

LICENSING COMMITTEE Regulatory Committee Agenda

Date Tuesday 21 October 2025

Time 9.30 am

Venue JR Clynes Building Ground Floor Room 1

Notes 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST- If a Member requires advice on any item involving a possible declaration of interest which could affect his/her ability to speak and/or vote he/she is advised to contact Alex Bougatef or Constitutional Services at least 24 hours in advance of the meeting.

2. CONTACT OFFICER for this agenda is Constitutional Services email Constitutional.Services@oldham.gov.uk

3. PUBLIC QUESTIONS - Any Member of the public wishing to ask a question at the above meeting can do so only if a written copy of the question is submitted to the contact officer by 12 noon on Thursday, 16 October 2025.

4. FILMING - The Council, members of the public and the press may record / film / photograph or broadcast this meeting when the public and the press are not lawfully excluded. Any member of the public who attends a meeting and objects to being filmed should advise the Constitutional Services Officer who will instruct that they are not included in the filming.

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Please also note the Public attendance Protocol on the Council's Website

https://www.oldham.gov.uk/homepage/1449/attending_council_meetings

MEMBERSHIP OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

Councillors Adams, Bishop, Byrne, Chowhan, Cosgrove, Hamblett, Harrison, Hindle, A Hussain, J. Hussain (Vice-Chair), S. Hussain (Chair), Nasheen, Navesey, Shuttleworth and Wahid

Item No

1 Apologies For Absence

2 Urgent Business

Urgent business, if any, introduced by the Chair

3 Declarations of Interest

To Receive Declarations of Interest in any Contract or matter to be discussed at the meeting.

4 Public Question Time

To receive Questions from the Public, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

5 Minutes of Previous Meeting (Pages 3 - 6)

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12th June 2025 are attached for approval.

6 Licensing Update Report (Pages 7 - 10)

The reason for this report is to request that Members note the activities of the Licensing Team since the last meeting.

7 Licensing Report - Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policy (Pages 11 - 80)

This report requests that Members approve a revised Licensing Policy for Taxis & Private Hire.

8 Hackney Carriage Licensing Report (Pages 81 - 150)

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of a survey to measure demand for hackney carriages within the Borough.

Present: Councillor S. Hussain (Chair)
Councillors Adams, Bishop, Byrne, Chowhan, Hamblett,
Harrison, Hindle, J. Hussain (Vice-Chair), Nasheen, Navesey,
Shuttleworth and Wahid

Also in Attendance:

Elise Brophy	Senior licensing Officer
Alan Evans	Group Solicitor - Environment
Susan Loftus	Licensing Projects and Hearings
	Officer
Kaidy McCann	Constitutional Services

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Cosgrove.

2 **URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business received.

3 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest received.

4 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions received.

5 **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 25th
February 2025 be approved as a correct record.

6 **LICENSING ANNUAL REPORT**

Consideration was given to the Licensing Annual report which
informed Members of the activities undertaken to discharge the
Council's Licensing function during the period 1 April 2024 to 31
March 2025.

Members were informed that There were two strategic
objectives that related to Licensing:

1. To work with businesses to ensure they were licensed
and compliant. This covered:
 - Proactively licensing premises and individuals
engaged in alcohol supply, entertainment and late-
night refreshment.
 - Participation in Pubwatch schemes, partnership
projects and joint, intelligence led inspections to
ensure licence conditions were not being
breached.

- Promotion of the four licensing objectives and three gambling objectives.
2. The second related to ensuring safe passenger journeys, in safe licensed vehicles with safe licensed drivers. This covered:
- Undertaking inspections of licensed vehicles.
 - Vetting new applicants for licences to ensure they were fit and proper.
 - Ensuring that passengers were safe in vehicles by responding to complaints and investigating offences and breaches of conditions

The Licensing Act 2003 was governed by four licensing objectives:

Prevention of crime and disorder
Prevention of public nuisance
Public Safety
Protection of Children from Harm

Members were informed about the number of licensed premises under the Act, the number of applications considered by the Licensing Premises Panel and the number of complaints related to licensed premises. Members were also informed about the number of permissions under the Gambling Act 2005. A rise in the number of premises licences was highlighted. In response to members questions on the issue of Personal Licences officers reported that these licences were issued for life but could be revoked in limited circumstances.

Members were informed that officers continued to work with the private hire and hackney trade to ensure effective communication and consultation took place. The Committee were provided with an update on the details of applicants and drivers brought before the Licensing Drivers Panel over the last twelve months. Members were provided with the breakdown of licences in force and the vehicle testing data. The Licensing Team also administered and enforced a wide range of other license, registrations and permits and the numbers of each were given.

Members were informed of future challenges and changes with regular changes to legislation and guidance affecting licensing together with consultations. A current study was being undertaken on Taxi Licensing in Greater Manchester to inform a plan to make GM the first choice for drivers, vehicle owners and operators. All licence holders had been invited to take part by completing the survey online. In-person sessions were also being held for those who could not complete online. In depth interviews were also taking place.

Members were also informed of current projects which were underway or due to start in the coming months which included:

1. Unmet Demand Survey – the Licensing Service had instructed CTS Traffic & Transportation to conduct an Unmet Demand Survey on hackney carriage vehicles. As the number of licences issued for HCV in Oldham were limited to 85, a survey must be carried out every 3-5 years to determine any unmet demand. The results should be received by the end of June, with the findings and any recommendations being brought to the Licensing Committee meeting in October 2025.
2. Review of Licensing IT capabilities to improve the service and experience of applicants and encouraging self-serve functions where possible

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.
2. The implications of the report be considered in future licensing decisions.

7

LICENSING TAXI & PRIVATE HIRE POLICY REPORT

Consideration was given to a report which set out the current position with regards to the Clean Air Plan, the related financial support for Oldham's licensed trades and how this effected the current emissions policy.

The Council in its capacity as licensing authority was responsible for the licensing of private hire and hackney carriage drivers and vehicles, and private hire operators. Best practice suggested that licensing authorities adopt a single licensing policy in order to unify all its decisions, procedures and conditions as a single source of information for licensees, applicants and interested parties. Due to the changes and delays to the Clean Air Plan (CAP) or Greater Manchester since work began in 2018, both taxis and private hire vehicles had been continuously affected. To support the case for funding and provide assurance it would deliver the changes required, Greater Manchester offered commitments to government that emissions policies would mandate the transition to cleaner vehicles and prevent non-emission compliant vehicles from being licensed in the future.

Members were informed that the proposals included:

- Extend the emissions compliance date to 31 December 2026 for existing vehicle licence holders with non-compliant vehicles.
- Allow existing vehicle licence holders to continue to renew their vehicle licence with the same non-emissions compliant vehicle until the age limit of that vehicle in accordance with the vehicle age policy.
- Extend the age limit for purpose-built hackney carriages and wheelchair accessible private hire vehicles from 15 years to 17 years.

RESOLVED that:

1. The report be noted.

2. The proposals be approved.

8

LICENSING COMPOSITION OF PANELS REPORT

Members considered a report which set out the membership of the Licensing Driver Panel and Licensing Panels, with future 2025/26 meeting dates.

RESOLVED that, the membership and meeting dates of the Licensing Driver Panel and Licensing Panels be noted.

The meeting started at 9.30 am and ended at 10.30 am

Report to Licensing Committee

LICENSING UPDATE

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Taylor – Cabinet Member for Housing & Licensing

Officer Contact: Nasir Dad

Report Author: Nicola Lord

21 October 2025

Reason for Decision

The reason for this report is to request that Members note the activities of the Licensing Team since the last meeting.

Recommendations

Members are asked to note the report.

Licensing Committee – 21 October 2025

Licensing Update

1. Background

- 1.1 The Council, acting in its role as Licensing Authority carries out a range of statutory functions including taxi and private hire licensing, alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment, gambling, and street trading.
- 1.2 This report sets out the activities of the licensing team since April 2025 together with outlining the challenges and demands on the service.

2. Alcohol, Entertainment & Late-night Refreshment

- 2.1 The team continues to advise, issue, and ensure compliance with a range of premises licences issued under the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2.2 There have been two hearings since April 2025 as detailed below:

Premises	Application	Outcome
Go Local Express, Vulcan Street, Oldham	Grant of a Premises Licence	Granted – with amended timings
Greene's Bistro & Parlour, Wade Row, Uppermill	Vary a Premises Licence	Granted – with amended timings

- 2.3 Officers continue to advise and respond to complaints about licensed premises and undertake inspections to ensure compliance with conditions.

3. Taxi & Private Hire

- 3.1 There have been around 877 new applications received for dual driver licences since April 2025.
- 3.2 The total number of licences granted are detailed below with comparison figures from previous periods.

Licence Type	Sept '25	Feb '25	Oct '24	May '23
Dual Drivers		3433	3088	1305
School Contract Drivers		79	86	95
Private Hire Vehicles		1880	1756	1030
Private Hire Operators		93	90	38
Hackney Carriage Vehicles	85	85	85	85

- 3.3 The Service continues to receive high levels of dual driver applications. The Service expanded in 2024 to recruit additional officers who have provided an invaluable resource to ensure we can maintain service delivery and process applications quickly and efficiently. The Licensing Service reception remains open five days per week, offering face to face assistance to applicants across all licensing functions.



- 3.4 The rise in licensed drivers has led to a steady increase in licensed vehicles. The licensed vehicle fleet has increased by over 100% since June 2023. This created capacity issues at the Council testing station based at Moorhey Street.
- 3.5 The Licensing Service commissioned a third bay to absorb the additional demand, and this means we currently have a total of 3 test bays offering over 100 test slots per week.
- 3.6 The test station was closed for a period between 2 May 2025 and 4 August 2025.
- 3.7 In readiness for the reopening of the test station, in support of the trade, the Leader announced that there would no longer be a fee for vehicles requiring a retest. This has been positively received by the trade.
- 3.8 The data on vehicle testing since the bays reopened can be seen below. Hackney Carriages are all typically tested in November and December of each year; therefore, there are no meaningful test results at this time:

Private Hire	Hackney Carriage
183 (51%)	Pass 1 (50%)
175 (49%)	Fail 1 (50%)

- 3.9 The main failure items for vehicles remain headlamps, suspension, tyres and vehicle condition.
- 3.10 Since April 2025 there have been 31 hearings before the Drivers Panel. The breakdown of outcomes is detailed below.

Granted	Refused	Suspensions	Revocations	Immediate revocations	No further action
8	7	5	0	9	2

- 3.11 In addition, there have been 12 delegated decisions made by Officers for urgent matters.

4. Options / Alternatives

4.1 Not applicable

5. Consultation

5.1 Not applicable

6. Financial Implications

6.1 Not applicable

7. Legal Implications

7.1 Not applicable

8. Appendices

8.1 None

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LICENSING COMMITTEE

Licensing Policy – Taxi & Private Hire

Report of Executive Member for Housing & Licensing

Officer contact: Nicola Lord – Principal Licensing Officer

21 October 2025

Executive Summary

This report requests that Members approve a revised Licensing Policy for Taxis & Private Hire.

Recommendations

That Members:

- 1) Note the report; and
 - 2) Approve the policy amendments
-

1. Purpose of the report

This report requests that Members approve a revised Licensing Policy for Taxis & Private Hire.

2. Introduction

2.1 The Council in its capacity as licensing authority is responsible for the licensing of private hire and hackney carriage drivers and vehicles, and private hire operators.

2.2 Best practice suggests that licensing authorities adopt a single licensing policy in order to unify all its decisions, procedures and conditions as a single source of information for licensees, applicants and interested parties.

2.3 Oldham has had such a policy for a number of years and from time to time it is reviewed in order to keep up with decisions made by the Licensing Committee, revised application procedures, guidance and best practice.

3. Proposed amendments

3.1 Tinted Windows

3.2 The Council's current policy requires any tinted windows to be manufacturer fitted:

Manufacturer only fitted window tints will be permitted as follows:

- a) Front windscreen minimum 75% light transmission
- b) Front side glass minimum 70% light transmission
- c) Remaining glass or rear side windows (excluding rear window) minimum 20% light transmission

3.3 It is proposed that the wording requiring tinted windows to be manufacturer fitted is removed.

3.4 Many owners procure their vehicles through the second-hand market, and it is increasingly popular for after-market tint films to be added to vehicles. If the tinted windows meet the legal light transmission requirements outlined in the policy, it is proposed these films be allowed to remain on licensed vehicles.

3.5 The additional testing criteria applicable to vehicles during their compliance test reviews the overall condition of the vehicle, including the windows, and where tints are improperly applied, bubbling, chipped, peeling or are unsightly in any other way, testers can require the owner to remove the tints in line with the vehicle condition not meeting appropriate standards.

3.6 DBS Requirements

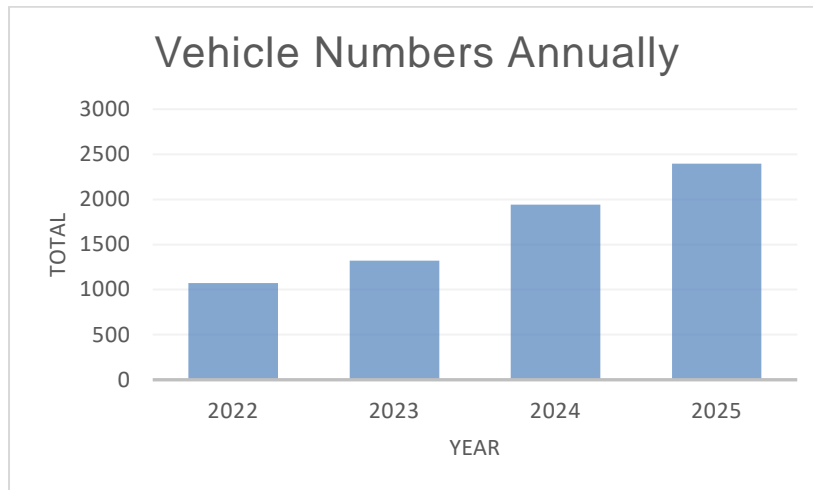
3.7 The Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards states that all licensed drivers should be required to evidence continuous registration with the DBS update service to enable the licensing authority to routinely check for new

information every 6 months. Drivers that do not subscribe to the update service should still be subject to a check every 6 months.

- 3.8 DBS certificates must be registered for the Online Update Service within 30 days of the date printed on the certificate. If the holder fails to register within that time, they must apply for a new DBS and subsequently register the new certificate.
- 3.9 The Council are experiencing high numbers of new driver applicants who are failing to register their DBS certificate for online updates within the required 30 days.
- 3.10 The current policy allows the Council to grant a Dual Driver Licence to an applicant where their DBS check is under 6 months old, in line with the Statutory Standards, regardless of whether it is registered to the update service or not. Once the existing DBS reaches the 6-month period, if the licence holder has not produced a new DBS their licence will be suspended until such time as they do.
- 3.11 It is proposed to change this policy, to mandate all applicants to evidence their subscription to the DBS Update Service prior to any licence being granted, including any that are required at renewal stage, or a suspension being lifted. This is due to the high volume of new applicants who fail to register their certificate and then also fail to apply for a new DBS Certificate by the time 6 months has passed. This will drastically reduce Officer time spent contacting licence holders and reduce the numbers of suspensions and the time drivers spend off the road.
- 3.12 In line with previous policy changes, the Council undertakes regular checks of the Update Service for all licence holders, currently 2-weekly, to identify any lapses of subscription or new information held against individuals. Doing these more frequent checks has regularly highlighted new information has been recorded against individuals, and those licence holders have often failed to notify the Council of that information.
- 3.13 At such time the check reveals new information is held, the licence holder is suspended with immediate effect and informed they must apply for a new DBS certificate and produce it to the Council to consider the new information.
- 3.14 Any new information usually relates to a conviction or caution, or could include relevant information provided by the police, or the holder may have been placed on the Children or Adults Barred List.
- 3.15 It is proposed to update the Policy to confirm the position of the Council where a licence is suspended in these circumstances. The wording would confirm the suspension would remain in place until a new DBS is produced and the new information is considered, which may be at a Licensing Driver Panel, or by way of delegated decision where the circumstances require an immediate decision.
- 3.16 **Vehicle Testing Arrangements**
- 3.17 Earlier this year, the Council launched a third MOT testing bay to ensure extra provision was in place for the growing licensed vehicle fleet. A review of the current fleet alongside the testing capacity has been undertaken and options

have been considered to reduce long waiting times, and to future proof the service to keep up with the growing fleet.

- 3.18 Since policy changes in 2023, the number of licensed vehicles has continued to grow year on year. Up to 2022, the fleet size remained static at around 1,000 licensed vehicles. In 2025 this has increased by over 100% and there are now 2,397 vehicles licensed by Oldham Councils Licensing Authority – demonstrated in the table below.



- 3.19 The age profile of the existing fleet is predominantly over 3, with 2,257 vehicles falling into that category. These vehicles are subject to two tests per year.
- 3.20 Considering all relevant data such as vehicle age, failures, other ad-hoc applications that require vehicle testing, missed appointments and tests needed following accident damage, the Service is in a position where provision requires an ongoing review regarding the ability to meet demand.
- 3.21 Currently, there is a minimum of 4 weeks before applicants can access a test. This is also the case for those vehicles that fail their test and need to be re-tested. This means vehicle owners are kept off the road and are unable to make a living.
- 3.22 A range of options have been considered, and it is proposed that mid-year tests of vehicles aged 3 years and over are carried out by a DVSA approved test station, where a private MOT can be obtained.
- 3.23 The Department for Transport (DfT) Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Best Practice Guidance states the following:

Number of testing stations

As the application of the MOT standards is considered appropriate to ensure the mechanical safety of a vehicle it should be accepted that any DVSA approved testing centre is able to conduct this assessment in this respect and that any recent MOT will evidence the fact the vehicle is roadworthy. This approach maximises the testing capacity available to vehicle proprietors and allows licensing authorities to focus their testing capacity on any additional criteria that they consider necessary for taxi and private hire vehicles.

Licensing authorities should ensure that their testing standards are publicised and easily obtainable by applicants for vehicle licences.

3.24 The benefit of this proposal is it would provide the immediate release of around 2,000 test slots currently booked for the fleets mid-year tests. It would clear the wait time for new and renewal applications and those requiring a re-test. It would also provide capacity for any increase in vehicle numbers in the upcoming months.

3.25 Previous revisions were made to the policy in relation to the issue of MOT certificates at the Council's Moorhey Street testing station.

3.26 In January 2025, following a review of the implications of delivering this, a decision was made that it was not feasible to issue MOT certificates and maintain the capacity needed to continue service delivery. The wording regarding providing MOT certificates is required to be removed from the policy to reflect this decision.

3.27 Driving Licence Requirements

3.28 The existing policy requires applicants to have held a full GB driving licence for at least 2 years before they can apply for a licence. If an applicant holds a foreign driving licence, they must have held that licence for 2 years of which 12 months must have been GB.

3.29 It is proposed to update the policy to require applicants to hold a full UK Driving Licence for at least 12 months.

3.30 Dropping the period from 2 years to 12 months is consistent with the other GM Licensing Authorities.

3.31 Vehicle Seating Requirements

3.32 The Council is seeing an increasing number of vehicles being licensed that have been imported from other countries. A common issue among these vehicles is the width of the passenger seats and whether they are adequate for travelling in comfort.

3.33 For standard passenger cars not used as licensed vehicles, there are no specific legal minimum width requirements. The design of passenger seats is covered by EU and UK vehicle construction and safety standards concerning crashworthiness, but not explicit dimensions for adult comfort.

3.34 Local Councils often set their own standards for licensed vehicles to ensure passenger comfort including minimum seat widths.

3.35 It is proposed to impose a width requirement for passenger seats to ensure a minimum standard is being met. Any vehicles currently licensed that do not conform to the width requirement should be given a reasonable period to be replaced. Alternatively, they may be given grandfather rights to remain on until they reach the maximum age policy or cut off for emissions standards if they are not currently emission compliant.

- 3.36 It is proposed the following be applied in the policy:

The minimum accepted width for passenger seats is 400mm. The measurement point will be taken from the front of the seat cushion. For bench seats, the total width required to provide the minimum space per passenger is 1200mm.

4. Legal Comments

- 4.1 Under section 57 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Council can require an applicant for a licence under the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (in respect of hackney carriages) or the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (in respect of private hire vehicles and private hire operators) to submit such information as they may reasonably consider necessary to enable them to determine whether the licence should be granted or whether conditions should be attached to any such licence. Any person aggrieved by the refusal to grant him a licence may appeal to the magistrates' court.
- 4.2 Under section 47(1) of the Act, the Council may attach such conditions to the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence as the Council considers to be reasonably necessary and under section 48(2) of the Act, the Council may attach such conditions to the grant of a private hire vehicle licence as they may consider reasonably necessary. Any person aggrieved by any conditions attached to a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle licence may appeal to the magistrates' court.
- 4.3 The Council may suspend the licence of an existing hackney carriage/private hire vehicle driver for any reasonable cause, which need not involve a conviction. Any driver aggrieved by the decision of the Council may appeal to the Magistrates' Court within 21 days of receiving notice of the Council's decision. (A Evans)

5. Co-operative Agenda

- 5.1 Not applicable

6. Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

- 6.1 None

7. Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

- 7.1 None

8. Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

- 8.1 No – not required

9. Key Decision – No

- 9.1 Key Decision Reference - N/A

10. **Background Papers**

10.1 Consultation document

11. **Appendices**

11.1 Updated Taxi & Private Hire Licensing Policy for approval

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Licensing Policy

Taxi and Private Hire



Contact Information

Address:

Oldham Council – Licensing Team
Sir Robert Peacock House
Vulcan Street
Oldham
OL1 4LA

Email:

licensing@oldham.gov.uk

Website:

www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis

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1. Introduction

1.1 Powers & Duties

- 1.1.1 The Licensing of hackney carriages dates back to 1847 and for private hire vehicles (outside of London) to 1976.
- 1.1.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, as amended ('the 1976 Act'), places on Oldham Council as the Licensing Authority ('the council'), the duty to carry out its licensing functions in respect of the hackney carriage and private hire trades.
- 1.1.3 In carrying out its regulatory functions relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing, the council will have regard to this policy document. Notwithstanding the existence of this policy, each application or enforcement action will be considered on its own merits.
- 1.1.4 This policy has been formed from several previous documents, combining them into one informative and comprehensive guide. It sets out the requirements and standards which are expected of all those involved in Oldham's hackney carriage and private hire trades.
- 1.1.5 Applicants for licences are particularly encouraged to read the contents carefully.
- 1.1.6 This authority is under a duty to protect the public funds it administers, and to this end may use the information you have provided for the prevention and detection of fraud. It may also share this information with other bodies responsible for auditing or administering public funds for these purposes.
- 1.1.7 The council reserves the right to undertake such relevant checks that it deems necessary on the suitability of applicants. This would include checks with the DVLA, motor insurers and other agencies, partners, and councils.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 The council has set the following objectives in relation to the licensing of the hackney carriage and private hire trades and aims to regulate them to promote these objectives:
 - Ensuring passengers have safe journeys at a transparent price
 - Ensuring that vehicles are safe, accessible, and reducing their impact on the environment
 - Ensuring drivers are safe and know what they are doing
 - Ensuring drivers provide a quality service to the public within the borough
 - The protection of children and vulnerable adults

1.3 Implementation

- 1.3.1 This policy shall take effect from 21 October 2025 in its revised form, and the council expects licence holders to comply with its terms immediately.
- 1.3.2 The council will keep this policy under review and will, where appropriate, consult on any proposed revisions.
- 1.3.3 From the effective date, this policy will override and supersede all existing policies in relation to hackney carriage and private hire licensing.

1.4 Partnership Work

- 1.4.1 The council will work in partnership with the following agencies to promote the policy objectives:
- Local hackney carriage and private hire trade
 - Hackney carriage and private hire trade associations
 - Local Residents
 - Disability Groups
 - Services Users
 - Greater Manchester Police (GMP)
 - Driving Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)
 - HM Revenues & Customs (HMRC)
 - Department of Work & Pensions (DWP)
 - Department of Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA)
 - Home Office
 - Department for Transport (DfT)
 - Other Councils – including those outside Greater Manchester
 - Other Council Departments

1.5 Licensing Profile

- 1.5.1 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are vehicles licensed to carry no more than 8 passengers but may be licensed to carry less.
- 1.5.2 Hackney carriages may be used to ply for hire in the street, at ranks, or at stands and may take bookings over the telephone. Private hire vehicles must be booked in advance, by the customer, through a private hire operator and cannot be hailed in the street or stand at a rank.
- 1.5.3 Strictly speaking a ‘taxi’ is a licensed hackney carriage but in this policy, it is used more informally as are the expressions ‘taxi trade’ and ‘taxi licensing’.
- 1.5.4 The council currently licences 85 hackney carriage vehicles and approximately 1,700 private hire vehicles, as well as 55 private hire operators and approximately 3,000 dual drivers.

1.6 Application Procedure

- 1.6.1 For specific details of the application procedures for any of the licences mentioned in this policy please visit the licensing webpages at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

1.7 Timescales for Issuing Licences

- 1.7.1 Licences, identification plates and badges, will be issued within 5 working days once granted.

1.8 Power to Refuse Inactive Applications

- 1.8.1 Where an application has been dormant for a period of 6 months or more, where the applicant has either not progressed their application or has failed to submit required documents, a delegated officer may refuse an application on the grounds that we cannot be satisfied they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence. A decision will only be made once the applicant has been given notice of our intention to refuse and given 14 days to respond.
- 1.8.2 The council at its discretion may undertake such checks, deemed relevant and necessary, on the suitability of applicants. This may include, but is not limited to, police, DVLA, government departments, multi-agency partners and councils. The council reserves the right to request updated or additional information in relation to an applicant's fitness and suitability to hold a licence.

2. Vehicles

2. Limitations of Numbers

- 2.1.1 No powers exist for licensing authorities to limit the number of private hire vehicles they licence.
- 2.1.2 In relation to hackney carriage vehicles, the current legal provision on quantity restrictions is set out in section 16 of the Transport Act 1985. This provides that the grant of a hackney carriage licence may be refused, for the purpose of limiting the numbers of licensed hackney carriages 'if, but only if, the local authority is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages (within the area to which the licence would apply) which is unmet'.
- 2.1.3 The council is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages; therefore, the council shall limit the number of hackney carriages it licences to 85. The council will determine whether there is any significant unmet demand at regular intervals.
- 2.1.4 On the occasion that a hackney carriage vehicle licence becomes available for issue the licensing authority will ascertain from all licensed clients whether anybody wishes to put their name forward to apply for a licence. Those interested will then go into a draw and the successful person will be invited to

apply for a licence if they can meet the criteria within the licensing policy. In addition to the trade notification seeking expressions of interest a public notice will be displayed on the council's website seeking to enable other interested parties to participate.

2.2 Exemptions from Control

2.2.1 The 1976 Act exempts the following vehicles from control under the Act:

- Vehicles while being used in conjunction with a funeral or used wholly or mainly for the purpose of funerals by a funeral director
- Vehicles while being used in connection with a wedding

2.3 Vehicle Age Limits

2.3.1 Vehicles new to licence, or applicants who seek to change their vehicle during an existing licence, may be licensed if it is below the maximum age limit and complies with emissions and the basic standards outlined in the policy in respect of colour, access, egress etc.

2.3.2 Vehicles can be licenced until the maximum age of 12, in the case of purpose-built hackney carriages or wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) the vehicle will be licenced until 17.

2.3.3 The above requirements are subject to all new and replacement vehicles meeting the latest emission standard which is outlined in this policy.

2.4 Vehicle specification

2.4.1 Local licensing authorities have a wide range of discretion over the types of vehicles they can licence as hackney carriage or private hire.

2.4.2 The council have differing vehicle specifications for hackney carriage vehicles, private hire vehicles, stretch limousines, and highly adapted vehicles.

