey some 193 different mentions were made of a total of 36 different companies (some were corruptions of the same name). These suggestions were made by a total of 100 people – of which 55 were in the Warwick sample. Of all the mentions, just six companies obtained more than 5% of mentions. The top two companies obtained between 27% and 14% - and both were most used in Warwick. Some hackney carriage companies were named, but none got more than three references.

Considering how many people quoted more than one company, Warwick again had the strongest response with 24 people quoting three companies there. The dominant response however was 38 people who quoted just single names. Overall there is a very high level of competition and very little brand loyalty with specific parts of the trade. In summary – the licensed vehicle trade in the area is very disparate although it is clear that private hire companies dominate the minds of those seeking to book vehicles rather than hackney carriages doing this. It also suggests there is a lot of niche market operation in this area – with large numbers of people ‘doing their own thing’.

A set of questions were then asked relating specifically to use of hackney carriages. 70% of those questioned provided hackney carriage usage frequencies. Of these, 38% in fact said they could not remember when they had last used a hackney carriage. 26% said they could not remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area. The resulting level of trips per person per month was just 0.6 on average – very low. South Leamington claimed no real usage of hackney carriages on this measure. Highest values, of 1.0, were for Kenilworth and Warwick with just 0.2 for Leamington. The overall value compared to total usage of licensed vehicles gives a slightly higher estimate of hackney carriage usage – about 38%.

People were asked to name all the rank locations they were aware of in the Council area and if they used the locations they named or not. Of the 229 different mentions given, there were 23 different names (some of which are the same location, e.g. train station, Leamington station). Two people said they were aware of the rank at Birmingham Airport – not in the Warwick district.

From within the area, the top four ranks (adding some where the location was mentioned by different names) were Leamington Station (36%), Hamilton Terrace (21%), Warwick (14%) and Kenilworth (10%). Interestingly the top three ranks are in the same order as the rank usage statistics – and the share of the total is remarkably similar for all three (38, 19 and 13% respectively). The ranks in Kenilworth and Warwick were both only named by those in their particular area. A number of other locations were mentioned including some of the night club ranks. The private hire office at Warwick station was considered to be a rank, and obtained 5% of responses.

When asked about new locations, the whole sample provided just 16 mentions, by the same number of people, which covered eight different locations. The largest number of people – four – sought a rank at Shire Hall. Two supermarket locations were mentioned, as was a rank for M&S (Leamington). None of these are significant and generally show satisfaction with the provision of ranks in the area at the present time.

In terms of problems with the local hackney carriages service there were 63 people who responded (25% of the total). Just two gave two responses giving a total overall of 65 responses on issues.

Of these, the largest proportion had issues with delay getting a taxi (29% but mainly in Kenilworth and Warwick). 20% had driver issues (mainly in Warwick), 18% had issues with position of ranks (nearly all Warwick) and 17% said other but only one specified what that issue was. 58% of all issues were recorded in Warwick, with Leamington (the main location for hackney carriages) having least issues.

In terms of what might make people use hackney carriages more, there were more responses – some 180 from all the respondents. There were a total of 163 people responding, with 17 people giving two responses. Warwick surveys provided a very high response rate.

As is normal in these surveys, the bulk of those who said 'other' said they would use them more if they were cheaper. This accounted for 52% of the responses. This response was across all four areas. The next highest response – 19% was 'better drivers', with 11% saying more hackney carriages they could hail (mainly for Kenilworth and South Leamington and none from Leamington where hackney carriages and ranks work more). Better vehicles scored 9%, with other responses 4% or less.

People were asked if they or anyone they knew had a disability needing either a wheel chair accessible vehicle (WAV), or a vehicle adapted in some other way. 75% of those interviewed responded. On average 87% said they did not themselves need, or know anyone who did need an adapted vehicle (a slightly lower than normal response). Of the total respondents, 3% said they would need a WAV, 6% said someone they knew would need a WAV and 2% said a differently adapted vehicle, not WAV (for either themselves or someone they knew). This tends to suggest people favour WAV in this area even though the current offer is a mixed vehicle fleet.

Of those answering if they had ever given up waiting for a hackney carriage, nine people said they had. Two locations given were outside the Warwick boundary (Coventry and Warwick University), whilst six responses were at Abbey End, Kenilworth. Overall, the total number giving up at relevant Warwick District locations was seven, giving a latent demand factor for ISUD purposes of 1.028, quite low. The only other location mentioned was one person giving up at the Holly Walk rank.

51% said they had regular access to a car. Just 53% of those interviewed lived in the area although this was dominated by few of the Warwick sample actually being local. For the other three areas, between 86 and 88% of those interviewed were local.

Our gender sample saw marginally more men (51% compared to 50% in the 2015 census estimate). Our age sample saw very slight under-representation of the older group (31% compared to 34%), with almost exact representation of the middle group – 41% in both the census and our survey. The under 30 group was correspondingly over-represented (28% compared to 25%). This is a generally representative sample – even though the Warwick sample was mainly from out of the area.

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5. Stakeholder Consultation

The following key stakeholders were contacted in line with the DfT Best Practice Guidance 2010:

- Supermarkets
- Hotels
- Hospital
- Pubwatch / night clubs
- Disability representatives
- Police
- Rail operators
- Other council contacts
- County council contacts

Specific comments have been aggregated below to provide an overall appreciation of the current situation, although in some cases comments are specific to the needs of a particular stakeholder. It should be noted that the comments contained in this Chapter are the views of those consulted, and not that of the authors of this Report. **Appendix 4** provides further details of those consulted. Information was obtained by telephone / email / letter as appropriate. Contacts were made with a selection chosen from an extensive list provided by the Council as well as by checking internet sources for other contact details or more detailed references.

The licensed vehicle trade consultation is the subject of the following chapter.

Supermarkets

Seven supermarkets were contacted. Three were too busy to speak with us. It was not possible to get any answer from another. One said their customers regularly used taxis (booking them through a Freephone with a named private hire company), another that only elderly customers used them (for whom the store would phone their preferred company if asked), and the third (in Whitnash) was not aware that any of its customers used taxis as they felt most were very local. Only one was aware of a nearby rank but did not think any of their customers used it. The only issue raised was that the booked vehicles often quoted shorter times than in actuality for arrival.

