

**Amber Valley Borough Council
Consultation with Disabled Taxi Users**

RESEARCH REPORT



**Submitted to
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**Amber Valley Borough Council
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1 Aims and Methods

Amber Valley Borough Council (AVBC) wish to consult people with disabilities on the issue of taxi provision in the AVBC area. In May 2008 AVBC appointed Social Research Associates (SRA) who carried out this task using the methods shown below/.

| Activity | Details |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Desk top research | Examination of national trends in taxi use, legislation, published material and interviews with DfT officers. In addition specific research was carried out into the local situation in AVBC. |
| Meeting and interviews with taxi trade representatives | A meeting was held at AVBC Town Hall on 2 nd June 2008 attended by a range of hackney and private hire proprietors and drivers. There were also subsequent meetings, telephone discussions and letters from individuals. |
| Letters, interviews, surveys, discussion and surveys with disability group stakeholders and disabled taxi users | Visits/discussions with stakeholders representing a wide range of disability groups including visual and ambulatory impaired as well as wheelchair users. In addition over 120 individual disabled people expressed their opinion through the various methods of consultation. |

2 Results

There are a number of issues which make travel by taxi difficult for disabled people including: the positioning of ranks, the design of ranks, ambiguity about when charging starts, customer care and discrimination.

Secondly, the results show a preference by disabled people for a mixed fleet of saloon and accessible hackneys in AVBC. However, this should be seen in the context that there are very few purpose built accessible hackneys in AVBC so most disabled people have no experience of the enhanced accessibility features of these types of vehicle.

Equally, there is very little understanding by users of the difference between hackneys and private hire and the majority of trips by disabled people are by private hire notwithstanding that some use private hire due to past experience of problems in obtaining accessible taxis without prebooking.

3 The implications of the results

In the light of the preference for a mixed fleet, the key issue for AVBC is whether to continue with the current policy which would gradually phase out saloon hackneys. In principle this is what the Disability Discrimination Act requires but it is no accident that the publication of the specifications to meet the requirements have been delayed and are still not available. The bottom line is that there is still no vehicle which suits all. However, this does not mean there never will be and it is known that a number of manufacturers are working on improvements to current designs.

Meanwhile it seems obvious to disabled people that a mixed fleet is the best solution and most people cannot understand why this is not achievable and certainly explaining this is complex. Current regulatory and legislative regimes including the Department for Transport and Office of Fair Trading guidance (as well as the National Consumer Council) advocate the phasing out of numbers regulation as has occurred in AVBC. If this happens

and at the same time Councils only issue new licences for accessible hackneys whilst allowing non accessible vehicles to continue, the new comers who are 'forced' to buy accessible hackneys will claim they are disadvantaged. The reasons being that saloon car hackneys are cheaper to buy and run, viewed by the public as cheaper to hire and preferred by some people. Thus those who operate a saloon hackney are likely to be advantaged and without some form of regulation most accessible hackneys would disappear. This then leads to the problem of who should be granted saloon hackney licences and who should not. The problem can be summed up in terms of it not being an 'even playing field'.

4 The Options

| Options | Comment |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Continue with the current policy | This will result in the phasing out of all saloon hackneys by 2014 and meanwhile a declining number of saloon hackneys. Given the strong preference of some disabled people for saloon taxis this would be discriminatory. However, many disabled people already book by telephone and use private hire (which could be expected to increase as a ratio to hackneys) and could thus continue to access saloon vehicles. |
| Reverse the current policy and allow free choice of vehicle | This would result in most licensees switching to saloon cars although a few operators would retain some of the larger vehicles (not all wheelchair accessible). This would reduce the availability of accessible vehicles which for some disabled people is their only option for travel. |
| Continue with the current policy in the hope that better vehicles which suit all users will be developed | The appearance of an ideal taxi is possible especially in terms of a powered down to the floor swivel seat and this could even be a requirement in the future. On the other hand such vehicles will be more expensive compared to the growing number of accessible vehicles some of which are little more than van conversions and disliked by many disabled passengers including wheelchair users, ambulant disabled and other types of disability. |
| Resort to quantity control and stipulate that new licences should only be issued for accessible vehicles. | This would be contrary to current Government guidelines although some authorities have reintroduced quantity control in the light of over supply. Such a policy could also result in those drivers 'forced' to buy accessible vehicles taking the Council to court on grounds of unfairness. |
| Continue with the current policy until there are equal numbers of accessible and saloon hackneys (c 2011 or sooner depending on retirements) and then hold an annual lottery (which all hackney licensees could enter) with the number of licenses adjusted each year to maintain parity. | This would be an innovative policy without precedent. The AVBC licensing officer considers such a policy would risk the Council being taken to court by those unsuccessful in the lottery. However, others consulted think this would be a viable option if a representative group of the trade agreed with the policy. |
| Continue with the current policy until there are an equal number of accessible and saloon hackneys. At present this would be in 2011, but with the effect of retirements and closures, the Council could work towards an earlier date, for example in 2009. The Council could then reassess the situation in the light of vehicle choices then available. | At the parity point the Council could reassess demand and the views of disabled users in the light of developments including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood of more accessible buses, • the emergence of new types of accessible vehicles which would be more acceptable to all disabled users., • more flexible guidance from the DfT, • changes in technology and intelligent transport systems leading to less distinction between private hire and hackney, and • changes in legislation related to this last trend. |

5 Recommendations

Vehicle Specifications

First Choice for achieving a balance of vehicle types

- Continue with the current policy until there is a 50/50 split between purpose built accessible and saloon hackneys. Given the age policy and current licensing requirements this will be in 2012 but could be before if licensees retire.
- After that date drivers wishing to renew a saloon hackney license would agree to take part in a draw to which all existing licence holders could enter. In this way the balance of the fleet could be maintained at 50% accessible and 50% saloons.

Second choice for achieving a balance of vehicle types

- Continue with the current policy until there are an equal number of accessible and saloon hackneys (2011 or sooner if some existing licensees retire).
- At the parity point the Council could reassess demand and the views of disabled users in the light of developments including
 - the likelihood of more accessible buses,
 - new patterns of demand and demographic change
 - the emergence of new hybrid vehicles,
 - more flexible guidance from the DfT,
 - changes in technology and intelligent transport systems leading to less distinction between private hire and hackney, and changes in legislation related to this last trend.

Phase out Rear Loading Vehicles

Whatever the Council decide; the current licensing of rear-loading accessible hackneys should be reconsidered in the light of road safety advice.

Ranks

Ranks in the area should be reviewed in terms of location and design. This applies particularly the Rank in Ripley which poses considerable problems for disabled access hackneys and the ranks in Belper and Heanor which are in relatively underused locations.

Provide shelters at the main ranks.

Information and guidance to disabled users

Use ranks and other communication means to publicise information about taxis, for example to explain that accessible vehicles are not more expensive to hire than saloon cars and to provide a fare chart for hackneys.

Provide clear guidance to the trade and customers about when meters should start after loading. Information about how to complain should also be more accessible.

Guidance should indicate that there may be a shortage of vehicles at certain times (i.e. around school leaving hours, or late at night) and that it would be advisable to book ahead at these times.

Improving Quality

Training for drivers should include a practical element to ensure that all drivers are properly aware of disability issues and requirements and have the practical skills to assist passengers. These skills include the safe and proper procedure for loading and securing wheelchairs which are not tested in the NVQ qualification (although are in the DSA test).

Supporting the Hackney Trade

The final recommendation relates to the need for those providing taxi services in AVBC to be given continued and perhaps some enhanced support such as publicity to inform the public about the hackney/private hire difference and also fare structures. The needs of taxis can be forgotten in Local Transport Plans especially as other forms of public transport are planned by a different tier of local government.

In this connection creating opportunities for the trade to tender for contracts for both regular and intermittent services would be helpful to offset the investment represented by the purchase of accessible vehicles.

Conclusion

There has been a lot of goodwill and interest shown in this research by disabled taxi users, organisations representing disabled people, the general public, public sector officers and the taxi trade. Whatever the Council decide, it will be a pity to lose this momentum which could be sustained by the formation of a Taxi Quality Partnership to include customers including disabled people, AVBC, Derbyshire County Council Local Transport Planning and Equality Officers, Police and taxi trade representatives. Such a Partnership could monitor the supply and type of accessible vehicles in the area, as well as discussing consumer experience in the area and promoting good standards of service in a more positive manner than relying on complaints for feedback.

Purpose built Hackney cabs



Saloon car Hackney cabs



Private Hire



Amber Valley Borough Council Consultation with Disabled Taxi Users

1 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Amber Valley Borough Council (AVBC) wish to consult people with disabilities on the issue of taxi provision in the AVBC area. In May 2008, Social Research Associates (SRA) a consultancy firm with expertise in consultation with disabled people, were appointed to achieve this objective.

2 BACKGROUND

The Disability Discrimination Act 1995, which made it unlawful to discriminate against a person because of their disability, was amended in 2005 to place a duty on all public authorities to promote disability equality.

All organisations covered by the Act are required, when carrying out their functions, to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination
- promote equal opportunities
- eliminate disability related harassment
- promote positive attitudes towards disabled people
- encourage participation by disabled people in public life

The last requirement is significant and the Disability Discrimination Act is the only diversity legislation which requires (rather than recommends) consultation with people with disabilities and this applies especially to areas of policy which impact disproportionately on people with disabilities. Clearly this applies to taxis which people with disabilities use more than the general population and was acknowledged in Derbyshire County Council's Disability Equality Scheme 2006-8 which includes the following action.

Work with district / borough Councils to ensure that all new taxis comply with current accessibility standards.

The problem with this aspiration is that there is as yet no agreed definition of what constitutes an accessible vehicle so it is not surprisingly that the requirement for taxis to be accessible, which would include vehicle standards, is lagging. The current implementation date is 2012 and part of the reason for this timescale is the lack of a completely satisfactory vehicle for all disabilities¹. Furthermore, although in many other policy matters the disabled community has been able to agree a compromise; in this case it has proved more difficult resulting in a number of

¹ This of course is not to say there never will be and various companies, especially producers of purpose built taxis are working to achieve this.

expensive and hotly disputed court cases in large part exacerbated by disparate interests within the taxi trade and with disabled people taking opposing sides.

Local Authorities are understandably concerned about the way forward and many have appealed to the Department for Transport for guidance. Unfortunately, as Amber Valley Borough Council (AVBC) have discovered following an inquiry to the Department for Transport; a firm lead is not forthcoming although an update to the current guidance is expected in October and the situation is still that all hackneys will need to be fully accessible by 2012.

However, this is not a popular policy with some in Amber Valley since, as elsewhere, both providers of taxi services and taxi users are divided about vehicle specifications.