2.4.3 Both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are not allowed to have towing bars on their vehicles.

2.4.3.1 Private Hire:

- Vehicles may be a saloon, estate, hatch, or a vehicle designed to carry no more than 8 passengers. No purpose-built taxi can be licensed as a private hire vehicle.
- Passengers must be able to access the rear seats without having to move or fold down any other passenger seat.
- Passengers must be able to exit the vehicle, via the relevant means of egress, without having to move or fold down any other passenger seat.
- All vehicles must be suitable to carry at least 4 passengers.
- The minimum accepted width for passenger seats is 400mm. The measurement point will be taken from the front of the seat cushion. For

bench seats, the total width to provide the minimum space per passenger is 1200mm.

2.4.3.2 Hackney Carriage:

- A purpose-built hackney carriage is a vehicle that has been manufactured and sold by the relevant manufacturer as a hackney carriage. A vehicle that has been converted since being manufactured and registered is not considered to be purpose-built. Whilst vehicles converted by an approved company post-manufacturing process may be permitted onto the fleet, it does not meet the definition of purpose-built.
- All hackney carriages must be purpose-built and wheelchair accessible by 31st December 2029. Until that date, a mixed fleet of saloon and WAVs will be permitted. Any vehicle change must be to a vehicle which is emissions compliant. Any current non-emission compliant vehicles must become compliant by 31st December 2026.
- Vehicles which have a WAV condition attached to their licence must still comply with that condition.
- Passengers must be able to access the rear seats without having to move or fold down any other passenger seat.
- Passengers must be able to exit the vehicle, via the relevant means of egress, without having to move or fold down any other passenger seat.
- The minimum accepted width for passenger seats is 400mm. The measurement point will be taken from the front of the seat cushion. For bench seats, the total width to provide the minimum space per passenger is 1200mm.

2.4.3.3 Stretched Limousine:

- A stretch limousine shall be required to have a Certificate of Single Vehicle Approval issued by the Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA), or another competent national authority of an EEA member state.
- A stretch limousine shall be permitted to have left-hand drive and tinted glass in the passenger compartment only.
- A stretch limousine shall be fitted with tyres that meet both the size and weight specification for the vehicle as determined by DVSA.
- The seating capacity of a stretch limousine shall not exceed eight passengers, excluding the driver's seat and a front seat in the driver's compartment, which must not be used for carrying passengers. Any advertisement placed for the services of the limousines shall state that it is restricted to carrying a maximum of eight passengers. An infant counts as a passenger regardless of age.
- All seatbelt requirements in the Road Vehicles (Construction & Use) Regulations 1986 as amended must be complied with.
- The minimum accepted width for passenger seats is 400mm. The measurement point will be taken from the front of the seat cushion. For bench seats, the total width to provide the minimum space per passenger is 1200mm.

2.5 Emissions

- 2.5.1 All vehicles, when first licensed/new to licence, must be Euro 6 (diesel), Euro 4 (petrol) or zero emissions compliant.
- 2.5.2 Existing non-emission compliant vehicles have until 31st December 2026 to become compliant, within age limits outlined in this policy.
- 2.5.3 Where retrofit emissions technology is installed in a vehicle it shall be approved as part of the Clean Vehicle Retrofit Accreditation Scheme (CVRAS).
- 2.5.4 There is a strong ambition within Greater Manchester to move existing fleets to zero emission capable vehicles as soon as possible. Further consultations on this will take place in due course.

2.6 Vehicle Testing

- 2.6.1 All new and renewal vehicles are tested at the council's Moorhey Street testing station. Tests are conducted at the time of being licensed and mid-year depending on the age of the vehicle.
- 2.6.2 Tests are conducted at the following intervals:
- 0 to 3 years of age – 1 test per year
 - Over 3 years of age – 2 tests per year
- 2.6.3 Vehicles that need a mid-year test can go to any DVSA-approved test station for a private MOT. The MOT certificate must be dated no more than 5 working days before the test is due and must be sent to the Licensing Service by the deadline shown on the vehicle's paper licence.
- 2.6.4 Vehicle owners are responsible for arranging their own private MOT appointments.
- 2.6.5 Any vehicle that fails to produce a valid MOT by the deadline will have the licence suspended.
- 2.6.6 Vehicle owners are required to book any Council vehicle tests using the online booking system. Details of this can be found at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.
- 2.6.7 Failure to attend a Council test without 48 hours' notice will result in a further payment for a test being charged.
- 2.6.8 Where the council is not satisfied with the roadworthiness of a vehicle it may request an HPI check or require the vehicle to undergo an independent inspection and an 'Autolign' report produced, at the cost of the applicant. This is to provide information and guidance relating to the proposed licensing of the vehicle (www.autolign.co.uk).

- 2.6.9 Where a vehicle fails its test and the vehicle tester is not satisfied as to the roadworthiness of the vehicle, the vehicle may be suspended by an authorised officer of the council.
- 2.6.10 Where a vehicle has passed its test, all supporting documents to complete the application must have been received by the licensing service within 30 days. Failure to do so will result in needing a new test.
- 2.6.11 Where a vehicle is suspended, the identification plate must be removed and returned to the council. The identification plate may be handed to an officer immediately upon suspension, otherwise a notice will be placed over the plate, and you will have 7 days to return it. Where a notice is placed on the plate the proprietor of the vehicle will be required to pay for a new plate upon the suspension being lifted.
- 2.6.12 The licensing authority will issue a document outlining the criteria upon which a vehicle will be tested. This document does not form part of the policy document, although it may be referred to within it. The testing criteria may be subject to change during the life of this policy, but such amendments may not result in a review of the policy.
- 2.6.13 Copies of the testing criteria can be obtained via the licensing webpage at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

2.7 Insurance Write Offs

- 2.7.1 On 1st October 2017 the system used by insurance companies to classify write-offs changed. The following table details how the council, in its capacity as a licensing authority, will deal with vehicles that have been written off by an insurance company.

Category <i>(from 1st October 2017)</i>	Action
A – scrap only	The council will not licence or re-licence a vehicle written off in this category
B – break for parts	The council will not licence or re-licence a vehicle written off in this category
S – structurally damaged but repairable	The council will consider licensing or re-licensing a vehicle in this category; however, a vehicle will only be considered if it has passed an Autolign inspection and receives a satisfactory report/certificate (www.autolign.co.uk)
N – not structurally damaged, repairable	The council will consider licensing or re-licensing a vehicle in this category;

	however, dependent on the information contained within a report by a member or associate member of the Institute of Automotive Engineer Assessors. In certain cases, a vehicle may have to pass an Autolign inspection, and a satisfactory report/certificate produced before it will be considered.
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2.8 Accidents

- 2.8.1 In accordance with section 50(3) of the 1976 Act, “the proprietor of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle shall report to the authority as soon as reasonably practicable, and in any case within 72 hours, any accident, causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance, or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of passengers.
- 2.8.2 Following the reporting of an accident an authorised officer will examine the vehicle to ascertain its fitness to remain licensed.
- 2.8.3 Where the officer is not satisfied as to the fitness of the vehicle, the officer may suspend it from use under section 68 of the 1976 Act. To ascertain the vehicles fitness, the officer may require the vehicle to be examined by the council’s vehicle testers located at Moorhey Street testing station.
- 2.8.4 Where a vehicle is suspended, the identification plate must be removed and returned to the council. The identification plate may be handed to an officer immediately upon suspension, otherwise a notice will be placed over the plate, and you will have 7 days to return it. Where a notice is placed on the plate the proprietor of the vehicle will be required to pay for a new plate upon the suspension being lifted.
- 2.8.5 If an officer is not satisfied as to the fitness of the vehicle before a period of 2 months has passed since the suspension was issued, the vehicle licence will be revoked, and a new licence must be applied for.

2.9 Signage & Advertising

- 2.9.1 It is important that the public can identify and understand the difference between a hackney carriage and a private hire vehicle.
- 2.9.2 Private hire vehicles are not permitted to display roof-mounted signs and any signs that include the words ‘taxi’, ‘cab’, or ‘for hire’.
- 2.9.3 Vehicle identification plates are a key feature in helping to identify vehicles that are properly licensed, with the exception of stretch limousines and approved executive hire vehicles, all other licensed vehicles shall display the identification

plate on the rear of the vehicle and a disc in the top left of the vehicle windscreen.

- 2.9.4 All private hire vehicles must display a mandatory door sign. The signs must be permanently displayed on the top half of the rear passenger doors of the vehicle. These signs must always be in place whilst the vehicle is licensed.
- 2.9.5 The door signs will be issued by the Council and will display the following wording: **Private Hire Vehicle – Not insured unless pre-booked with the operator.**
- 2.9.6 In addition to the door signs, private hire vehicles must also display a sign (logo) on the passenger side of the windscreen indicating which operator they work for. This sign must be kept up to date and changed as required to accurately reflect the operator the vehicle is working for at any one time. The size of the sign must be 10.5cm width and 8.5cm high. This is to ensure it fits inside the holder supplied by the Licensing Service.
- 2.9.7 Hackney carriage vehicles must display a mandatory door sign which must be permanently displayed on the top half of the front driver and passenger door panels by way of adhesive, rather than magnetic means. These signs must always be in place whilst the vehicle is licensed. These signs must include the word “TAXI” and the name of the council together with its specified logo.
- 2.9.8 All non-purpose-built hackney carriage vehicles must display a roof sign showing white to the front and red to the rear. The roof sign must be 90cm x 15cm x 15cm.
- 2.9.9 The council, by way of conditions, restricts advertising that can be placed on any licensed vehicle. Permission to display advertisements on a licensed vehicle must be sought from the council.

2.10 Byelaws

- 2.10.1 Vehicles will be licensed for a period of 12 months. Renewal of the licence will be subject to the vehicle undertaking and passing a further test at the appointed test station.

2.11 Ownership of Multiple Vehicles

- 2.11.1 There is no limit on the number of vehicle licences an individual or a company can hold.

2.12 Security Cameras / Audio Recording Equipment in Vehicles

- 2.12.1 Security cameras are permissible in vehicles subject to certain safeguards. In addition, there are limited circumstances in which audio recording may be justified, for example, where recording is triggered due to a specific threat i.e., a ‘panic button’ in a vehicle.

2.12.2 Equipment should not be used to record conversations between members of the public. If possible, a system without this facility should be used. If your system comes equipped with a sound recording facility, then you should turn this off or disable it in some way.

2.12.3 No vehicle equipped with a security camera, and/or audio recording facilities, shall be used unless the existence of the camera and/or audio recording is clearly indicated by a notice displayed.

2.12.4 The council recognises the sensitive nature of security surveillance in general, but also recognises the legitimate concerns of licensed drivers. Equipment should be available to inspect, and images downloaded by authorised officers or constables. The owner of the footage must be registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) and signage clearly displayed to show passengers that recording takes place.

2.13 Smoking

2.13.1 It is an offence to smoke, or allow another person to smoke, in a vehicle whilst it is licensed. This applies even if you are not working.

2.13.2 The use of e-cigarettes and/or vaping in a licensed vehicle by the driver and/or passenger(s) is not permitted.

2.14 Style of Plates and Badges

2.14.1 The style of plates and badges is likely to change from time to time. The authority will keep up to date with new developments and current health and safety best practice, image, value for money, and recognition will always be a high priority.

2.14.2 Plates must be firmly fitted, in their holder, any window discs displayed, and badges must always be worn whilst working.

2.14.3 The council has specified that the vehicle licence number, make, model, licence expiry date, and number of passengers it is licensed to carry shall be placed on the identification plate. This plate must not be tampered with, or amended, by anyone other than an authorised officer.

2.15 Transfer of Owner

2.15.1 If a vehicle is sold to a new owner, the existing licence holder must notify the council within 14 days. Failure to do so is an offence and makes the licence holder liable for prosecution.

2.16 Conditions

2.16.1 The council is permitted to impose such conditions on hackney carriage and private hire vehicle licences as it considers reasonably necessary. Appendix A of this policy sets out the conditions attached to private hire vehicles, and Appendix B sets out those attached to hackney carriage vehicles.

2.16.2 The conditions at Appendices A and B do not form part of the policy document, although they may be referred to within it. The conditions could be subject to change during the life of this policy, but such amendments may not result in a review of this policy.

2.17 LPG & Electric Vehicles

2.17.1 The councils testing station at Moorhey Street does not currently have facilities to test the fuel systems of LPG and electric vehicles; therefore, the proprietor of such vehicles must obtain the relevant certificates from a DVSA approved testing station.

2.18 Carrying of Assistance Dogs

2.18.1 Under the Equality Act 2010, drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are under a duty to carry assistance dogs without additional charge. When carrying passengers with assistance dogs, drivers have a duty to:

- Convey the disabled passenger's dog and allow it to remain under the physical control of the owner
- Not to make any additional charge for doing so

2.18.2 It is best practice to ask the passenger where they want themselves and their dog to sit in the vehicle.

2.18.3 It is an offence for any operator or driver to refuse to carry an assistance dog or to charge more for the fare or booking. On conviction for such an offence drivers can face a fine of up to £1,000 and having their licence revoked.

2.19 Taxis & Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) Act 2022

2.19.1 The 2022 Act amends the Equality Act 2010 to place duties on hackney carriage and private hire vehicle drivers and operators, so any disabled person has specific rights and protections to be transported and receive assistance when using a taxi without being charged extra.

2.19.2 Although each situation will be different, and reasonable mobility assistance will be subject to other applicable law, including health and safety legislation, it is expected that drivers provide basic assistance which could include, but may not be limited to the following:

- Opening the passenger door
- Folding manual wheelchairs and placing them in the luggage compartment
- Installing the boarding ramp
- Securing a mobility aid within the passenger compartment

2.19.3 For more information about the Act, guidance can be found at www.gov.uk.

2.20 Compliance with the Equality Act 2010

2.20.1 To ensure the Acts are upheld, the licensing authority will:

- a) Have a zero-tolerance policy to accessibility refusals – investigating all reported violations of the Acts with a view to pursuing a conviction
- b) Undertake periodic test purchasing on licensed vehicles to ensure that licensing requirements are being complied with
- c) Make it a condition that drivers of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles have undertaken disability equality training, which includes information regarding the carriage of assistance dogs and their obligations under the 2022 Act

2.21 Medical Exemption Certificates

2.21.1 Drivers who have a certifiable medical condition which is aggravated by exposure to dogs may apply to the council for exemption from the duty on medical grounds. If no exemption has been applied for and subsequently granted, then drivers are required to carry assistance dogs.

2.21.2 Drivers who have a physical condition or medical grounds which make it impossible or reasonably difficult for them to provide the sort of physical assistance which the mobility assistance duties require can apply for an exemption to the council. An exemption may be issued for as short or long a period as the council considers appropriate, bearing in mind the nature of the relevant physical or medical condition.

2.21.3 The licensing authority will:

- a) Make it a condition to the licence that any notice of exemption must be exhibited in the vehicle by fixing it in an easily accessible place, for example, on the windscreen or in a prominent position on the dashboard
- b) Seek to use tactile medical exemption certificates so that visually impaired passengers can identify the certificate, which should be presented to the passenger upon request. The cost of this certificate will be borne by the driver being granted the exemption.
- c) Only issue exemption certificates when it is authorised by the driver's own GP and is accompanied by medical evidence, for example a blood test, skin prick test, or clinical history.

2.22 National Database of Vehicle Licences

2.22.1 The Government (DEFRA) have issued regulations which require licensing authorities to upload and regularly update details of all licensed vehicles onto a central register for the purposes of creating a register to use when creating clean air zones across the country.

2.23 Seat Belts – Driver Exemption

2.23.1 Generally speaking, every person driving a motor vehicle must wear a seatbelt. However, this requirement does not apply to:

- The driver of a hackney carriage vehicle while it is being used for seeking hire, answering a call for hire, or carrying a passenger for hire

- A private hire driver while they are using a private hire vehicle to carry passengers for hire

2.24 Converted Vehicles

- 2.24.1 Vehicles converted from vans which have a type approval other than M1 will not be acceptable unless they are presented with approved certification for that vehicle.
- 2.24.2 Typically, the type of vehicles adapted or modified are small vans (N1 vehicles), and larger vehicles such as minibuses (M1 vehicles). Where vehicles have been converted, applicants need to provide additional certification to satisfy the council that the conversion has been carried out to the proper and safe standard.
- 2.24.3 Where a vehicle has been registered with DVLA, no change, structural alteration, or rearrangement of detail shall be carried out to the vehicle unless such change has been subsequently granted M1 Whole Type Approval.
- 2.24.4 Any vehicles which have had their seating capacity reduced or increased since manufacture must have a Voluntary Individual Vehicle Approval (VIVA) test. Where seating has been reduced, all bolt holes or tracks where seats have been removed must be covered over. Before a licence is granted, the applicant must produce to the Council an updated logbook (V5C) to reflect the correct seating capacity.
- 2.24.5 In the first instance applicants must contact DVSA to obtain the correct IVA application form. For further information or advice, applicants must contact DVSA on 0300 123 9000 or email approvals@dvsa.gov.uk.
- 2.24.6 Any seats that have been added must be fitted to the manufacturers specification and pass the IVA test and have all the necessary documentation in place. Any limousines, imported, or converted vehicles from outside the UK will require an IVA test irrespective of age.
- 2.24.7 Further information with respect to vehicle approvals can be found at www.gov.uk/vehicle-approval.

2.25 Window Tints

2.25.1 Tinted windows will be permitted as follows:

- a) Front windscreen minimum 75% light transmission
- b) Front side glass minimum 70% light transmission
- c) Remaining glass or rear side windows (excluding rear window) minimum 20% light transmission

2.26 Executive Hire

- 2.26.1 The main distinction between private hire and executive hire is the type of client, service offered and cost of the service.

2.26.2 When determining if a booking is executive hire, consideration will be given to the following factors:

- How the booking is made
- How the payment is made
- The type of vehicle used
- The dress code of the driver
- The business plan of the operator

2.26.3 Executive hire vehicles must be of an executive, prestige standard. They must be less than 5 years old when first licensed and will not be permitted to display any form of advertising, including company details.

2.26.4 A full list of vehicle requirements and the application form can be found at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

3. Drivers

3.1 Parallel Procedures

3.1.1 The statutory and practical criteria and qualifications for private hire and hackney carriage drivers' licences are similar. Therefore, the sections below apply equally to both unless indicated.

3.2 Application Requirements

3.2.1 A full guidance document for applicants on making an application is available online at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

3.2.2 The council will not grant a licence unless it is satisfied the applicant is fit and proper.

3.2.3 An applicant must be at least 21 years of age when making an application.

3.2.4 Criminal offences are checked through the Disclosure & Barring Service via the council's contractor whose details are on our webpages. They will process the applicants online DBS application. The council requires applicants for driver licences to disclose all convictions, whether spent or otherwise, and in addition disclose any fixed penalties, cautions, bind-overs, or anti-social behaviour orders. Other applicants need only declare unspent convictions etc.

3.2.5 All applicants are required to sign up to the DBS Update Service within 30 days of the date printed on their DBS certificate. Failure to do so will result in a new DBS certificate being required.

3.2.6 All new applicants must evidence they are subscribed to the DBS Update Service before any licence will be granted.

3.2.7 As part of their application for a licence, by making that application they agree to a check of their DBS on the Update Service being carried out at a minimum of one weekly intervals. The Department for Transport's Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards states that every driver must be subject to a DBS check at least every 6 months. By conducting weekly checks, we are able to better support licence holders by giving them advance notice if their update service subscription lapses.

3.2.8 Where a check of a DBS fails or cannot be completed for any reason, the mandatory 6-month check window will commence starting the date of the last successful check. A new DBS must be applied for and produced before that time. Where a new DBS is not produced, an existing licensed driver will be suspended until such time that it is. Any affected drivers will be notified by email of their update service lapsing and must take appropriate action themselves.

3.2.9 It is the licence holder's responsibility to keep the Update Service live by paying the annual amount directly to the DBS. This fee is charged to the card they have registered and is not a direct debit payment.

3.2.10 Where an applicant has lived outside the UK for more than three continuous months in the last 5 years, they must obtain a Certificate of Good Conduct authenticated and translated into English by the relevant Embassy or Consulate to assess their suitability and review any previous convictions.

3.2.11 All applicants must by law prove to the satisfaction of the council that they are legally entitled to work in the UK prior to a licence being granted.

3.2.12 All drivers and operators who are renewing a licence from 4th April 2022 must provide they are registered with HMRC to pay UK tax. Information in relation to this can be found at [Complete a tax check for a taxi, private hire or scrap metal licence - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/complete-a-tax-check-for-a-taxi-private-hire-or-scrap-metal-licence).

3.2.13 The applicant must produce a standard passport sized photograph as part of their application which will be used on the council's database and on the council issued ID badge if a licence is granted. The photograph must resemble their usual appearance as it would be seen by the public. No sunglasses may be worn, nor any hats not required by way of religion that may otherwise obscure the face or usual appearance.

3.2.14 Should an applicant who has an application pending have any change in circumstances including medical, driving record, or conviction/arrest, they should notify the council in writing immediately to enable this information to be assessed for relevance. The council will carefully consider the

application/licence of any person who does not notify the council of matters they should under the application criteria or licence conditions.

3.2.15 A copy of the council's guidance on the suitability of applicants can be found at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

3.3 Language Proficiency and Driver Awareness Training & Knowledge Test

- 3.3.1 The Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards introduced in July 2020 recommend that a licensing authority's test of a driver's proficiency should cover both oral and written English language skills. Written proficiency is relevant because this could affect a driver's ability to understand written documents, such as policies and guidance relating to the protection of children and vulnerable adults and applying this to identify and act on signs of exploitation. Oral proficiency will be relevant in identifying potential exploitation through communicating with passengers and their interactions with others.
- 3.3.2 Language proficiency will bring wider passenger benefits to those set out in the Statutory Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Standards in terms of the driver's ability to demonstrate an understanding of the desired destination, an estimation of the time taken to get there and other common passenger requests and for the driver to provide a legibly written receipt upon request.
- 3.3.3 The Council will carry out a language proficiency test in several ways. The Council requires applicants to undertake a Driver Awareness Training Session which is immediately followed by their written Knowledge Test. Details of this can be found from 3.3.8 onwards.
- 3.3.4 Where an applicant attends their New Driver Appointment and cannot hold a basic conversation, their application will be referred to an authorised officer for an assessment of their verbal communication skills.
- 3.3.5 Where there appears to be a significant enough language barrier that the applicant cannot hold a conversation the application will be put on hold pending the applicant seeking English language lessons.
- 3.3.6 Once the applicant improves their verbal communication skills enough to hold a basic conversation they may return for a further assessment by a Senior Officer. They will then be allowed to continue with the application process.
- 3.3.7 An application will only be held open for a maximum of 6 months from the date of the initial language assessment. If the applicant fails to return or meet a satisfactory standard before that time, the application will be refused, and the individual will need to reapply.

3.3.8 All applicants will be required to attend a Driver Awareness Training course, which will be directly followed by a Knowledge Test.

3.3.9 The Driver Awareness Training will last for approximately 90 minutes and will cover the following material as a minimum:

- Disability awareness
- Equality, diversity, and inclusivity
- Safeguarding – Child Sexual Exploitation and Vulnerable Adults
- County Lines
- Licensing & other relevant legislation
- Licensing condition
- Knowledge test preparation

3.3.10 Applicants will complete their Knowledge Test directly after the training session.

3.3.11 The test will comprise of 20 multiple choice questions. To successfully pass the test the applicant must get at least 15 questions correct (75%).

3.3.12 The test will be multiple choice; applicants will have one hour to complete it.

3.3.13 The questions will cover the following topics as a minimum:

- Licence conditions/policy
- Customer care skills
- Basic numeracy skills
- Child sexual exploitation (CSE)
- Road signs
- Highway code

3.3.14 If an applicant fails the test 6 times, their application will be referred to an authorised officer who will consider refusing the application.

3.3.15 If an existing licence lapses and a period of 5 years or more passes before applying to be re-licensed, the applicant will be required to undertake the Driver Awareness Training & Knowledge Test before a new licence will be issued. This policy is in place to ensure the applicant has up to date knowledge on key licensing conditions, policy, and other relevant topics such as CSE are understood before the grant of a new licence.

3.4 Driving Licence Requirements

3.4.1 Applicants must have held a full GB driving licence for at least 12 months when applying for a licence.

- 3.4.2 An existing EU licence holder must transfer their licence to a GB DVLA licence before their current dual private hire/hackney drivers licence expires. Failure to do so is likely to result in the renewal application being refused.
- 3.4.3 Online DVLA checks of driving licences are conducted by the council's contractor and are paid for by the applicant in advance. Details of this can be found in the guidance for new applicants document on the council's website at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

3.5 Application Process Delays

- 3.5.1 Where a new application is submitted for a dual driver's licence, and the application process exceeds 6 months, an online check of the DBS will be carried out. If the check fails a new DBS will be required before any licence can be granted.
- 3.5.2 Where a new application is submitted for a dual driver's licence and the date on the medical submitted exceeds 6 months, the applicant will be required to complete a medical self-declaration before any licence can be granted.
- 3.5.3 Where a renewal application is submitted for a dual driver's licence and the licence cannot be granted within a period of 3 months, due to incomplete supporting information/documentation, the application will be refused as the council cannot verify the applicant is a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

3.6 Medical Standards

- 3.6.1 The Council has adopted the DVLA Group 2 medical standards for licensed drivers. This is the same standard applied to bus & lorry drivers and has been adopted due to the long hours worked by licensed drivers, along with the responsibility of carrying members of the public as passengers.
- 3.6.2 The medical certificate required by the council requests medical practitioners have regard to the DVLA Assessing Fitness to Drive, A Guide for Medical Professionals, which can be found at www.gov.uk/assessing-fitness-to-drive.
- 3.6.3 Medicals must be completed on the DVLA's own D4 form and accompanied by the Council's GP/Doctor Medical Declaration Form. Both forms can be found via www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.
- 3.6.4 The medical must be completed by a registered doctor who has full access to the applicant's medical history. This requirement is to ensure full disclosure of the applicant's medical conditions is made.
- 3.6.5 Any medicals submitted to the council must be dated within the last 3 months.
- 3.6.6 Any licence holder must, as soon as is reasonably practicable, notify the council of any newly diagnosed medical condition which may restrict their entitlement to a dual driver licence.

3.6.7 Medicals are required upon first application, and every 6 years thereafter until the age of 65. From the age of 65 medicals will be required annually.

3.7 Duration of Licences

3.7.1 Dual driver licences are granted for a period of 3 years. There may be circumstances where a licence cannot be issued for 3 years; this may include:

- The applicant is due to retire or cease being a licensed driver
- The driver is being given a trial (probationary period) following a hearing or assessment of their fitness to hold a licence
- Other cases that may arise from time to time that the Licensing Driver Panel or an authorised officer feel requires a licence to be issued for a period of less than 3 years

3.8 Breaks in Licence

3.8.1 The council recognises that sometimes applicants may have a break in their licence whereby they do not apply to renew before their existing licence expires.

3.8.2 These breaks can be for a variety of reasons and due to circumstances outside the control of the applicant.

3.8.3 The council affords existing licence holders a grace period of 7 days whereby they can apply to renew their dual driver licence after it has expired. Where a licence has expired and a period of more than 7 days has elapsed, the applicant must apply as a new applicant.

3.8.4 The applicant will be required to pay the fee of a new application and must submit any documentation requested by the technical support team.

3.8.5 The Driver Awareness Training and Knowledge Test will not need to be undertaken where the break in licence is less than 5 years.

3.8.6 The application process for those who have a break in licence can be found in the guidance document available on our website at www.oldham.gov.uk/taxis.