Hotels

Five hotels were contacted. Three did not respond in the time available. Both said their customers used taxis and that they would book them for the customer. Neither were aware of any ranks and the only issue one suggested was more vehicles available at weekends.

Restaurants / Night venues

Six different restaurants / cafes from across the area were contacted. All but one responded. One said their customers did not use taxis, one said only at the weekend, with the others all saying they did use them. Four said they would book taxis for customers by phone if asked, but many customers used their own mobile phones to make bookings. The two locations in Warwick were both aware of the rank there, the other locations were not aware of any ranks. Two said customers had not reported issues, the other two said the main issue was the time vehicles often took to arrive.

Three large entertainment venues were contacted. One refused to speak with us, another could not be contacted and the other said the entrance was too far away for them to know if customers used taxis or not.

Six public houses were contacted. Two were not contactable within the time available. The other four all said their customers did use taxis. Two would call if asked but felt customers usually called themselves. One (again in Warwick) said people would head to the rank there. Both this location and another in Leamington were aware of the ranks directly outside. Neither the Kenilworth nor Whitnash respondents were aware of any nearby ranks. Only one said their customers had any issue – which was mainly of the expense of the fares.

Five night clubs were contacted. In the time available for response, two replied to say their customers did use taxis. One said people called vehicles using their own mobiles. The others said people either called on their own mobiles or used the rank directly outside. Both were in fact aware of the rank outside their doors, and neither had received any complaints about the service received at all.

Hospitals

Warwick Hospital was contacted but no response was received despite several attempts to contact them.

Police

No police response was obtained during the time available for consultation for this survey.

Disability representatives

It did not prove possible to identify or contact any representatives of those with disabilities across the area. This is not unusual for surveys of this type given that our request for consultation is not statutory and given the current pressures on such organisations – whose contact details can also sometimes be hard to find or confirm. Further, we have often found that disability response timescales are usually very much longer than those for other stakeholders.

District Council representatives

The Safer Communities Manager from Warwick District Council told us they were concerned about public safety arising from the activities of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles late at night. They felt trade driving standards were very poor and that few drivers could readily be recommended for the service they provided. They felt many were turning down short journeys in favour of fares to the University. They felt few took proper advantage of the false one-way created in Tavistock Street meaning there were dangerous u-turns still occurring there whilst there were many people around the vehicles.

They felt there were too many hackney carriages competing for the trade on busy nights – but that it might be hard to provide sufficient taxi rank spaces in the right places to encourage safe operation.

Town and Parish Councillors

Contact was made with most local town and parish councils within the District. During the time available for response, three of the town and one parish councils responded.

One Town Council felt there were a large number of taxis for the size of the area. Key issues for them were the need for better information about the difference between hackney carriage and private hire services, clearer idea of potential fares, and need for better knowledge and ability of drivers to communicate with passengers.

Another Town Council welcomed the opportunity to contribute, but mainly gathered the views of individual members rather than any formal view of the Town Council. One person felt there were not enough formal ranks available, and that many drivers tended to refuse short journeys, dissuading higher levels of usage by doing so. One mentioned the issues that Warwick University has, particularly leaving female students vulnerable if they are refused a journey home. Another felt there were times when not enough taxis were at the ranks – particularly at school transport times and in evenings. There were also issues with discrimination against those needing assistance. They pointed out an issue with refusal of assistance dogs had been reduced by provision of appropriate training.

The third town council gathered comments from its members. One felt there needed to be better rank provision in Warwick but that the trade did not help in not supporting potential change. Another felt a better location was needed than the current one. Another felt that current gaps in service might be helped by some phone link provided near to the rank. They felt any regulation of hackney carriages would give private hire the advantage over them. Another felt extra provision was needed in other locations, though they did mention Warwick Parkway where there is a rank already.

Two representatives noted the main issues in terms of shortages of vehicles related to when they were undertaking school contracts. They felt the rank needed to be made safer – particularly citing issues with the present arrangement of needing to reverse every time a vehicle left and that drivers seemed to lack local knowledge. There was a feeling that vehicles left Warwick at night to service demand in Leamington, meaning people found it hard to get home after 23:00.

A parish council felt the invitation to comment did not provide enough information for them to form any judgment from. They felt that hackney carriage numbers should self-regulate to meet demand. They also felt that an inability to apply the same rules on vehicle numbers to both sides of the trade would limit any effectiveness of any action taken on the hackney carriage side. Overall they felt the mix of private hire and hackney carriage they were aware of was satisfactory. They expected a wide-ranging review would be undertaken with them, not just a general opportunity provided to make comment.

We also obtained a copy of the Taxi Survey undertaken by Warwick University Students Union. Information from this covers activity of both Coventry and Warwick licensed vehicles. This survey collected information over a two week period with 492 responses. It found that 74% of students did not know that refusal of a fare by a hackney carriage was illegal. 59% of respondents had been refused a taxi journey.

51% of these had been refused in Leamington. Reasons for refusal included too short a journey (56%) or not enough passengers (9%) though 15% were that the driver said they were 'too drunk'. One person said they had been refused a journey home from a Leamington club when they left early on their own. Some students living in Leamington student accommodation found it hard to get a journey home from central Leamington as they were told the journey was too short. The report provides lots of quotes of issues by students although it is difficult to make a strong case from this as these are not formal complaints and have been made in a specific context focussing on the issues rather than within a wider research context.

County Council representatives

A Warwickshire County Council (WCC) representative from their Transport Operations advised us that they source operators for their contracts from across the County not from specific licensing areas. Their contracts are county-wide and not district specific. Operators apply to be on their framework and once part of that then bid for work. The only specification made is the size of vehicle needed and / or need for specific accessibility criteria. There is no distinction made between hackney carriage or private hire.

They felt most hackney carriages which serviced ranks were not interested in being on the WCC contract as they felt it tied them up to specific times. They felt that 80% of work went to private hire vehicles.

Rail Operators

National statistics are publicly available showing the total number of entries and exits at each rail station in the United Kingdom. These numbers are calculated using ticket barrier and ticket issue information from ticket sales. The Table below shows information from 1997/1998 to date. The figures after the station name show the position in rank in terms of usage of English, Welsh and Scottish railway stations, with the smallest usage being the 2,533rd station and the highest being 1st in the list (Waterloo, London). Within the Warwick area there are five stations, Leamington Spa (247th), Warwick Parkway (748th), Warwick (817th), Hatton (2027th) and Lapworth (2099th).