The bottom line is that consultation designed to achieve an agreed outcome without resort to law, is the desire of the Council and a key part of this is involving people with disabilities in informed discussions about the various options available. Furthermore, even if there is recourse to law, the Council's case needs to be backed by evidence of consultation with people with disabilities and other interested parties. These discussions also need to be iterative because there is a widespread lack of understanding about taxi provision especially in terms of the hackney/private hire distinction and the difficulty of creating an even playing field within the hackney sector if both saloon and purpose built vehicles are licensed.

Finally, it is worth recording that the identification of disability needs will of necessity involve a broad brush consideration of the wider aspects of taxi provision such as rank design and location, the operation of the two taxi markets (hackney and private hire) including fares structure, training and quality control policies and complaints systems. These all affect people with disabilities in particular ways.



Accessible hackney – can be hailed in the street as well as prebooked



Saloon hackney - can be hailed in the street as well as prebooked



Private hire – must be prebooked – cannot be hailed in the street

3 METHODOLOGY

The research considered the needs of people with a variety of different disabilities, the frail elderly and other groups who may experience difficulty accessing taxis.

The research comprised two stages. Initially a desktop exercise summarised the existing licensing environment in Amber Valley, any previous research in the area and national trends in taxi accessibility.

Secondly, the local needs of specific groups were considered through interviews with stakeholders and representatives of the taxi trade, group discussions with taxi users with several differing disabilities, and a public survey targeting frail elderly taxi users in the area.

Summary

| Activity | Details |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Desk top research | This work included an examination of national trends, legislation, published material and interviews with DfT officers. In addition specific research was carried out into the local situation in AMBC. A summary of this background work is shown at Appendix A and headlines given in section 4 below. |
| Meeting and interviews with taxi trade representatives | A meeting was held at AMBC Town Hall on 2 nd June 2008 attended by a range of hackney and private hire proprietors and drivers. There were also subsequent meetings, telephone discussions and letters from individual within the trade.. |
| Interviews and discussions with disability group stakeholders and members | 10 interviews with stakeholders and members from a range of disability groups including those representing general and specific disability groups. |
| Letters from disabled taxi users | Some of the letters were forwarded by the taxi trade and others were sent directly. In addition we spoke to over 30 disabled users either face to face or by telephone. |
| Surveys in the four sub areas and discussion groups with disabled taxi users. | A questionnaire survey (see Appendix B) was widely distributed to elderly and disabled taxi users with support from disabled groups. The same questionnaire was used to carry out a face to face survey in the four sub areas of the borough – namely Belper, Alfreton, Heanor and Ripley. In total over 120 people expressed their opinion through the various methods of consultation. |

4 CHARACTERISTICS OF AVBC RELEVANT TO TAXI USE BY DISABLED AND ELDERLY PEOPLE

4.1 Demographic Profile of Taxi Users

As shown in Appendix A, taxis are used disproportionately by affluent and poor people – a classic ‘U’ curve. In addition people in rural areas (of which there are many in AVBC) without cars and with limited bus and train services often rely on taxis for crucial journey purposes. Other higher user groups are those without access to cars and older people.

4.2 Age

The population of the area at the last census was 116,471 people. As Table 1 shows AVBC has a slightly older population than the national average. Equally, there is a higher percentage of people in the area with a limiting long-term illness than in England as whole. Figures for the proportion of the population who are disabled are harder to come by but it is estimated that on average 10% of the population nationally are disabled – thus indicated around 12,000 in the AVBC area.

Table 1: AVBC Age structure

| Age % | East Midlands Region | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------|-----------------|---------|
| | Amber Valley | Midlands Region | England |
| 0-18 | 22.9 | 23.8 | 23.9 |
| 18-24 | 5.4 | 7.1 | 7.2 |
| 25-34 | 13.6 | 13.6 | 14.4 |
| 35-44 | 14.9 | 14.9 | 14.9 |
| 45-54 | 14.7 | 13.6 | 13.2 |
| 55-64 | 11.8 | 11.0 | 10.5 |
| 65-74 | 8.6 | 8.5 | 8.3 |
| 75+ | 8.1 | 7.5 | 7.5 |
| With a Limiting Long-Term Illness % | 19.7 | 18.4 | 17.9 |

Source: 2001 Census

4.3 Income and deprivation

The average indices for income and deprivation for areas across the Amber Valley region show it to be middle ranking amongst the English local authorities for income, deprivation and employment.

Table 2: Indices of Deprivation 2007

| | Amber Valley Non-Metropolitan District |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------|
| Average Score | 18.12 |
| Rank of Average Score | 159 |
| Average Rank | 15290.74 |
| Rank of Average Rank | 164 |
| Extent | 0.09 |
| Rank of Extent | 170 |
| Local Concentration | 27304.55 |
| Rank of Local Concentration | 171 |
| Income Scale | 14794 |
| Rank of Income Scale | 154 |
| Employment Scale | 6593.5 |
| Rank of Employment Scale | 137 |
| Index of Multiple Deprivation; LA Population | 119109 |

Source: DCLG 2007

Car Ownership

The dominant mode of transport in the Amber Valley district is the car. This is to be expected in such a rural area and is reflected in the table below, which shows higher rate of car ownership than the national average:

Table 3: AVBC Car Ownership

| | Amber Valley | East Midlands | England |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Households with no car or van % | 22.5 | 24.3 | 26.8 |

Source: 2001 Census

One of the problems in areas with relatively high car ownership, such as Amber Valley, is that it leaves those without private transport even less likely to gain access to good bus services since operators find a lack of critical mass to run frequent services. Thus there are many areas in Amber Valley which are poorly served by buses in spite of the fact that there are a growing number of accessible buses on some routes. Community and voluntary transport provision is an alternative for some but these options are not universally or reliably available and frequently over subscribed as well as, in the case of community transport, generally only able to offer group trips. Thus disabled people without cars often rely on taxis either for sole travel, or as a mixed mode.

5 THE LICENSING SITUATION IN AMBER VALLEY

5.1 The history

Amber Valley has a mixed fleet of hackney carriages incorporating saloons, large van type vehicles and a range of different accessible vehicles. The fleet is not limited in terms of numbers since the Council decided to remove the restriction on the number of hackney carriage on February 14th 2004:

“That the Council agrees in principle to revoke its current policy of quantity regulation, that the Licensing Board formulate new quality standards and criteria for the issue of hackney carriage licences and a timetable for implementing the new arrangements and that the proposals be submitted to the Council for approval.”²

Shortly after this, on May 19th 2004 the de-regulated fleet was issued with tighter guidelines on the provision of wheelchair accessible hackneys.

- From 1 June 2004, all new proprietors to provide wheelchair accessible vehicles.
- Any replacement for the existing accessible vehicles to be wheelchair accessible.
- The existing non wheelchair accessible vehicles were allowed to remain as non wheelchair accessible vehicles *“unless the Council requires the vehicles to become wheelchair accessible vehicles or the proprietors wish to convert their vehicles to become wheelchair accessible”*.

5.2 The current situation

In July 2007 the Council changed the licensing requirements of hackneys in the area to include:

- From 1st January 2008 only wheelchair accessible vehicle would be licensed as hackney carriages.
- From the 1st January 2008 any non-accessible hackney taxi being replaced would have to be replaced by an accessible vehicle.
- From 1st January 2008 any new hackney carriage would have one livery colour and Council coat-of-arms. From 2013 all hackney carriages should have one livery colour and Council coat-of-arms.
- From 1st January 2013 only wheelchair accessible vehicles will be licensed as hackney carriages

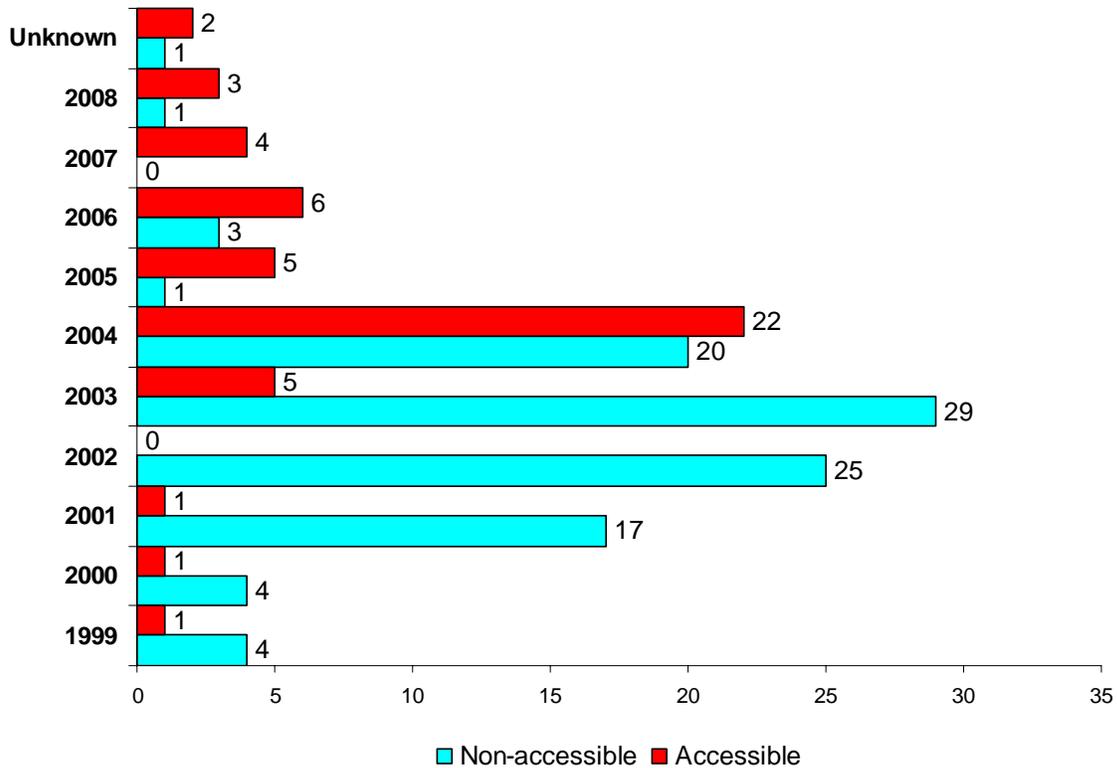
Regulations for wheelchair accessible hackneys remained as before. The hackneys considered as accessible include the following, although other vehicles may be considered on a case-by-case basis:

- London-type taxis
- Mercedes VITO

² Report to the Licensing Board, Amber Valley Borough Council 11th June 2007

- Peugeot E7
- Peugeot Eurobus
- Metrocabs
- Fiat Euro Cabs

The fleet of hackney carriages now stands at 155 vehicles, 50 of which were wheelchair accessible on the 1st May 2008. The table below shows the year of registration for all hackney carriages in the fleet and the number of those which are accessible vehicles.