3.9 Licence Conditions

3.9.1 The council is permitted to impose such conditions as it considers reasonably necessary on private hire drivers.

3.9.2 Hackney carriage drivers are subject to Byelaws made under Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Section 171 of the Public Health Act 1875.

3.9.3 Appendix C sets out the conditions attached to all private hire drivers' licences.

3.9.4 Appendix D sets out the Byelaws attached to all hackney carriage drivers' licences.

3.10 Database of Refusals, Revocations, and Suspensions (NR3S)

3.10.1 The sharing of information, within the rules governing data protection, is an essential part of our role in protecting the public. By sharing information on our decisions, it helps other licensing authorities make informed decisions.

3.10.2 Applicants and licence holders should be aware that Oldham Council is required to use the NR3S register to record details of refusals, revocations, and suspensions.

3.10.3 All applicants upon first application, and each renewal, will be checked against the register to see whether any other licensing authority holds information about the applicant that may be useful in the decision-making process. The council also publishes records of its own decisions made for the benefit of other authorities.

3.11 Dress Code

3.11.1 The purpose of the dress code is to set a standard that provides a positive image of the licensed hackney carriage and private hire trade, promoting public and driver safety.

3.11.2 Dress Standard:

- All clothing worn by those working as a hackney carriage or private hire driver must be in good condition and the driver must keep good standards of personal hygiene.
- As a minimum standard whilst working males should wear trousers and a shirt/t-shirt or polo shirt which has a full body and short/long sleeves. Knee length shorts are acceptable. Exceptions related to faith or disability are accepted.
- As a minimum standard whilst working females should wear trousers or a knee length skirt or dress, and a shirt/blouse/t-shirt or polo shirt which has a full body and a short/long sleeve. Knee length shorts are also acceptable. Exceptions related to faith or disability are accepted.
- Footwear whilst working shall fit (i.e., be secure) around the toe and heel.

3.11.3 Examples of Unacceptable Standards of Dress

- Clothing that is not kept in a clean condition, free from holes, rips, or other damage.
- Words or graphics on any clothing that is of an offensive or suggestive nature which might offend.
- Sportswear e.g., football/rugby kits including team shirts or beachwear (tracksuits are acceptable).

- Sandals with no heel straps, flip flops, or any other footwear not secured around the heel.
- The wearing of any hood or any other type of clothing that may obscure the driver's vision or their identity.

3.11.4 Uniforms

The council recognises the positive image that uniforms can create. This dress code does not require a licensed driver to wear a distinct uniform. The council acknowledges that many hackney carriage and private hire companies do require licensed drivers to wear appropriate corporate branded uniforms, and this is a practice that the council would encourage licensed drivers to support.

4. Operators

4.1 Requirements

- 4.1.1 Operators of private hire vehicles are required to be licensed under the 1976 Act. No person may operate a vehicle as a private hire vehicle if the vehicle or driver is unlicensed. "Operate" means, in the course of business, to make provision for the invitation or acceptance of bookings for a private hire vehicle.
- 4.1.2 The council must grant an operator's licence unless the applicant is not a fit and proper person to hold one.
- 4.1.3 The council may refuse to grant an operator's licence where the trading name is the same, or similar, to an existing operator.

4.2 Conditions

- 4.2.1 The council is permitted to impose such conditions as it considers reasonably necessary on private hire operators. Appendix D sets out the conditions attached to private hire operator licences, and operators must comply with these conditions.
- 4.2.2 The conditions set out in Appendix D do not form part of the policy document, although they may be referred to within it. The conditions could be subject to change during the life of this policy, but such amendments may not result in a review of this policy.

4.3 Duration of Licences

- 4.3.1 Operator licences are granted for 5 years, unless circumstances dictate it should be granted for a lesser period.

4.4 Insurance

- 4.4.1 As a private hire operator, you may be required to obtain public liability insurance and or employee liability insurance. You should seek advice from the council as to whether you do require such insurance.

4.5 Criminal Check

- 4.5.1 An operator requires an annual basic criminal records check, conducted by the Disclosure Barring Service (DBS).
- 4.5.2 An operator must ensure all staff paid and unpaid, who have access to booking and despatch records requires a basic criminal records check, conducted by the DBS every 3 years.
- 4.5.3 Such checks will be carried out before initial employment commences and then every 3 years thereafter for staff, and annually for the operator.

4.6 Operator Policies

- 4.6.1 Operators are required by virtue of the private hire operator licence conditions to adopt, implement, review, and update as necessary the policies outlined in Section 11 of the conditions.

4.7 CSE & Licensing Training

- 4.7.1 All base/office staff are required to attend the council's CSE and Licensing Training Course.

4.8 Data Protection

- 4.8.1 Operators must ensure they are registered with the Information Commissioners Office (ICO) for the provision of handling and storing customer data. Furthermore, operators must ensure that customers personal data i.e., phone numbers, are not accessible or shared with the individual drivers without the express consent of the hirer.

5. Enforcement

5.1 Authorised Officers

- 5.1.1 Authorised officers are officers appointed by the council to fulfil duties and carry out licensing functions on its behalf.
- 5.1.2 The 1976 Act defines an authorised officer as “an officer of a district council authorised in writing by the council for the purposes of this Act”. Authorised officers have the right to do the following:
- Require drivers to produce licences, insurance certificates, and other documents.
 - Require operators to produce records.
 - Remove plates and discs from vehicles.
 - Inspect and test vehicles.
 - Suspend vehicles from use.
 - Suspend or revoke a driver’s licence.
- 5.1.3 Obstruction of authorised officers is a criminal offence. The council employs Licensing Officers who have the authority to exercise the powers set out in the 1847 and 1976 Acts.
- 5.1.4 The council has a published Enforcement Policy which details its approach to dealing with investigations, prosecutions, and sanctions.

5.2 Complaints

- 5.2.1 Should a complaint be received about a driver, operator, or vehicle proprietor it will be investigated fully. Ideally complaints should be put in writing and emailed to licensing@oldham.gov.uk.

5.3 Enforcement

- 5.3.1 Many rules and regulations apply to taxi licensing and a system of enforcement exists to oversee the process.
- 5.3.2 If a criminal offence is committed prosecutions may be brought by either the council or the police.

6. Offences

6.1 Criminal Offences

- 6.1.1 There are several specific offences that apply to the hackney carriage and private hire trades. The 1847 Act, and Byelaws made under it, together with the 1976 Act all have offences contained within them and are the ones to be aware of. Copies of the abovementioned Acts are available on request or can be downloaded from our website. Copies of the offences can be viewed at Appendix F.
- 6.1.2 In addition, all those concerned with the hackney carriage and private hire trades should make themselves aware of the relevant provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1988 e.g., speeding, traffic signs, insurance, and defective vehicles.

6.2 Driving Whilst Unlicensed

- 6.2.1 It is very important to note that offences can be committed by the driving of a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle by unlicensed drivers.
- 6.2.2 Hackney carriage and private hire vehicles remain licensed at all times a licence is in force; they cannot be driven otherwise than by the appropriate driver. This extends to any unlicensed driver including members of the family of the licensed driver.
- 6.2.3 Contravention of this rule may also result in the offence of driving whilst uninsured (and/or permitting another to drive while uninsured).

6.3 Rights of Appeal

- 6.3.1 Any person aggrieved by a requirement, refusal, or other decision of the council, including authorised officers, may appeal to the Magistrates Court.
- 6.3.2 The 1976 Act makes special provisions relating to rights of appeal. Certain decisions in relation to applications being refused are suspended etc. until the 21-day appeal period has expired and if an appeal is lodged until such appeal is disposed of. On public safety grounds certain decisions may take immediate effect. There are also further rights of appeal to the Crown Court under the Public Health Act 1936.

7. Delegated Powers

7.1 Delegation Scheme

- 7.1.1 The council cannot take all decisions directly through its committees. An Executive Director is authorised to take all action on behalf of the council that are not specifically reserved to the council or a committee. The Executive Director can then further delegate functions to officers who carry out the daily tasks and actions under that authority.

8. Fares

8.1 General

- 8.1.1 The council is not able to set the fares for private hire vehicles; this is a matter for the operator of the firm the vehicle works for.
- 8.1.2 In relation to hackney carriage vehicles, the 'Hackney Carriage Table of Fares' is set by the council and are the maximum fares that can be charged by hackney carriage drivers, which can be negotiated downwards by the hirer for journeys within the Borough.

9. Fees

9.1 Fees

- 9.1.1 The council is entitled to charge fees in respect of the various licences it administers, and legislation provides that the fees charged to applicants should cover the cost of application, administration, and enforcement. In relation to vehicles this extends to inspection, creation/maintenance of hackney stands, and training.
- 9.1.2 Licences surrendered prior to their expiry shall not be eligible for a refund of the unexpired portion of the licence.
- 9.1.3 Fees are reviewed annually in accordance with the council policy and Licensing Fees Model.

10. Hackney Carriage Stands

10.1 Taxi Ranks

- 10.1.1 The purpose of hackney carriage stands (taxi ranks) is to provide the public with a set location at which they can hire a licensed hackney carriage. Only hackney carriages licensed by Oldham Council can stand on a taxi rank or stand (as they are sometimes referred to). A list of ranks is available on our website.

10.1.2 There is an obligation on drivers when plying for hire in any street, and not actually hired, to proceed to one of the ranks designated under the 1976 Act. The 1847 Act defines a street as extending to any “road, square, court, alley and thoroughfare, or public passage”. Land will only be a street if the public have a right to be there.

11. Public Registers

11.1 Registers

11.1.1 The council is required by the 1847 Act to maintain a register of licences it issues. These, and other information, can be viewed on our website.

Appendix A – Private Hire Vehicle Conditions

The licensee shall at all times comply with the provisions of Part II of the local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the conditions hereinafter provided.

1. Definitions

For a legal definition of the following terms, see the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

“Appointed Test Station” a garage approved by the Council for the purposes of carrying out a Vehicle Test

"Authorised Officer" any Officer of the Council authorised in writing by the Council for the purposes of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

"The Council" Oldham Council

"Identification Plates" means the plates issued by the Council for the purpose of identifying the vehicle as a private hire vehicle

"The Licensee" means the holder of a private hire vehicle licence.

"The Operator" / “PHO” a person who makes provisions for the invitation and acceptance of booking / hiring for a Private Hire Vehicle.

"The Private Hire Vehicle" a motor vehicle constructed to seat fewer than nine passengers, other than a hackney carriage or public service vehicle which is provided for hire with the services of a driver for the purpose of carrying passengers

"The Proprietor" means the person(s) who owns, or part owns the private hire person who is in possession of the vehicle if subject to a hiring or hire purchase agreement.

"The Meter" means any device for calculating the fare to be charged in respect of any journey in a private hire vehicle by reference to the distance travelled or time elapsed since the start of the journey or a combination of both

"Test" a compliance test of the vehicle undertaken at an Appointed Test Station Words importing the masculine gender such as "he" and "him" shall include the feminine gender and be construed accordingly.

Where any condition below requires the Licensee to communicate with the Council, unless otherwise stipulated, all communication must be to the Council's Licensing Department.

2. Identification Plates

2.1 The vehicle licence identification plate must be displayed in the authorised plate holder, obtained from the Licensing Department; and the plate must be fixed in the plate holder using the clips provided, to allow it to be easily removed by an authorised officer. The plate holder should be securely fixed to the vehicle in such a way that neither it, nor the number plate are obscured; and that both are 100% visible. Cable ties are not an acceptable means of fixing a plate to a vehicle or indeed to the plate holder.

2.2 The Licensee shall ensure that the 'Identification Plate' and window disc is maintained and kept in such condition that the information contained on the plate and disc is clearly visible to public view at all times.

2.3 The Council has specified that the vehicle licence number, make, model and licence expiry date together with the number of passengers it is licensed to carry shall be placed on the identification plate attached to the vehicle. This plate must not be tampered with or amended by anybody other than an Authorised Officer.

3. Condition of Vehicle

3.1 The Licensee shall ensure that the private hire vehicle shall be maintained in good mechanical and structural condition at all times and be capable of satisfying the Council's mechanical and structural inspection at any time during the period the vehicle is licensed.

3.2 The interior and exterior of the Private Hire Vehicle shall be kept in a clean and safe condition by the Proprietor.

3.3 The Licensee shall not allow the mechanical and structural specification of the Private Hire Vehicle to be varied without the written consent of the Council.

3.4 The Licensee of the Private Hire Vehicle shall: -

- provide sufficient means by which any person in the Private Hire Vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring
- ensure the interior of the vehicle is kept wind and watertight and adequately ventilated
- ensure the seats in the passenger compartment are properly cushioned and covered
- ensure the floor in the passenger compartment has a proper carpet, mat, or other suitable covering
- ensure fittings and furniture of the Private Hire Vehicle are kept in a clean condition and well maintained and in every way fit and safe for public use
- provide facilities for the carriage of luggage safely and protected from damaging weather conditions.

3.5 All vehicles must undertake and pass any further test at the appointed test station in accordance with Council policy (Arrangements for vehicle testing are entirely the responsibility of the Licensee).

3.6 A daily vehicle check log must be completed by the driver of the vehicle at the beginning of each shift. The checks to be carried out are as follows:

- Lights and indicators
- Tyre condition, pressures, and tread
- Wipers, washers, and washer fluid levels
- Cleanliness inside and out
- Bodywork – no dents or sharp edges
- Licence plate present and fixed in accordance with these conditions
- Any internal discs on display
- Door stickers on display
- Tariff sheet on display
- Horn in working order

The Licensee shall record the above information and keep it in the vehicle at all times and make it available to an authorised officer upon request.

4 Passengers

4.1 The proprietor shall not allow any child under the age of 16, who is unaccompanied by an adult, to be conveyed in the front of the private hire vehicle.

5 Accidents & Incidents

5.1 The Licensee shall report to the Council, in writing, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case within 72 hours any accident/incident, causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of passengers. The report should contain full details of the damage including photos.

6. Vehicle signage

6.1 No sign, notice, flag or emblem or advertisement shall be displayed in or on any Private Hire Vehicle without the express permission of the Council.

6.2 The Licensee shall ensure that the Council issued mandatory door signs are affixed permanently to the vehicle and are not removed whilst the vehicle is licensed.

6.3 The Licensee shall ensure the operator sign is displayed in the front windscreen of the vehicle to clearly identify which operate they are working for at any one time.

7. Assistance Dogs

7.1 The Licensee shall permit any assistance dog to ride in the vehicle (in the control and custody of the passenger) and allow it to be carried in the front passenger seat footwell of the vehicle if required.

7.2 The location of the assistance dog must be agreed with the passenger.

7.3 The Licensee will ensure that any certificates exempting drivers of the vehicle from duties to carry assistance dogs, are displayed visibly and prominently as prescribed by the Council.

8. Other Animals

8.1 Any other animal may be carried in the vehicle at the discretion of the driver and must be carried in the rear of the vehicle in the custody and control of the passenger.

9. Meters

9.1 If the vehicle is fitted with a meter:

- The licensee shall ensure the meter is of a type approved by the Council and maintained in a sound mechanical condition at all times
- The licensee shall ensure the meter is set to display any fare table which may be adopted by the private hire operator
- The Council may calibrate and seal, at the expense of the licensee, any meter which is to be used in the licensed vehicle
- The licensee shall ensure the meter is illuminated and located in a position where any hirer can see the fare easily
- The licensee shall ensure that the words 'FARE' shall be printed on the face of the meter in clear letters, to apply to the fare recorded thereon
- The licensee shall ensure that the meter and any connected equipment is fitted securely without the risk of impairing the driver's ability to control the vehicle or be a risk to any person in the vehicle
- No meter shall be replaced without the consent of an authorised officer of the council.

10. Fare Tables

10.1 The Licensee shall ensure that a copy of the current fare table is available, when not working for an 'app only' based operator, so it can be easily read by passengers.

10.2 The Licensee shall ensure that the fare table is not concealed from view or rendered illegible whilst the vehicle is being used for hire.

11. Licence

11.1 The Licensee shall retain a copy of the original private hire vehicle drivers' licences of all drivers driving the private hire vehicle and produce the same to an Authorised Officer or Police Constable on request.

12. Convictions and Suitability Matters

12.1 The licensee shall ensure they provide a relevant DBS certificate as required by the Council to assess their fit and proper status; and that it is kept up to date and remains 'valid' in line with the Council's policies.

12.2 The licensee will register and remain registered with the DBS Update Service to enable the Council to undertake regular checks of the DBS certificate status as necessary.

12.3 The licensee shall notify the Council if they are subject to any:

- arrest or criminal investigation,
- summons,
- charge,
- conviction,
- formal/simple caution,
- fixed penalty,
- criminal court order,
- criminal behaviour order or anti-social behaviour injunction,
- domestic violence related order,
- warning or bind over
- or any matter of restorative justice

against them immediately in writing (or in any case within 24 hours) and shall provide such further information about the circumstances as the Council may require.

13. Notifications and Licence Administration

13.1 For the duration of the licence, the licensee shall pay the reasonable administration charge or fee attached to any requirement to attend training, or produce a relevant certificate, assessment, validation check or other administration or notification process.

13.2 The Licensee shall notify the Council in writing within 14 days of any transfer of ownership of the vehicle. The notice will include the name, address, and contact details of the new owner.

13.3 The Licensee shall give notice in writing to the Council of any change of his address or contact details (including email address) during the period of the licence within 7 days of such change taking place.

13.4 If requested by an Authorised Officer the Licensee must provide, in the timescale requested, in writing, to Council the following information: -

- The name of the driver and their badge number
- The address of the driver
- The company for whom the driver works for
- The date and time you hired / lent / leased / rented your vehicle to the driver
- Whose insurance the driver will be using the vehicle under
- Whether the driver will have sole use of the vehicle, if not sole use whom else will have access to the vehicle
- The expected duration the vehicle will be hired / lent / leased / rented to the driver

14. CCTV

14.1 The licensee shall ensure, in accordance with any Council policy, that CCTV cameras are fitted and in good working order.

NB: This proposed condition is subject to change and further consultation if CCTV is mandated either by GM or the Government. At this stage further conversations will take place with the Surveillance Commissioner and relevant parties.

Appendix B – Hackney Carriage Vehicle Conditions

1. Definitions

"Appointed Test Station" a garage approved by the Council for the purposes of carrying out a Test

"Authorised Officer" any Officer of the Council authorised in writing by the Council for the purposes of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

"The Council" means Oldham Council

"Hackney Carriage" has the same meaning as in the Town Police Clauses Act 1847

"The Identification Plates" the plates issued by the Council for the purpose of identifying the vehicle as a hackney carriage

The "Licensee" is the person who holds the Hackney Carriage Vehicle Licence

"The Proprietor" means the person(s) who owns or part owns the private hire person who is in possession of the vehicle if subject to a hiring or hire purchase agreement.

"Taximeter" any device for calculating the fare to be charged in respect of any journey in a hackney carriage or private hire vehicle by reference to the distance travelled or time elapsed since the start of the journey, or combination of both

“Test” a compliance test of the vehicle undertaken at an Appointed Test Station

“Vehicle” the vehicle licensed as a Hackney Carriage

Words importing the masculine gender such as “he” or “him” shall include the feminine gender and be construed accordingly.

Where any condition below requires the Licensee to communicate with the Council unless otherwise stipulated, all communication must be with the Council’s Licensing Department.

2. Identification Plates

- 2.1 The vehicle identification plate must be displayed in the authorised plate holder, obtained from the Licensing Department; and that the plate must be fixed in the plate holder using the clips provided to allow it to be easily removed by an authorised officer. The plate holder should be fixed to the vehicle in such a way that neither it nor the number plate are obscured; and that both are 100% visible. Cable ties are not an acceptable means of fixing plates to a vehicle or indeed to the plate holder.
- 2.2 The Licensee of the vehicle shall ensure that the ‘Identification Plate’ and window disc is maintained and kept in such condition that the information on the plate and disc is clearly visible to public view at all times.
- 2.3 The Council has specified that the vehicle licence number, make, model and licence expiry date together with the number of passengers it is licensed to carry shall be placed on the identification plate attached to the vehicle. This plate must not be tampered with or amended by anybody other than an Authorised Officer.

3. Condition of Vehicle

- 3.1 The Licensee shall ensure that the vehicle is always maintained in a good mechanical and structural condition and be capable of satisfying the Council's mechanical and structural inspection at any time during the period of the licence.
- 3.2 The interior and exterior of the Hackney Carriage shall be kept in a clean condition by the Proprietor.
- 3.3 The Licensee shall not allow the mechanical and structural specification of the vehicle to be varied without the consent of the Council.
- 3.4 The Licensee of the vehicle shall: -
 - provide sufficient means by which any person in the vehicle may communicate with the driver during the course of the hiring
 - ensure the interior of the vehicle to be kept wind and watertight and adequately ventilated

- ensure the seats in the passenger compartment are properly cushioned and covered
 - cause the floor in the passenger compartment to be provided with a proper carpet, mat, or other suitable covering
 - ensure fittings and furniture of the vehicle are kept in a clean condition and well maintained and in every way fit and safe for public use
 - provide facilities for the carriage of luggage safely and protected from damaging weather conditions.
- 3.5 All vehicles must undertake and pass any further test at the appointed test station in accordance with Council policy (arrangements for vehicle testing are entirely the responsibility of the Proprietor).
- 3.6 The Licensee must ensure that a daily vehicle check log must be completed by the licensee or driver(s) of the vehicle at the beginning of each shift. The checks to be carried out are as follows:
- Lights and indicators
 - Tyre condition, pressures, and tread
 - Wipers, washers, and washer fluid levels
 - Cleanliness inside and out
 - Bodywork – no dents or sharp edges
 - Licence plate present and fixed in accordance with these conditions
 - Any internal discs on display
 - Door and bonnet stickers on display
 - Tariff sheet in display
 - Horn in working order
- 3.7 The Licensee shall ensure that they or the driver shall record the above information and keep it in the vehicle at all times and make it available to an authorised officer upon request.
- 4 Passengers**
- 4.1 The proprietor shall not allow any child under the age of 16, who is unaccompanied by an adult, to be conveyed in the front of the hackney carriage vehicle.
- 5. Accidents & Incidents**

- 5.1 The Licensee shall report to the Council, in writing, as soon as is reasonably practicable and in any case within 72 hours any accident/incident causing damage materially affecting the safety, performance or appearance of the vehicle or the comfort or convenience of passengers. The report should contain full details of the damage including photos.

6. Advertisements

- 6.1 The Licensee may only display advertisements on the outside of a London Style Hackney Carriage which must comply with the Council's policy and for which consent has been provided by an Authorised Officer.

7. Vehicle Signage

- 7.1 The Licensee will not allow any sign, notice, flag, emblem, or advertisement to be displayed in or from any Hackney Carriage Vehicle without the express permission of the Council
- 7.2 The Licensee will ensure that any mandatory signs be affixed permanently to the vehicle as directed by the Council and are not removed whilst the vehicle is licensed.

8. Assistance Dogs

- 8.1 The Licensee shall permit any assistance dog to ride in the vehicle (in the control and custody of the passenger) and allow it to be carried in the front passenger seat footwell of the vehicle if required.
- 8.2 The location of the assistance dog must always be agreed with the passenger.
- 8.3 The Licensee will ensure that any certificates exempting drivers of the vehicle from duties to carry assistance dogs, are displayed visibly and prominently as prescribed by the Council.

9. Other Animals

- 9.1 Any other animal may be carried in the vehicle at the discretion of the driver and must be carried in the rear of the vehicle in the custody and control of the passenger.

10. Taximeters

- 10.1 The Licensee shall ensure the vehicle is fitted with a Council approved, tested, and sealed Taximeter before plying or standing for hire and shall use the approved meter only.
- 10.2 The Licensee shall ensure that the Taximeter is located within the vehicle in accordance with the reasonable instruction of an authorised officer, and sufficiently illuminated that when it is in use, it is visible to all passengers.

- 10.3 The Licensee shall ensure that the authorised Taximeter is maintained in a sound mechanical/electrical condition at all times and programmed to calculate the fare in accordance with the current fare's tariffs fixed by the Council.
- 10.4 The Licensee shall ensure that the 'for hire' sign is extinguished when the fare commences, and the taximeter is brought into operation.
- 10.5 The Licensee shall ensure that the 'for hire' sign is not illuminated when the vehicle is outside of its licensing district.

11. Tampering with Taximeters

- 11.1 Taximeters must not be tampered with by anybody other than an Authorised Officer or an approved contractor approved by the Council.

12. Fare Table

- 12.1 The Licensee shall ensure that a copy of the current fare table supplied by the Council is displayed and visible at all times so that it can be easily read by passengers.

13. Drivers Licence

- 13.1 The Licensee shall retain copies of the hackney carriage drivers' licence of each driver of their vehicle and produce the same to an Authorised Officer or Police Officer on request.

14. Communication Equipment

- 14.1 The Licensee shall ensure that any communication equipment, used to communicate with passengers, fitted to their Hackney Carriage is at all times kept in a safe and sound condition and maintained in proper working order.

15. Convictions and Suitability Matters

- 15.1 The licensee shall ensure they provide a relevant DBS certificate as required by the Council to assess their fit and proper status; and that it is kept up to date and remains 'valid' in line with the Council's policies.
- 15.2 The licensee will register and remain registered with the DBS Update Service to enable the Council to undertake regular checks of the DBS certificate status as necessary.
- 15.3 The licensee shall notify the Council if they are subject to any:
- arrest or criminal investigation,

- summons,
- charge,
- conviction,
- formal/simple caution,
- fixed penalty,
- criminal court order,
- criminal behaviour order or anti-social behaviour injunction,
- domestic violence related order,
- warning or bind over
- or any matter of restorative justice

against them immediately in writing (or in any case within 24 hours) and shall provide such further information about the circumstances as the Council may require.

16. Notifications and Licence Administration

- 16.1 For the duration of the licence, the licensee shall pay the reasonable administration charge or fee attached to any requirement to attend training, or produce a relevant certificate, assessment, validation check or other administration or notification process.
- 16.2 The Licensee shall notify the Council in writing within 14 days of any transfer of ownership of the vehicle. The notice will include the name, address, and contact details of the new owner.
- 16.3 The Licensee shall give notice in writing to the Council of any change of their address or contact details (including email address) during the period of the licence within 7 days of such change taking place.
- 16.4 If requested by an Authorised Officer the Licensee must provide, in the timescale requested, in writing, to Council the following information: -
 - The name of the driver and their badge number
 - The address of the driver
 - The company for whom the driver works for
 - The date and time you hired / lent / leased / rented your vehicle to the driver

- Whose insurance the driver will be using the vehicle under
- Whether the driver will have sole use of the vehicle, if not sole use whom else will have access to the vehicle;
- The expected duration the vehicle will be hired / lent / leased / rented to the driver

17. Intended Use

- 17.1 The Licensee of the Hackney Carriage vehicle licence shall ensure that an accurate and contemporaneous record is made and maintained either by himself or the driver of the vehicle, of all uses of the vehicle when being used to fulfil pre-booked hiring's on behalf of a private hire operator licensed by another local authority.
- 17.2 The accurate and complete record should include, as a minimum, the following information, and be recorded in a stitched or heat / glue bound book to provide a continuous record without breaks between rows: -
- date
 - time of first pick up
 - first 'pick up' point by location / name / address including house number
 - destination point by location / name / address including house number
 - the name and address of the operator on behalf of which the journey was being undertaken
- 17.3 Each book shall legibly and clearly display the details of the vehicle to which it relates, including the make, model, registration number and vehicle licence number.
- 17.4 The record of journeys shall be available for inspection at any time by a Police Officer or PCSO; and an Authorised Officer of any local authority who through the course of their normal duties are authorised to inspect the licensed vehicle.
- 17.5 Each book, when full, shall be delivered to the Council's Licensing Department.
- 17.6 Where the Licensee wishes to maintain a record of use in any other format than set out above, prior approval must be obtained from an Authorised Officer.