Rail year (ends March in last yr. noted)	Entries / exits	Growth / decline
Leamington Spa (247th)		
1997 / 1998	740,719	n/a
1998 / 1999	881,209	+19%
1999 / 2000	872,105	-1%
2000 / 2001	921,999	+6%
2001 / 2002	964,259	+5%
2002 / 2003	999,111	+3%
2003 / 2004	Not collected	
2004 / 2005	1,198,749	+21% (2 yrs.)
2005 / 2006	1,220,031	+2%
2006 / 2007	1,326,763	+9%
2007 / 2008	1,400,832	+6%
2008 / 2009	1,767,556	+26%
2009 / 2010	1,772,398	+0%
2010 / 2011	1,856,378	+5%
2011 / 2012	2,014,910	+9%
2012 / 2013	2,097,938	+4%
2013 / 2014	2,241,038	+7%
2014 / 2015	2,315,836	+3%
Last three years (11/12 to 14/15)		+15%
Over full period		+213%

Since data began collection, rail patronage at Leamington Spa – the busiest station in the Warwick District - has increased 213% to well over 2.3 million entries and exits per year. Even the last three years have seen some 15% growth.

The internet-based Train Taxi guide correctly states there is a rank or cab office at Leamington Spa, Warwick and Warwick Parkway, and provides three numbers to use at Leamington if a booking is preferred. The three numbers for both Warwick stations are the same. None of the private hire operators quoted suggests they provide wheel chair accessible (WAV) services.

No comment was obtained from the rail operator.

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6. Licensed Vehicle Trade Consultation

Trade consultation

A letter was issued to all licensed drivers by the Council inviting them to complete a questionnaire about their current service to the public, and their views on the policy of limiting hackney carriage numbers. This letter was issued to all current drivers – all of whom have dual licences. All responses were returned to CTS using a freepost address provided by CTS, or returned using our on-line option.

Some 51 responses were received (10%), a very good response for this type of survey. If just hackney carriage responses are compared to the total number of hackney carriage vehicles, the response from hackney carriage drivers was 19%, very high.

76% said they drove a hackney carriage, 16% a private hire and 8% said they drove both kinds of vehicle. Although all driver badges are dual (but vehicle licences cannot be), 27% said they had a hackney carriage 'badge' but 69% said 'dual'.

79% owned and drove their own vehicles. 20% said someone else drove their vehicle – quite low. This is typical of an area where there is no limit on hackney carriage vehicles and where the vehicle licences are freely available.

Just 6% of respondents said they operated on a radio circuit whilst 94% did not. Only one respondent went on to tell us which circuit they worked on.

Those responding had, on average, been involved with the licensed vehicle trade as drivers for 12 years (but ranging from one to 40 years). They tended to work 5 days per week for an average of 34 hours per week (low). The range of days worked was between one and 7. The range of hours was from four to 80.

Drivers told us issues that affected when they chose to work. The largest proportion – 35% said they worked at busy times or when there was most demand. 13% worked around family commitments. Many other reasons were cited but few saw high response (the next highest was avoiding traffic congestion, 9% of responses).

There were 93 responses about the ranks used with many drivers telling us several locations. The strongest response was drivers telling us areas they worked rather than specific ranks. 30% of responses were 'Leamington', 14% 'Warwick' and 10% 'Kenilworth'. Several ranks were known by different names, with the main Leamington rank being called most different names (e.g. Police Station, Town Hall). Some specifically named night clubs.

There was a strong response about issues with ranks – 64% of these responses were that there were too few ranks and spaces available. No other issue was as strongly quoted – though 8% of responses did suggest need for stewards.

Of the 94 total responses about methods used to get fares, 44% were rank, 23% phone bookings, 14% hailing, 11% contracts with private companies and 8% school contracts. Many gave more than one response.

In terms of the limit policy, 79% said the current policy of not limiting should be overturned and a limit returned to hackney carriage vehicle numbers. Some responded to tell us how they thought this would benefit the public with most responses (35%) being it would help reduce public safety issues including tired drivers. It was also suggested it would help ensure clean, safe, well-maintained vehicles, reducing over-ranking and congestion and ensuring vehicles were always available at ranks.

Many comments were made. The bulk pointed out there were too many vehicles and that as more plates were issued, their work levels were reduced further. Another issue raised by many was a preference for the fleet to remain mixed between saloons and WAV style.

There was an early issue with use of the on-line response options but this was quickly resolved and overall we do not consider this affected overall response, which as stated above is high for this kind of survey.

7. Summary and conclusions

Policy Background

Warwick District Council is one of five districts within the County of Warwickshire. Warwickshire County Council has the highway and transport powers for the area and is therefore responsible for overall transport policy and provision of hackney carriage ranks (other than those on private land). The Third Warwickshire (County) Local Transport Plan (LTP) covers 2011 to 2026 developments and issues. The key reference in the LTP is that enhanced facilities will be provided for both hackney carriages (called taxis) and private hire at all public transport interchanges. This is particularly true for the proposed new station at Kenilworth (now expected to be in August 2017, with expected completion of construction by March that year) (Today's Railways Issue 172).

Relatively uniquely for a Shire County, Warwickshire County Council does have a 'taxi and private hire vehicle strategy'. This is, however, based on the 2004 Government Action Plan for taxis. Focus is on providing first and last stages of journeys as well as providing lower income people access they would not otherwise have and a better quality of life. Concerns include high cost of fares compared to public transport, the fact this varies across authorities within the County, the low level of vehicles meeting DDA requirements and the impact of rogue operations on overall reputation. There are four specific policies outlined with the County well aware it needs to work with the districts to implement these. A key issue is ensuring sufficient information is available and accessible.

Warwick District Council, along with all other English licensing authorities, retains the power to apply a limit to hackney carriage vehicle licences under Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act and related law, but we have no record of this Council ever having applied that power. The authority was created on 1st April 1974 from two municipal boroughs, an urban and a rural district which in other areas has led to zone systems for hackney carriages but there is no evidence of this occurring in Warwick.