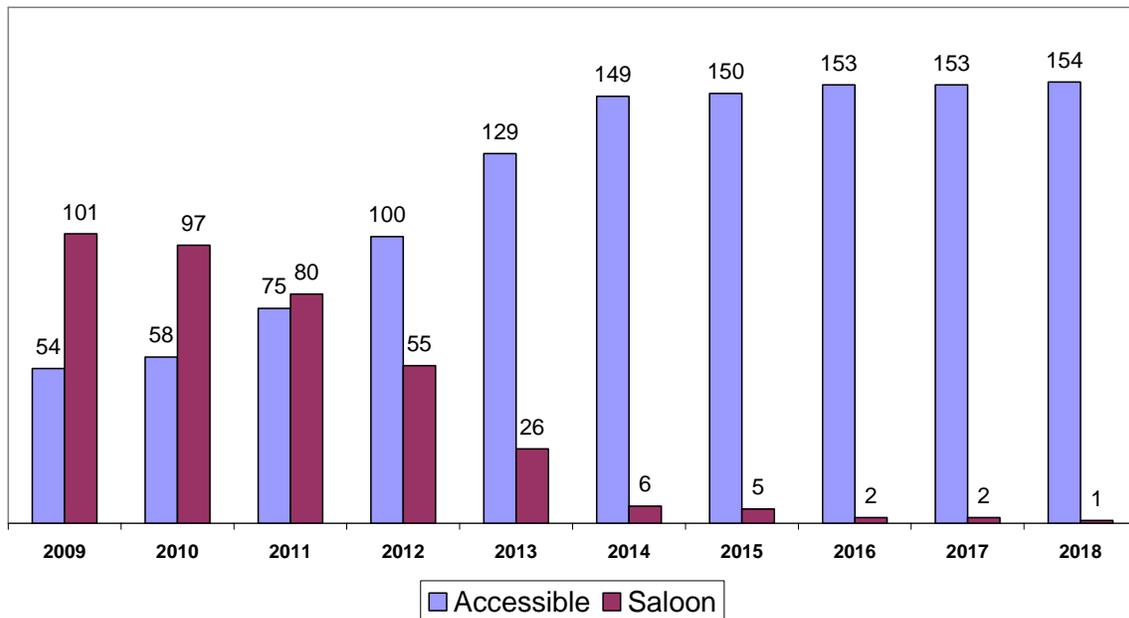


Clearly a large proportion of the older vehicles are non-accessible and several of these are currently reaching the end of their nine year life span. Current licensing regulations stipulate that these hackneys will be replaced with wheelchair-accessible vehicles. The regulations also stipulate that the entire fleet should be wheelchair accessible by 1st January 2013. This would mean that the twenty-six non-accessible vehicles that were not yet nine years old at this date would have to be replaced with accessible vehicles.

It should also be noted that Amber Valley currently only has one London-style Hackney cab and the majority are rear loading such as the Fiat Doblo.

Below is a projection of the changing make-up of the Amber Valley fleet under current licensing regulations:

The changing vehicle balance with current age policy of 9 years



Current Licensing regulations state that a saloon Hackney may operate up until the day before it become 10 years old. Therefore the figures above show the make-up of the fleet by the end of the relevant years. By the end of 2011 the balance between saloon Hackney's and purpose built accessible vehicles would be roughly 50/50.

However, these figures do not account for dynamic change such as new licenses (although these would have to be accessible), drivers opting not to renew their existing non-accessible licences or taxi firms closing. These events cannot be accurately predicted and would have a major effect on the balance of the fleet.

5.3 The view of the taxi trade

Many hackney providers are opposed to the new requirement to move towards a totally accessible fleet and in support of this argument make the following points.

- The economics of the trade in AVBC does not support the investment required for an accessible vehicle.
- In a mixed fleet situation, people assume that accessible hackneys are more expensive and move down the rank to saloons.
- Many customers prefer saloon car taxis, especially the frail elderly which comprise a significant user group in the AVBC area.

- AVBC comprises market towns with a large rural hinterland and as such is not suitable for accessible vehicles which are less well sprung.

However, not all the trade agree and some local firms voluntarily operate accessible vehicles, claiming that they provide a good living via dual use of the carriage of disabled people and for use at night in transporting larger groups from the clubs.

Nevertheless, the majority of the trade – both those with accessible and those without accessible vehicles – are opposed to the current policy as it moves towards a fully accessible fleet. This view is growing in strength – reasons given include the growth of recession, more accessible buses in the area mean that demand for accessible taxis is declining and thirdly that people are alleged to be going out to pubs and clubs less due to the smoking ban.



6 RESEARCH WITH GROUPS REPRESENTING DISABLED PEOPLE

6.1 A wide range of groups and needs

SRA interviewed stakeholders in the Amber Valley area with an interest in taxi provision for people with a wide variety of disabilities. A list of participant groups is shown below. In addition meetings of the groups were attended and discussions held with their members.

- Derbyshire County Council Transport and Access Officers
- Leonard Cheshire Disability
- Derbyshire Association for the Blind
- Arthritis UK
- Belper Social Club for the Disabled
- Age Concern
- Amber Valley Community Transport
- Derbyshire Centre for Inclusive Living
- Amber Valley Access

Generally stakeholders were keen to point out that within particular disability groups there were likely to be a variety of different needs and preferences. For example, Arthritis UK made the point that 20% of the population have some form of arthritis and there are over 200 forms of the condition. This means there are likely to be many different levels of disability within the category of 'arthritis' and that this group cannot be considered to have uniform needs. Similarly some wheelchair users like to transfer to a seat when using taxis and others cannot.

These disparate needs were echoed by other disabled people and they have profound implications for the balance of the fleet, particularly as no one model of taxi was considered to be entirely suitable for the needs of all disabled people.

6.2 Patterns of use

A perennial problem in discussing taxis with stakeholders and the public in general is the widespread confusion between hackneys and private hire. Thus it was difficult for many stakeholders to distinguish between the two. However, it was agreed that the majority of disabled people pre booked taxis and so some of the comments and experiences discussed applied to both hackneys and private hire or either. In particular it was felt to be most likely for disabled people to book by telephone albeit some then picked up from a rank for the return trip.

6.3 Vehicles

A number of different issues relating to vehicles used for taxis in Amber Valley were highlighted by stakeholders. Firstly there was the recognition that accessible taxis are not always the easiest to use for all people with disabilities. For example, a representative of Arthritis UK noted that he was able to use sticks to aid walking and that London-style taxis were extremely difficult for him to get in and out of, whereas they may be essential for those whose condition confines them to a wheelchair.

Likewise a transport officer for Derbyshire County Council with considerable experience of booking taxis for people with disabilities said that the groups he was dealing with day-to-day had a wide variety of disabilities and many did not need an accessible vehicle. Indeed he stated that many users were actively opposed to being sent accessible vehicles when they didn't need them as either they felt that the council was spending unnecessary money on them (commonly users feel that larger purpose-built vehicles are more expensive than saloon cars), or they were uncomfortable with the dimensions of the vehicle. Furthermore, one man from a day centre had told him that accessible vehicles were fine when getting in from a kerb, but when the user was trying to get in from a flat surface (e.g. from a car park) they were unusable for him as he was unable swing his legs round as he would in a lower car. This also highlights the different levels of accessibility of taxis, as whilst larger accessible taxis can difficult for users to enter using the step up, features such as 'swivel seats' are designed to assist in this regard. In contrast other disabled people preferred larger accessible vehicles especially those who could not or preferred not to transfer from wheelchairs, larger people or people with guide dogs. One representative of blind and visually disabled people explained how important it was to have a standard purpose built hackney which their members could be trained to use.

Taxi operators also supported the case for a mixed fleet and presented letters from their customers advocating saloon car vehicles. These letters were particularly from frail elderly people who have experienced difficulties getting into the higher accessible taxis. These concerns were echoed by the representative for Age Concern noting that many models of accessible taxi were difficult for the elderly to access.

Despite such preferences for a mixed fleet, it remains the case that for many people with ambulant disabilities, accessible vehicles are a necessity. One point that arose from discussion with stakeholders is that the physical accessibility of taxis varies considerably in the region. For example, a representative for the Derbyshire Centre for Independent Living noted that frequently vehicles that were considered accessible weren't actually that easy to get in and out of. Most have a side access door and ramp which is fine in most cases, but powered chairs, which are taller, can provide a problem if the person in the chair is unable to bend their neck. Step heights were also a problem for some people when getting into accessible vehicles especially where there was no lower step or if there was it was on the wrong side of the vehicle for the rank.

Other stakeholders also noted the lack of a standardised definition of accessibility. The steepness of wheelchair ramps which may be difficult to mount using powered chairs was a particular concern to the representative of Arthritis UK.

Finally, the importance of quality maintenance was mentioned. One stakeholder felt that many of the current operators '*fly very close to the wind*' by not maintaining their vehicles properly. In this sense he could see the point of insisting on an all purpose-built hackney fleet as it would encourage the most committed drivers, although he felt this was '*like using a hammer to crack a nut*'. Likewise, the importance of maintaining all parts of the taxi was noted, particularly as accessible features may not be regularly used.

Overall it was clear that there was no consensus about vehicles and a widespread agreement that there was no one vehicle which would suit all.

However, in this context it is notable that many people had not actually experienced a very full range of types of taxi vehicle and in particular were unaware of some of the features of purpose built as against 'accessible' taxis especially in AVBC where there are few in the area.

6.4 Driver attitude/training

A common theme in the consultation was the need for helpful and well trained drivers. Indeed the representative for the Derbyshire Centre for Independent Living noted that they generally booked taxis with specific companies and individual drivers on the recommendation of their clients. Likewise a County Council officer referred to the case of a home for the elderly that uses a local firm even though he didn't think they had any accessible taxis at all and some of the residents had mobility issues. This was because the residents appreciated the attitude of the drivers for the firm who '*go the extra mile*' to ensure that they had a comfortable trip. In this sense he felt that customer service was an important element for users

The attitude of drivers and levels of customer care can be a deterrent for taxi users with visual impairments and the representative of the Derbyshire Association for Blind noted some drivers are unwilling to get out to guide passengers to the taxi or may drive off if the passenger isn't out of the cab quickly. The representative of Arthritis UK believed that drivers could access funds for training through the regional assembly and that disability training for drivers should be heavily promoted.

There was some discussion with the trade as to the appropriate time to switch on the meter when picking up a passenger. Clearly some passengers will take longer than others to get to the hackney and the appropriate time to start the meter was a matter of some contention with disabled users.

A connected enforcement issue for AVBC was noted by the Derbyshire County Transport Officer who stated that it was important that drivers do not switch with members of their family or friends for a shift as fill-in drivers may not have sufficient knowledge to be able to deal effectively with the demands of all passengers.

6.4 Rank issues

There was concern (shared by the taxi trade) about the placement of a number of the ranks in the area both in terms of siting and accessibility problems at the sites.