18. CCTV

- 18.1 The licensee shall ensure that, in accordance with any Council policy, that CCTV cameras are fitted and in good working order.

NB: This proposed condition is subject to change and further consultation if CCTV is mandated either by GM or the Government. At this stage further conversations will take place with the Surveillance Commissioner and relevant parties.

Appendix C – Private Hire Driver Conditions

The licensee shall at all times comply with the provisions of Part II of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the conditions hereinafter provided.

Definitions

In this licence:

"the Act" means the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

"the Council" means Oldham Council

"the Operator" means a person holding a licence to operate private hire vehicles issued pursuant to Section 55 of the Act.

"private hire vehicle" has the same meaning as in Section 80 of the Act.

"the proprietor" has the same meaning as in Section 80 of the Act.

"the meter" means any device for calculating the fare to be charged in respect of any journey in a private hire vehicle by reference to the distance travelled or time elapsed since the start of the journey or a combination of both.

"authorised officer" has the same meaning as in section 80 of the Act.

"licensee" means the person who holds the private hire drivers' licence.

“hirer” means the customer that has made the booking, who could also be the passenger

“passenger” means the person(s) travelling in the booked vehicle. For the avoidance of doubt, all children (including babies) count as individual passengers.

‘Sexual Activity’ includes but not limited to touching, kissing, inappropriate comments or conversation or propositioning.

“Owner” means a person to whom any lost property belongs to

“Drivers badge” has the same meaning as in Section 80 of the Act.

Words importing the masculine gender such as "he" and "him" shall include the feminine gender and be construed accordingly.

Where any condition below requires the Licensee to communicate with the Council, all communication must be to the Council's Licensing Department unless otherwise stated. Reference to the Council's email address means the email address of the Council's Licensing Department.

1. Licence Administration

1.1 The licensee shall notify the Council in writing of any change of their address and contact details during the period of the licence within 7 days of such change taking place.

1.2 The licensee shall notify the Council in writing within 7 days of commencing work with a private hire operator.

1.3 The licensee shall notify the Council in writing within 7 days of any subsequent change of operator.

1.4 The licensee shall provide a copy of their private hire driver's licence with the Operator through which the Private Hire Vehicle is being used.

1.5 The licensee shall ensure that relevant documentation (including DBS certificate/status, Medical Certificate, and right to work documentation) required by the Council to assess their fit and proper status, is kept up to date and remains ‘valid’ in line with the Council's policies.

1.6 For the duration of the licence, the licensee shall attend (as required) and pay the reasonable administration charge or fee attached to any requirement for training or to produce a relevant certificate (i.e., new medical certificate), assessment, validation check or other administration process.

1.7 The licensee will register and remain registered with the DBS Update Service to enable the Council to undertake regular checks of the DBS certificate status as necessary.

2. Convictions and Suitability Matters

2.1 The licensee shall notify the Council immediately in writing (or in any case within 24 hours) if they are subject to any of the following:

- arrest or criminal investigation,
- summons,
- charge,
- conviction,
- formal/simple caution,
- fixed penalty or speed awareness course,
- criminal court order,
- criminal behaviour order or anti-social behaviour injunction,
- domestic violence related order,
- warning or bind over
- any matter of restorative justice

And shall provide such further information about the circumstances as the council may require.

3. Notification of Medical Conditions

3.1 The licensee shall notify the council of any newly diagnosed or change to a current medical condition which may restrict their entitlement to a driver's licence requiring a DVLA Group 2 medical standard. Notification must be sent to the Council's email address immediately (or in any case within 48 hours) of the relevant diagnosis or change to medical condition.

3.2 The licensee shall at any time (or at such intervals as the council may reasonably require) produce a certificate in the form prescribed by the council signed by an appropriate Doctor/Consultant who has access to the driver's full medical records to the effect that he/she is or continues to be fit to be a driver of a private hire vehicle.

4. Driver Badge

4.1 The licensee shall at all times when driving a private hire vehicle wear the driver's badge issued to them by the Council so that it is plainly and distinctly visible and show it to any passenger(s) if requested.

4.2 The badge shall be returned to the council immediately upon request by an Authorised Officer (i.e., the licence is suspended, revoked, or becomes invalid for any reason).

4.3 The licensee must wear any lanyard, clip, or holder issued to them by the Council.

5. Driver Conduct and Dealing with Passengers

5.1 The licensee shall behave and drive in a civil, professional, and responsible manner to passengers, other road users, members of the public, Council officers and other agencies.

5.2 The licensee shall comply with any reasonable request made by an Authorised Officer, Testing Mechanic, or Police Officer. The licensee will also comply with any reasonable request of the passenger regarding their comfort during the journey (e.g., heating/ventilation).

5.3 The licensee shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with the private hire vehicle at the appointed time and place as required by the operator booking or as instructed by an Authorised Officer.

5.4 The licensee shall stop or park the private hire vehicle considerately and legally (not in contravention of any road traffic orders) and shall switch off the engine if required to wait (no idling).

5.5 The licensee shall not use the vehicle's horn to attract customer attention. The horn must only be used in an emergency.

5.6 The licensee shall comply with the Council's Licensed Drivers Dress Code.

5.7 The licensee shall provide reasonable assistance to passengers as required by the hirer (e.g., mobility assistance and loading/unloading luggage). The licensee shall not provide mobility assistance to passengers by physically touching without consent to do so.

5.8 The licensee shall ensure that luggage (including shopping and other large objects) is safely and properly secured in the vehicle.

5.9 The licensee and passengers are not permitted to smoke in the vehicle. The licensee also must not:

- a) vape or use an e-cigarette in the vehicle
- b) drink or eat whilst driving
- c) use any handheld device whilst driving or allow themselves to be distracted in any other way
- d) display any moving images or have any form of visual display screen fitted to the licensed vehicle other than satellite navigation
- e) conduct lengthy telephone conversations whilst driving passengers
- f) play a radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the vehicle (other than for communicating with the operator) without the express permission of the passenger(s))
- g) cause or permit the noise emitted from any radio or sound reproducing instrument or equipment in the private hire vehicle to cause nuisance or annoyance to any person

5.10 The licensee when hired shall, (subject to any directions given by the passenger), take the shortest route bearing in mind likely traffic problems and known diversions and explain to the passenger any diversion from the most direct route. Alternative routes must be discussed with the passengers before being taken.

5.11 The licensee shall, at all times when a vehicle is hired, take all reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the passengers within, entering or alighting from the vehicle.

5.12 The licensee shall report immediately to the operator any incident of concern including accidents where hurt or distress has been caused, customer disputes or passenger conduct concerns.

5.13 The licensee shall be vigilant regarding vulnerable passengers and safeguarding concerns when carrying out their duties and shall report any concerns immediately or in any event within 24 hours in accordance with council guidance.

5.14 The licensee shall report (on the conclusion of the booking to the operator any complaint a passenger/member of the public has made to the licensee regarding their conduct or the conduct of other personnel/drivers.

5.15 The licensee shall not engage in any sexual activity in a licensed vehicle, even if consensual.

5.16 The licensee shall not, except with the express consent of the hirer/passenger or approved ride share journey, carry any person (other than the hirer/passenger) in the private hire vehicle.

5.17 The licensee shall not carry a greater number of passengers than is prescribed on the vehicle licence and shall not allow any unaccompanied child to be carried in the front seat of the vehicle.

5.18 The licensee will ensure that the vehicle is clean for passengers, and the plate clearly visible at all times they are in control of the vehicle.

5.19 The licensee will ensure that they are aware of all the workings and mechanics of the vehicle before undertaking bookings.

5.20 The licensee shall report any accidents involving a licensed vehicle they are driving within 72 hours to the Licensing Department and must comply with any request thereafter by an Authorised Officer.

5.21 The licensee shall ensure that a daily vehicle check log has been completed (either by themselves or the vehicle proprietor) at the beginning of each shift. The checks to be carried out are as follows:

- lights and indicators
- tyre condition, pressures, and tread
- Wipers, washers, and washer fluid levels
- Cleanliness inside and out
- Bodywork – no dents or sharp edges
- Licence plate present and fixed in accordance with these conditions
- Any internal discs on display and facing inwards so customers can see
- Door and bonnet stickers on display
- Tariff sheet on display
- Horn in working order

The licensee shall ensure a record of the above information is kept in the vehicle at all times and will ensure the information is available to an Authorised Officer or Police Officer upon request.

6. Assistance Dogs

6.1 The licensee shall carry a disabled passenger's assistance dog with the passenger. The licensee will follow the advice of the passenger as to the exact position and location for the assistance dog to travel, to best suit their needs.

6.2 Where the licensee has been granted a medical exemption to exempt them from any requirement under the Equality Act 2010; the notice of the exemption must be displayed in the vehicle so that it is visible by fixing it in an easily accessible place (for example on the dashboard) or as prescribed by the Council.

6.3 The licensee must notify their operator of any medical exemption they hold in relation to the requirements under the Equality Act 2010.

7. Fares

7.1 If the vehicle is fitted with a meter the licensee shall ensure it is always visible. The licensee shall ensure it is not cancelled or concealed until the passenger has paid the fare.

7.2 The licensee shall ensure a copy of the current fare table is always displayed and visible in the vehicle.

7.3 The licensee shall not demand from any passenger a fare in excess of that previously agreed, displayed on a fare card, or if the vehicle is fitted with a meter the fare shown on the face of the taximeter.

7.4 The licensee shall, if requested by the passenger, provide a written receipt for the fare paid.

8. Conduct relating to illegally plying or standing for hire

8.1 The licensee shall ensure that the passenger(s) entering the vehicle is/are the correct person(s) for whom the vehicle has been pre-booked.

8.2 The licensee must take precautions against behaviour that may be deemed to be standing or plying for hire, by not plotting or waiting without a booking:

- a) in high footfall /high visible locations
- b) outside busy venues/businesses or in close proximity to events
- c) at the front or back of designated hackney ranks
- d) in groups or lines that present as a 'rank'
- e) in contravention of road traffic orders

8.3 The licensee shall not while driving or in charge of a private hire vehicle:

- a) Tout or solicit any person to hire or be carried for hire in any private hire vehicle.
- b) Cause or allow any other person to tout or solicit any person to hire or be carried for hire in any private hire vehicle.
- c) Offer any Private Hire vehicle for immediate public hire (whether the journey was undertaken or not)
- d) Accept, or consider accepting, an offer for the immediate hire of that vehicle, including any such hire that is then communicated to the Operator to be

recorded on the Operator's booking system. For the avoidance of doubt, bookings can only be undertaken when first communicated to the licensee by the operator.

9. Responsibility for lost property

9.1 The driver must immediately after the end of every hiring or as soon as is practical thereafter, search the vehicle for any property which may have been accidentally left there.

9.2 If any property accidentally left in a private hire vehicle is found by or handed to the licensee then all reasonable steps must be taken to return the property to its rightful owner. If the property cannot be returned to the owner, then the property should be reported to the operator through whom the passenger booked the vehicle at the earliest opportunity and handed to the Operator as soon as is practical and in any case within 24 hours of the property being found.

Appendix D – Hackney Carriage Byelaws

Hackney Carriage Byelaws

Byelaws made under Section 68 of the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and Section 171 of the Public Health Act 1875, by the Council of Oldham Metropolitan Borough with respect to hackney carriages in Oldham.

Interpretation

1. Throughout these byelaws "the Council" means Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council and "the district" means Metropolitan Borough of Oldham.

Provisions Regulating the Manner in which the Number of each Hackney Carriage corresponding with the Number of its Licence, shall be Displayed

- a) The proprietor of hackney carriage shall cause the number of the licence granted to him in respect of the carriage to be legibly painted or marked on the outside and inside of the carriage, or on plates affixed thereto.
- b) A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall: -
 - i. not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer any such number to be concealed from public view while the carriage is standing or plying for hire; and
 - ii. not cause or permit the carriage to stand or ply for hire with any such painting marking or plate so defaced that any figure or material particular is illegible

Provisions regulating how Hackney Carriages are to be furnished or provided

2. The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall: -

- a) provide sufficient means by which any person in the carriage may communicate with the driver
- b) cause the roof or covering to be kept watertight
- c) provide any necessary windows and a means of opening and closing not less than one window on each side
- d) cause the seats to be properly cushioned or covered
- e) cause the floor to be provided with a proper carpet, mat or other suitable covering
- f) cause the fittings and furniture generally to be kept in a clean condition, well maintained and in every way fit for public service
- g) provide means for securing luggage if the carriage is so constructed as to carry luggage; and
- h) provide at least two doors for the use of persons conveyed in such carriage and a separate means of ingress and egress for the driver.

3. The Proprietor of a Hackney Carriage shall cause the same to be Provided with a Taximeter so constructed, attached and maintained as to comply with the following requirements, that is to: -

- a) the taximeter shall be fitted with a key, flag or other device the turning of which will bring the machinery of the taximeter into action and cause the word "HIRED" to appear on the face of the taximeter
- b) such key, flag or other device shall be capable of being locked in such a position that the machinery of the taximeter is not in action and that no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter; when the machinery of the taximeter is in action there shall be recorded on the face of the taximeter in clearly legible figures, a fare not exceeding the rate or fare which the proprietor or driver is entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage by time as well as for distance in pursuance of the tariff fixed by the Council;
- c) the word "FARE" shall be printed on the face of the taximeter in plain letters so as clearly to apply to the fare recorded thereon
- d) the taximeter shall be so placed that all letters and figures on the face thereof are at all times plainly visible to any person being conveyed in the carriage and for that purpose the letters and figures shall be capable of being suitably illuminated during any period of hiring; and
- e) the taximeter and all the fittings thereof shall be so affixed to the carriage with seals or other appliances that it shall not be practicable for any person to tamper with them except by breaking, damaging or permanently displacing the seals or other appliances.

Provisions Regulating the Conduct of the Proprietors and Drivers of Hackney Carriages plying within the District in their Several Employments and Determining whether such Drivers shall wear any and what Badges

4. The driver of a hackney carriage provided with a taximeter shall: -

- a) when standing or plying for hire, keep the key, flag or other device fitted in pursuance of the byelaw in that behalf locked in the position in which no fare is recorded on the face of the taximeter
- b) before beginning a journey for which a fare is charged for distance and time, bring the machinery of the taximeter into action by moving the said key, flag or other device so that the word "HIRED" is legible on the face of the taximeter

and keep the machinery of the taximeter in action until the termination of the hiring; and

- c) cause the dial of the taximeter to be kept properly illuminated throughout any part of a hiring which is between half-an-hour after sunset and half-an-hour before sunrise and also at any other time at the request of the hirer.

5. A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not tamper with or permit any person to tamper with any taximeter with which the carriage is provided, with the fittings thereof, or with the seals affixed thereto.

6. The driver of a hackney carriage shall, when plying for hire in any street and not actually hired: -

- a) proceed with reasonable speed to one of the stands appointed by the Council
- b) if a stand, at the time of his arrival, is occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, proceed to another stand
- c) on arriving at a stand not already occupied by the full number of carriages authorised to occupy it, station the carriage immediately behind the carriage or carriages on the stand and so as to face in the same direction; and
- d) from time to time, when any other carriage immediately in front is driven off or moved forward cause his carriage to be moved forward so as to fill the place previously occupied by the carriage driven off or moved forward.

7. A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage, when standing or plying for hire, shall not make use of the services of any other person for the purpose of importuning any person to hire such carriage.

8. The driver of a hackney carriage shall behave in a civil and orderly manner and shall take all reasonable precautions to ensure the safety of persons conveyed in or entering or alighting from the vehicle.

9. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage who has agreed or has been hired to be in attendance with the carriage at an appointed time and place shall, unless delayed or prevented by some sufficient cause, punctually attend with such carriage at such appointed time and place.

10. A proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall not convey or permit to be conveyed in such carriage any greater number of persons than the number of persons specified on the plate affixed to the outside of the carriage.

11. If a badge has been provided by the Council and delivered to the driver of a hackney carriage he shall, when standing or plying for hire and when hired, wear that badge in such position and manner as to be plainly visible.

12. The driver of a hackney carriage so constructed as to carry luggage shall, when requested by a person hiring or seeking to hire the carriage: -

- a) convey a reasonable quantity of luggage,
- b) afford reasonable assistance in loading and unloading; and
- c) afford reasonable assistance in removing it to or from the entrance of any building, station, or place at which he may take up or set down such person.

Provisions Fixing the Rates or Fares to be paid for Hackney Carriages within the District and Securing the Due Publication of such Fares

13. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall be entitled to demand and take for the hire of the carriage the rate or fare prescribed by the Council, the rate of fare being calculated by a combination of distance and time unless the hirer express at the commencement of the hiring his desire to engage by time.

14. Provided always that where a hackney carriage furnished with a taximeter shall be hired by distance and time the proprietor or driver thereof shall not be entitled to demand and take a fare greater than that recorded on the taximeter, save for any extra charges authorised by the Council which it may not be possible to record on the face of the taximeter.

15. The proprietor of a hackney carriage shall cause a statement of the fares fixed by council resolution to be exhibited inside the carriage, in clearly distinguishable letters and figures.

16. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage bearing a statement of fares in accordance with this byelaw shall not wilfully or negligently cause or suffer the letters or figures in the statement to be concealed or rendered illegible at any time while the carriage is plying or being used for hire.

Provisions Securing the Safe Custody and Re-delivery of any Property accidentally left in Hackney Carriages and Fixing the Charges to be made in respect thereof

17. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall immediately after the termination of any hiring or as soon as practicable thereafter carefully search the carriage for any property which may have been accidentally left therein.

18. The proprietor or driver of a hackney carriage shall, if any property accidentally left therein by any person who may have been conveyed in the carriage be found by or handed to him: -

- a) carry it as soon as possible and in any event within 48 hours if not sooner claimed by or on behalf of its owner, to a police station in the Borough and leave it in the custody of the officer in charge of the office on his giving a receipt for it; and
- b) be entitled to receive from any person to whom the property shall be re-delivered an amount equal to five pence in the pound of its estimated value (or the fare for the distance from the place of finding to the office of the Council, whichever be the greater) but not more than five pounds.

Penalties

19. Every person who shall offend against any of these byelaws shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding Level 2 on the Standard Scale and in the case of a continuing offence to a further fine not exceeding two pounds for each day during which the offence continues after conviction.

Repeal of Byelaws

20. These byelaws revoke any byelaws previously made by Oldham Metropolitan Borough Council which are subsisting at the date of these byelaws, and which relate to hackney carriages and their drivers.

Dated 15th March 2004

Appendix E – Private Hire Operator Conditions

The Operator shall at all times comply with the provisions of Part II of the local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and the conditions hereinafter provided.

1. Definitions

For a legal definition of these terms, see the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. You can get a copy online.

"Authorised Officer" any Officer of the Council authorised in writing for the purposes of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

"The Council" means Oldham Council

"The Operator / PHO" a person who makes provisions for the invitation and acceptance of bookings/hiring for a Private Hire Vehicle.

"The Private Hire Vehicle" a motor vehicle constructed to seat fewer than nine passengers, other than a hackney carriage or public service vehicle which is provided for hire with the services of a driver for the purpose of carrying passengers

"District" means the area within the Licensing Authority boundary

Words importing the masculine or feminine gender such as 'his' and 'her' shall include a company and be construed accordingly.

Reference to the Council's email address means the email address for the Council's Licensing Department.

Where any condition below requires the Licensee to communicate with the Council, unless otherwise stipulated, all communication must be to the Council's Licensing Department.

2. Premises & Equipment

2.1 The Operator shall obtain any necessary planning permission required for his/her premises and shall comply with any conditions imposed.

2.2 The Operator shall provide adequate communication facilities and staff to provide an efficient service to the public using the operator's facilities.

2.3 The Operator's premises shall be kept clean and tidy, and adequately heated, ventilated and lit.

2.4 The Operator shall ensure that any waiting area for the use of prospective hirers shall be provided with adequate and comfortable seating.

2.5 The Operator's radio/electrical equipment where installed shall be regularly maintained in good working condition and any defects shall be repaired promptly.

2.6 The Operator shall at no time cause or permit any audio equipment to be a source of nuisance, annoyance, or interference to any other person. In addition, all reasonable precautions are to be taken to ensure that activities within the Operator's office and from licensed vehicles do not create a nuisance to others.

2.7 The Operator shall obtain and maintain a public liability insurance policy in respect of his/her premises and produce the same to an Authorised Officer or Constable on request.

2.8 The Operator must display the following, at any premises that the general public have access to and/or on online booking sites and applications:

- A copy of the current Operator licence
- A schedule of fares
- A notice which provides information on how to complain to the Licensing Authority including email and phone number
- A copy of the public liability insurance policy certificate

The above shall be displayed in a prominent position within the relevant premises where it can be easily read; or clearly marked on the relevant online site/app where it can be easily accessed.

2.9 If the Operator has a website and/or uses Application based technology to attract bookings, the notices listed at 2.8 above must also be available to view on the relevant web pages or application menu.

2.10 The Operator shall not allow their Licensed Operator Premises to be used to conduct business relating to licensees of other non-Greater Manchester local authorities.

3. Booking Fares

3.1 When accepting the hiring, the Operator shall, unless prevented by some sufficient cause, ensure that a licensed private hire vehicle attends at the appointed time and place.

3.2 When accepting the hiring, the Operator shall, if requested by the person making the booking, specify the fare or the rate of the fare for the journey to be undertaken and, in every case, the Operator shall immediately enter all the details of the hiring legibly as required, by Condition 3.3.

3.3 The records of hiring accepted by the Operator as required under Section 56 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, shall contain the following detail:

- Time and date booking received (using 24-hour clock)
- Name and contact details (phone number or address) of person making the booking
- How the booking was made e.g., telephone/online etc
- Time and detailed pick-up location
- Specific destination (the use of the term 'as directed' or similar term should only be used exceptionally).
- ID of despatched driver (i.e., name and call sign)
- ID of despatched vehicle (Licence/fleet number)
- ID of person taking booking (excludes electronic bookings)
- Any special requirements e.g., wheelchair accessible or disability assistance
- Details of any subcontracting to or from another PHO (Inc. any other Operator owned by the Operator subject to these conditions)
- Any fare quoted at time of booking, if requested by the person making the booking.

3.4 The Operator shall not allow drivers to pass a booking on to the Operator on the passenger's behalf and will take all reasonable steps to ensure their drivers are aware that such practice is illegal.

3.5 Where a booking is sub-contracted the customer must be so advised and informed as to the sub-contracted Operator who will be undertaking the booking.

3.6 If a non – Oldham Council licensed driver and vehicle are being despatched to fulfil the booking, the Operator must communicate the following message to the person making the booking (whether via telephone, automated booking or booking App) before the booking is made (allowing the requester the opportunity to confirm the booking or not):

*The driver and vehicle you are about to book are not licensed by Oldham Council to their standards and Oldham Council are not empowered to take licensing action in the event of a complaint. Your driver and vehicles are licensed by **{insert name of***

Council} and customers will have to deal with that authority in the event of a complaint.

3.7 The despatch, by an Operator, of a passenger carrying vehicle (PCV) and the use of a public service vehicle (PSV), such as a minibus, is not permitted without the express consent of the hirer.

3.8 Where the hirer is being given the option of one of the above-mentioned vehicles being despatched, they should be notified that the driver is subject to different checks than a private hire driver and are not required to have an enhanced DBS check.

3.9 The Operator must advise the authority of the booking system it uses and advise in writing when the booking system is changed. The operator must demonstrate the operation of the system to an authorised officer upon request. Only the confirmed booking system (whether that be an electronic or manual system) can be used to record journeys taken for and carried out by vehicles licensed by Oldham Council (or a Public Services Vehicle, operating under a licence from the Driver & Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA)).

4. Record Keeping & Responsibility

4.1 The Operator must keep detailed, up to date, records of every driver and vehicle operated by themselves (whether licensed as private hire or hackney carriage) and no matter which Council licensed the driver/vehicle. The records must include:

- a) Name and home address of the driver
- b) The dates the driver commenced fulfilling bookings from the PHO and the date the driver ceased taking bookings from the PHO (where applicable).
- c) A copy of the driver's current private hire or hackney carriage driver licence including the expiry date of that licence and that Licensing Authority that issued it.
- d) Name and home address of the proprietor of every vehicle
- e) A copy of the current vehicle licence including expiry date, and the licensing authority that issued it.
- f) The date the vehicle was first used by the PHO to fulfil bookings and the date the PHO ceased using the vehicle to fulfil bookings (where applicable)
- g) The vehicle registration number
- h) A list of unique radio/call sign allocated to the driver and vehicle
- i) A copy of the valid insurance in place for the driver and vehicle

4.2 The Operator must ensure that booking records are:

- Kept electronically
- Are available for immediate inspection by an Authorised Officer or Police Officer
- Able to be printed onto paper or downloaded in an electronic format continuous and chronological
- Not capable of retrospective alteration or amendment
- Kept as one set of records. Cash and credit account bookings can be separately identified but must not be in separate sets of records.
- The name of the person compiling the records must be detailed on the records.

- Are clear, intelligible, kept in English and retained for a minimum of 12 months from the date of the last entry or for such other period as required by an Authorised Officer.

4.3 The Operator must retain records for a minimum period of 12 months and make available any GPS data and any voice recording system for inspection upon request by an Authorised Officer or Police Officer.

4.4 The Operator must implement a robust system to ensure that drivers and/or vehicles do not operate when their licence or insurance has expired. This must be documented and approved by an Authorised Officer.

4.5 The Operator must conduct a check of the Council's public register (where it exists) when contracting a driver to carry out bookings.

4.6 The Operator must take all reasonable steps to ensure that its drivers and vehicles, when plotting or waiting without bookings around the district, do not do so:

- a) in high footfall / high visible locations
- b) outside busy venues/businesses or in close proximity to large events
- c) at the front or back of designated hackney ranks
- d) in groups or lines that present as a 'rank'
- e) in contravention of road traffic orders

Operators will upon request by an Authorised Officer or Police Officer demonstrate how they monitor and control this behaviour.

4.7 The Operator must have an approved process in place to ensure that the individual carrying out a booking is the licensed driver they have contracted for this purpose.

4.8 The Operator will ensure registration with the Information Commissioner's Office for Data Controller, CCTV, and other relevant purposes. Where the Operator is exempt from registration with the Information Commissioner's Office, they will notify the Council within 7 days of the commencement of these conditions.

4.9 Where the Operator agrees sub-contracting arrangements with other non-Oldham Council licensed Operators, it must have due regard for the comparative licensing policies and standards of the relevant licensing authority their partner Operator is subject to and take steps not to undermine the Council's licensing standards which have been set in the interests of promoting high levels of public safety.

5. Complaints

5.1 The Operator must notify the Council immediately (or in any case within 24 hours) by email of receiving or otherwise becoming aware of any complaint/allegation, police enquiries, or notification of convictions involving any driver that is registered to carry out bookings for the operator, which relates to matters of a sexual nature, violence/threats of violence or substance misuse.

5.2 The Operator must notify the Council within 72 hours of any complaint/allegation, police enquiries, or notification of convictions involving any driver that is registered to

carry out bookings for the operator, which relates to matters involving dishonesty or equality.

5.3 The Operator is required to provide at the time of notification to the council the identity of the driver involved and the nature of the complaint/enquiry including the complainant's details. This notification to the Council must take place regardless of whether the Operator ceases any contractual arrangement with the driver.

5.4 The Operator must record every complaint received against its service (against any driver operated by him, including those licensed by other authorities carrying out a sub-contracted booking on the Operator's behalf) and, if unable to resolve the complaint within 7 days (from the date of the complaint) the Operator must provide the complainant with the relevant Licensing Authority contact details within 10 days (from the date of complaint).