Statistical Background

DfT statistics show hackney carriages in the area have grown almost threefold between 1994 and 2016 whilst growth of private hire vehicles has been much less at 20%. This is typical for an area where there is no limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers, although the encouragement to have wheel chair accessible (WAV) style hackney carriages can often reduce the growth – for which there is no evidence in Warwick. Most growth in hackney carriages was between 2005 and 2007. The overall licensed vehicle fleet has grown 80% since 1997. Hackney carriages are presently 54% of the total licensed vehicle fleet (they were 31% of the fleet in 1997).

All drivers are now able to drive either hackney carriage or private hire. Driver numbers have only grown 26% since 1997 – less than vehicle numbers – suggesting a reduction in any double shifting though the current driver ratio of 1.31 suggests some may still occur.

A notable fact is the high number of private hire operators implying there is a high level of competition in this area and little dominance by any company. Another key fact is that the plate numbering system for both kinds of vehicle does not currently permit re-use of lapsed numbers, which artificially inflates the apparent numbers in service. At present, the highest hackney carriage plate is 250 though there are only actually 213 vehicles in service. The issue is worse on the private hire side where numbers start at 500 (which does not actually exist), there are 185 vehicles, but the highest plate number is presently over 1000. This can give a false impression of the fleet size.

The fleet has a relatively high level of WAV in the hackney carriage side, and around 2% in the private hire fleet. This is well above the average for England excluding London and excellent for a shire district authority.

Rank Survey results

A total of 252 hours of rank observation have been analysed to provide the database of information for demand for this study. The survey covers all ranks identified in the area including the two private rail station ranks operated by Chiltern Railways with requirement for a supplementary paid for permit. Surveys covered one full weekend with a supplementary night at the busiest night club on its busiest night (Tuesdays).

A total of 23 different rank locations / days were observed with just under 2,000 vehicle departures recorded. Of these, 10% were private cars at or near ranks. Just 2% were private hire vehicles. 59% of the hackney carriages observed were identified as WAV style – in the same order of magnitude to the 72% understood to be in the current fleet.

No rank was active 24/7. The longest active hours were found at the Hamilton Terrace and Leamington Spa station locations. Three other ranks were specifically related to specific clubs (and dependent on their operating days and hours). Overall passenger demand at ranks was low – the two busiest ranks only seeing 12 passengers per active hour. Most usage was eight passengers or less per hour on average.

Service levels to ranks are generally very good to fair. This is supported by there being a high level of excess vehicles compared to demand at all rank locations on average. A sample of plates observed on the Friday of the surveys identified 63% of the active fleet in operation. The very high demand at one-night club on a Tuesday in mid-December – likely to be a peak – needed just under a quarter of the fleet to service this without any passenger having to wait for a vehicle to arrive.

The dominant rank in passenger terms is the one at Leamington Spa station – though it only sees 38% of estimated total demand. Hamilton Terrace provides about half that level – 19%. Warwick rank provides 13%. The Copper Pot rank provides 7.6% and Warwick Parkway in the order of 7.5%. Abbey End provides 6.1% though much of this is from the one busy hour on a Friday night which was observed. The rank near Vialli's is marginally busier than the other club ranks (excluding Smack).

Unmet demand was observed both in off peak hours having some passengers having to wait for vehicles to arrive, and by average passenger waiting times over a minute. The ISUD index calculated was well below the formal cut-off level that would otherwise define the observed unmet demand as significant. It can therefore clearly be stated that, according to the ISUD index, there is currently no unmet demand in the Warwick District Council area which is significant. Further discussion of this occurs in the light of other evidence below (see Synthesis section).

Public Consultation

250 persons in the street gave us their views of the current 'taxi' service in the area. Responses were mainly from those available during the day time as is the standard practise for these interviews.

47% overall had used a licensed vehicle in the Warwick District Council area in the last three months – moderate. The average level of trip making is 1.6 licensed vehicles per person per month. When narrowed down to hackney carriages the level is 0.6, or 38% of the total estimate. This is not far different to the 33% who said they got licensed vehicles from ranks, plus the 1% who said they hailed them (quite high for this kind of area). There was a high level of obtaining vehicles by mobile or smart phone (18%) together with on-line or internet methods (3%). Traditional phone methods were the highest means – 44% - though less than in other places given the high level of interactive responses quoted.

When asked about who they contacted to obtain licensed vehicles, a very high number of companies were named including some corruptions of the same name. Of all the 36 different names given, just six had 5% or more of the total mentions. The top company had 27%, followed by one with 14%. Hackney carriage related companies were mentioned but none obtained more than three actual mentions each.

The overall response on who people used to obtain licensed vehicles demonstrates that the licensed vehicle trade in this area is very disparate but still dominated by private hire companies rather than hackney carriage operations. There appear to be a lot of operators keeping to niche markets rather than wider advertising. Very little brand loyalty was found overall.

In terms of hackney carriage usage, 70% of all respondents replied. However, 26% could not remember seeing a hackney carriage in this area. 38% could not remember when they had last used a hackney carriage. This left just 36% telling us frequencies.

In terms of ranks known about, knowledge matched usage very closely with the top three ranks known matching those used, with very similar percentages (Leamington Station 36% knew, 38% used in rank results; Hamilton Terrace 21% / 19% and Warwick 14% / 13%). Kenilworth rank was fourth most known. Most of the night club ranks were quoted, and people did think the Warwick station office was a rank. The Warwick and Kenilworth ranks were only known by those in the samples in these specific areas whereas Leamington ranks were more widely known.

The low level of suggestion regarding new ranks demonstrates further the satisfaction with the current provision of ranks.

Issues with hackney carriages tended to be less significant in Leamington with the main issues being delay getting a hackney carriage (in Kenilworth and Warwick), with driver and rank location issues in Warwick (although the latter has to be tempered by the fact most Warwick respondents were not living in the area – though most likely those working here rather than visitors given the time of year).

In terms of matters that would make people use hackney carriages more the dominant response across the area was if they were cheaper. Again it was clear that the Leamington area were better acquainted with and happier with the hackney carriage service than Kenilworth and Warwick where people would have liked to see more hackney carriages available to hail. Overall 19% said better drivers (top score apart from the cost issue).

75% responded about if they or anyone they knew needed a wheel chair accessible (WAV) or other adapted vehicle. 87% did not need (or know anyone who needed) a WAV. 6% said need was for a WAV and 2% for another style of vehicle – tending to support WAV style vehicles although the current fleet provides a mixed offer.