One of the most obvious problems is the rank in Ripley, which presents particular difficulties for passengers wanting to use side-loading accessible vehicles. The rank is on the right of a one-way street, whereas many side-access hackneys will have accessibility features such as steps, ramps or swivel seats on the left hand side of the vehicle. This means that anyone needing to use these features would need to go into the road and risk facing the oncoming traffic. Clearing a space for rear-loading accessible vehicles can also mean that waiting hackneys on rank have to reverse

towards oncoming traffic and also that once again wheelchair users have to be loaded in the road.

Other stakeholders also noted that ranks could be made easier to use for people with other disabilities. The representative for Arthritis UK stated that ranks should be more disabled-friendly and one thing that would help in this would be seating, high enough and wide enough to be used by disabled users whilst waiting. Another suggestion was to provide shelters, similar to bus-stops, although this would be a matter for the County Council.

Out of town supermarkets on the edge of the town centre in Alfreton, Heanor and Ripley also have an effect on the rank trade particularly as these are not public ranks and particular local firms have contracts with the supermarkets to supply taxis to customers using the courtesy phone, or booking through supermarket staff. For example, taxi drivers in Alfreton noted that the trade from the rank had dropped off considerably since the opening of the new Tesco supermarket, as the public rank is situated next to the old site.

6.5 Availability

The Transport Officer for the County Council had experienced problems sourcing accessible vehicles in the east of the region (Belper/Alfreton) and felt that these towns had a lack of purpose built taxis. Of Alfreton he said '*we could probably fill their fleet with our work alone*'. However, he wanted to be clear that whilst they wanted more accessible vehicles in the region, particularly the Eastern area of the region, he did not feel that a 100% accessible fleet was necessary or desirable.

Other stakeholders had not experienced particular difficulties booking taxis for their clients, but this is in the context of many organisations having contracts to provide taxis to particular schools, care homes or hospitals. Others described how they had started pre booking due to past experience of not being able to book at peak times, making the point that "*you can't take chances with disabled people who may have time related requirements*".

Several of the stakeholders working directly with people with disabilities were likely to use a combination of transport, including taxis and community transport. Amber Valley Community Transport reported a varied demand for their services across the district, but were generally able to cover most requests from both wheelchair users and elderly passengers. However they could not offer individual services and saw themselves as principally a provider of group travel.

6.6 Cost

Disabled people often have lower incomes than the general population and there was a view that there should be more help for using taxis, especially for people who could not use other forms of public transport for which there were concessions. There was also some sympathy for the taxi trade in this connection with the view that the investment in accessible vehicles should be supported by a local taxi card scheme.

6.7 Information

Stakeholders noted that for many people using taxis independently there were issues of trust and confidence. For example some older people who lacked mobility were nervous about booking taxis or lacked confidence that the taxi would arrive. Access to information was felt to be equally important. The representative of the Derbyshire Association for the Blind noted it can be difficult for people with visual impairments to get access to phone numbers (especially if they don't have access to the internet), or to be sure of which company to use in the first instance. Others felt there should be better information about using taxis targeted at disabled people.

6.8 Summary

- Accessible vehicles are not always easy to use for people with certain disabilities but other disabled people can only use accessible vehicles.
- Stakeholders in Amber Valley work with people with a wide variety of disabilities and vehicle preferences and therefore generally favour a mixture of vehicles. However, there is also a preference for a higher proportion of accessible vehicles, balanced throughout the region.
- Hackneys are often used by stakeholders in combination with other forms of transport especially private hire but also accessible buses and Community Transport.
- Driver attitude and training is extremely important to disabled people and service providers. Training should include a practical element to ensure drivers have experience of providing good customer care for passenger with different disabilities.
- Ranks in Ripley, Heanor and Belper are not in the optimum position or designed to ensure accessibility.
- Ranks are not disabled friendly for some users and would benefit from clearer signposting, shelters and seats at an appropriate level.
- There should be more financial support for disabled taxi users who cannot use other forms of public transport.

7. Survey Research and Mystery Shopping

This part of the research involved the participation of over 120 disabled people in the four parts of AVBC. 48 disabled members of the public with varying degrees of mobility and mobility needs completed a formal questionnaire. Discussion groups were held with a further 50+ people with ambulatory and non-ambulatory disabilities including wheelchair users. Thirdly, 10 members of the public took taxi journeys in a range of different vehicles and reported back to SRA on their preferences. Finally, SRA took two accessible vehicles to Ripley and Belper in order to demonstrate their features and held subsequent discussions including with disabled people who may not have been aware of such features.

7.1 The importance of taxis

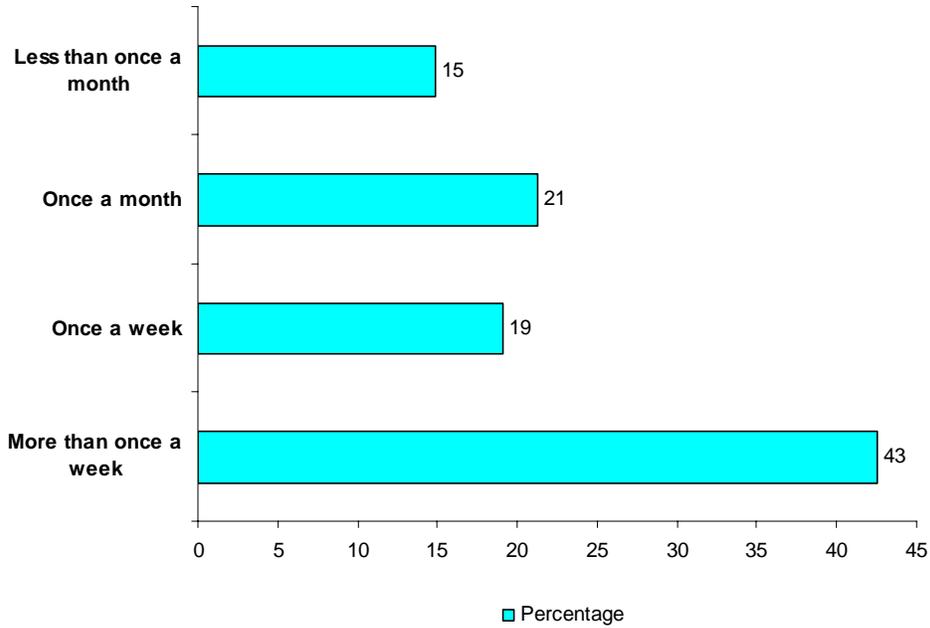
Nearly half of the interviewees used taxis more than once a week, showing a considerable demand from the disabled and frail elderly. Moreover comments from respondents indicated that for many people taxis are crucial for their day-to-day lives as they are reliant on them for short journeys to the shops or to the doctors/hospital. Indeed, one respondent to the survey suggested that the area should offer a taxi-card, similar to a bus pass for those unable to use buses.

Discussions with wheelchair users revealed that for most of the group without private transport, taxis were the main mode of transport. Community Transport was not always convenient and for example, the train station at Alfreton is difficult to use (there is no lift to get on the bridge, so passengers have to get assistance to cross the tracks when no trains are coming). One wheelchair user group met regularly and confirmed that although they had the numbers of twenty firms in the area to use for a variety of purposes, they only used approximately five of them and the names of good taxi firms and drivers got passed around quickly.

Respondents from a group with visual disabilities in the north-east of the region noted that they had little alternative to taxis if they wished to travel independently, as bus services were infrequent and often did not go to required destinations. Equally, wheelchair users noted a number of difficulties with accessing buses. Firstly the space on the bus for wheelchairs and pushchairs is frequently full. Secondly, kerb heights can mean that even the 'kneeling' accessible buses can be difficult to get on. Thirdly, wheelchair users noted that there were some non-accessible buses in the area, although they thought they may be in the Derby City Region.

7.2 Frequency of Use

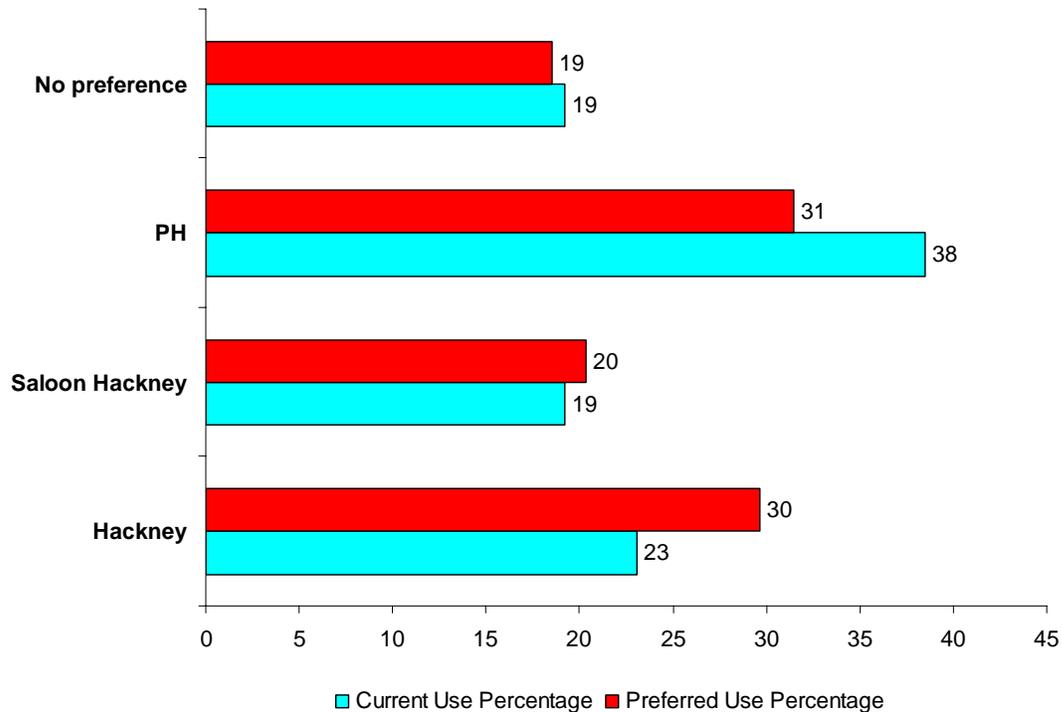
The public survey showed the following results regarding frequency of use:



Nearly half of respondents used taxis more than once a week indicating a strong level of demand from the elderly and people with disabilities. For many users in the discussion groups taxis were the most independent form of transport they could use.



7.3 Vehicle Use and Preference



The difference between the two sets of results show a very slight unmet demand for purpose-built accessible vehicles, but in general they are notable for the wide variety of preferences shown by respondents.

The advantages of saloon vehicles

Comments from these interviews revealed that if saloon cars were preferred, this was generally because it was easier for some people, particularly frail older people, to step down into a lower vehicle than to step up into an accessible one. Other respondents valued the comfort of the vehicle and the ease of conversation with the driver. Finally, responses also revealed that a number of people thought that saloon car hackneys were cheaper to hire than accessible hackneys.