5.5 Where a complaint not covered by section 5.1 above is received against a driver and it remains unresolved after 7 days (from the date of complaint), the operator must notify the Council within 10 days (from the date of complaint). The Operator is required to provide at the time of notification, the identity of the driver involved, the nature of the complaint/enquiry including the complainant's details.

5.6 The Operator must keep all complaint records for at least 12 months (including against drivers carrying out sub-contracted bookings) and ensure these records are available for inspection at any time an authorised officer may request to review them.

6. Convictions and Staff Vetting

6.1 The licensee shall notify the Council immediately in writing (or in any case within 24 hours) if they are subject to any of the following:

- arrest or criminal investigation,
- summons
- charge
- conviction
- formal/simple caution
- fixed penalty
- criminal court order
- criminal behaviour order or anti-social behaviour injunction
- domestic violence related order
- warning or bind over
- any matter of restorative justice

and shall provide such further information about the circumstances as the Council may require.

6.2 The Operator must keep up to date records of all individuals working in any capacity (paid or unpaid) and who have access to booking records for the business as follows:

- Full Name
- Address
- Date of Birth
- Contact details (phone and email)

- DBS issue date and certificate number
- Start and finish dates of employment
- Job Title

6.3 The Operator must ensure that all individuals (non-drivers) working in any capacity and have access to booking records (paid or unpaid) have obtained a basic DBS Certificate from the Disclosure and Barring Service before commencing employment. The DBS certificate must be dated within one month before the commencement of employment.

6.4 The Operator must ensure that DBS checks are carried out for all existing relevant staff (as per condition 6.3) within one month of the commencement of these conditions. The employee is subject to a basic DBS check every 3 years.

6.5 The Operator is subject to an annual basic DBS check.

6.6 The Operator must have a policy compatible with the Council's suitability policy or adopt the Council's suitability policy and implement this policy in relation to the recruitment of all staff (paid or unpaid) and the recruitment of ex-offenders. This must be produced upon request.

6.7 The Operator must be able to evidence that they have had sight of a basic DBS by maintaining a register. The register should be a 'living document' that maintains records of all those in employment for at least 12 months, being the duration of how long booking records are to be kept and allows cross referencing between the two records. A record that the operator has had sight of a basic DBS check certificate (although the certificate itself should not be retained) should be retained for the duration that the individual remains on the register. Should an employee cease to be on the register and later re-entered, a new basic DBS certificate should be requested and sight of this recorded.

6.8 Operators may outsource booking and dispatch functions, but they cannot pass on the obligation to protect children and vulnerable adults. Operators should be required to evidence that comparable protections are applied by the company to which they outsource these functions.

7. Advertisements

7.1 The Operator shall not cause or permit to be displayed in, on or from his/her premises or to be published in relation to the Operator's business any sign, notice or advertisement which consists of or includes the words "Taxi" whether in the singular or plural or the words "For Hire" or any other word or words of similar meaning or appearance whether alone or as part of another word or phrase or any other word or words likely to cause a person to believe that any vehicle operated by him/her is a hackney carriage.

7.2 All advertisements by the Operator should first be approved by the Council to ensure they comply with conditions and do not breach the Codes of Practice of the Advertising Standards Authority or those of the Portman Group relating to alcohol advertising.

7.3 The Operator must not dispatch any vehicle that has been licensed by another Authority, which uses, displays or exhibits any literature, documentation, advertising or which displays any signage associated to the Private Hire Operator or the Council which suggests, indicates, misleads or might lead to a misunderstanding that the vehicle is licensed by this Council.

8. Notifications and Licence Administration

8.1 For the duration of the licence, the licensee shall pay the reasonable administration charge or fee attached to any requirement to attend training, or produce a relevant certificate, assessment, validation check or other administration or notification process.

8.2 The Licensee shall give notice in writing to the Council of any change of their address or contact details (including email address) during the period of the licence within 7 days of such change taking place.

9. Duty to Co-Operate

9.1 The Operator and their staff shall co-operate fully with any Local Authority Authorised Officer or Police Officer in respect of any enquiries or investigations carried out relating to drivers or vehicles currently connected to the business or formerly connected to the business.

9.2 The operator will provide the Council with details of appropriate members of staff (whether at the base or via telephone) to be contactable during the times of operation (day or night) in relation to compliance/enforcement related matters. Where the contact details change, the Operator shall inform the Council of the new contact details within 24 hours.

9.3 The Operator shall grant access to the licensed premises to any Local Authority Authorised Officer or Police Officer upon request.

10. Lost Property

10.1 Any lost property held by the Operator must be stored securely for 6 months after it was found.

11. Operator Policies

11.1 Operators are required to adopt, implement, review, update as is necessary and submit to the Council the following policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Customer Service and Complaints Policy which includes conduct of drivers and the timeframe for responding to complaints
- Equality Policy (Equality Act 2010) including disability awareness and the carrying of assistance animals.
- Data Protection Policy
- Recruitment / Suitability Policy

12. Training

12.1 Operators should ensure that they have attended any licensing training required by the Council within one month of a licence being granted or as otherwise directed by the Council.

12.2 The Operator must ensure that training is provided to relevant staff (paid or unpaid) on licensing law, Licensing policy, the policies listed at paragraph 12.1 and how and when to accept bookings. This training must be undertaken within one month of the commencement of these conditions or employment and thereafter, at least every two years. The Operator must keep a record of the training which has been signed by the operator and the member of staff.

Appendix F – List of Offences

Hackney Carriage Offences – Town Police Clauses Act 1847

Offence
Giving False information on application for HC proprietors Licence
Failure to notify change of address of HC proprietor
Plying for hire without HC proprietors Licence
Driving a HC without HC drivers' licence
Lending or parting with HC drivers' licence
HC proprietor employing unlicensed driver
Failure by HC proprietor to hold HC drivers' licence
Failure by HC proprietor to produce HC drivers' licence
Failure to display HC plate
Refusal to take a fare
Charging more than the agreed fare
Obtaining more than the legal fare
Travelling less than the lawful distance for an agreed fare
Failing to wait after a deposit to wait has been paid
Charging more than the legal fare
Carrying other person than the hirer without consent
Driving HC without proprietor's consent
Person allowing another to drive HC without proprietor's consent
Drunken driving of HC

Wanton or furious driving or wilful misconduct leading to injury or danger
Driver leaving HC unattended
HC driver obstructing other HC's

Hackney Carriage Offences – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Offence
Failure to notify transfer of HC proprietors' licence
Failure to present HC for inspection as required
Failure to inform local authority where HC is stored if requested
Failure to report an accident to local authority
Failure to produce HC proprietors' licence and insurance certificate
Failure to produce HC drivers' licence
Making false statement or withholding information to obtain HC drivers licence
Failure to return plate after notice given after expiry, revocation, or suspension of HC proprietors licence
Failure to surrender drivers' licence after suspension, revocation or refusal to renew
Permitting any vehicle other than HC to wait on a HC stand
Charging more than the meter fare for a journey ending outside the district, without prior agreement
Charging more than the meter fare when HC used as private hire vehicle
Unnecessarily prolonging a journey
Interfering with a taximeter
Obstruction of authorised officer or constable
Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable
Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable

Private Hire Offences – Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Offence
Using an unlicensed PH vehicle
Driving a PH vehicle without a PH drivers' licence
Proprietor of a PH vehicle using an unlicensed driver
Operating a PH vehicle without a PH operator's licence
Operating a vehicle as a PH vehicle when the vehicle is not licensed as a PH vehicle
Operating a PH vehicle when the driver is not licensed as a PH driver
Failure to display PH vehicle plate
Failure to notify transfer of PH vehicle licence
Failure to present PH vehicle for inspection as required
Failure to inform local authority where PH vehicle is stored if requested
Failure to report an accident to local authority
Failure to produce PH vehicle licence and insurance certificate
Failure to produce PH drivers' licence

Failure to wear PH drivers' badge
Failure by PH operator to keep records of bookings
Failure by PH operator to keep records of PH vehicles operated by him
Failure to produce PH operator's licence on request
Making false statement or withholding information to obtain PH drivers or operator's licence
Failure to return plate after notice given after expiry, revocation, or suspension of PH vehicle licence
Failure to surrender drivers' licence after suspension, revocation, or refusal to renew
Charging more than the meter fare when HC used as PH vehicle
Unnecessarily prolonging a journey
Interfering with a taximeter
Obstruction of authorised officer or constable
Failure to comply with requirement of authorised officer or constable
Failure to give information or assistance to authorised officer or constable

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LICENSING COMMITTEE

Hackney Carriage Licensing Survey

Report of Executive Member for Housing & Licensing

Officer contact: Nicola Lord – Principal Licensing Officer

21 October 2025

Executive Summary

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of a survey to measure demand for hackney carriages within the Borough.

Recommendations

That Members:

- 1) Note the report; and
 - 2) Decide whether to retain the current limit of 85 hackney carriage vehicles in the Borough
 - 3) Decide whether more wheelchair accessible vehicles (WAVs) are needed on the fleet either in addition to existing vehicles or brought on when saloon vehicles are replaced
-

1. **Purpose of the report**

The purpose of this report is to inform Members of the outcome of a survey to measure demand for hackney carriages within the Borough.

2. **Background**

- 2.1 Current hackney carriage, private hire and operator licensing is undertaken within the legal frameworks first set by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847, amended and supplemented by the Transport Act 1985 (S.16) in regard to hackney carriage vehicle limits, and by the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 for private hire vehicles and operators. Hackney carriage vehicle licences are the only part of licensing where such a stipulation occurs and there is no legal means by which either private hire vehicle numbers, drivers or operators can be limited.
- 2.2 The Department for Transport (DfT) Best Practice Guidance, most recently revised in November 2023, seeks to provide information to the licensing authority to meet S.16 of the Transport Act 1985 “that the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence may be refused if, but only if, the licensing authority is satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages within its local area, which is unmet”.
- 2.3 The Council has commissioned an Unmet Demand Survey to be undertaken in line with the DfT Best Practice Guidance every 3 years. The last survey due to be undertaken was started in early 2020 but was discontinued following the country going into a national lockdown.
- 2.4 The most recent survey prior to this year was carried out in 2017 and was carried out by Ian Millership from CTS Traffic & Transportation. Mr Millership has carried out the previous surveys in 2011 and 2014 and was commissioned to carry out the 2025 survey to provide a level of consistency in how the study is conducted.

3. **Methodology**

- 3.1 The following methodology was used to conduct the study:
 - Review of relevant policies, standards etc. to understand the authority’s aspirations for meeting travel needs and social inclusion and provide context to determining overall demand for travel and how this should be met
 - Extensive rank observations including monitoring passengers waiting time, any illegal plying for hire, use of hackney carriages by wheelchair users and levels of vehicle activity
 - On street interviews: a survey of 250 representative people on street to obtain information about their understanding of the sector, their last taxi journey, their overall levels of taxi use, about quality and barriers to use
- 3.2 The above methodology mirrors that used in the previous survey but also incorporates developments in methodology since the last survey, particularly guidance from the DfT’s 2023 Best Practice Guidance.

4. Consultation

- 4.1 Consultation took place with key stakeholders and the trade. There was a total of 134 trade responses which is significantly higher than in previous surveys (47 in 2020 and 41 in 2017). This may be explained by the sharp increase in the total number of licence holders in 2025.
- 4.2 91% of hackney carriage respondents and 49% of private hire agreed the numbers of vehicles should continue to be limited.
- 4.3 Most of the comments about benefits of the limit being retained related to the excess numbers of vehicles. Specific benefits quoted were 'experienced drivers, reduced congestion and better service'.

5. Overall Conclusions

- 5.1 The survey was carried out between March and June 2025 with the rank and on-street public consultation in April, driver surveys through April and May, and key stakeholder consultation throughout the full period.
- 5.2 The number of hackney carriages has remained at 85 since at least 1994 although private hire vehicle numbers have increased significantly, as have driver numbers.
- 5.3 Oldham is one of the two Greater Manchester authorities that does not currently stipulate all hackney carriages should be WAVs. The level of these vehicles was around 25% of the fleet in 2013, but this has now reduced to around 14% as of the last few years.
- 5.4 The estimated 2025 average weekly level of passengers is 4,403. This is 53% lower than in 2017.
- 5.5 The level of observed WAVs in the survey was 11% which is very similar to the 14% that exist in the total fleet. The level of usage of these vehicles was up to 7 people using wheelchairs, compared to the 4 observed in 2017. The level of people assisted into vehicles has increased significantly from 18 in 2017, to 98 in 2025.
- 5.6 In terms of scoring aspects from interviewees, 'good' was the most dominant score with the highest 'good' scores for vehicle cleanliness and driver professionalism.
- 5.7 24 people took time providing further detail for those aspects they had rated 'very good'. The further details were as follows:
 - Great service
 - Very reliable
 - Polite drivers
 - Drivers know the area very well
 - Neat and clean
 - Very helpful and polite
 - Always on time
 - Minibus service always professional

- Vehicles old but good
- Very cheap

5.8 The index of significance of unmet demand is at the highest it has been in the last 3 surveys at 8.87 but remains a long way from the industry accepted level of 60 that would suggest the unmet demand was significant.

5.9 On the basis of the evidence gathered in the survey the key conclusion is that there is no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages which is significant at this point in time.

6. Options

6.1 Members are asked to consider the outcome of the study report and relevant guidance and have the options of:

- a) retaining the limit of 85 vehicle licences
- b) releasing a set number of licences (possibly as WAVs)
- c) lifting the quantity restrictions altogether

6.2 Members should note the Council's current Taxi & Private Hire Vehicle Licensing Policy position is as follows:

"All hackney carriage vehicles must be purpose-built and wheelchair accessible by 31 December 2029. Until that date, a mixed fleet of saloon and WAVs will be permitted".

7. Response from Oldham Hackney Association

7.1 Trades response as follows its may be not in sequence as as author written in its reports .

We as trades representatives thankful to Oldham councils that initiated this survey to establish the unmet demands is significant or not which usually the cost survey is paid by my members this time Oldham council paid 25% fee towards this survey which was really appreciated .

Reports writer's clearly stated that there is no significant unmet demands in Oldham Oldham council free to retain the number 85 which beneficial to public plus trades as well service was counted as good .

The conclusion is no significant unmet demands in Oldham .

Most importantly that mixed fleets in Oldham working effectively and meeting customers needs according to equality Act 2010 .

As Greater Manchester authorities proposing all black cabs by 2030 we as trades feels that is not possible to achieve that goals because black cabs at present the price of £70k by 2030 that will be over £100k even second hands vehicles price is unaffordable in Oldham because Oldham town centre commercial activities are very poor so 100% black cabs not possible to achieve this target in Oldham only best things is to have mixed fleets mostly vehicles

are environmentally friendly at present and in future 100% electric saloons vehicles depending on price of electric vehicles.

Survey back ground and methodology and its significance,

Report writer have given depth details trades thinks that is adequate and sufficient we don't want add any things extra or repeats the same again and he given full details in development and legislation and practice including equity Act 2010.

Case law and unmet demand,

Three cases council took the courts and trades wins all three because survey were carried out and there was no significant unmet demands and they meets the conditions of 1985 transport Act .

We in Oldham had major advantages that our dual badge is allowed to hackney carriages vehicles price or private hires vehicles , triple lock licensing clearly states that all three should be from same councils but unfortunately licensing allowed if driver badge and plated outside Oldham but work with local operators that is acceptable but we as trades feels that is not fair to our trades and encourage them to carried illegal works as well (plying for hires and parked and pick the customers from ranks as well most of time they parked parallel with hackney rank in Waterloo street and some park in front of hackney vehicles all these issues were raised regularly to licensing, councils but so these drivers continued working on these spots .

Local background and context,

This give the basic details that how the contract the survey company asked them regarding unmet demand survey and author given the Oldham history and it's population and different locations of Oldham areas

Out of total population 1.9 % used taxis because private cars numbers are increasing significantly it is imperative to note that our trades facing difficulties .Oldham council is part of Greater Manchester transport hub bee network killed our business due to lowest fare prices ie £2 for Manchester as I given information that London black cabs and Brimingham black drivers giving black cabs due to private hires vehicles are increasing at very high rates now LFT proposing put the caps on private hires vehicles otherwise black cab in both areas completely finish similar situation is developing in the Oldham as well .

Hackney trades is on it's knees that out 85 hackney 54 working on private operators systems which clearly shows that ranks works are diminishing we needs helps to address this problem on war footing rather putting under the carpet by doing this it will multiple the problems as our feeder rank causing major problems that private car , private hires cars and delivery drivers causing mayhem on ranks trades continuously communicating with wardens and send emails to Jemmy only get ready made cross-pounding printed emails in last and present survey reports clearly indicated this problem I f no bodies take responsibility where we stands .

Taxi statistics,

Previous two surveys clearly showed that hackney carriages meeting no unmet demands problems like present one but private hires numbers are significantly increased which is very detrimental to hackney trades .

Now Oldham council allowed private hires drivers bring wheelchairs assessable vehicles to work in Oldham no distinguishing left and make Hackney under valued .

History of demand survey in Oldham,

During lockdown period few ranks were introduced in Oldham but not much work available on ranks and night economy hit the hardest several night clubs and pubs were closed down due lack of public interest only one night clubs available in Waterloo street unfortunately this rank is flooded with private hires vehicles leaving little work for Hackney drivers our complaints dropped on deaf ears and illegal works continue near the nightclub.

Due to poor night economy several ranks abounded like St Mary ,Lord street and near tram stations mumps bridges and integrated centre with disabled people's places at present only three ranks commercially viable , Royton, Tommyfield and Yorkshire streets in town centres and upper mill rank not suitable place.

Present survey 2025 rank Hackney movement was good customer were not wait long vehicles were available immediately but during working hours drivers were waiting for customers over one hours or more particularly in the morning was over 1.5 hours waiting time which creates problems to Hackney drivers live hoods .

if you look ranks activities at present time (2025) there is significant reduction in customers numbers (page16)if these 4 ranks not working hackney drivers bankrupt. You can see yourself customers flows reduce by half comparing surveys of 2017 (page 18)

Waiting time slightly increase due too many hackney vehicles working on radio systems due to poor follows of customers on the ranks many customers come near the ranks they already booked private hires vehicles or uber they wait near the cameras installed near the ranks can't differentiate the customer waiting for hackney vehicles or private hires vehicles.in these majority peoples walk away for good health reasons not any others reasons

General public views ,

Report writer used experience qualified persons asked the questions and write down the answers correctly sample was about 250 peoples with different age groups plus drinking alcohol during the interview time peoples said they used hackney plus private hires vehicles but majority used private hires vehicles may be due to price differences these statistics not properly tabulated they mixed figures that can be seen and draw the conclusion in our opinion that were very satisfactory no alarming situation and page 26 just general information nothing else but general score ing was good and vehicles cleanliness good and drivers were professional and knowledgeable but price was in question only 3% which can be ignored Royton ranks poor scores due to driver behaviour which

completely surprised me mostly drivers who work Royton ranks well dressed , well spoken and very good knowledge of their destination (So trades representative not agreed with the reports writers)

5 key stakeholders consultation,

As stakeholders answered and response were kept in secret that is fine with us we don't want to explore it further .

Trade stakeholders views,

No comment !

Because all pages are self explanatory with fine details written which licensing officials and committee members can read or wish to make any observations they are entitled to we have no objections.

Evaluation of unmet demand and its significance,

This information based on over 3/4 pages with fine details and writer analysis that there's no unmet demand significantly present and council can retains the present limits (85 hackney plates) in Oldham and can defended if necessary in courts .

Summary,

This is written over pages with fine details plus statistically relevant figures and findings which show that every things is perfectly balanced no doubt writer analysis the figures very carefully left no hiccups for the reader of this reports.

Public views,

Very satisfactory the service provided in Oldham areas with hackney vehicles but private hires drivers made the situation muddy that needs addressing by the licensing and councils .

Page 50 to 53

General information regarding hackney trades but writer expressed concerns regarding private hires drivers which making difficulties for hackney traders that needs to address by council official and make public aware of licensed vehicles which is working in Oldham areas they must understand the difference between the twos

Recommendations,

Mr Millership and his colleagues reached t to the decision that during this survey there is no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent which is significant in Oldham licensing areas. The committee is therefore able to retains the present limits levels (85) and improving the feeder ranks position immediately . We as a trade hope committee made the decision wisely and retained the limits 85 which is beneficial for hackney drivers and councils too thanks

A R khayal Chair

Board member nphta

Zafar Iqbal directors

Mohammed Israr director

8. Legal Comments

8.1 Before a local authority can refuse an application for a vehicle licence in order to limit the number of licensed taxis, they must be satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of taxis within the area to which the licence would apply which is unmet. If the local authority are thus satisfied, a discretion as opposed to an obligation, arises to refuse the grant of a licence, but if the local authority are not so satisfied, they cannot refuse to grant a licence for the purpose of limiting the number of licensed taxis and are thus obliged to grant it.

8.2 It is important to note that local authorities have an unfettered discretion to increase the number of hackney carriage licences they issue and case law has confirmed that any such decision to increase the numbers should not be judged in an over-refined or over-legalistic way. If the Council wishes to maintain the existing policy of limiting the number of hackney carriage licences it must be satisfied that there is no significant unmet demand for extra taxis. For the Council to be so satisfied, there must be some evidence on which to base that decision. (A Evans)

9. Co-operative Agenda

9.1 Not applicable

10. Environmental and Health & Safety Implications

10.1 None

11. Equality, community cohesion and crime implications

11.1 None

12. Equality Impact Assessment Completed?

12.1 No – not required

13. Key Decision – No

13.1 Key Decision Reference - N/A

14. Background Papers

14.1 None

15. Appendices

15.1 LVSA Unmet Demand Survey 2025



Oldham Council
Unmet Demand Survey
August 2025

Executive Summary

This report title has been undertaken on behalf of Oldham Council following the guidance of the November 2023 DfT Best Practice Guidance document, and all relevant case history in regard to unmet demand. This Executive Summary draws together key points from the main report that are needed to allow a committee to determine from the facts presented their current position in regard to the policy of limiting hackney carriage vehicle licences according to Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act. It is a summary of the main report which follows and should not be relied upon solely to justify any decisions of a committee but must be read in conjunction with the full report below.

Encouraging signs from this survey include that service to those needing adapted vehicles appears to have increased, with increased usage by such customers of vehicles at ranks. Respondents took time to provide compliments about the service provided, with the overall service counted as 'good'.

The full trade continue to support the limit policy, which continues to provide stability to the trade and therefore overall public benefit. Activity by hackney carriages on both phone and app bases is a positive and future-proofing move although its impact on rank service (particularly at Royton) has been negative, which needs care.

The overall level of usage of licensed vehicles has actually increased arising from the strong competition and move to use of more recent methods of getting vehicles, at the expense of overall rank usage, which is a national trend, however as noted above, the local hackney carriage trade has provided a healthy response by taking advantage of these methods as they are legally allowed to do.

Trade and public alike seem to be at best confused by how they can get licensed vehicles, with some recent private hire entrants appearing to advise us they consider they can pick up at ranks, and some public also believing the same.

The overall conclusion is that there is no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent that is significant at this point in time in the Oldham licensing area. Further the limit appears to be providing public benefit. The committee can therefore retain the limit and also defend this if it so chooses.

The marginal increase in the values within the formal industry standard test of significance of unmet demand suggests that the spare plate available should be retained and made available.

An issue remains with enforcement, particularly of feeder ranks, which are critical to efficient operation of ranks; review could occur with other authorities who have used technology to good effect.

Very strong benefit could be obtained in publicising widely the good views that customers have of the overall service provided in Oldham, particularly to those needing adapted vehicles of various kinds. This could be part of a wider public education that could also cover the issue of how people can legally get licensed vehicles of all kinds in the present licensing framework.

Feedback to the region's mayor of these results would be beneficial.

A further survey should be planned, with rank work no later than April 2030, and preferably earlier, although the expected changes in licensing arising from the latest Government review and political reorganisation may amend this need.

This Report clearly demonstrates the benefit in whatever future might develop of having statistical and empirical evidence about the operation of the licensed vehicle service and the mayor should be encouraged to consider including such review in any future licensing approaches.

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1 General introduction and background

Oldham Council is responsible for the licensing of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles operating within the Council area and is the licensing authority for this complete area. Further details of the local application of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act with regard to limiting hackney carriage vehicle numbers is provided in further Chapters of this report. Hackney carriage vehicle licences are the only part of licensing where such a stipulation occurs and there is no legal means by which either private hire vehicle numbers, private hire or hackney carriage driver numbers, or the number of private hire operators can be limited.

The Best Practice Guidance

This review of current policy is based on the Best Practice Guidance produced by the Department for Transport in November 2023 (BPG). It seeks to provide information to the licensing authority to meet section 16 of the Transport Act 1985 “that the grant of a hackney carriage vehicle licence may be refused if, but only if, the licensing authority is satisfied that there is no significant demand for the services of hackney carriages within its local area, which is unmet.” This terminology is typically shortened to “no SUD”.

The revised and updated version of the BPG published in November 2023 made significant revisions and additions to the overall guidance to licensing authorities and followed a wide consultation on its Draft version. It supplements and complements the “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” (STPHVS) of 23rd July 2020 but in essence retains much of the material content regarding unmet demand and its review from its 2010 predecessor.

Background

Current hackney carriage, private hire and operator licensing is undertaken within the legal frameworks first set by the Town Police Clauses Act 1847 (TPCA), amended and supplemented by various following legislation including the Transport Act 1985, Section 16 in regard to hackney carriage vehicle limits, and by the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 with reference to private hire vehicles and operators. This latter Act saw application of regulation to the then growing private hire sector which had not been previously part of the TPCA. Many of the aspects of these laws have been tested and refined by other more recent legislation and more importantly through case law.

Beyond legislation, the experience of the person in the street tends to see both hackney carriage and private hire vehicles both as 'taxis' – a term we will try for the sake of clarity to use only in its generic sense within the report. We will use the term 'licensed vehicle' to refer to both hackney carriage and private hire. This is contrary to the BPG suggestion that 'taxis' should refer to hackney carriages and private hire should be called such, principally because our work with the public finds them (as noted above) believing 'taxis' to be both private hire and hackney carriage.

The legislation around licensed vehicles and their drivers has been the subject of many attempts at review. The limiting of hackney carriage vehicle numbers has been a particular concern as it is often considered to be a restrictive practice and against natural economic trends. The current BPG in fact says "most local licensing authorities do not impose quantity restrictions, the Department regards that as best practice".

The most recent reviews were by the Office of Fair Trading in 2003, through the production of the BPG in 2010, the Law Commission review which published its results in 2014, the Parliamentary Task and Finish Group which reported in September 2018, the Government Response in February 2019 and the consultation on "Protecting Users" which closed on 22 April 2019. STPHVS was published in July 2020 with the revised BPG in November 2023.

Other groups have provided their comments (including the Urban Transport Group, Competition and Markets Authority and the International Association of Transport Regulators) but the upshot remains no significant change in legislation from that already stated above with reference to unmet demand.

With respect to the principal subject of this survey, local authorities retain the right to restrict the number of hackney carriage vehicle licenses. The Law Commission conclusion included retention of the power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers but utilizing a public interest test determined by the Secretary of State. It also suggested the same horizon also be used for rank reviews and accessibility reviews. The latest BPG seeks to tie the timeline for refreshing reviews with Local Transport Plan revisions although these do not follow the strict five-year review process as the BPG appears to assume.

The present background to policy

A trend occurred seeing a good number of licensing authorities removing their limits on hackney carriage vehicle numbers in favour of 'quality control' essentially requiring all new hackney carriages to be wheelchair accessible. A consequence of this was that saloon style vehicles were effectively limited and often gained 'grandfather' rights to remain as such.

The present issue of significant pressure on operating costs within the industry is now leading to individual drivers seeking to minimise their use of more expensive to maintain WAV vehicles. This is putting pressure on WAV only policies as well as often worsening service to those needing these vehicles most. The issue is further complicated by these vehicles often all being the most polluting diesel style vehicles with an even higher cost related to any replacement of them with more sustainable fuel styles.