In terms of the latent demand factor, the effective ISUD factor is just 1.028 (2.8%) – quite low. Kenilworth was the main location together with one mention of “Holly Walk” (Hamilton Terrace).

Only 51% had regular access to a car. Apart from the Warwick sample, 86 to 88% were local. The gender / age profile was very representative compared to the latest census estimates.

Stakeholder Consultation

Supermarkets and hotels, together with larger entertainment venues, were generally not interested in giving information but those that did mainly used private hire or booked vehicles. One supermarket was aware of a nearby rank. The only complaints were about delay arriving.

Restaurants and night venues were much more willing to share their customer’s experiences of licensed vehicles. Most said their customers tended to book vehicles using their own mobile phones. Those responding in Warwick were aware of the rank there.

Public houses said their customers did use taxis and most were aware of ranks if they were nearby – but not for Kenilworth. Both night clubs responding said people tended to phone on their own mobiles but one said people also used the rank outside the club. None had any issues or had received any complaints.

No response was obtained from the local hospital, the police nor disability representatives. Sadly, none of these omissions are atypical of other studies. The key area which could be improved is the disability area, but this would need much more research and proactive engagement than is possible within the scope or timescales of a standard unmet demand survey. This is noted further in recommendations below.

The Warwick Council Safer Communities Manager was most concerned about the danger of service to Smack despite various measures having been taken to try to make the area safer – which drivers were not using (the false one way in particular).

An excellent response came from town and parish councillors. Their key issues related to needing better information about what services were available and to better rank provision specifically in Warwick. Some preferred more information and more consultation before they could feel able to make any real comment.

Input was provided from the Warwick University taxi survey – which from the nature of the university covered both Warwick District and Coventry City licensed vehicles. The survey demonstrated significant issues for service to students particularly returning from Smack in Leamington to student accommodation not only at the University but also more locally in Warwick / South Leamington.

Warwickshire County Council does use local vehicles for its contracts but does not restrict contracts for the Warwick area to Warwick registered vehicles. They felt that most hackney carriages were not interested in work from their contract preferring to remain able to work if and when they wished rather than be tied to regular specific times.

Leamington Spa Station sees the 247th highest passenger flows in England, Scotland and Wales. These flows have increased 213% since 1997/98 and 15% over the last three years. Much of this is related to the dynamic growth of Chiltern Railways. However, just before the survey, an issue arose in that most London to Stratford upon Avon services were withdrawn and replaced by the need to change trains at Leamington Spa. It is not clear how this affected taxi services.

Only Leamington Spa, Warwick Parkway and Warwick are quoted as having taxi services available on the traintaxi web site. The other stations have references to needing to use the three main stations. All are quoted as having either ranks or booking offices, and all are given three alternative private hire numbers for use, with both Warwick stations being given the same three operators.

Trade Consultation

All licensed dual drivers were sent a letter and questionnaire regarding their current service to the public. Returns were direct to CTS either via post or electronic means. 10% responded.

76% said they drove hackney carriages and 8% said they drove both kinds of vehicle. 79% owned and drove their own vehicle – high but typical of an area without any limit on obtaining any vehicle.

Just 6% said they operated on a radio circuit suggesting many worked on a one-man basis and by direct calls. The working week tended to be five days and 34 hours on average – low. Average experience in the trade was 12 years.

35% worked at busy times. 13% worked around family commitments.

Most drivers told us the areas they worked ranks rather than specific ranks. 30% said Leamington, 14% Warwick and 10% Kenilworth. Drivers gave a wide range of different names for specific rank locations. 64% of those responding felt there were not enough ranks or spaces available.

44% said they got fares from ranks, 23% phone, 14% hail, 11% private company contracts and 8% from schools.

79% of those responding felt a limit should be reintroduced. Many gave reasons they thought this was in the public interest – 35% saying it would reduce public safety issues particularly tiredness of drivers. Other improvements considered included improved opportunity for maintenance, reduction of over-ranking and congestion and ensuring vehicles were always available at ranks.

Most comments related to their considering there were too many vehicles and that every time a new plate was introduced their work fell further – they did not feel there was currently any growth in the area at all. Many also said they preferred to retain a mixed fleet rather than continue to increase WAV levels.

Synthesis and Conclusions

The market for licensed vehicle usage in Warwick appears to be strongly technology based from the passenger side. A high level of passenger numbers appears to make bookings for journeys using their own mobile phones, or other smart methods, including some making bookings by internet. This is supported by a large range of relatively small or one-man band private hire companies, some of which are in reality hackney carriage one-man bands (although formal private hire seems to take a much larger proportion of this trade).

Notwithstanding this, there are several important rank-based operations in the area but even within this there are a number of specific and different elements.

Total passenger demand at ranks, estimated based on the surveys undertaken is 5,986. With average occupancy of 1.8 and 212 plates this equates to some 15 jobs per vehicle per week from ranks – or three per day based on the average working week quoted of five days. This perhaps explains why the overall level of hours in a week worked is also relatively low at well under 40 hours. However, despite this, our surveys demonstrate that most potential hackney carriage demand is appropriately met by hackney carriages across the area, even where overall demand is perhaps less than might normally justify hackney carriages (e.g. at Kenilworth).

The main hackney carriage area is Leamington. Hackney carriages service the station and Hamilton Terrace, although demand at both of these is low for the size of the town. Service at the station is restricted by there being a need for an additional paid for permit from the local rail operator. Neither rank has demand 24/7, with at least three dead hours even on the busiest nights. Leamington demand sees a major peak from one general night rank and three other club related ranks. The major demand in the whole area comes from one nightclub and its service to students at Warwick University. Even with relatively low demand, there is one area where hackney carriages attempt to form a rank where there is no easy / safe place to pick up.

Demand at the main Leamington rank is not high and vehicles can wait here for extended periods. Even though relatively few take schools contracts those numbers can cause minor issues with availability at this rank when there is a peak in demand. But overall, the issue is too many vehicles at this rank rather than too few.

The station rank can face issues when larger trains arrive. There is a clear commuter peak at the station – both for people coming to work in the area, and for those arriving home from various places including Birmingham and London in the evening.