The advantages of accessible vehicles

In contrast, there were other disabled people with stiff legs that could not be bent and who found saloon cars did not provide enough space and/or for whom getting in and out of saloon cars was difficult especially where the sill height created a deep well between the floor and the sill.

Other responses favouring a purpose built accessible vehicle also followed a general pattern, in that respondents either required the accessible vehicle to get in, or valued the extra space for stretching out, or for shopping trolleys, walking frames

and pushchairs as well as wheelchairs. It should also be noted that a number of people with a variety of different ambulatory disabilities who had previously only used saloon taxis, found purpose built vehicles to be satisfactory when they made trial journeys following the demonstration of accessibility features such as a swivel step and grab handles. However, some of them still preferred the saloon style.

The views of wheelchair users

Discussion revealed that wheelchair users in the area preferred side access to rear access vehicles. The riding position was better and several noted that rear access vehicles had ramps that were too steep to ascend independently and powered chairs would have to be pushed (the majority of the accessible fleet in Amber Valley is rear access). It was felt that some accessible hackneys were unsuitable for passengers in wheelchairs. In particular it should be noted:

- Some ramps have a lip that means that it may not possible to load a wheelchair. Even a half-inch lip may prevent access, particularly if the passenger is heavy. A couple of the group members had experience of being unable to get into taxis because of this.
- Headroom - several people had problems with headroom in some accessible taxis and one of the taller members of the wheelchair users group often had to travel in a stoop. Metrocabs were fine in this regard as were the bigger 'minibus' style cabs.
- However, floorspace was generally not an issue and even in the smaller taxi's it was noted there was room for a wheelchair and a carer.
- 'Strips' for the ramp, were less popular than solid ramps. The former were considered to be difficult to use and not appropriate for all wheelchairs, particularly powered wheelchairs.
- In some accessible taxis, wheelchairs get fastened in backwards and it was noted that this was disorientating as the passenger has no idea of what is approaching. There was a lack of understanding that this position was in fact safer.

For some respondents with visual disabilities a clear sign on the front of the vehicle, such as the Hackney sign below, is helpful. This was echoed by other respondents who valued a recognisable fleet.



7.4 Rank issues

People requiring wheelchair accessible hackneys often had very poor experiences of trying to hire from the rank. In particular it was found that there were frequently not accessible hackneys on the rank at certain times of the day, or that if there were,

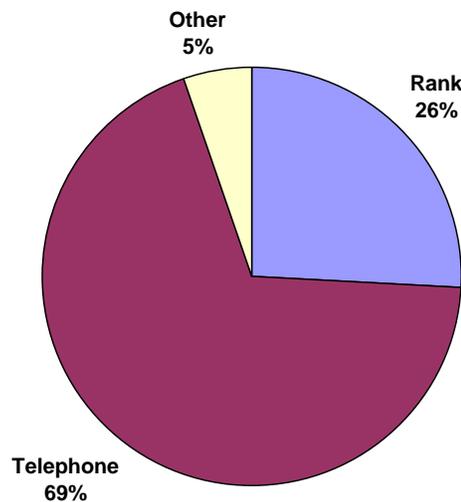
it was necessary to wait for them to get to the front of the queue. One member said *'a lot of the time I give up and call my daughter'*. Others, especially wheelchair users booked private hire to ensure availability.

'I've been left in the rain once too often so now I prebook but I'd rather have the freedom to go home when I felt like it and not have to plan ahead.'

Other comments suggest that the lack of availability was concentrated around certain times of the day: particularly 3-4pm when many firms had school contracts. Wheelchair users also found some difficulty getting an accessible hackney home after a night out.

The common response to such difficulties was to book by telephone and indeed the majority of disabled people book by telephone. However, some people used both methods – booking one way and using the rank for the other especially the return to home trip. Very few people hailed in the street other than from ranks.

Main Method of Booking taxis



It was noted from a number of sources that the area needed more ranks in more accessible places - the rank in Ripley was seen as particularly dangerous as it was the wrong side on the one-way street, thus the ramps came out in the middle of the road. Equally to access the rear of vehicles hackneys often had to reverse into oncoming traffic to clear a space. This was also considered a problem by wheelchair users.

The rank in Belper is located down the hill at the bottom of King's Street and appears to be underused in the daytime. Disabled respondents felt that it would be better located further along the main street or at the top of the hill, or close to the Co-op supermarket. Indeed, taxis appear to use the market place at the top of the hill on an informal basis at present.

One wheelchair user noted that ranks are often blocked by parked cars making access difficult and disrupting the flow of the rank.

A related point made by a wheelchair user was that kerb heights at ranks (and at bus stops) need to be considered so that access ramps reach properly and are not too steep.

Finally there was call for shelter at ranks and the disparity between such provision for buses as against hackney taxi users was highlighted.

7.5 Driver attitude

Most of the respondents to the survey and participants in the discussion groups had particular favourite firms and drivers who would generally cater for their needs. However, clearly these firms were unable to cope with all demand at all times and there were concerns expressed about the attitude of some drivers.

A frequent concern for disabled passengers, particularly those in wheelchairs, was that they felt some drivers ignored them, due to the extra effort required to load a wheelchair. This was felt to be a problem particularly late at night, when taxis are scarce and work is more plentiful.

Cost was a key issue for all the wheelchair user groups and many felt that they were getting a disproportionately poor deal. In particular there was concern from some users who had experience of drivers starting the meter before loading and they felt that this was discriminatory as disabled people were likely to take longer to get in and settle. This appears to be an issue requiring guidance from the Council, as many drivers and users had differing expectations of when to start the meter.

7.6 Summary

- Taxis are often the only mode of transport available for the disabled and the frail elderly in the area.
- Disabled people would use more taxis if they could afford them.
- There is a mixed demand from disabled and elderly taxi users in the area in terms of vehicle type. Some have very strong preferences and others don't.
- Wheelchair users generally prefer side access to rear access accessible vehicles.
- Some access ramps are too steep for wheelchairs especially when loading from the road rather than the pavement.
- Clear hackney taxi signs are important to those with visual disabilities.
- There is a shortage of accessible hackneys on ranks at certain times of the day.
- Ranks in Ripley and Belper are difficult and inconvenient for disabled and elderly hackney users to access.
- Disabled people experience discrimination from drivers in the area although in contrast some drivers are very helpful.

8 CONCLUSIONS

8.1 The results

The results of the research are not unexpected in demonstrating a preference by disabled people for a mixed fleet of saloon and accessible hackneys.

There is a widespread lack of understanding about the difference between hackneys and private hire leading to considerable confusion in discussions – to most people there are just ‘taxis’..

The majority of disabled people use private hire most of the time but many also sometimes use hackneys. Wheelchair users in particular tend to use private hire to ensure availability.

In addition there is also a wide range of other issues which make travel by taxi difficult for disabled people and these will be addressed in the recommendations below.

8.2 The implications of the results

The key issue for AVBC is whether to continue with the current policy which would gradually phase out saloon hackneys. In principle this is what the Disability Discrimination Act requires but it is no accident that the vehicle specifications to meet this have been delayed and are still not available. The bottom line is that there is still no vehicle which suits all. However, this does not mean there never will be and it is known that a number of manufacturers are working on improvements to current designs especially in terms of the needs of ambulant disabled users.

Meanwhile it seems obvious to disabled people that a mixed fleet is the best solution and most people cannot understand why this is not achievable and explaining this is complex. Current regulatory and legislative regimes including the Department for Transport and Office of Fair Trading guidance (as well as the National Consumer Council) advocate the phasing out of numbers regulation as has occurred in AVBC. If this happens and at the same time Councils will only issue new licences for accessible hackneys whilst allowing non accessible vehicles to continue, the new comers ‘forced’ to buy accessible hackneys will claim they are disadvantaged. The reason is that saloon car hackneys are cheaper to buy and run, viewed by the public as cheaper to hire and preferred by some people. Furthermore any remaining accessible vehicles would attract a disproportionate number of disabled users and although this could lead to increased trade from larger groups it could be counteracted by carrying disabled people some of whom take longer to load and are less likely to be able to afford good tips.

Thus those who operate a saloon hackney are likely to be advantaged and without some form of regulation most accessible hckneys would disappear. It’s not an even playing field. This then leads to the problem of who should be granted saloon hackney licences and who should not.

8.3 The Options

Therefore what are the options for AVBC?

| Options | Comment |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Continue with the current policy | This will result in the phasing out of all saloon hackneys by 2014 and meanwhile a declining number of saloon hackneys. Given the strong preference of some disabled people for saloon hackneys this would be discriminatory. However, many disabled people already use private hire and could rely on these for most purposes. |
| Reverse the current policy and allow free choice of vehicle | This would result in most licensees switching to saloon hackneys although a few operators would retain some of the larger vehicles (not all wheelchair accessible). This would reduce the availability of accessible vehicles which for some disabled people is their only option for travel. |
| Continue with the current policy in the hope that better vehicles which suit all users will be developed | The appearance of an ideal taxi in the future is feasible especially in terms of a powered down to the floor swivel seat and this could even be a requirement in the future. On the other hand such vehicles will be more expensive compared to the growing number of cheap accessible vehicles. However, many of the latter are disliked by both the public and a wide range of disabled passengers and some are also dangerous. |
| Resort to quantity control and stipulate that new licences should only be issued for accessible vehicles. | This would be contrary to current Government guidelines although some authorities have reintroduced quantity control in the light of over supply. Such a policy could also result in those drivers 'forced' to buy accessible vehicles taking the Council to court on grounds of unfairness. |
| Continue with the current policy until there are an equal number of accessible and saloon hackneys (2011 or sooner if some existing licensees retire) and then hold an annual lottery (which all hackney licensees could enter) for subsequent licences adjusted each year to maintain parity. | This would be an innovative policy without precedent. The AVBC licensing officer considers such a policy would risk the Council being taken to court by those unsuccessful in the lottery. However, others consulted think this would be a viable option if a representative group of the trade agreed with the policy. |
| Continue with the current policy until there are an equal number of accessible and saloon hackneys. At present this would be in 2011, but with the effect of retirements and closures, the Council could work towards an earlier date, for example in 2009. The Council could then reassess the situation in the light of vehicle choices available. | At the parity point the Council could reassess demand and the views of disabled users in the light of developments including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the likelihood of more accessible buses, • the emergence of new hybrid vehicles, • more flexible guidance from the DfT, • changes in technology and intelligent transport systems leading to less distinction between private hire and hackney, and • changes in legislation related to this last trend. |

9 RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 Vehicle Specifications

First choice for achieving a balance of vehicle types

- Continue with the current policy until there is a 50/50 split between purpose built accessible and saloon hackneys. Given the age policy and current licensing requirements this will be in 2012 but could be before if licensees retire.
- After that date drivers wishing to renew a saloon hackney license would have to take part in a draw to which all existing license holders could enter. In this way the balance of the fleet could be maintained at 50% accessible and 50% saloons..