Attempts to encourage sustainable fuel vehicles in the hackney carriage fleet are hindered by the relative paucity of WAV purpose-built or adequate conversions that are also sustainably fuelled. One other make is now becoming available which is easing the issue, but they remain expensive to invest in. Wider consideration of overall disability issues also means in some cases mixed fleets are more in favour – such as in Oldham, although a recent consideration saw the idea that all Greater Manchester hackney carriages should be fully WAV.

The latest BPG now encourages distinction between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles to focus on private hire only being distinguished from private cars by having their rear licensing plate, although not all authorities agree with this stance. In general, hackney carriages have roof signs although some authorities do allow roof signs on private hire, some as long as they only advertise the company and do not say 'Taxi' and others by having the sign at right angles.

For Oldham, the current identifying features are that hackney carriages must display a roof sign and a mandatory door sign with its plate number marked on it. They have white plates fixed to the rear of the vehicle. Private hire can be any colour vehicle, cannot be purpose-built or black cab style, cannot display a roof sign, but have small yellow mandatory door signs telling the public the vehicle is a private hire vehicle which must be prebooked with the operator or that journey is not insured. The council website states "the main difference between hackney carriage and private hire vehicles are the way in which they are obtained. Private hire vehicles must be booked in advance by a licensed private hire operating company, whereas hackney carriages can be hailed in the street or can wait and be hired at an approved rank without needing to be pre-booked.

Unmet demand and its significance

After introduction of the 1985 Transport Act, Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies developed a tool by which unmet demand could be evaluated and a determination made if this was significant or not. The tool was taken forward and developed as more studies were undertaken. Over time this 'index of significance of unmet demand' (ISUD) became accepted as an industry standard tool to be used for this purpose. Some revisions have been made following the few but specific court cases where various parties have challenged the policy of retaining a limit.

Some of the application has differed between Scottish and English authority's. This is mainly due to some court cases in Scotland taking interpretation of the duty of the licensing authority further than is usual in England and Wales, requiring current knowledge of the status of unmet demand at all times, rather than just at the snap-shot taken every three (now potentially up to five)years.

In recent years, more authorities with limits have chosen to remove them, or state that they propose to do so. More significantly, several changes to create larger authorities (e.g. North Yorkshire creation) have also led to the removal of limit policies even if the authority retains hackney carriage zones for other reasons. Very few of these have made this change without considering the demand / supply issues before, although some (notably West Suffolk) have undertaken surveys and considered their zone mergers using empirical data.

The DfT asked in writing in 2004 for all licensing authorities with quantity restrictions to review them, publish their justification by March 2005, and then review at least every three years since then. In due course, this led to a summary of the government guidance which was last updated in England and Wales in 2023.

The BPG provides additional suggestions of how these surveys should be undertaken, albeit in general but fairly extensive terms. A key encouragement within the BPG is that "an interval of five years is commonly regarded as the maximum reasonable period between surveys". BPG suggests key points in consideration are passenger waiting times at ranks, for street hailings and telephone bookings, latent and peaked demand, wide consultation and publication of "all the evidence gathered".

Recent developments in legislation and practice

The most recent changes in legislation regarding licensed vehicles have been enactment of the parts of the Equality Act related to guidance dogs (sections 168 to 171, enacted in October 2010), the two clauses of the Deregulation Act which were successful in proceeding, relating to length of period each license covers and to allowing operators to transfer work across borders (enacted in October 2015), and most recently enactment of Sections 165 and 167 of the Equality Act, albeit on a permissive basis (see below).

In November 2016, the DfT undertook a consultation regarding enacting Sections 167 and 165 of the Equality Act. These allow for all vehicles capable of carrying a wheel chair to be placed on a list by the local council (section 167). Any driver using a vehicle on this list then has a duty under section 165 to:

- Carry the passenger while in the wheel chair
- Not make any additional charge for doing so
- If the passenger chooses to sit in a passenger seat to carry the wheel chair
- To take such steps as are necessary to ensure that the passenger is carried in safety and reasonable comfort
- To give the passenger such mobility assistance as is reasonably required

This was enacted from April 2017. There remains no confirmation of any timetable for instigating the remainder of the Equality Act.

The fact that many authorities did not introduce the WAV list voluntarily has led to a Private Members Bill which made this mandatory. It must be reiterated that the proposal to require any authority with limited numbers of hackney carriages and a mixed vehicle fleet issue extra WAV style vehicles to ensure the fleet had a certain proportion of WAV has never been implemented.

The STPHVS requires update to be provided to the DfT in regard to:

- Production of a comprehensive policy document
- Review of CCTV mandation and value
- Documentation of passenger complaints.

The other 2022 Private Members' Bill related to making mandatory the requirement for usage of the NR3S database for refusals, revocations and suspensions by all English authorities.

These two 2022 Acts are the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety Act) (31 March 2022)" and the "Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles (Disabled Persons) (28 June 2022)".

Case law and unmet demand

In respect to case law impinging on unmet demand, the two most recent cases were in 1987 and 2002. Three other cases, each with novel twists, occurred in 2019 (see below).

The first case (R v Great Yarmouth) concluded authorities must consider the view of significant unmet demand as a whole, not condescending to detailed consideration of the position in every limited area, i.e. to consider significance of unmet demand over the area as a whole.

R v Castle Point considered the issue of latent, or preferably termed, suppressed demand consideration. This clarified that this element relates only to the element which is measurable. Measurable suppressed demand includes inappropriately met demand (taken by private hire vehicles in situations legally hackney carriage opportunities) or those forced to use less satisfactory methods to get home (principally walking, i.e. those observed to walk away from rank locations).

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

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

Current status regarding unmet demand studies

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

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

During September 2018 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on taxis produced its long-awaited Final Report. There was a generally accepted call for revision to taxi licensing legislation and practice, including encouragement for local authorities to move towards some of the practical suggestions made within the Report. The Government has broadly supported the recommendations of this Task and Finish Group.

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

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

Current concerns regarding the large volumes of non-local authority vehicles and drivers working well out of their areas have led to Government promise of action. The present thought is to shift the licensing function to the level of transport authorities, covering larger regions, but the exact application of this is as yet a long way from being known.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the present legislation in England and Wales sees public fare-paying passenger carrying vehicles firstly split by passenger capacity. All vehicles able to carry nine or more passengers are dealt with under national public service vehicle licensing. Local licensing authorities only have jurisdiction over vehicles carrying eight or less passengers. Further, the jurisdiction focusses on the vehicles, drivers and operators but rarely extends to the physical infrastructure these use (principally ranks).

The vehicles are split between hackney carriages which are alone able to wait at ranks or pick up people in the streets without a booking, and private hire who can only be used with a booking made through an operator. If any passenger uses a private hire vehicle without such a properly made booking, they are not generally considered to be insured for their journey.

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

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

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

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

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

2 Local background and context

Key dates for this unmet demand survey for Oldham Council are:

- appointed Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Assessment (LVSA) on 10th February 2025
- in accordance with our proposal of early February 2025
- as confirmed during the inception meeting for the survey held in early March 2025
- this survey was carried out between March and June 2025
- On street pedestrian survey work occurred April 2025 (on a Thursday, Friday and Saturday)
- the video rank observations occurred early April 2025
- Licensed vehicle driver opinions and operating practices were canvassed using an electronically available survey during April and May 2025
- Key stakeholders were consulted throughout the period of the survey
- A draft of this Final Report was reviewed by the client during August 2025
- and reported to the appropriate Council committee following acceptance by the client.

Oldham Council is a metropolitan borough authority, and in terms of background council policy able to determine its own rank provision and transport policy although working within the Greater Manchester combined authority area with reference to overarching transport policy.

The authority has a current population of 246,130 using the 2023 estimates currently available from the 2021 census. This is 1.7% up on the value at the 2021 census, which was 5.1% increased over the previously quoted 2017 value based on 2011 in the previous survey, which was itself 0.7% up on the 2014 estimate. This suggests a high level of correction of actual population with the 2021 census collection.

The area has several smaller urban centres at Failsworth, Chadderton, Royton, Shaw, Uppermill and Lees. These are all part of the extensive area covered by this authority lying on the northern edge of the Greater Manchester conurbation (with nine other authorities included). The area has borders with Manchester to the West, Rochdale to the North, Tameside to the south and West Yorkshire / Derbyshire to the East.

With reference to other available statistical information, the proportion of people at the census travelling to work by taxi was 1.9%, compared to the North West average of 1.2% and the English average of 0.7%. Car ownership at the census was 1.12, lower than either the North Western (1.20) or English (1.25) values.

With reference to residents with disability, those with day to day activities limited a lot are a lower proportion than the North Western value (8.6% compared to 8.9%) but both are higher than the English 7.3%. The same is true for those with day to day activities limited a little. For those with long term physical or mental conditions that do not affect their day to day activities, the Oldham share is lower at 5.6% than either the regional (6.7%) or English value (6.8%).

The proportion with no long term physical or mental health conditions is correspondingly higher at 76.1% than either the regional (73.8%) or English level (75.9%). These figures all suggest lower need for adapted vehicles here than in the region or England overall.

In terms of background council policy, Oldham Council has all planning, transport policy and licensing powers under its auspices, although it is also part of the larger Greater Manchester authority, formerly the county of Greater Manchester as explained above. Execution of the local transport policy is within the gift of each separate authority with monitoring undertaken by Transport for Greater Manchester, and each authority inputting to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Highway matters are partly assisted by a partnership with a private company.

The Oldham Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan (OTSDP) has a publication date of 2 November 2022. This supports the aims of the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 to have “world class connections that support long-term sustainable economic growth and access to opportunity for all”. It also has ambitions aligned to the Oldham Corporate Plan 2022-2027.

In section 2.7, third paragraph OTSDP states “taxis / phvs provide invaluable transport services at times when public transport is not an option for some vulnerable groups. These services can be especially valuable in enabling people with restricted mobility to access key amenities or health services.” An overall aim is providing quick, cheap and easy transport to every part of the City region.

2022 saw submission of the Places for Everyone Joint Plan which mainly aligns with strategic housing allocations. A related concern is that access to employment sites can be challenging where public transport provision has limited frequency and spares overnight services that are often needed. It references that 23% of Oldham households do not have access to a car or van.

Oldham Council will work with TfGM to support the development and roll-out of Mobility-as-a-Service (MaaS) ensuring disabled and vulnerable users are accommodated. This will be allied with development of travel hubs.

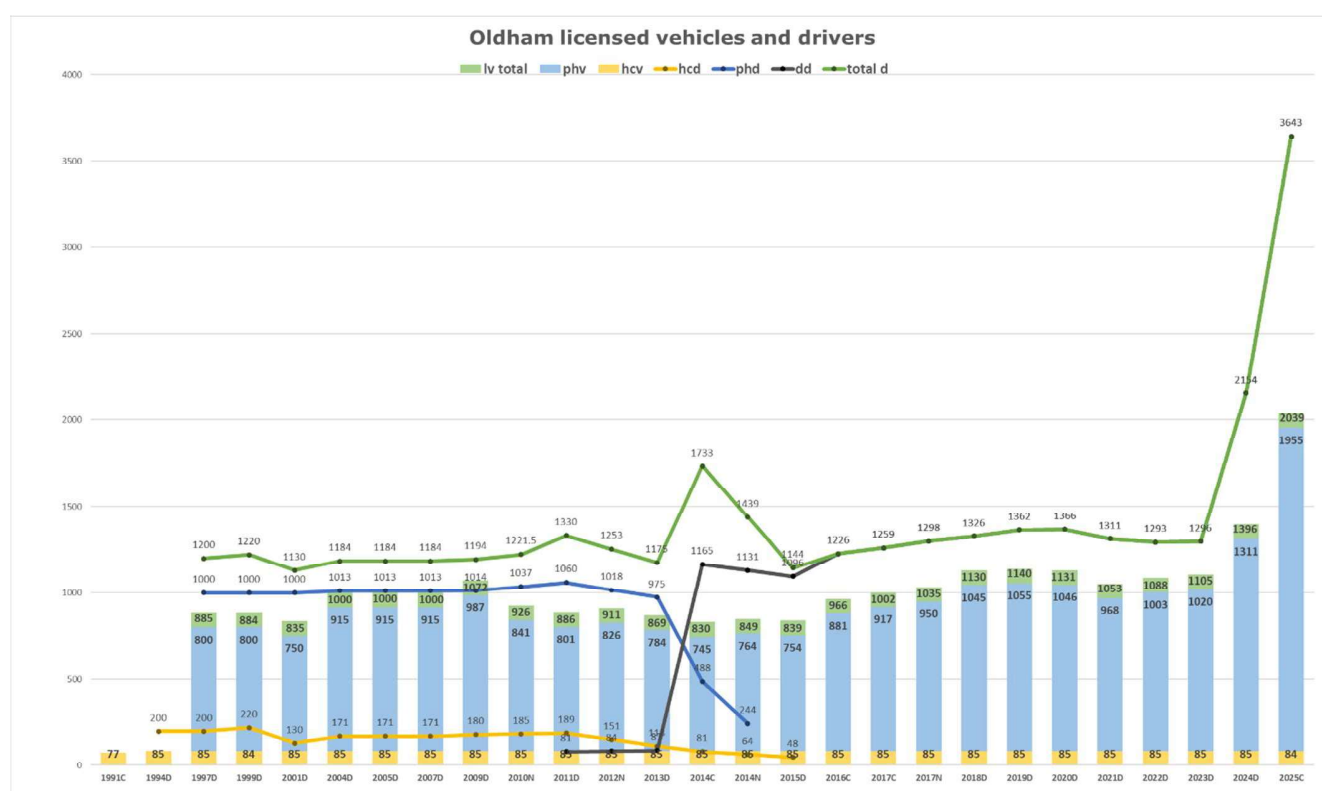
The detailed section on taxis and private hires in LTP3 (which ran to 2026) does not appear to have been replicated in the latest document. The current TfGM five year Transport Delivery Plan and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040 form the statutory Local Transport Plan for the area. The integrated section of the current network policies references Policy 1 "Policy 1 - Taxis, Private Hire, DRT: We will work with partners to ensure that modes of transport such as taxis, private hire vehicles and other demand responsive services - as well as shared mobility solutions, including car clubs, cycle hire and other forms of shared transport - are available, and fully integrated into the Greater Manchester transport network". Policy 28 states "Taxi and Private Hire Standards: We will work with the taxi and private hire industry to develop minimum standards for policy/regulation and operation across Greater Manchester, and work with Government to strengthen national legislation". Recent activity has seen the Mayor of Greater Manchester leading the Government response to the 'out of town' taxi issues.

Limit Policy

Oldham Council has chosen to utilize its power to limit hackney carriage vehicle numbers, and as far as we are aware has done so for as long as such policies have been possible.

Taxi Statistics

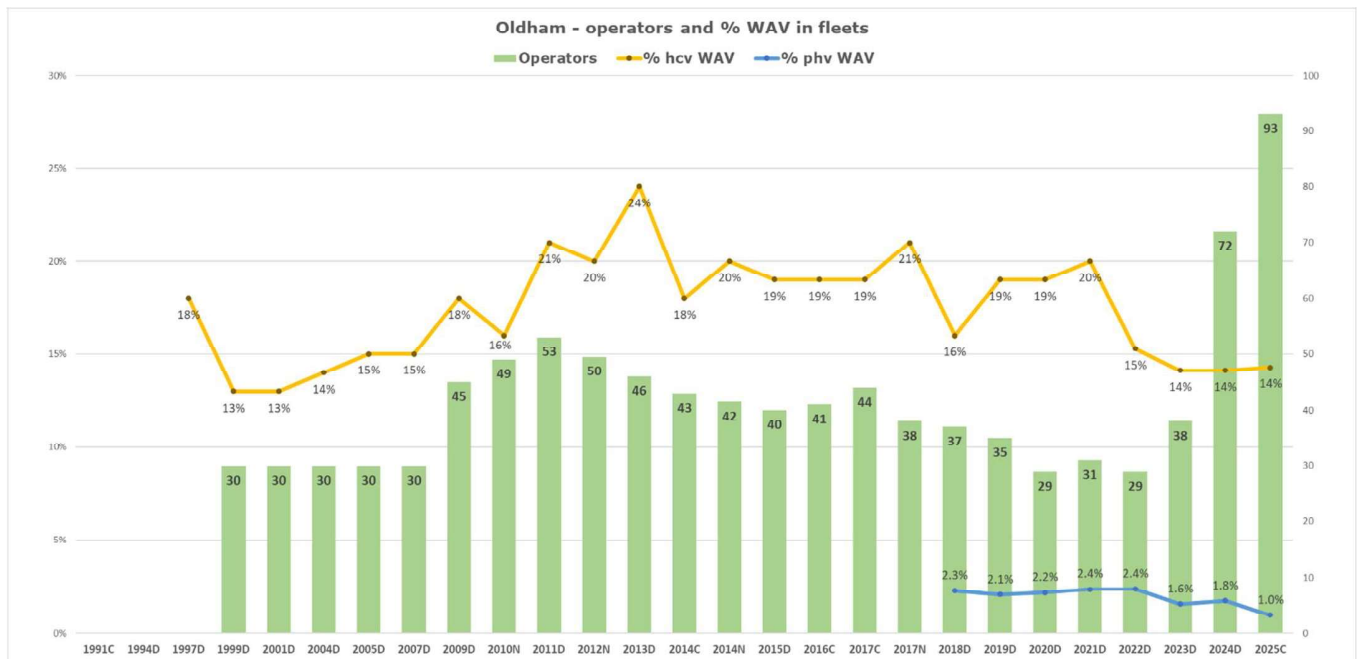
By drawing together published statistics from both the Department for Transport (D) and the National Private Hire Association (N), supplemented by private information from the licensing authority records (C), recent trends in vehicle, driver and operator numbers can be observed. Due to the comparative size, the operator and WAV proportion figures are shown in the second picture.



Licensing Statistics from 1994 to date

The graph shows the almost constant level of hackney carriage vehicle numbers over the years. At the time of the survey, there was one plate not on issue. Private hire vehicle numbers reduced slightly during the pandemic but have most recently grown significantly. All drivers are now able to drive either hackney carriage or private hire vehicles, and their numbers have grown even more than the number of vehicles.

Information is also available from these sources to show how the level of wheel chair accessible vehicles (WAV) has varied. It must be noted that in most cases the values for the private hire side tend to be much more approximate than those on the hackney carriage side, as there is no option to mandate for private hire being wheel chair accessible. In some areas, to strengthen the ability of the public to differentiate between the two parts of the licensed vehicle trade, licensing authorities might not allow any WAV in the private hire fleet at all.



Operator numbers and levels of WAV provision in the fleet

The number of operators has also increased with the growth of the overall numbers of vehicles.

The level of WAV style vehicles generally grew from 1999 to 2013, to a peak of just under a quarter of the fleet. The proportion has since fallen with the level now having been stable at around 14% for the last three years, but much lower than at the time of the last survey. There are a small number of WAV in the private hire vehicle fleet, with a peak of 2.4%; but this proportion has fallen as the fleet has grown and is now just 1% (but of a much larger total vehicle fleet).

History of demand surveys in Oldham

A survey was under way in early 2020 at the point that the country was locked down. Only the driver survey had been completed at that time, although preparations had been made for the rank work. Following recovery from the pandemic, no further action was taken given the potential changes arising from the harmonisation of conditions across Greater Manchester City Region licensing authorities, which in the end did not occur. Consideration was also being given to removing the limit, but a decision was made to continue with this early in 2025, resulting in this Study.



3 Patent demand measurement (rank surveys)

As already recorded in Chapter 2, control of provision of on-street ranks in the Oldham Council area is fully within the functions of the Council, albeit within a different section. Our methodology involves a current review both in advance of submitting our proposal to undertake this unmet demand survey and at the study inception meeting, together with site visits where considered necessary. This provides a valid and appropriate sample of rank coverage which is important to feed the numeric evaluation of the level of unmet demand, and its significance (see discussion in Chapter 7).

Rank changes

There has been significant change to rank provision and layouts since the last survey in 2017, although many of the changes were pre-pandemic. The Old Town Hall rank was revised so that all vehicles approach the rank from Greaves Street, where there is a long feeder rank, although this allows loading between 05:00 and 10:00 and is only a formal rank from 10:00 until 05:00. Initial issues with the rank design saw changes enabling vehicles to exit the rank if early vehicles became disabled.

A rank was added in Waterloo Street (22:00 to 05:00) outside the exit of the night club there.

A rank was provided at the Mumps Metrolink stop within the bus stop layout there.

The bus station rank was not in use during this survey – the loop road being closed due to work in the area – although vehicles were allowed to reverse into a part of the loop adjacent to the Tommyfield rank. In the past, vehicles would wait at the bus stop rank and then feed across to the Tommyfield rank. In the present situation, most vehicles went first to the stub of the bus station rank and then moved to the Tommyfield rank rear when space was available.

In 2020, and with this survey, observations were undertaken of the rank located in Uppermill.

Both Care Centre and Post Office ranks in central Oldham no longer exist.

The Royton rank remains near to the administrative block for the hackney carriage radio operation, but there is no passenger waiting facility there and all passengers must take vehicles from the rank, although some waiting vehicles might be dispatched from their to fulfil bookings, perhaps more so than at the other ranks.

Overview of rank observations

The 2025 survey provided some 8,328 lines of survey information for the rank survey undertaken from Thursday morning 3rd April 2025 through to later on Sunday 6th April 2025. Of these, 72% were vehicle arrivals or departures, 26% were records of pedestrian arrivals, 1.3% were 'general notes' and the final 0.7% were pedestrian walk-aways.

There were some 6018 vehicle arrivals or departures recorded (4715 over the Friday and Saturday observed in 2017). 80% (83%) of all vehicle movements observed were hackney carriages. 15% (8% 2017) were cars, 4% (8%) private hire and 0.5% each goods (1% in 2017) or emergency vehicles.

Overall rank usage estimates

Rank	2025		2017		2014		2011	
	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%	Pass	%
Tommyfield	1,796	41	2,588	28	2,178	27	2,704	28
Bus Station	See above		1,280	14	1,313	17	1,632	17
Old Town Hall	1,225	28	2,794	30	3,129	39	3,754	39
St Mary's Way, night	Unused		1,077	12	518	7	1,064	11
Royton, Spring Garden St	1,196	27	751	8	528	7	410	4
Waterloo St, night	186	4	556	6	Not introduced			
Mumps Metrolink	Unused		122	1	195	2	Not introduced	
Royton, Oddies, night	Club Gone		97	1	60	1	Not introduced	
Care Centre	Gone		n/a		20	0.	Not introduced	
TOTALS	4,403		9,265		7,940		9,564	
From 2017	-52%		n/a		n/a		n/a	
From 2014	-45%		+17%		n/a		n/a	
From 2011	-54%		-3%		-17%		n/a	

The total estimated typical weekly passengers for 2025 are 4,403. This is a 52% reduction on 2017 levels, and 54% on the highest level recorded in 2011. The recovery between 2014 and 2017 has clearly been reversed. Levels during the pandemic recovery must have been even lower.

Busiest rank is that at Tommyfield, followed by Old Town Hall, closely followed by Royton with Waterloo Street seeing the least usage. The share between Tommyfield / Bus Station and Old Town Hall remains remarkably similar, suggesting the former bus station patronage has transferred to the Tommyfield location (although these observations do include any passenger boarding at the stub end). Royton has actually increased both volume and share. This remains effectively a hackney carriage booking office administrative site that

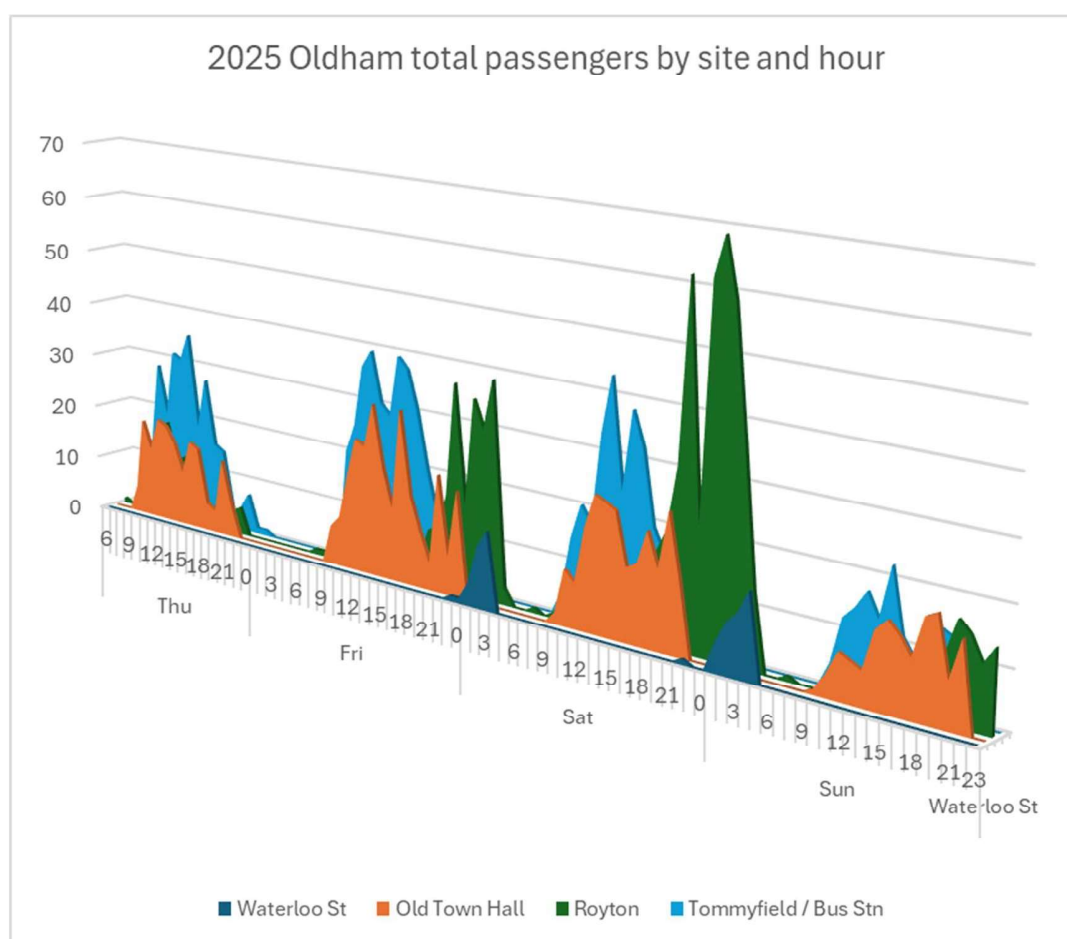
is a rank, with no change from previous years. Passenger levels at Royton are not much less than those at the Old Town Hall location.

The level of hackney carriage usage from the Waterloo Street rank now seems to be such that there is no need for the St Mary's Way location, although it was observed that when peak vehicle flows occurred, some did wait here. At other times vehicles waited on Yorkshire Street to enter Waterloo Street, with some passengers taking vehicles from there.

One incident was noted where vehicles could not use Waterloo Street due to a police incident at the Club, in which case any passengers used Yorkshire Street.