Warwick has one active rank which is well-known and relatively well-used although some people would like a wider range of locations or a better design for this unusual drive-on, reverse off, move down as vehicles leave, operation. There is a higher presence of larger companies providing private hire services in Warwick including them having supplanted the rank at Warwick station with a private hire office (although the rank would have been in any event on private railway land). There is some evidence that people would prefer a more active hackney carriage fleet here than the level of demand ends up providing.

Kenilworth seems to be a location where the rank is only used (but very well used) for very short periods principally relating to pub closing times. It appears that the rest of the time one-man hackney carriage phone links and some small private hire operators meet demand – particularly that from the local large supermarkets. There is, however, some reference by the public suggesting they have issues with the delay in getting taxis in Kenilworth.

It will be interesting to see how / who provides the licensed vehicle service when the new Kenilworth station opens with a stated aim by Warwickshire County Council of having a good licensed vehicle interchange there.

There are strong issues related to how students get home from the main night club to their accommodation, which is shared between that on campus on the boundary with Coventry City, and other locations closer to Warwick and Leamington. This leads to issues with drivers and passengers wishing to obtain the best deal which is inconsistent with this being principally a hackney carriage operation. Normal legality, including rank protocol for taking the first available vehicle, and charging being only by the meter, appears to justifiably disappear as the longest journey takes vehicles outside Warwick District into Coventry and gives an apparent right to charge a quoted fare rather than that by the meter. Ignorance on behalf of the students as to what can be done – and a preference to have a quoted fare rather than relying on the meter – complicates this issue.

There are other issues related to safety with operation of this rank, and others related to it at night, which also need to be addressed in a comprehensive manner. Preferably this would involve the local Council, the Students Union and the club. A key factor is to confirm just how dominant the student demand actually is, and particularly how many nights and weeks of the year this demand occurs. It would be costly to undertake a long term monitoring of this and the club should be able and willing to work with the council on this matter, perhaps through an external reviewer were this felt important to maintain confidentiality on the overall usage levels.

Other than the student issue, most people using Leamington hackney carriages appear to be generally happy with the service provided and it is clear that Leamington is much more 'hackney carriage' serviced than either Warwick or Kenilworth.

A key factor in both sides of the trade is that there are very few larger companies, and a large number of very small operators all seeming to be happy to do what they are doing. This means the overall market is disparate – with it being very hard for any one company to become large enough to dominate, but also meaning that customers either build a relationship with one or two people, or trust bookings or turning up at the rank. The level of demand probably best suits the more individual approach.

In terms of overall hackney carriage demand, there is unmet demand both off-peak and in peaks. However, the level of this is well below that at which it would be counted as significant. None of the other evidence from on-street users or key stakeholders would counter this conclusion. Latent demand is very low. The general picture is that more than enough vehicles are generally provided to service rank needs, including meeting high peaks where necessary.

The meeting of the main club demand is impressive – but even a very busy night only needs a quarter of the current fleet to meet demand. There is no other demand at this time of night – though there are also issues that some passengers / drivers appear to be able to cherry pick their journeys to get the best deal. This issue is not dominated by either driver or passenger but equally driven towards sub-optimal service for both.

It is interesting that the statistics and information gathered seem to suggest the private hire fleets to be obtaining much more trade than the hackney carriage fleet do, although the tendency is growth on the hackney carriage side in terms of vehicle numbers. This implies that private hire fleets are becoming more effective in dealing with customer numbers whilst on the hackney carriage side there seems to be increasing numbers yet it is not clear if there is any significant increase in demand to match this.

Potential options for Warwick hackney carriage limit policies

A limit on vehicle numbers can be applied if, and only if, an authority is certain that there is no unmet demand for hackney carriages which is not significant. This does not mean there cannot be any unmet demand, just that it must be clear that this has not become significant due to the restraint on ability of people to have new vehicles when demand requires it.

For the sake of clarity, patent unmet demand is when a passenger arrives at a hackney carriage rank (be it used or unused in general by vehicles) and finds no vehicle ready for immediate hire. Latent demand is when people wait and then move away having given up expecting a vehicle to arrive at that location. Or they choose to travel another way not even considering the hackney carriage option because they believe they would not get them.

There are other elements to latent demand, such as not even bothering to wait at a rank or making arrangements to travel by another, non-licensed vehicle method, such as private car, public transport but sometimes including use of private hire bookings.

An authority can attempt to restrict the number of vehicles in a hackney carriage fleet by two principal methods. Section 16 permits quantity control when there is no unmet demand which is significant but requires this to be regularly tested. Other authorities have applied quality controls which can have a similar effect of increasing the cost of entry to the hackney carriage vehicle market, such as by imposing age limits on new or current vehicles. Government policy discourages too much interference with 'market forces' but tends to prefer quality controls over quantity ones.

At the present time, Warwick applies quality controls requiring any new hackney carriage to be a completely new vehicle, which must also be fully wheel chair accessible and side loading. There is no further stipulation made. Despite this, numbers of hackney carriage vehicles continue to grow. If it is assumed the market is working, this should mean there is demand for these new plates.

Apart from the growth at the railway station which is presently restrained by needing an additional, paid for permit, we cannot find any significant evidence for such growth.

The issue of quantity controls applies along a continuum. This ranges from those authorities with no limit back to authorities who have set a limit below the current level of vehicle numbers. Some authorities have a 'settling limit' (e.g. Birmingham which has a moratorium on issue of new plates and no replacement of plates which cease to be used). Others have a fixed limit and re-issue spare plates that become available.

The final step on the scale towards having no limit is authorities who retain a fixed limit but issue a number of plates over a particular time period – otherwise known as managed growth. One of the most well-known authorities with such growth is Brighton and Hove, who issue five WAV style plates per year in order to grow their WAV percentage upwards (they are not fully WAV). Some fully WAV authorities also have managed growth (e.g. Manchester) but this is currently set at zero plates per year.

There are benefits and disbenefits of having no limit (sometimes known as 'deregulation' or 'delimitation', although adding quality controls into this mix can make actual impacts much harder to unpick).

Allowing entry to the hackney carriage vehicle market allows entrepreneurs ready entry if they see an opportunity. It allows vehicles to grow to meet demand quickly. It is in tune with the latest stated government policy (although this has not been updated by the Law Commission research at all and is therefore relatively 'old' in terms of when it was clearly stated most recently in the public domain).