Second choice for achieving a balance of vehicle types

- Continue with the current policy until there are an equal number of accessible and saloon hackneys (2011 or sooner if some existing licensees retire).
- At the parity point the Council could reassess demand and the views of disabled users in the light of developments including:
 - the likelihood of more accessible buses,
 - new patterns of demand and demographic change
 - the emergence of new hybrid vehicles,
 - more flexible guidance from the DfT,
 - changes in technology and intelligent transport systems leading to less distinction between private hire and hackney, and changes in legislation related to this last trend.

Phase out Rear Loading Vehicles

Whatever the Council decide, in terms of vehicle standards the licensing of rear-loading accessible hackneys should be reviewed in the light of road safety advice.

9.2 Ranks

Ranks in the area should be reviewed in terms of location and design. This applies particularly to the rank in Ripley which poses considerable problems for disabled access vehicles and the ranks in Belper and Heanor which are in relatively underused locations.

Provide shelters at the main ranks.

9.3 Information and guidance to disabled users

Use ranks and other communication means to publicise information about taxis, for example to explain that accessible vehicles are not more expensive than saloon cars and to provide a fare chart for hackneys. The need to also explain the

distinction between hackneys and private hire is a perennial challenge which cannot be neglected.

Another need is to provide clear guidance to the trade and customers about when meters should start after loading. Information about how to complain should also be more accessible.

Guidance should indicate that there may be a shortage of vehicles at certain times (i.e. around school leaving hours, or late at night) and that it would be advisable to book ahead at these times.

9.4 Improving Quality

Training for drivers should include a practical element to ensure that all drivers are properly aware of disability issues and requirements and have the practical skills to assist passengers. Practical issues include the safe and proper procedure for loading and securing wheelchairs which are not tested in the NVQ qualification but are in the DSA test.

9.5 Supporting the Hackney Trade

There is a need for those providing taxi services in AVBC to be given continued and in perhaps some instances enhanced support. This is the quid pro quo for stipulating new investment in training and vehicles. One important need is to make sure that the needs of the taxi trade is not forgotten in Local Transport Plans – a far too common tendency perhaps exacerbated by the fact that other forms of public transport are planned by a different tier of local government.

In this connection creating opportunities for the trade to tender for contracts both regular and for intermittent services would be helpful to offset the investment represented by the purchase of accessible vehicles.

9.6 Moving forward and sustaining momentum

Further support to both users and suppliers would be provided by the formation of a Taxi Quality Partnership to include consumers including disabled people and , council officials, police and trade representatives. Amongst other matters, such a Partnership could monitor the supply and type of accessible vehicles in the area, and report to the council accordingly. The partnership could also be useful in discussing the general consumer experiences of taxi use in the area and promoting good standards of service in a more positive manner than relying on complaints for feedback.

Appendix A - Background Research: Taxi use and policy in the UK

1 Introduction

The provision of taxi services to the general public is an integral part of public transport and is the only section that provides 24 hour, on demand, door-to-door transport. Increasingly in the twenty-first century provision for disabled passengers has also become a critical factor and must be taken into account.

Research suggests that a lack of transport access by disadvantaged consumers is a significant problem especially for those on low incomes but also by elderly and disabled people. Other research indicates that these consumers are significant users of taxis and often rely on them for shopping and general mobility especially when there is no access to a car. It is these groups that are particularly vulnerable to high fares, difficult physical access to vehicles and poor safety standards.

In order that a taxi trade works effectively, there needs to be a good, economic balance between supply and demand. Too many taxis and the quality may suffer; too few taxis and the service is inadequate. There also needs to be a balance between hackney carriage and private hire that is right for the area. Large towns and cities can often accommodate more hackney carriages than rural areas where more private hire will predominate. The national average is two private hire cars to one hackney carriage but this is changing as more authorities come under pressure to delimit the number of hackney carriages. Only one third of authorities now retain limits and these are almost exclusively in large urban areas. On the supply side, parts of the provision of taxis is increasingly characterised by BME drivers.

2 Who Uses Taxis?

Taxi use is not spread evenly across the population or geographical areas. The table below summarises key differences.

Table1

| | |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Sex | Women make 33% more trips than men |
| Income | People on the lowest income levels make significantly more trips than other income levels but their trips are shorter. The lowest use is in median income groups. |
| Car ownership | Unsurprisingly people in non car owning households make more journeys by taxi. |
| Age | Taxi use is higher in the under 30 age group particularly women in the 17-20 age group. Women over 70 use taxis twice as much as men over 70. |
| Length of trips | Three quarters are under 5 miles and a third under 2 miles. The average is 4.6 miles. |
| Disability | Taxis are used more frequently by disabled people (67% more according to a MORI survey commissioned by DPTAC in 2002). |

These are clear findings but finer analysis is hampered by a relative lack of robust detail of taxi use. The annual National Travel Surveys³ are the main source of information but there are also individual area studies which follow these trends. Overall there are 10 trips per year per person but this is almost certainly an understatement due to under recording of the trips by those at the extremes of the income strata and also tourists whose trips are largely unrecorded.

3 Future Trends

In spite of rising car ownership, demand for taxis remains steady⁴ and in addition, there are many indications it will continue to rise. A number of explanations beyond the simple increase in population are given below.

Aging population

Although more older people drive, there is a growing problem in relation to the ability to drive as people get older and income falls. Taxis are an important alternative especially in rural areas and as people become more frail. Thus there is a valuable social role in keeping older people independent and mobile. For this reason some local authorities have taxi token schemes as well as bus tokens.

Disability

As the number of elderly people increases, there will inevitably be more disabled people in the age structure. There is also a growing trend to enable disabled people of all ages to live and travel independently. Taxis have an important role in facilitating this.

Should all local authorities offer taxi tokens especially where there is no alternative (e.g. rural areas without bus services).

Climate change and increasing demand for travel

There is a growing demand for travel – and taxis form an important alternative to the car. They are also often a significant link in the feasibility of journeys by public transport.

Transport planning changes

As competition for urban space increases, parking will inevitable come under pressure and there will be whole streets where there is simply no opportunity for residents to park. Clearly the use of alternatives such as car clubs and taxis will increase.

³ The National Travel Survey 2006 has been used to compile Table 1

⁴ NTS 2006 ibid

4. Supply

The ratio of hackneys to private hire is approximately 1:2 and employs over a quarter of a million drivers without associated ancilliary services. This represents 1.3 drivers for every licensed vehicle overall.

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------|
| Hackney only | 73,328 |
| Private Hire | 132,505 |
| Total vehicles | 205,833 |
| Drivers – hackney only | 71,506 |
| Drivers – private hire only | 128,204 |
| Hackney and private hire | 64,934 |
| Total drivers | 264,644 |

In London the ratio is similar with 44,000 licensed private hire drivers, and almost 46,000 licensed private hire vehicles. 21,000 licensed taxis (black cabs) and almost 25,000 licensed taxi drivers.

Hackneys

Of the total number of hackneys in England and Wales just over half are either purpose built (35,624) or converted body types (5,467) and the remainder comprising saloon cars (32,237). While some local authorities have specified purpose built body types, many fleets comprise a mix of saloon cars and purpose built. Whilst this may suit a wider range of consumers, the playing field is arguable not level between the two vehicle types as purpose built vehicles are more expensive to purchase and maintain.

The hackney industry is dominated by a large number of owner drivers with a just a few companies operating fleets but these are usually mixed hackney and private hire.

An increasing number of drivers however subscribe to a radio link which gives a greater degree of access to bookings and less reliance on ranks. Outside of London a hailing culture is relatively undeveloped even in large cities such as Birmingham.

Private Hire

There are 15,803 private hire operators. This part of the taxi industry is characterised by a large number of small operators. However, there are some large companies and also specialist suppliers to the limousine market.

Key differences and associated issues between hackneys and private hire

| Fares and meters | Comment |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>Hackneys are metered although they can come off their meters by negotiation with customers.</p> <p>Private Hire do not have to be metered although a few are.</p> <p>Fares are in principle open to negotiation and little is known about the relative prices between hackneys and private hire although the general consensus and perception is that the latter are cheaper.</p> | <p>Research shows that there is little knowledge by consumers of what journeys cost and this is especially difficult for poor people and may deter use. In addition infrequent users over estimate taxi fares so this is a further deterrent.</p> <p>Others make regular journeys especially by private hire and get to know or agree the going rate.</p> <p>Case for knowledge of journey costs in advance for hackneys? Clearer fare structure and better publicity (current tables displayed in very small print in vehicle).</p> <p>Fares vary widely for hackneys – for example from the highest £5.50 for two miles in Birmingham whilst in Newcastle under Lyme the same journey would be £3.70. In North Devon the same distance is £5.75 compared to £3.56 in Flintshire. The national average for this distance is £4.46.</p> |
| <p>Hackneys can ply for hire and private hire cannot.</p> | <p>This leads to enormous problems of recognition and understanding of the difference by consumers. Also a source of friction within the trade and Councils spend a lot of money trying to enforce the distinction which is also structure into insurance costs – hackneys pay far higher premiums. In addition the lack of a distinctive difference makes it easier for completely illegal cars to pick up unsuspecting customers and there have been many example so assaults as a result.</p> |
| <p>Vehicle standards</p> <p>Increasing guidance on good practice encourages local authorities to ensure that hackneys are accessible especially for wheelchairs but private hire do not.</p> | <p>This has led to a lot of debate and court cases against Councils by the sections of the hackney trade in alliance with disabled groups some of whom do not want to give up saloon cars.</p> |
| <p>Quality standards also vary with in general hackney drivers being required to comply with higher standards of geographic knowledge, language skills, health and age or condition of vehicle</p> | <p>These standards vary from one Council to another making it difficult for consumers to predict uniform quality. On the other hand when standards are rigorous lower income users may be priced out so it could be argued that the dual market serves a useful social purpose.</p> |
| <p>In a number of areas, the supply of hackneys is still regulated by numbers control.</p> | <p>Some would argue (e.g. OFT) that this restricts the supply and fails to meet consumer demand as well as resulting in high 'unofficial' plate values which ultimately inflate prices. For example in Brighton (£40,000) or Leeds (£60,000).</p> <p>On the other hand some argue (especially hackney drivers) that numbers restriction benefits consumers and the urban environment by ensuring a balance of supply and quality.</p> |

5. Regulatory Framework

Regulations in England and Wales (outside London)

The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the broad policy (through primary legislation) but local district and borough councils administer the licensing laws.

Councils have a wide range of powers, e.g. assessing the fitness of drivers and vehicles to be licensed, setting fares and creating taxi stands. Since 1985, local authorities have been required to satisfy themselves that there is no unmet demand for taxi services before refusing any license on the ground that limits on taxi numbers have been met.