Rank usage by location and time

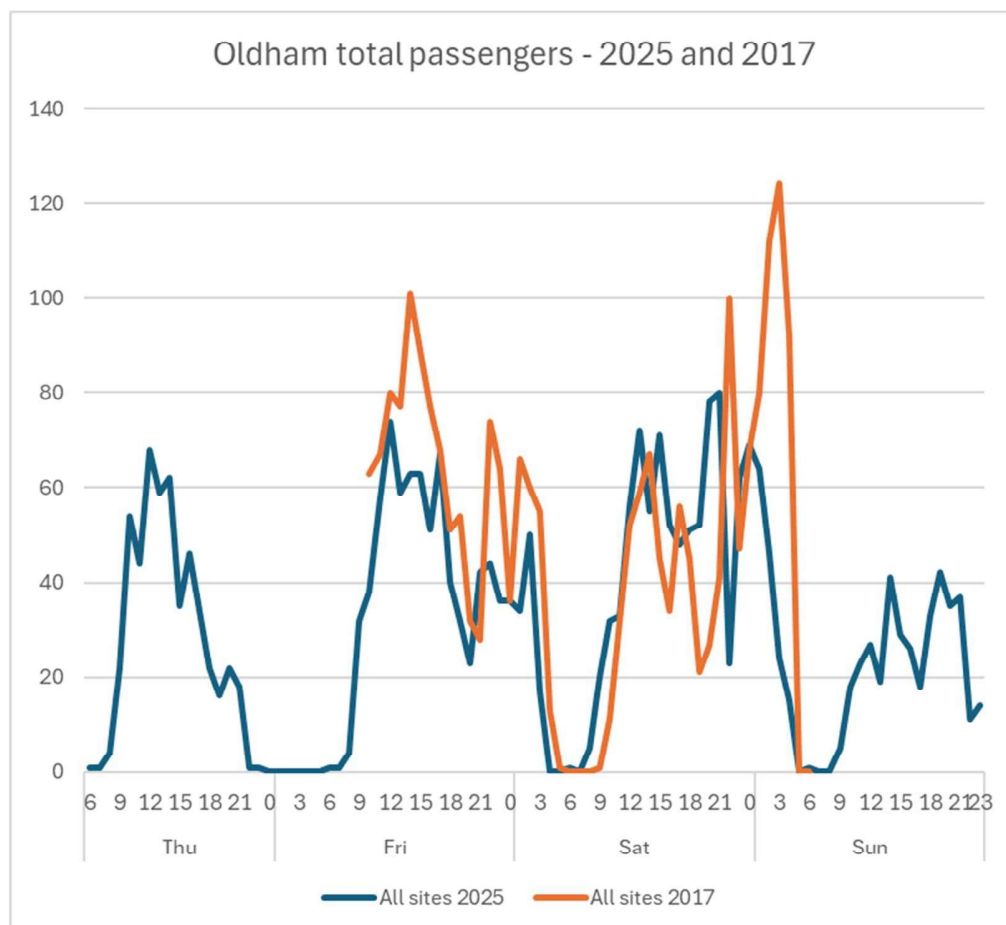
The graph below shows passenger flows by site and hour for the active ranks in Oldham in 2025:



Friday and Saturday flows are very similar apart from Friday night also having demand. Saturday daytime flows are not much different to Friday but there is a sharper overnight peak, mainly in Royton, but with later activity at Waterloo Street. Sunday flows are not a great amount less than those for Thursday,

apart again from night demand, again appearing to be more in Royton. The Old Town Hall rank seems to operate more consistently for longer hours.

Total flows at all ranks are shown below, and compared to 2017:



The profiles of overall demand on the two days covered in both surveys, Friday and Saturday are relatively similar, albeit 2025 is at a generally lower level. Saturday flows were in several cases actually higher in 2025, but the high overnight flows in 2017 no longer occur.

Comparing average daily flows, 2025 Thursday is 21 passengers per hour; Friday is 36 (58 in 2017), Saturday is 42 (2017 46, much closer), and Sunday 21 – the same as Thursday (though over less hours). The peak flows in 2017 were in the early hours of Sunday morning, being 124 and 112 in the 03:00 and 02:00 hours respectively. There were just two other flows of over 100 passengers in 2017. In 2025, the peak flow was 80, at 21:00 on the Saturday night, followed by 78 the hour before. There were no flows more than 80 passengers over the four days.

The peak to average flow ratio, however, was 2.61 in 2025 but lower at 2.46 in 2017.

Surveyed hours with observed unmet demand

The rank observations identify the locations and hours when unmet demand occurs, i.e. people arrive, find no vehicle available and have to wait for one to arrive. For any such hours, average passenger delay is calculated by dividing the total waiting time for those experiencing a wait by the total number of passengers in any hour.

For this study there are just 29 of the 229 hours observed when there are any passengers waiting. This is more than in 2017 when there were just 22 hours. 5% of these hours have average passenger delay a minute or more; 7% have average passenger delay less than a minute.

In passenger terms, 1.5% of all passengers experience a wait when average passenger waiting is over a minute, and 0.9% when under a minute. Ten people experienced waits of 11 minutes or more, 12 between six and ten minutes and 46 between one and five minutes.

The longest average wait was 8 minutes 55 seconds, followed by 5 minutes 35, 4 minutes 41 and 4 minutes 21.

Sorted by day and time, the 2025 data hours with delay see 8 hours Thursday daytime, one Thursday evening, 8 Friday daytime and three early Saturday morning, five Saturday daytime, and two overnight Saturday/Sunday plus three on Sundays. This is a widespread level of delay despite low overall passenger numbers.

When considered by location, 82% of delay time was at the Spring Garden Street rank, 16% at the Old Town Hall and 2% at Tommyfield.

All these suggest low levels of passenger waiting. Further discussion in terms of how significant this is in respect to Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act occurs in Chapter 7 below.

Persons walking away from ranks

During the course of the survey some 72 people were observed walking away from ranks without taking hackney carriages. It was not possible to surmise the actual reason for leaving. Royton saw 33 passengers, Old Town Hall 19, Tommyfield 14 and Waterloo Street six. These are not high numbers and many may be legitimate, e.g. people leaving friends who have taken hackney carriages, people who had not been waiting for hackney carriages, or various other reasons.

Frequency of vehicle operation during rank survey

The actual vehicles operating during the survey were noted in six sets of 1.5 hour samples, over the Thursday, Friday and Saturday of the survey. Over the three days, 936 different records were taken of vehicles operating at or near the ranks in the area. 79% of these were validated as local Oldham hackney carriage or private hire vehicles by using the local list of plates valid at the time of the survey. Of the Oldham vehicles, 40% were Oldham hackney carriages, 2% Oldham WAV style hackney carriages and the remainder Oldham private hire.

The 21% that were out of town vehicles came from eight different areas. 62% however were not possible to attribute to a particular authority. Five of the authorities were other Manchester authorities so could be legitimate journeys being made. The highest percentage, 16%, were from a distant authority known to be a key area used by licensees. The next largest percentage was from a neighbouring authority.

Of the hackney carriages, 58% appeared to be operating as individual vehicles. 22% operated for an operator for whom we also saw 11% of the private hire vehicles. Two other operators were identified from the hackney carriage operation who we also saw private hire operated by them – with 8% of the hackney carriage and 1% of private hire and 2% of the hackneys and 3% of the private hire respectively. 5% of the hackney carriages observed belonged to a company that only appeared to operate hackney carriages.

Just under 50% of the observed private hire vehicles that were confirmed as Oldham private hire were operating for a large international app-based company. Two other large local private hire companies provided 16% each of the observed vehicle observations.

Over the course of the plate observations, 77% of the local hackney carriage fleet were observed. In 2017, just the Friday was observed, but the level of activity from the fleet was remarkably similar at 76%. 38% were seen on the Thursday, 48% on the Friday and 63% on the Saturday. 29% of the hackney carriage fleet were observed only on one day; 26% on two days, and 23% on all three days.

One vehicle was observed 16 times; five were seen 12 times, three ten times; but with 11% of the observed vehicles just seen once, 7% five times and 6% twice.

The table below compares the proportion of the total hackney carriage fleet operating in the different observed periods and days:

	Late morning	Early afternoon	Late afternoon	Early evening	Late evening	Early hours (next day)
Thursday	18	11	6	5	1	4
Friday	14	19	4	6	5	23
<i>Friday 2017</i>	33	25	12	19	29	33
Saturday	24	25	10	11	15	26

The highest proportion of the hackney carriage fleet was observed in the early hours of Sunday morning (26%). 24% were seen late morning Saturday and 25% early afternoon. 23% were seen the early hours of Saturday morning. Lowest activity was late evening on Thursdays – just 1% of the fleet, followed by the early hours of Friday morning. The figures overall show a very active hackney carriage fleet, somewhat working to levels of demand.

Comparison to the 2017 Friday data however shows reduced levels of the fleet active in all time periods with the biggest reduction shown late evening on Fridays.

Other vehicles at or near ranks

Our observations noted all vehicles at or near ranks likely to impact on the activity of each rank. As noted above, 15% of all observations were private cars. All the observed usage of the rank at Uppermill were private cars. No hackney carriages were observed at all. The Mumps Metrolink stop saw 75% of its small number of observations being private cars (mainly people setting down or picking up passengers from the trams), with the remainder being service vehicles of Metrolink. 57% of vehicle activity at Waterloo Street was private cars with a further 21% of observed movements being private hire, and 19% hackney carriages. This location saw the worst of the mis-use of the rank.

The Old Town Hall rank saw 19% of the movements as private cars – almost exclusively in the feeder rank section. A further 5% were private hire and 1% goods vehicles. 75% were hackney carriages. The trade provided us many examples of how this impacted on their ability to keep the rank full of sufficient vehicles to meet demand.

The Tommyfield and Spring Garden locations only saw 3% and 1% cars, and no other real incursions. This relates to both being well-used by hackney carriages and laid out in a manner that it is much harder for other vehicles to use the rank spaces.

Observed usage for those with disabilities

Of the observed hackney carriages in the survey, 11% were considered to be wheelchair accessible vehicle (WAV) style. This is close to the 14% level within the fleet.

Seven passengers were observed using the ranks in wheel chairs. This was greater than the four observed in 2017. One was at Spring Garden (as in 2017) and the other six at Tommyfield (two in 2017). There was one wheel chair user observed at the Old Town Hall rank in 2017.

A further 98 (18) people were observed with other disabilities needing assistance. 56% of these were at Tommyfield, 24% at Old Town Hall and 19% at Spring Garden.

4 General public views

It is very important that the views of people within the area are obtained about the service provided by hackney carriage and private hire. A key element which these surveys seek to discover is specifically if people have given up waiting for hackney carriages at ranks (the most readily available measure of latent demand). However, the opportunity is also taken with these surveys to identify the overall usage and views of hackney carriage and private hire vehicles within the study area, and to give chance for people to identify current issues and factors which may encourage them to use licensed vehicles more.

Such surveys can also be key in identifying variation of demand for licensed vehicles across an area, particularly if there are significant areas of potential demand without ranks, albeit in the context that many areas do not have places apart from their central area with sufficient demand to justify hackney carriages waiting at ranks.

These surveys tend to be undertaken during the daytime period when more people are available, and when survey staff safety can be guaranteed. Further, interviews with groups of people or with those affected by alcohol consumption may not necessarily provide accurate responses, despite the potential value in speaking with people more likely to use hackney carriages at times of higher demand and then more likely unmet demand. Where possible, extension of interviews to the early evening may capture some of this group, as well as some studies where careful choice of night samples can be undertaken.

Our basic methodology requires a sample size of at least 200 to ensure stable responses. Trained and experienced interviewers are also important as this ensures respondents are guided through the questions carefully and consistently. A minimum sample of 50 interviews is generally possible by a trained interviewer in a day meaning that sample sizes are best incremented by 50, usually if there is targeting of a specific area or group (e.g. of students, or a sub-centre), although conclusions from these separate samples can only be indicative taken alone. For some authorities with multiple centres this can imply value in using a higher sample size, such as 250 if there are two large and one moderate sized centre.

It is normal practice to compare the resulting gender and age structure to the latest available local and national census proportions to identify if the sample has become biased in any way.

More recently, general public views have been enlisted from the use of council citizens' panels although the issue with these is that return numbers cannot be guaranteed. The other issue is that the structure of the sample responding cannot be guaranteed either, and it is also true that those on the panel have chosen to be there such that they may tend to be people willing to have stronger opinions than the general public randomly approached.

Finally, some recent surveys have placed an electronic copy of the questionnaire on their web site to allow interested persons to respond, although again there needs to be an element of care with such results as people choosing to take part may have a vested interest.

For the 2025 survey, some 246 interviews were obtained, very close to the target set of 250. Of these, 47 (19%) were undertaken near the Co-op store in central Royton. The remainder were undertaken in locations in central Oldham including near the Nationwide bank, near Pepe's Takeaway, near the Tommyfield pub, near Sainsbury's and near McDonalds. The additional surveys in Shaw, Uppermill and Lees were not undertaken this time.

They were undertaken on a Thursday (61%), Friday (19%) and Saturday (20%) towards the end of April 2025.

All those interviewed in Royton and 97% of those interviewed in Oldham said they were from the Oldham area. Of those not from Oldham, two were from parts of Manchester, one from Stockport, another from Calderbrook just over the boundary and two from Coventry.

The sample was compared to the latest projections available from the 2021 census, 2023 projections. 5% less males were interviewed than the census suggests (although this was opposite in Royton) whilst in terms of age, overall there were 8% less of the younger group, 2% less of the older group and 10% more of the mid-age group. The Royton sample was more extreme with 64% of its interviewees in the mid age group, and just 6% of the younger group compared to 49% and 19% respectively for Oldham.

In the three months before being interviewed, 76% overall (54% 2017)(81% in Royton and 75% in Oldham) said they had made one or more trips by any form of licensed vehicle in the Oldham area. By hackney carriage only was 5% (2% Royton, 6% Oldham); by private hire only 60%, 77% and 56%, and by both kinds of vehicle 11%, 2% and 13%.

With reference to frequency of usage, the most frequent level quoted was 40% of people saying they used both types of vehicle once or twice a week (26% Royton, 43% Oldham). 12% (similar in both areas) said they never used them. This results in an estimated 5.7 (2.3 2017) trips per person per month for the full area (5.2 Oldham and 7.8 Royton).

When compared to the similar question asked, but purely for hackney carriages, provides an estimated 12% of trips being made by hackney carriage. The value in Royton was just 2% whilst that in central Oldham was 16%.

People told us how they normally got a licensed vehicle in the Oldham area. 41% (57% 2017) telephoned (36% Royton and 41% Oldham), 31% used an app (not asked 2017)(45% and 28% in the area), 14% used a freephone (5% 2017) (11% and 15% in the areas), 12% (20% 2017) a rank (5% and 13%) and 3% (none 2017) hailed (2% and 3%). In 2017, 18% said they used their own mobile or phone. The value for use of a rank matches that from the overall level of usage estimates, also being fairly similar by area. The change from 2017 also suggests rank share has reduced.

People were asked which companies they used to book vehicles. 39% in Oldham and 32% in Royton provided an answer. In Oldham 56% (12% 2017) named three companies, 25% two (41%) and 19% (48%) just one. For Royton the values were 14%, 43% and 43% (a very different balance, suggesting possibly less choice and / or more satisfaction in Royton, although the overall numbers answering was lower).

Whilst there was no clear similar set of three chosen companies, for those choosing two companies one combination obtained 31% of all those quoting use of two companies.

Ten companies were named, a lot less than the 26 of 2017, although some of this was a reduction in the citing of different names for the same company.

In 2025, there were four companies quoted that people used with between 16% and 18% of share of those companies' people mentioned, totalling some 68% of the mentions (the top four in 2017 totalled just 57%).

The top company was only mentioned by those interviewed in Oldham, and has gained share since 2017. The next three companies were named by both sets of interviewees, with the dominant company in Royton (getting 42% of Royton responses) was also a company not named in 2017. The second company had lost share marginally whilst the fourth company had increased its share a little. Five other companies were first mentioned in 2025, with the other three companies named in both surveys losing share. Mention of an international app company had increased, now putting them sixth overall with 6% of mentions across the area (4% in Royton, 6% Oldham).

The top 'new' response was second equal in proportion of responses, another new entrant has 10% (fifth), two others were seventh and eighth with 5% and 3% and the final two had 2% and 0.4% respectively. This suggests much greater competition now than in 2017.

In Royton just two apps were mentioned, an international and a local one. Ten were mentioned in Oldham. The top app gained 46% of mentions overall, with 73% of mentions in Royton and 40% in Oldham. The next three highest app mentions only scored 11% or 10%; with another scoring 8%, another 7%, one 4% and three just 1%; again suggesting plenty of choice for apps, though not necessarily in Royton (where just two were named, one of which was a new entrant, which may also explain the dominance there of the international app). The top nine named companies all were quoted as using apps with the top two quoted companies gaining the second and fourth highest quoted app mentions.

Hackney carriage usage per person per month was 0.8 for Oldham, 0.2 for Royton and 0.7 overall. Just one person, in Royton, could not remember seeing a hackney carriage in the area (was 3% in 2017, an improvement). 49% (75% in 2017) (53% Royton and 48% Oldham interviewees) could not remember the last time they used a hackney carriage in the area. This suggests good levels of knowledge about the differences between hackney carriages and private hire and good visibility of hackney carriages and improvement since 2017.

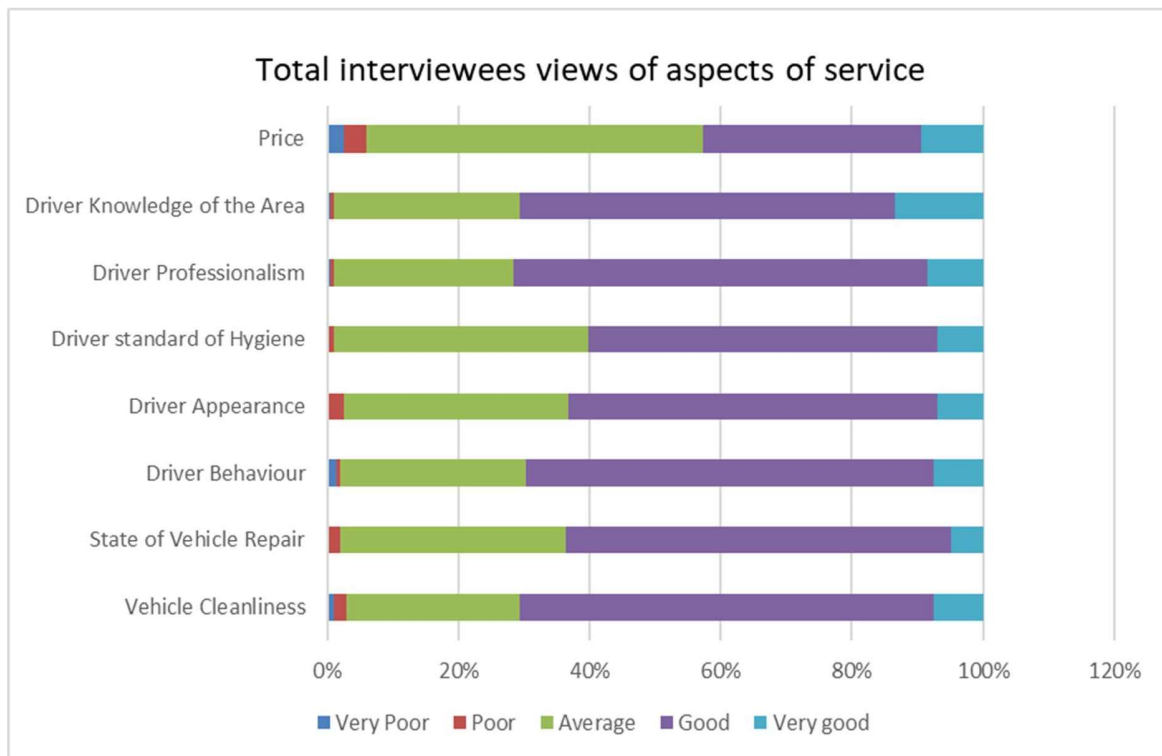
43% (64% in 2017) of interviewees told us ranks they were aware of and if they used them. In total just five locations were provided, compared to the 24 in 2017 (although many of those were colloquial versions).

5% of respondents in Oldham gave three rank names, 42% gave two (29% in Royton) and 53% just named one (71% Royton). The most frequent combination of two names given saw 55% naming the Old Town Hall and Tommyfield (although people called them Yorkshire Street and Henshaw Street respectively).

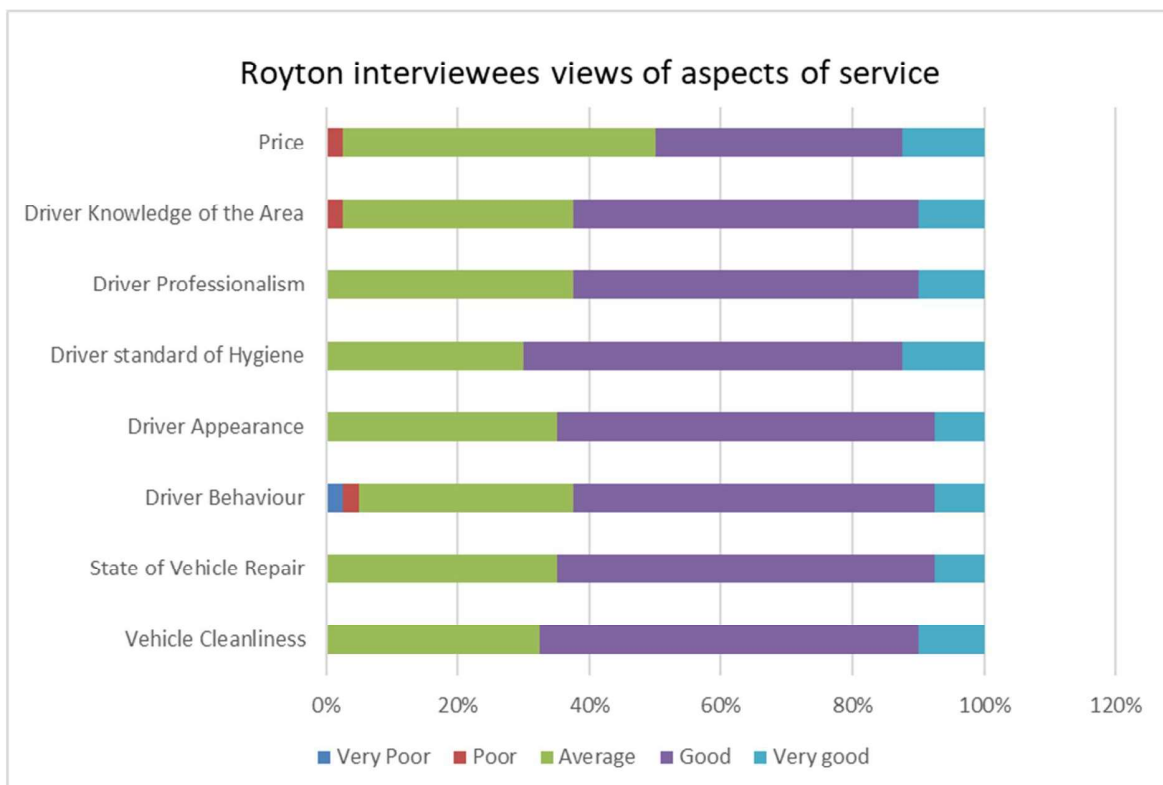
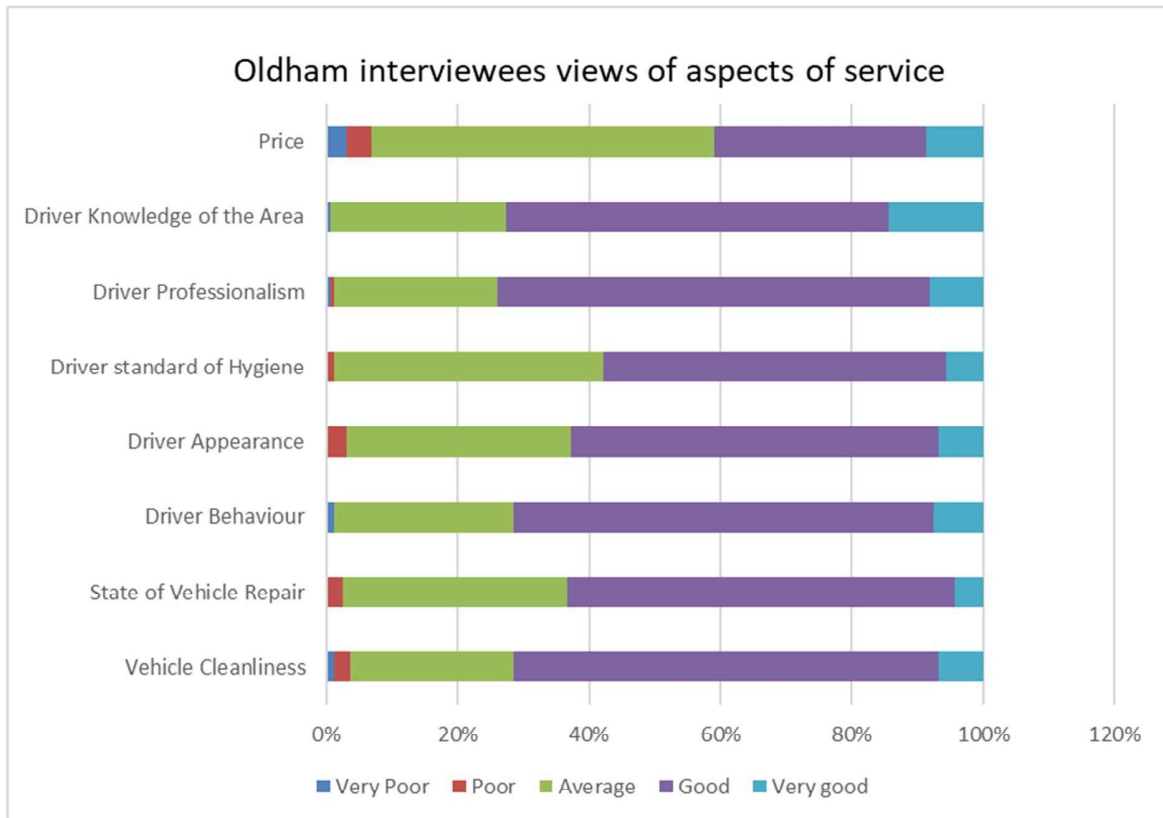
Old Town Hall obtained 52% (39% 2017) of mentions overall (33% Royton and 55% Oldham), Tommyfield (Henshaw Street) was second with 24% (17% 2017) (11% and 26%). Royton was third with 17% (56% and 5%), with some in the Oldham interviewees calling it Spring Garden Street. 5% in Oldham mentioned the Mumps rank. 3% (11% 2017) in Oldham mentioned the Bus Station rank.

With respect to usage, 48% naming Old Town Hall said they used it, 47% for Royton, 46% for Tommyfield, 25% for the Bus Station and 14% for the Mumps rank.

81% overall told us for their recent trip how they rated various aspects. The results are shown graphically below:



The most dominant score for all aspects apart from price is 'good'. Highest scores were 63% for both vehicle cleanliness and driver professionalism. There were just five categories with 'very poor' scores, with the highest level being for price (but only 3%). The two area responses were relatively similar.



The only 'very poor' or 'poor' score in Royton was driver behaviour; otherwise there were no poor or very poor scores there. Price scored relatively better in Royton, otherwise most responses were similar to Oldham respondents.

With respect to aspects rated very poor the only additional information given was five people in Oldham saying 'expensive', one comment about an unhygienic vehicle, one about drivers and cars not being nice, and a final one 'some drivers are rude'. In context all these are insignificant.

More people – some 24 in total – took time to providing further detail for aspects they had rated 'very good'. The top was five saying 'great service'. Three people each said either 'very reliable' 'polite drivers' 'drivers know the area very well' or 'neat and clean'. Seven other single comments were provided – 'very helpful and polite' 'always on time' 'minibus service always professional' 'vehicles old but good' 'x is cheaper than others' 'very cheap' and 'y drivers are the best'. These are all encouraging and could be shared.