On the negative side, if there is no increase in demand adding further plates continues to dilute the earnings amongst more vehicles. It leads to further reaction from the trade and potential unease amongst those with high levels of experience in servicing the public. It also assumes that the free market is working properly and effectively which may not be the case.

Application of a fixed limit on plates would be very clearly possible if there is no unmet demand whatsoever. Such a status is rare as demand and supply rarely always lead to sufficient supply. This is because random elements in demand will nearly always lead to short term failure of supply to meet demand. Rank capacity can have an impact on this particularly for small ranks, or where high levels of demand can occur in short periods – such as at railway stations.

We therefore consider that application of a fixed limit on plates is also possible even when there is unmet demand identified. This is clearly not possible however if the level of unmet demand is beyond that which is counted to be significant. The present situation in Warwick is that there is unmet demand, but at a level far from that which would be considered significant.

Put another way, if a limit were applied and this was challenged, we believe the evidence in this report would lead to the challenge not being sustainable, i.e. that challenge would be defeated.

The negatives of applying a limit at the current level of vehicle numbers are that it does not allow entrepreneurs to enter if they wish at the level of owning a hackney carriage vehicle. It does not readily provide for times when growth of the market exceeds that which the current level of vehicles is able to meet. It provides the potential for an expensive challenge by those wishing to apply for hackney carriage vehicle plates. It does not actually address the issue if there are currently much higher numbers of vehicles than justified by demand and can prevent any market reduction in numbers by giving the vehicle plate an inflated value.

It depends on the actual rules regarding return of plates if the plates can be traded if no longer required by their owner or not. Some authorities have found ways in which the plates have to be returned (the clear direct legal option for this only exists in Scotland) such that no true plate value can accrue other than that relating to buying the value of the business.

Positives of a limit include the stability it adds to the trade and the positive impact from a trade feeling more secure. It can allow the trade to feel better able to focus on customer service. If demand remains the same, over-ranking will not worsen, and the current level of earnings will also remain the same and more predictable. It may encourage renting of vehicles by drivers no longer able to obtain a vehicle, which can increase the activity levels and length of time the fleet is overall available, particularly impacting on periods when people might not otherwise choose to work.

It can allow the trade to feel able to work on various specific issues to benefit the public more easily than if there is no limit. One example was where a fleet moved to being fully wheel chair accessible (WAV) in one authority where the limit was retained. It could be that a clear way to properly resolve the issues of the student service might be one option that could be tackled were a limit to be returned.

Coventry re-issues plates which lapse and has a clear method for allocating these and giving people sufficient time to take up the returned plates before offering them on again. This keeps the fleet at the current level but allows a level of renewal of vehicles and gives a quicker option of updating the fleet since new owners are often more willing to invest than those already in the trade.

Some authorities have re-applied a limit by saying no new plates will be issued (moratorium, eg Birmingham City Council). This has the impact of steadily reducing the number of plates on offer. This does provide a response to the issue of supply well exceeding demand, and as plates reduce, income increases given the same level of demand.

It also has the benefit of encouraging people to remember to renew within the new rules, and to keep to any rules that might jeopardise their plate. Chesterfield did this for at least five years, seeing some benefit.

In summary, given the low levels of unmet demand, which are far from being significant, and the fact that the highest demand was met by a quarter of the plates, and the full demand over our survey period met by 63% of plates, there is clearly in the order of 20% spare capacity in the present fleet (allowing for some plates not being active at the time of the survey (add say 10%) and some requirement for growth till the next survey should occur (add 5% then round to 80%)).

This provides four options for choice: Option 1 – retain status quo; Option 2 – return a limit at a fixed level; Option 3 – option 2 but also take opportunity to work to develop fleet; Option 4 – return limit but on basis of no issue of any new plates (therefore number of plates reduces over time).

The thought of developing the fleet if a limit was returned is based on the fact that the trade will benefit from the introduction of the limit. There should be some return to the council and the people using hackney carriages in the area from this.

In terms of options to develop the fleet, this is based on evidence found that 26% of those responding in the street interviews to the question about use of hackney carriages said they could not remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area. 11% of those saying they would use hackney carriages more said they would do so if more were available to hail – which needs them to be more distinctive to people. The Town Council for Warwick in their response sought better differentiation of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles. The area is also a tourist area such that a high level of those using licensed vehicles would tend to be very much less knowledgeable about what a hackney carriage is. This suggests that consideration of a livery for hackney carriages might be a valuable off-spin from introducing a cap on vehicle numbers. Windsor is an example where a tourist licensing authority chose such an option.

A further option could be to work with the trade within a capped environment to encourage vehicles towards the hybrid / electric route, which would provide environmental benefits as well as giving the fleet a trend towards being seen as environmentally friendly. This could first focus on areas such as Warwick where the need for consideration of pollution is more urgent than in Kenilworth.

A review of the current make-up of the hackney carriage fleet from the point of view of accessibility and vehicle content could also be undertaken, with an output being a target vehicle fleet profile which could be developed over time.

8. Recommendations

Limits on the number of hackney carriage vehicles

There is **no evidence** of any unmet demand for hackney carriages either patent or latent which is significant at this point in time in the Warwick District council area.

The Council could therefore return a limit on the number of hackney carriage vehicle licences and this would be defensible in Court were any challenge to be raised to this policy.

Taking all matters into consideration, we would recommend that Option 3 be taken – returning a fixed limit set at the time this Report is considered by the Council which would need to include all successful applications under way at that time, and that the issues of rank needs and student issues be resolved as promptly as possible using the stability of the limit to encourage trade co-operation. The limit should be set at the current level at the time the committee accept this recommendation, which will be the number of vehicle licences on issue at the time of the meeting, plus allowance for any applications in progress at that time. Any failed applications should be discounted from further consideration once all reasonable allowances have been given to rectify their issues for failure. Also, the time allowed for a person to complete their application should be specified.

It should also be made clear that the introduction of a limit is linked to other changes being made, and that the hackney carriage trade would be expected to give full cooperation on other matters being worked on, particularly on issues about operation of the student element of the service.

The committee is also at liberty to remove the limit at any point that it becomes clear such a change is necessary, such as if there is significant growth in the area, or if passenger complaints are received in terms of availability of hackney carriages in the area.