Role of local authorities

Taxi and PHV licensing in England and Wales is carried out by district/borough councils and unitary authorities outside London, and by Transport for London (TfL) in London. The application of the regulations varies from area to area, but falls into three broad categories:

- Quantity regulation; Local Authorities can limit the supply of taxis by imposing a cap on the number of licences for taxi vehicles.
- Quality and safety regulation.
- Fare regulation.

The Department for Transport (DfT) in 2006 better articulated the role of local authorities by producing *Taxi and PHV Licensing: Best Practice Guidance*. The main points are summarised below.

- The aim of local authority licensing of the taxi and PHV trades is to protect the public. The public should have reasonable access to taxi and PHV services, because of the part they play in local transport provision.
- Local authorities should consult on any significant proposed changes in licensing rules.
- Local licensing authorities should consider how accessible the vehicles they license as taxis are for disabled people.
- Enforcement of duties is the responsibility of local licensing authorities. It is therefore for authorities to decide whether breaches should be pursued through the courts or considered as part of the licensing enforcement regime.
- Local licensing authorities should give very careful consideration to a policy which automatically rules out particular types of vehicle or prescribes only one type or a small number of types of vehicle.
- An annual test for licensed vehicles of whatever age seems appropriate in most cases, unless local conditions suggest that more frequent tests are necessary. However, more frequent tests may be appropriate for older vehicles.

- Members of the public can often confuse PHVs with taxis, failing to realise that PHVs are not available for immediate hire and that a PHV driver cannot be hailed. So it is important to distinguish between the two types of vehicle.
- Local licensing authorities should consider how far their vehicle licensing policies can and should support any local environmental policies that the local authority may have adopted.
- Most local 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.
- Quite apart from the requirement of the 1985 Act, the Department's letter of 16 June 2004 asked all local licensing authorities that operate quantity restrictions to review their policy and justify it publicly by 31 March 2005 and at least every three years thereafter. The Department also expects the justification for any policy of quantity restrictions to be included in the five-yearly Local Transport Plan process.
- Local licensing authorities have the power to set taxi fares for journeys within their area. (There is no power to set PHV fares).
- Offer drivers the choice of an annual licence or a three-year licence.
- In considering an individual's criminal record, local licensing authorities will want to consider each case on its merits, but they will doubtless take a particularly cautious view of any offences involving violence, and especially sexual attack.
- It is common for licensing authorities to apply the 'Group 2' medical standards to taxi and PHV drivers.
- Most licensing authorities require would-be taxi-drivers to pass a test of local topographical knowledge as a prerequisite to the first grant of a licence (this is not the case for PHV).
- It is appropriate for a licensing authority to check that appropriate public liability insurance has been taken out for premises that are open to the public.
- Well-directed enforcement activity by the local licensing authority benefits not only the public but also the responsible people in the taxi and PHV trades.

Who has responsibility for meeting social needs of transport?

It is ultimately the government's responsibility for meeting the social needs of transport, however top level strategy and policy needs to be reflected at more grass roots level through local authority engagement.

The Department for Transport's Accessibility & Equalities Unit promotes socially inclusive transport, examining the links between transport and social exclusion, analysing social inclusion issues and the transport needs of different social groups. Units such as these reflect wider government policy, and as such attempt to tackle some of the social needs of society in general.

It has already been seen that local authorities have some discretion in how they interpret such policy and so local authorities have to take some responsibility for meeting social needs of transport. Local authorities should consult the community to best reflect their needs and wants. Taxis provide a vital transport role, especially in rural areas, for the movement of mobility impaired people, the elderly and heavily

encumbered individuals. As such target audiences should be identified and their needs met.

The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, makes it unlawful for public bodies (which will include licensing authorities) to discriminate against a disabled person in carrying out their functions and to change any policy which adversely affects a disabled person. Although there is no case law yet established, It is likely that this would apply to the policies on accessible vehicles, driver training etc introduced by licensing authorities. In addition, public bodies also have a duty under the 2005 Act to promote equality of opportunity between disabled and non-disabled people. This too would have a direct bearing on their taxi licensing policies.

Additional agencies responsible for ensuring the social needs of transport include TravelWatch, Campaign for Better Transport, and the PCO (this is by no means an exhaustive list).

6 Unmet need and barriers to use

Vehicle accessibility

One of the advances in recent years for all forms of public transport has been the increase in accessibility. Taxis are no exception and many hackney fleets are now entirely wheelchair accessible. However, the deadline for total accessibility has been constantly delayed and there are still many areas of the country where wheelchair accessible taxis are in short supply or unavailable. It should also be noted that none of the “accessible “ taxis currently in service provides satisfactory levels of access or meets the standards which would need to be met under DDA to provide a similar level of access to that provided by trains and buses.

Furthermore, whilst wheelchair accessibility is an important aspect of access, there are also differences of view about what constitutes good accessibility for different groups. The bottom line is that there is no one ideal vehicle that meets all needs. However, a recent report from the European Conference of Ministers of Transport and the International Road Transport Union⁵ has proposed two types of accessible vehicle, one which meets the needs of passengers needing to travel in a wheelchair and the other which starts from a standard saloon type of vehicle and includes features such as swivel seats, grab handles etc to make access easier for older and ambulant disabled people. The report suggests optimum dimensions to meet the needs of the full range of people with disabilities.

Another issue is discrimination against disabled taxi users⁶. This is one of the reasons for opposing a mixed purpose built and saloon car hackney fleet since this requires the person booking to identify themselves as in need of an accessible vehicle. However, the new duties imposed by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 outlaw discrimination both by operators and drivers. No case law has yet been established.

⁵ Improving Access to Taxis (ISBN 978-92-821-0103-2) www.cemt.org

⁶ SRA survey for Leicester City Transport (2004) and for example articles in Evening Standard 17 December 2007 “Peer in Wheelchair: nine taxis refused me a ride”.

Supply by time of day

It is a truism that there will never be enough taxis at 1 am on a Friday night. Demand for taxis is characterised by peaks such as school runs, when it is raining, during special events and during late drinking hours. This makes it very difficult to meet demand at such times. However, there is evidence that the supply side has geared itself up to address this by part time or split shift working.

Supply by urban/suburban/rural

In general city centres are well supplied with taxis. However there are problems in some suburbs and rural areas where lower densities or lower taxi use by middle income groups impact on supply. It can be particularly difficult for the general population when the taxis that do exist have contracts for morning and mid afternoon education and other social service work.

No go areas

An increasing problem for both customers and drivers of taxis is crime and personal security. This reflects a number of trends such as increasing drunkenness and violence by passengers. Whilst it is a problem for both purpose built and saloon taxis, the latter are more vulnerable even when there is a screen fitted between the driver and passenger. Purpose built vehicles in contrast offer greater protection but this still leaves them vulnerable to non payment of fares, etc.

Another problem is that passengers increasingly feel the need to use taxis to travel safely especially at night but these are the times when there are fewer taxis available and those drivers that are available are likely to be nervous or unwilling to drive to certain estates or neighbourhoods.

7. How to get the right balance between hackney and private hire

Major conurbations

In a major conurbation the most successful hackney carriage fleets in effect fulfil the role of both taxi and private hire car as most of them are on radio. The need to ply for hire from ranks at the peak times early in the morning, late in the evening and late at night are the natural earning times for taxi drivers. But fulfilling a good transport role at other times is really only possible if hackney carriages are on radio or fulfil contract work. There can be a conflict with contract work, particularly first thing in the morning, when stations can be busy areas and taxis are away doing school contracts so this conflict needs to be avoided.

Disabled passengers have the same right to access taxi services as the able bodied and the Disability Discrimination Act envisages a situation where all hackney carriages are wheelchair accessible. Passengers, however, more often than not start their journeys from home and will therefore need to contact a suitable taxi to make the journey in the first place, albeit that they may make the return journey from a rank taxi.

Private hire is generally a more flexible and transient part of the taxi service. In many cities there is no requirement to do a Knowledge examination or purchase a special vehicle. Provided a CRB check is met, more or less anyone can become a private hire driver and many are happy to remain so for many years. Experience shows, however, that given the opportunity to move over to hackney, many will take it.

For those authorities that have limited the number of hackney carriages a system of managed growth with regular plate issues will provide a sound economic basis for the investment in good quality vehicles and a trade that needs to provide a good round the clock service.

Where an authority has already delimited the quality of the service to some degree will depend on the quality of the fleet. By way of explanation, if a driver is able to drive around in a £1,000 taxi and he does not have particularly pressing financial needs, because he might be 60+ years of age, his availability to provide a service is often limited to a few hours only. Many drivers will make the point that they have to work long hours in order to earn a living in a delimited market, but in practice one finds that these are the people who are not on radio, only want to work daytimes and waste many hours sitting in long queues on ranks that are under utilised in the middle of the day. If, on the other hand, test standards are strict, taxi specification is tight and age limits are imposed, the cost of the taxi used will be higher. This necessitates drivers having to work 'smart' i.e. to go on the radio, employ other drivers to work night shifts and generally put themselves where the work is. As a consequence, the public get a much better service.

Rural Areas

In rural areas it is far more difficult to achieve the right balance between hackneys and private hire – not least because the distinction is more difficult to make and also journeys can be longer along country roads and less suitable for some of the purpose built vehicles designed for urban environments. In addition the volume of trade may be lower and thus not merit the investment required for top of the range purpose built vehicles.

Best Practice:-

- If regulated have good managed growth each year (unlikely to need a survey then) onto good quality wheelchair accessible taxis (see section below), less than three years old.
- If unregulated, have tight standards for vehicles both in terms of specification, age at first time of licensing and age at which vehicle is taken off the road.
- Have policy to encourage hackney drivers onto radio and 'smarter' working.

8. Rank Spaces, Suitability and Pedestrianisation

The number of rank spaces available in many towns and cities is often only a fraction of the number of taxis (hackney carriages) operating in the town. It is not uncommon for local authorities to have an unmet demand survey, decide that they

will grant a further 20 or so licences or even delimit without creating any new rank spaces. Another problem that regularly occurs is that there is a failure to communicate between the highways division of the country council or unitary authority and the local licensing office. One finds situations where taxi ranks are moved to the offside of a road so as to make way for new bus stops without giving any need to consider disabled passengers who may have to be loaded from the near side, or in some cases the rank is removed all together.

Pedestrianisation has happened in many towns across the country and the removal of taxi ranks and relocation is often an afterthought. There is currently a situation in Sunderland where taxis and PHVs have been prohibited from the whole of the town centre, which creates a situation where vulnerable people late at night have to walk some way to get a taxi home. It is therefore vital that there is a proper provision of taxi ranks in town centres at the right places and in sufficient number to meet the needs of the population and the trade in general. Where a local transport plan is drawn up, licensing must be included and taxis should generally have more than half a page of consideration out of a 200 page report.