Rank provision

General rank provision across the area is sufficient and adequate, and tends to meet the needs of the bulk of customers and trade. There are a small number of issues which would bring benefit if they could be dealt with. We are aware that these matters need multi-agency decisions and may therefore be difficult or take a long time to resolve. However, the LTP supports such collaborative working and the Warwickshire County Council Taxi Policy should be used to achieve these aims.

Discussion needs to occur between relevant parties including the trade, Warwickshire County Council, Warwick Town Council and the District Council (various parts), to consider the options for revision of rank provision in central Warwick. Although the current rank does work, it has ongoing threats in terms of potential for accidents, and with changes in the central area, might be better re-designed or moved to a different location. The best way forward would be arranging a workshop day gathering all with interest to try to identify a way forward.

In terms of Vialli's rank, we accept this rank is small and located between a bus stop and a busy junction corner. There is potential for significant issues if more than two vehicles attempt to wait here, and this can lead to potential unmet demand if both vehicles are taken by passengers and it is a while before other vehicles fill the gap. The principal way that extra capacity could be provided here would be considering making the bus stop, or part of it, a part time rank perhaps from midnight onwards or after buses have ceased running.

On a counter note, the rank outside Boots in Warwick Street should be removed and given over to other forms of parking since it is not used by hackney carriages. Signage should be provided to the main rank in Hamilton Terrace to assist any passengers that might require hackney carriages on this part of Warwick Street.

In terms of overall spaces available in Leamington Spa, the only active daytime rank is at Hamilton Terrace. If possible, the spaces released by removal of Boots should be added at the rear of this rank, which often ends up with vehicles informally using the spaces behind the rank. Such extra space is often needed to ensure there are sufficient vehicles ready for peak departure times. There was no evidence of lack of space at other ranks which was leading to issues needing formal amendment.

Action is needed to identify and improve the operation of the rank at Smack involving the club, the Student Union, Warwick District Council and the trade, to discourage unsafe operation (u-turns and lack of use of the false one-way) and unfair operation (cherry-picking of journeys). This would need regular service by stewards on the busiest nights as well as better information about how many nights suffer such abuses (see also below). A code of conduct could be agreed by drivers and publicised to those using the rank in various ways, principally through the university links, but perhaps also with a press campaign to capture local users.

Warwick District and the trade need to work with Warwickshire County Council to ensure there is appropriate provision and service provided to the new Kenilworth station when this is finally provided. Preparation for this should begin at the current time to ensure the best possible options are provided.

The reference to ranks on the internet, readily accessible, is best practise and needs to be maintained. However, the list should be kept up to date, and ranks unlikely to be serviced removed, and references to club locations

made secondary in case names change. Specifically, the Vialli's location needs to be added.

It may be worth noting the ranks which are provided by Chiltern Railways and a comment that any views about operation of these should first be directed to the rail operator who has jurisdiction rather than the local Council which only controls vehicle and driver standards in these locations (and has no powers over number of vehicles servicing them). It may also be that the council and Chiltern could work together to provide more information at these locations, perhaps using the study results, to inform passengers of likely waiting times when demand was high. Discussion could also occur to ensure that as far as possible limits on permits (either actual or by price) did not unduly restrain the service provided.

Student Issues

A working party should be set up including the District Council licensing, representatives from the Student Union, Coventry City Licensing and any other relevant parties, to produce a clear Code of Conduct for the transport of students by both Warwick District and Coventry City hackney carriage drivers. This needs to clearly address both legalities and preferences from all sides and include agreed and practical enforcement options. This is very important as students are the future market for the taxi trade around the country and their early education into what is legal and what is practical is crucial to the future of the licensed vehicle trade. This may take some hard choices by the trade to eradicate any poor practise and to work with the authorities who determine what proper service means to this important clientele group.

It is very important also to understand how 'typical' the student demand is of the overall demand for hackney carriage in the District. Either the club or the Student Union need to provide advice on how many days per year they consider Tuesday student nights to occur, and how this relates to other nights.

This is very important as this demand pushes the numbers of vehicles needed in the area, and it needs to be clearly understood if this demand can be seen to be appropriate for overall vehicle requirements to be set at, or counted as a peak that is well beyond the 'typical'.

Disability inputs

As is regularly the case for such studies, we were unable to obtain any input from those representing people with disabilities in the area. We recommend that various methods are attempted by the Council to seek such views, including use of their internet site as well as possibly direct visits to offices of those representing people with disabilities in the area to attempt to engage such groups further. This could also include arranging practical half days where disability friendly hackney carriages were gathered together so that those with disabilities could see for themselves how vehicles could assist them, and to encourage further engagement between the council, trade and those needing disability style vehicles.

Future review of hackney carriage demand

The current review of demand has been useful in understanding one facet of the licensed vehicle trade in Warwick District. It is clear that there are other markets which the hackney carriages in the area also trade in which have not been fully identified, but in general this study has highlighted overall usage and demonstrated that the current operation is reasonable and does generally meet most needs of passengers.

We would strongly recommend that a further repeat be undertaken within at a three-year horizon, with rank work repeated in October / November 2018. This would allow the situation to be reviewed at that time, and is in context of the Law Commission recommendations and the current Best Practice Guidance in this respect. This should include a review of ranks (as undertaken this time) but should also consider adding more detailed review of the provision made for those with disabilities or other special needs. This should include the needs of specific groups in the area, such as students and tourists.

This repeat should occur whichever option is taken in regard to the limit on vehicle numbers as otherwise there is no information readily available to help continue to develop the hackney carriage (and even private hire) trades in an area. It would also maximise returns from the investment in this current study, with updating of the database of information collected.

There may be wider elements of the present study which are not necessary to repeat in the future re-survey, and the brief needs to be carefully checked before the future study is undertaken. This may allow some other issues to be included of benefit (see below).

Any future study should have one eye on the beneficial suggestions resulting from the Law Commission review (i.e. consideration of public interest) but mindful that this remains purely guidance and not case law (although the Best Practice Guidance document also does not have legal standing either). It should consider including a wider review of the private hire sector and particularly how this interacts with the contractual needs of Warwickshire County Council also considering how the general lack of ability to contact the principal WAV element of the trade by phone actually works for the public (i.e. a wider consultation with disability groups and persons is needed – perhaps this needs to begin within the current validity period of the present survey since often timescales in working with those with disabilities need to be much longer than usually fit with a demand survey profile).