The need to serve disabled passengers and those with impaired mobility must be properly considered with suitable rank space, possible raised kerbs and even cover for waiting passengers. The 'quality partnership' operated by bus companies is a good example of how local authorities can collaborate with transport providers for the benefit of passengers. All that is needed is a little strategic thinking. Again, the new duties on public authorities not to discriminate and to promote equality would be relevant here.

Best Practice :-

- Town centre ranks must be located where people need them be that shops, night clubs or at transport interchanges
- There must be enough spaces to accommodate the majority of taxis licensed.
- If areas are pedestrianised the ranks should be located immediately adjacent to such areas.
- All ranks should be located on the nearside kerb not the offside
- Consider a quality partnership with the trade

9. Fleet Age and Pollution

The quality of the taxi fleet and the need to provide suitable vehicles is a key concern for local licensing authorities. There are many local authorities across the country whose total focus has for many years been on "does the cab pass the test"? In this day and age this is a somewhat outmoded view to take as there are so many other factors to be considered. For example, emissions and provision of passenger features are now very different from what they were ten years ago.

Motor manufacturers are required to update their engines now on a regular basis to meet new European emissions standards. Currently manufacturers are meeting Euro 4 emissions standards and shortly will have to meet Euro 5 and in due course Euro 6 standards. However, there are many taxis still operating around the country that are pre-Euro or Euro1 and as the reduction between each standard is

approximately 50% it can be seen that the difference between a pre-Euro and a Euro 4 is both compound and huge. If local authorities want to meet their air quality standards there is a need to consider emissions of taxis as they are predominantly operating in the town and city centre 24/7.

Ideally, local authorities should not in this day and age allow vehicles to run on beyond on ten years. The average taxi will do approximately 50-60,000 miles per annum and in the days when all taxis were saloon cars and were frequently bought second hand from low mileage users, age may not have mattered as much as it does now. Purpose built and accessible taxis obviously work as taxis from day one and in ten years will have covered some 600,000 miles. It is therefore not sensible to allow such vehicles to continue on, even if they do “pass the test”.

As increasingly the taxi fleet becomes wheelchair accessible, the variety of facilities made available to disabled passengers continues to increase as does the ingenuity and quality of those introductions. This is not the same as a saloon car which fundamentally has a back seat and that’s it. If the manufacturers and converters are to continue to innovate, there is little point in them doing so when older, less accessible and less versatile taxis remain on the roads for up to fifteen or more years, providing a less than adequate service.

Best Practise :-

1. Accessible taxis should have a maximum age of ten years to keep emission levels down and the quality of taxi up.
2. PHV’s and saloon taxis should not exceed 6years old, unless in exceptional condition

10. Quality standards

For many years when local authorities were only licensing saloon cars, the issue of quality standards related to such things as the measurement of the back seat and whether the car had four doors or not. The introduction of wheelchair accessible taxis has really changed these requirements quite dramatically. It is now important that licensing officers are able to satisfy themselves in respect of the safety of a converted taxi and the suitability of an accessible taxi for all sorts of passengers and a wide variety of impairments.

Consideration when considering standards for an accessible taxi should therefore encompass the following:

| Subject | Recommendation |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Type approval standard (safety) | European Whole Vehicle Type Approval (M1) |
| Wheelchair access | Single piece ramp (not channel ramps) |
| Ramp angle | Not to exceed 16° |
| Side or rear loading | Side loading only (keep passengers on the pavement, not in the road) |
| Sill height | 380 mm ideal or with intermediate step if more |
| Intermediate step | 250 mm maximum from road and to floor |

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Swivel seat | On near side |
| Door handles | Light touch easy to use (internal and external) |
| Interior lighting | Good including floor lighting |
| Wheelchair restraints | Easy to use and separately tested to ECWVTA |
| Seat belts | Separate passenger restraint for wheelchair |
| Seat belts | Seat belt adjuster for children |
| Intercom | With integral induction loop for those with impaired hearing |
| Seating visibility (minimum 5 seats) | Highlighting patches in a colour which contrasts with the seat fabric |
| Grab handles | Suitable round diameter also in colour which contrasts with surrounding area; |
| Door aperture (height) | Not less than 1250 mm, ideally 1350 mm |
| Door width (usable opening n/side)) | Minimum 750 mm |
| Interior headroom | 1380 mm minimum |
| Centre division | Tested to ECWVTA |
| Head restraints | Fitted to all seats |

Clearly there are many hackneys classed as accessible vehicles which do not meet many of these individual standards. It is up to local authorities to consider which but clearly some of the cheaper conversions do not come anywhere near.

11. **Test Intervals and Inspection Standards**

Because taxis routinely do between 50,000 and 60,000 miles per annum and some can do over 100,000 miles a year, regular testing is essential. Many local authorities use their own garages for testing and have good control over the standards that are set. Some authorities, however, have chosen to sub-contract the testing which is fine provided the testing is closely monitored. Experience has shown the opportunity for 'interpretation' of standards by sub-contractors can lead to problems and, sadly, there is always the opportunity for corruption as well.

The best taxi fleets in the country are those that are subject to continuous spot checks. Every week we read of local authorities calling in their fleets of taxis and private hire vehicles to find that anything up to 40% are failures and yet out there plying for hire. This is simply not satisfactory.

Older vehicles can be tested up to three times per annum and in reality this should be the norm for anything over five years old. If this is the policy backed up by regular spot checks, drivers are not even tempted to take chances and will inevitably ensure that their cabs are kept in good order without even being asked. Being taken off the road at 7 o'clock on a Friday night for a bald tyre or a faulty shock absorber will cost the owner or driver far more than having done the repair beforehand.

Best practice :-

1. is therefore in-house inspection, or tightly controlled sub-contract inspection to a few test centres.
2. Provision for road side spot checks on a regular basis rather than from time to time.
3. Rigorous enforcement of age and emission limits.

12. Drivers

Many local authorities are dealing with drivers whose first language is not English. It is therefore sensible to ensure that drivers are able to communicate with passengers and find their way round the town or city. For hackney carriage drivers, it is certainly important that they pass a Knowledge test and can demonstrate their ability to communicate properly. Private hire may not necessarily need a Knowledge test, but should be able to demonstrate that they can get passengers from A to B without undue delay or difficulty.

Driver training in customer care and disability awareness is generally becoming more widely recognised as a necessary virtue. The introduction of BTEC and NVQ courses brought about by the encouragement of Go Skills and others should be incorporated in to the induction of any new driver. The DSA test is unique in incorporating a practical demonstration of wheelchair loading which other training lacks (see para below). Because taxi drivers tend to spend a long time in their trade, sadly local authorities are faced with many existing drivers who think they do a good job, but do not necessarily do so.

With regard to wheelchair accessible taxis, it should be a requirement of a **driver's** licence that he or she is able to demonstrate that they are able to use the equipment provided on their vehicle and load and secure a wheelchair passenger or an ambulant disabled passenger safely and securely. Just as it is recommended that taxis be spot checked, drivers should also be checked and if found wanting, be offered the opportunity of training. Some of the best disability awareness training of taxi drivers is delivered by disabled people at the local level.

Of course, drivers go through necessary CRB checks before being licensed and from time to time these should be re-checked. Most local authorities will also ensure drivers go through medical tests and these should be at least annually for those over the age of 65.

CONCLUSION: Ideas for change

Clearly both sections impact on improvements for both industry and consumers. Many are outside the powers of district local authorities and thus require cross tier and governmental partnership.

Industry and professionalisation

| |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integration with other modes of public transport. |
| More research into the dual markets which private hire and hackney serve before any move towards a one tier system. |
| Move licensing function to a regional level away from districts to avoid boundary problems and disparities in fares . |
| Changing and clarifying the law with regard to taxi buses, for example to enable smaller purpose build vehicles to operate as taxi buses. |
| Training – this is improving especially for the hackney trade but there are problems with funding and motivation which need to be addressed via licence entry systems. |
| Customer care: a need for higher standards of customer care – with consumer satisfaction surveys, a disabled taxi users panel and ‘mystery shopping’ exercises carried out as part of the licensing function. |
| Tough prosecution of illegal plying for hire – this to be in part achieved by strong policies for vehicle recognition for both hackneys and private hire. As long as the two tier system continues to exist the design should also differentiate the two strongly. E.g. all private hire yellow, all hackneys black and preferable purpose built. |
| Consistent regional standards for bus lane use and access to one way systems and pedestrian zones (exceptions to be strongly argued). |
| More consistent and better enforcement of quality standards as regards to age and condition of taxis. |

Customer needs

| |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Integration into public transport system as level playing field including comparable concessions etc and fuel duty rebate and other fiscal issues e.g. VAT exemption and also awarding social transport contracts especially to those who invest in an expensive purpose build vehicle. |
| Clear and simple to understand fare structures |
| Include taxis in public transport ticketing and Concessionary fare schemes with mechanism for reimbursing taxi driver promptly (not weeks or months later as in some schemes). |
| Better signing to ranks with shelters and fare structures advertised. |
| Training should include practical experience in the needs of disabled passengers including ramp fixing and handling as well as communication and other issues. |
| Clearer complaints systems, enforcement and protocols. There is a need for higher standards of professionalism in the trade and a recognition that driving a taxi is more than just a driving job. |
| Need for tough measures to tackle security for drivers and passengers. Examples of measures are grants for in cab CCTV systems, enforcement partnerships with police and town centre management systems, marshalling at crowded times and events and liaison with Crime and Safety Partnerships. Addressing security issues could potentially eliminate the need for a higher night time tariff. |

Appendix B User Questionnaire

On average, how often do you use Taxi services?

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|
| More than once a week | Once a week | Once a month | Less than once a month |
|------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|

Are taxis particularly important for you and, if so, why?

| |
|------------------------------------------|
| |
|------------------------------------------|

How do you generally book a taxi?

| | | |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------|
| By telephone | Hailing from a rank | Other |
|---------------------|----------------------------|--------------|

Do you have any comments about booking taxis by telephone or hailing on the rank?

| |
|------------------------------------------|
| |
|------------------------------------------|

What are the three most common types of journey you would make in a taxi?

| Purpose (e.g. going to the shops, work, leisure etc.) | Length | Comments |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

Do you generally use:

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <p>Hackney Taxis (they can be hailed in the street as well as booked by telephone)</p> | <p>They have to be booked and cannot be hailed in the street</p> | | |
| <p>Purpose built Hackney cabs</p>  | <p>Saloon car Hackney cabs</p>  | <p>Private Hire</p>  | <p>No Preference</p> |

Would you prefer to use:

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| <p>Purpose built Hackney cabs</p>  | <p>Saloon car Hackney cabs</p>  | <p>Private Hire</p>  | <p>No Preference</p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|

If you generally use one or the other, why do you prefer this style of taxi?

Do you have any other comments about taxis in the Amber Valley area?

Thank you very much for your time