Overall, 80% of interviewees told us at least one matter that might make them use hackney carriages or use them more. 2% (all in Oldham) gave three reasons, two thirds gave two and the remaining 32% just one. As is normal across the country, 48% (41% 2017) overall said 'if they were more affordable'. Second with 30% was 'more hackney carriages I could phone for'. Better vehicle quality scored 9% (24% 2017), and driver quality 4% (24% 2017). More hackney carriages to hail or at a rank scored just 2%. 56% of those choosing two options stated 'if they were more affordable' and 'more hackney carriages I could phone for'. Five people added 'safety' and three 'quick availability'.

78% (96% 2017) of people said they did not consider they, or others they knew, needed an adapted licensed vehicle. Of the 22% saying they did; nearly all said someone they knew would need a WAV (16% of overall total). A small proportion (1% and 3% for others) said another kind of adapted vehicle, not a WAV. The change from 2017 suggests much higher need of WAV or adapted vehicles in 2025 than in 2017.

Just five people overall said they had given up waiting for a hackney carriage; three of these said at the Old Town Hall, two others did not say where. This suggests a latent demand factor of 1.02. This is the same as in 2017.

Response to walking away was that one made a booking, another used an international app, another walked, and another walked away but then hailed a vehicle.

93% (98% in Royton and 92% in Oldham) felt there were enough hackney carriages in the Oldham area.

None said they had ever had any issue getting a vehicle that matched their accessibility needs, with 3% (6% Royton, 2% Oldham respondents) said their needs were always met.

5 Key stakeholder consultation

The following key stakeholders were contacted in line with the recommendations of the BPG:

- Supermarkets
- Hotels
- Pubwatch / individual pubs / night clubs
- Other entertainment venues
- Restaurants
- Hospitals
- Police
- Disability representatives
- Rail operators
- Other council contacts within all relevant local councils

Comments received have been aggregated below to provide an overall appreciation of the situation at the time of this survey. In some cases, there are very specific comments from given stakeholders, but we try to maintain their confidentiality as far as is possible. The comments provided in the remainder of this Chapter are the views of those consulted, and not that of the authors of this report.

Our information was obtained by telephone, email, letter or face to face meeting as appropriate. The list contacted includes those suggested by the Council, those drawn from previous similar surveys, and from general internet trawls for information. Our target stakeholders are as far as possible drawn from across the entire licensing area to ensure the review covers the full area and not just specific parts or areas.

For the sake of clarity, we cover key stakeholders from the public side separately to those from the licensed vehicle trade element, whose views are summarized separately in the following Chapter.

Despite two attempts to contact various key stakeholders by email and a google form questionnaire, no responses were received. This is normal in the post-pandemic and not critical as stakeholder responses rarely provide much guidance in respect to unmet demand, unless there is a major issue.

6 Trade stakeholder views

The BPG encourages all studies to include 'all those involved in the trade'. There are a number of different ways felt to be valid in meeting this requirement, partly dependent on what the licensing authority feel is reasonable and possible given the specifics of those involved in the trade in their area.

The most direct and least costly route is to obtain comment from trade representatives. This can be undertaken by email, phone call or face to face meeting by the consultant undertaking the study. In some cases to ensure validity of the work being undertaken it may be best for the consultation to occur after the main work has been undertaken. This avoids anyone being able to claim that the survey work was influenced by any change in behaviour.

Most current studies tend to issue a letter and questionnaire to all hackney carriage and private hire owners, drivers and operators. This is best issued by the council on behalf of the independent consultant. Usual return is now using an on-line form of the questionnaire, with the option of postal return still being provided, albeit in some cases without use of a freepost return. Returns can be encouraged by email or direct contact via representatives.

Some authorities cover private hire by issuing the letter and questionnaire to operators seeking they pass them on when drivers book on or off, or via vehicle data head communications.

In all cases, we believe it is essential we document the method used clearly and measure response levels. However, it is also rare for there to be high levels of response, with 5% typically felt to be good and reasonable.

This survey was distributed to the trade as in all previous surveys. This report also records the 2020 trade survey which was completed but never reported as the main study was halted due the onset of the pandemic.

A total of 139 (47 in 2020 and 41 in 2017) responses were received. Once a small number of incomplete and some duplicates were removed, the total became 134. This is 4%, a fair total, but much more significant than that of previous surveys.

32% (98% in 2020) of these were from hackney carriage, with 9% (2%) that said they drove a private hire vehicle as well. 58% were from private hire and one from someone that said they did not drive any vehicle.

80% said the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. 5% were working part time but had no other source of income. 8% worked part time but had other sources of income. 6% said they were not currently working but planned to return once demand had increased, and 2% said they had left the trade with no intention to return.

On average, those responding had 10.5 (17 in 2020) years' service (16 in 2017). This ranged up to 38 (39) years. For hackney carriages, the average was 18.3 and maximum 35; for private hire 6.5 and 38, for those driving both vehicle types 6.7 and 26. This demonstrates the significant level of experience in the hackney carriage trade.

Drivers were asked the kind of work they normally undertook. Many gave multiple answers. 2% gave three answers, 27% two and the remainder just one answer. The responses were cross-checked with later answers and the vehicle type and several private hire responses that they undertook immediate hire – ranks were removed. However there were two private hire who both stated they undertook immediate hire from ranks and quoted in one case 5% of work from ranks, with the remaining from bookings and another 70% from apps and the balance of 30% from ranks. These have been left in but appear to be a possible issue. Both had relatively short periods of experience in the industry (one year and 2.5 years).

All those giving three answers said immediate hire work, ranks, immediate hire work, bookings and advanced hire work. Two only drove hackney carriage, one drove both kinds of vehicle.

The 27% providing two answers were broken down further as follows:

- 12% saying immediate hire work, bookings and advanced hire work
- 10% saying immediate hire work ranks and bookings (one of which was a dual vehicle user)
- Two (1.5%) as noted above that were private hire but also claimed ranks work as well as bookings
- Two (1.5%) that said immediate hire ranks and advanced hire – one a hackney carriage and the other a dual vehicle user
- Two (1.5%) advance hire work and chauffeur / corporate (one dual vehicle and one private hire).

The remaining single answers comprised:

- 19% just immediate hire ranks (one of which was a dual vehicle user)
- A third just immediate hire work, bookings, all private hire
- 2.5% immediate hire work, bookings, dual vehicle users
- 2.5% immediate hire work, bookings, hackney carriage
- 12% advanced hire work only (one of which was a dual vehicle user)

- 3% chauffeur or corporate, one of which was a dual vehicle user.

When taken together, 26% overall said immediate hire, ranks; 49% was immediate hire, bookings, 22% advanced hire and 3% chauffeur or corporate.

48% (57% 2020 and 79% 2017) of those responding had worked six days in a typical week. 20% (26%, 18%) had worked five days and 15% (11%, 3%) seven. 6% (2%) had worked four days, 5% three, none (4%) two days, 1% a single day and 5% had not worked.

The average days worked were 4.4 (just under 6 2020). Hackney carriage average was 5.7 and the private hire 5.4. This amounted to, on average, 34 (43, 44) hours, with quoted hours ranging up to 90 (79, 60). Hackney carriage average was 38.8 hours and private hire 40.6.

In terms of periods worked within a week, the main difference was that 46% of hackney carriages said they worked the 13:00 to 20:00 period, with 10% 20:00 to 23:00 and 4% 23:00 to 05:00 whereas private hire saw 32% (less), 16% and 12% (both more); i.e. more private hire tended to work late and overnight. The share of morning service was very similar between the two kinds of vehicle, except that more private hire operated Sunday mornings.

Night service levels rise for both kinds of vehicles on Fridays and Saturdays but still see less levels of service than during daytime hours. Again, private hire levels appear to be higher than those for hackney carriage.

The largest quoted issue affecting when people worked remained, as in 2020 'family commitments' (35%, was 44%). 27% (21%) chose to work busy times. 20% (much higher than the 5% of 2021) chose to avoid times with busy traffic and 9% (8%) chose to avoid times when passengers might be disruptive. Just 1% this time (9% 2020) had the hours they worked affected by sharing of the vehicle they drove. The 'other' category was 9% this time, although some of those were specific quotes of the categories above.

81% (94% 2020, 95% 2017) owned their own vehicle. In 2020, 4% said they were under a lease or other financial agreement. A very small 3% (was 17% 2020 and 10% 2017) said someone else also drove the vehicle they used. Periods quoted were 33% (50%) at night, 33% evenings and 33% when other driver was not working (in 2020 remainder was 30% for days and 20% over weekends (very similar to 2017)

77% (much higher than the 47% of 2020) accepted pre-bookings. However, this was partly due to a much higher response this time from private hire. Of the 133 total responses, 2% gave three methods, 17% two, 50% just one, 7% said they did accept pre-bookings but did not say how, and 24% did not take pre-bookings. Only one named a company this time.

For the hackney carriage respondents, 53% said they did accept bookings, of which 61% were for a company (not named). 22% were for a company and app, 9% were return bookings, and 4% (each) were company and return booking and app. In 2020, the bulk of those accepting bookings were with one large hackney carriage radio operator (72%) with four other companies named, the largest being used by 11% and each of the rest by 6% each. This response was similar to 2017 although the level of accepting pre-bookings was actually reduced from the 64% in 2017 but increased from the 47% of 2020.

87% of private hire respondents said they did take pre-bookings. 55% did so via app; 20% by either company or app, 10% did not say how, 9% direct via a company, 3% through a company, an app or return bookings, and 1.5% each for app/return booking and app/own operators licence.

With reference to shares of work obtained, 26% of the hackney carriages obtained all their work from ranks. A further 11% obtained between 75% and 99% from ranks and the balance from hailing. 14% said they got half their work from ranks and half from bookings. A further 10% obtained between 20% and 80% from ranks with the balance from bookings. 2% got 90% from ranks with the balance from schools. Another 2% got 25% from rank and 75% from schools. 19% obtained between 10% and 50% from ranks, 25% to 60% from bookings and the balance from schools contracts. Four hackney carriage did not provide any details.

For private hire, 38% got all their work from bookings. 10% said they got all their work from a large international app, and 9% from an (unnamed) app. 29% provided no detail and the others obtained work from a range of other sources. As already noted, there were two private hire with only short lengths of experience saying they obtained work from ranks, and two mentioned work from hailing.

76% (compared to all in 2020) felt there were enough hackney carriages in Oldham now.

Many gave multiple answers for the ranks they used. The Town Hall rank was termed both Yorkshire Street (8%, 17% 2020) and Town Hall (15% (14% 2020), with 2% (as in 2020) saying Greaves Street, the feeder rank, giving a total of 25% (33% 2020) for this rank, making it the top quoted overall. The main rank quoted in its own right was Tommyfield 30% (28% 2020), then Royton 30% (25% 2020)(the rank near a booking office). None this time said Dan Fold (was 5% 2020 plus 1%, Bus Station) or St Mary's Way (was 4% 2020).

70% of those responding to the question felt that the number of hackney carriage vehicles should continue to be limited. In 2020 and 2017 this level was all those responding. When split by vehicle type, 91% of hackney carriages agreed, 49% of private hire and 50% of those saying they drove both kinds of vehicle also agreed, with 7% of hackney carriage, 42% of dual and 35% of private hire disagreeing. In each case the balance of 8%, 2% and 16% gave no response.

Whilst some (most in 2020) said how they thought this provided benefit to the public, most of the comments focussed on the excess numbers of vehicles. Those focussed on the benefits to the public stated experienced drivers, lower congestion and better service, with others pointing out more vehicles would lead to more congestion and lower remuneration for those working.

Most of the responses about how people felt removing the limit might benefit the public used the opportunity to reiterate they felt there were too many vehicles, or said simply that more vehicles was clearly a benefit to the public. The additional comments also focussed again on excess vehicle numbers.



7 Evaluation of unmet demand and its significance

It is first important to define our specific view about what constitutes unmet demand. Our definition is when a person turns up at a hackney carriage rank and finds there is no vehicle there available for immediate hire. This normally leads to a queue of people building up, some of who may walk off (taken to be latent demand), whilst others will wait till a vehicle collects them. Later passengers may well arrive when there are vehicles there, but because of the queue will not obtain a vehicle immediately.

There are other instances where queues of passengers can be observed at hackney carriage ranks. This can occur when the level of demand is such that it takes longer for vehicles to move up to waiting passengers than passengers can board and move away. This often occurs at railway stations but can also occur at other ranks where high levels of passenger arrivals occur. We do not consider this is unmet demand, but geometric delay and although we note this, it is not counted towards unmet demand being significant.

The industry standard index of the significance of unmet demand (ISUD) was initiated at the time of the introduction of section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act as a numeric and consistent way of evaluating unmet demand and its significance. The ISUD methodology was initially developed by a university and then adopted by one of the leading consultant groups undertaking the surveys made necessary to enable authorities to retain their limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers. The index has been developed and deepened over time to take into account various court challenges. It has now become accepted as the industry standard test of if identified unmet demand is significant.

The index is a statistical guide derived to evaluate if observed unmet demand is in fact significant. However, its basis is that early tests using first principles identified based on a moderate sample suggested that the level of index of 80 was the cut-off above which the index was in fact significant, and that unmet demand therefore was such that action was needed in terms of additional issue of plates to reduce the demand below this level, or a complete change of policy if it was felt appropriate. This level has been accepted as part of the industry standard. However, the index is not a strict determinant and care is needed in providing the input samples as well as interpreting the result provided. However, the index has various components which can also be used to understand what is happening in the rank-based and overall licensed vehicle market.

ISUD draws from several different parts of the study data. Each separate component of the index is designed to capture a part of the operation of the demand for hackney carriages and reflect this numerically. Whilst the principal inputs are from the rank surveys, the measure of latent demand comes from the public on-street surveys, and any final decision about if identified unmet demand is significant, or in fact about the value of continuing the current policy of restricting vehicle numbers, must be taken fully in the context of a careful balance of all the evidence gathered during the survey process.

The present ISUD calculation has two components which both could be zero. In the case that either are zero, the overall index result is zero, which means they clearly demonstrate there is no unmet demand which is significant, even if other values are high.

The first component which can be zero is the proportion of daytime hours where people are observed to have to wait for a hackney carriage to arrive. The level of wait used is ANY average wait at all within any hour. The industry definition of these hours varies, the main index user counts from 10:00 to 18:00 (i.e. eight hours ending at 17:59). The present index is clear that unmet demand cannot be significant if there are no such hours. The only rider on this component is that the sample of hours collected must include a fair element of such hours, and that if the value is non-zero, review of the potential effect of a wider sample needs to be considered.

The other component which could be zero is the test identifying the proportion of passengers which are travelling in any hour when the average passenger wait in that hour is greater than one minute.

If both of these components are non-zero, then the remaining components of the index come into play. These are the peakiness factor, the seasonality factor, average passenger delay, and the latent demand factor.

Average passenger delay is the total amount of time waited by all passengers in the sample, divided by the total number of passengers observed who entered hackney carriages.

The seasonality factor allows for the undertaking of rank survey work in periods which are not typical, although guidance is that such periods should normally be avoided if possible particularly as the impact of seasons may not just be on the level of passenger demand, but may also impact on the level of supply. This is particularly true in regard to if surveys are undertaken when schools are active or not.

Periods when schools are not active can lead to more hackney carriage vehicles being available whilst they are not required for school contract work. Such periods can also reduce hackney carriage demand with people away on holiday from the area. Generally, use of hackney carriages is higher in December in the run-up to Christmas, but much lower in January, February and the parts of July and August when more people are likely to be on holiday. The factor tends to range from 0.8 for December (factoring high demand level impacts down) to 1.2 for January / February (inflating the values from low demand levels upwards).

There can be special cases where summer demand needs to be covered, although high peaks for tourist traffic use of hackney carriages tend not to be so dominant at the current time, apart from in a few key tourist authorities.

The peakiness factor is generally either 1 (level demand generally) or 0.5 (demand has a high peak at one point during the week). This is used to allow for the difficulty of any transport system being able to meet high levels of peaking. It is rarely possible or practicable for example for any public transport system, or any road capacity, to be provided to cover a few hours a week.

The latent demand factor was added following a court case. It comes from asking people in the on-street questionnaires if they have ever given up waiting for a hackney carriage at a rank in any part of the area. This factor generally only affects the level of the index as it only ranges from 1.0 (no-one has given up) to 2.0 (everyone says they have). It is also important to check that people are quoting legitimate hackney carriage rank waits as some, despite careful questioning, quote giving up waiting at home, which must be for a private hire vehicle (even if in hackney carriage guise as there are few private homes with taxi ranks outside).

The ISUD index is the result of multiplying each of the components together and benchmarking this against the cut-off value of 80. Changes in the individual components of the index can also be illustrative. For example, the growth of daytime hour queueing can be an earlier sign of unmet demand developing than might be apparent from the proportion of people experiencing a queue particularly as the former element is based on any wait and not just that averaging over a minute. The change to a peaky demand profile can tend towards reducing the potential for unmet demand to be significant.

Finally, any ISUD value must be interpreted in the light of the sample used to feed it, as well as completely in the context of all other information gathered. Generally, the guide of the index will tend not to be overturned in regard to significant unmet demand being identified, but this cannot be assumed to be the case – the index is a guide and a part of the evidence and needs to be taken fully in context.

Component	2025	2017	2014
Average passenger delay	0.13	0.1	0.015
% off peak hours with any delay	29.17	25	8.3
% passengers travelling in hours with over 1 minute average delay	3.81	2.03	2.3
Seasonality	1.0	1.0	1.0
Peakiness factor	0.5	0.5	1.0
Latent demand	1.02	1.02	1.005
<i>Calculated index:</i>	8.87	2.59	0.016

For 2025, all the main measures of unmet demand have increased, apart from seasonality, the peakiness factor and latent demand. The index of significance of unmet demand is now the highest it has been during the course of surveys undertaken, at just under 9. However, it remains a long way from the industry accepted level of 60 that would define the observed unmet demand as being significant in terms of the 1985 Transport Act Section 16.

This result implies that the limit can be retained and defended if necessary.

Further discussion of how this fits with the other evidence of this report occurs in the synthesis chapter below.

8 Summary, synthesis and study conclusions

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

Background and context

This latest review of unmet demand and its significance is undertaken within the context of the Department for Transport November 2023 Best Practice Guidance, the latest provided enabling review if the current situation in Oldham supports application of section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act with respect to limiting hackney carriage vehicle numbers. This latest review for Oldham followed determination by the authority that a further survey was required given their view that the limit should be retained.

This survey was carried out between March and June 2025 with the rank surveys and public consultation on-street both in April, driver surveys through April and May and key stakeholder consultation through the full period. The area, which is a metropolitan borough authority within the Greater Manchester combined authority area, sets its own rank provision but sees overarching transport policy set at the combined authority level.

Local population in the area continues to grow. In 2021, travel to work by taxi was 1.9% for the authority compared to 1.2% for the north west region average and 0.7% for the English average level. Levels of disability from the 2021 census suggest higher levels than the English average at 8.6% compared to 7.3% for activities limited a lot, albeit lower than the North West value of 8.9%.

Transport policy was last set in 2022 in the "Oldham Transport Strategy and Delivery Plan" (OTSDP) and states that "taxis and phv's provide invaluable transport services at times when public transport is not an option".

The current Local Transport Plan for this area is based in the Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) five year Transport Delivery Plan and the Greater Manchester Transport Strategy 2040. Policy 1 states that the authority will work with partners to ensure (amongst others) that taxis and phv's are available and fully integrated into the Greater Manchester transport network. Policy 28 seeks to work with the industry to develop minimum standards across the Region, with the Mayor of Greater Manchester taking the lead in potential Government response to out of town taxi issues.

The current limit on hackney carriage vehicle numbers appears to have been in place for as long as such policies have been possible, although the area did not draw any zoning policy through from the Government reorganisation of 1974 that saw many licensing authorities have such provisions (but more so in West Yorkshire than Greater Manchester).

The number of hackney carriages has remained at 85 since at least 1994 although one plate was not on issue at the time of the survey. After a slight dip due to the pandemic, private hire vehicle numbers have now increased significantly, as have driver numbers. Local policy sees all drivers now able to choose to drive either hackney carriage or private hire vehicles.

Oldham is one of the two Manchester area authorities that does not stipulate all hackney carriages should be WAV style. The level of these vehicles grew from 1999 to be 25% of the fleet in 2013. The level has now reduced to 14% although this level has been constant over the last few years. There are some WAV in the private hire fleet (2.4% at most, around 1% at present).

The number of operators has also increased significantly since the pandemic.

The limit has regularly been reviewed, although the previous survey was 2017 given that an update in 2020 was halted due to the onset of the pandemic. Prior to 2017, surveys were in 2014, 2011 and 2003.

Rank observations

Changes have been made to rank provision and layouts since the last survey in 2017, although all had been in place before the pandemic, so are not recent. The main change was to the Town Hall Rank which was provided with a feeder rank in Greaves Street (not available between 05:00 and 10:00 each day to allow loading), meaning the original layout was also changed so all vehicles need to approach along Greaves Street. A rank was added near the club in Waterloo Street operating 22:00 to 05:00. The Metrolink station at Mumps saw provision of a dedicated taxi rank.

In this survey, temporary road works closed the loop road on which the bus station rank was located. Vehicles were allowed to reverse into part of the remaining loop as part of their feeding to the Tommyfield Rank. The Care Centre and Post Office ranks no longer operate.

The 2025 survey recorded activity at all active ranks covering Thursday 3rd April through to later on Sunday 6th April 2025. Of all the survey information gathered, 72% covered vehicle arrivals and departures, 80% of which were hackney carriages. This was slightly reduced from the 83% observed in 2017, with the main increase being seen in private cars at ranks (8% 2017 to 15% now). This is a national change seen since the pandemic arising from vehicles finding spaces to park when hackney carriages were less active.

The estimated 2025 average weekly level of passengers is 4,403, some 53% lower than in 2017, and 54% lower than the previously highest recorded value in 2011. In terms of the levels of usage between sites, both Tommyfield and the Old Town Hall have very similar shares of usage. Spring Garden Street has actually increased actual and shares of patronage since 2017 whilst night demand at Waterloo Street has reduced in both actual numbers and share.

Busiest rank is Tommyfield (including any departures from the stunted bus station location), with 41% of estimated passengers. Next is the Old Town Hall with 28% and Royton with 27%. The remaining 4% were from the Waterloo Street night rank.

Thursday, Friday and Saturday flow profiles are generally similar apart from more significant night flows on Friday and Saturday into the early hours – mainly in Royton. Latest activity into the early hours of Saturday and Sunday is at Waterloo Street. In general the Old Town Hall rank operates more consistently for longer hours whilst the Tommyfield location tends to focus more on shopping hours.

When comparing total flows, profiles for 2017 and 2025 are similar with 2025 levels generally always lower although some Saturday daytime flows appear marginally higher. The sharp Saturday night peak is now much lower and much earlier. In 2017 four hours had flows over 100 passengers. In 2025 the peak is 80 and occurs at 21:00 Saturday compared to the peaks at 02:00 and 03:00 early Sunday morning in 2017.

Despite this, the peak to average flow ratio in 2025 at 2.61 is higher than the 2.46 of 2017. Per se this implies meeting demand in 2025 could actually be more difficult than in 2017 despite overall lower flows.

2017 saw 22 hours with passengers waiting, in 2025 this has risen to 29 hours. Further, hours with delay see more on Thursday daytime (eight) and Friday daytime (eight) than overnight Saturday / Sunday (two) when total passengers are actually higher. This is symptomatic of vehicles needing to find other work due to low overall flows. This is further discussed in the synthesis section.

Sample review of the activity of all licensed vehicles identified 21% of active licensed vehicles were out of town, with five other Manchester authorities represented but with the highest proportion of these plates being from an authority known to license many out of town plates (16% of the out of town plates). Of the 79% of plates validated as local, 40% were Oldham hackney carriages, 2% Oldham WAV hackney carriages and the remained, 48%, Oldham private hire.

58% of the hackney carriages appeared to be independents. 22% were working for an operator who also had private hire vehicles in their fleet. Two other 'mixed' hackney carriage / private hire fleet operators were also identified. A hackney carriage only operation accounted for 5% of the total hackney carriages observed.

Of the local private hire vehicles, half operated for one large app-based company with a further two sets of 16% each for local operators.

Over the three days 77% of the hackney carriage fleet were observed. In 2017 just one day was sampled, with the value of 76% resulting. In general, Saturday saw a higher proportion of hackney carriages active, with the highest proportion, 26% in the early hours of Sunday morning, followed by 25% early afternoon and 24% late morning. Comparing the Friday data from 2017 to 2025 however found generally lower levels of activity in 2025 on the Friday, with the strongest reduction being from 29% of the fleet seen late evening to just 5% for 2025.

With reference to issues with other vehicles using ranks, 57% of the activity at Waterloo Street was private cars, with a further 21% private hire and just 19% hackney carriages. In terms of daytime ranks, the Old Town Hall rank, and in particular its feeder, saw 19% of movements being private cars. The trade advised us that there were times when this meant it was hard to keep sufficient vehicles available to feed the main rank.

The level of observed WAV in the surveys at 11% was very similar to the 14% that exist in the fleet. The level of usage of these vehicles was up to seven people using wheelchairs compared to four in 2017. In 2025 most were at the Tommyfield rank. The level of people assisted into vehicles had also increased significantly (98 2025, 18 2017). Again a high proportion, 56% were at Tommyfield rank, with 24% at Old Town Hall and 19% at Spring Gardens.

On street public views

246 people were interviewed in the streets of Oldham including 19% in central Royton. Nearly all were from the area (97%). The sample structure was relatively similar to that in the 2021 census. 76% had made one or more trips by licensed vehicle in the area in the previous three months. However, hackney carriage saw just 5%, private hire 60% and by both kinds 11%.

The level of overall usage of licensed vehicles at 5.7 per person per month is much higher than the 2.3 estimated in 2017. When compared to hackney carriage usage, the estimate is 12% of trips being made by hackney carriage. This is lower than the 20% of 2017. However, since 2017 hailing levels have increased from 0% to 3%, but the main change is 18% saying they used their own mobiles or phones rising to 31% now saying they use apps. The freephone share has gone up from 5% to 14% but telephone is down from 57% to 41%. This follows the national trend towards increasing use of apps at the expense of more traditional methods of obtaining licensed vehicles.

The level of numbers of private hire companies named in 2025 at ten was a lot less than the 26 named in 2017, although a lot of this was reduction in use of alternative names for the same company in 2017. The top four names now take 68% of the total mentions whereas this was just 57% in 2017. The top company now gets 18% of share whereas it only had 1% in 2017; the second company was top in 2017 but now has slightly less share, the same level as another company not mentioned at all in 2017. The fourth company has slightly increased its share. This suggests a very competitive market, but one that is seeing agglomeration, another national trend. The top nine companies all saw people say they used their apps.

This has involved high levels of app activity although most of this was referenced in the central Oldham interviewees. However, the visibility of hackney carriages, very good in 2017 was excellent now, with just one person of the whole sample that responded to this question saying they could not remember seeing a hackney carriage. The level of those not remembering when they last used a hackney carriage had reduced from 75% to 49%.

However, a lower share of interviewees told us of ranks they were aware of and less locations were mentioned (partly due to a change in the method of questioning). The Old Town Hall rank saw 52% of total mentions with Tommyfield second with 24% and Royton third with 17%. Levels of quoted usage were near 50% for these three ranks.

In terms of scoring of aspects of service, 'good' was the most dominant score with highest 'good' scores for vehicle cleanliness and driver professionalism. Very few extra comments were provided for the very few 'very poor' scores, mainly related to expense.

In contrast, 24 people took time providing further detail for those aspects they had rated 'very good'. All are encouraging comments and should be publicised further.

48% said they would use hackney carriage vehicles more if they were more affordable. 30% said if there were more hackney carriages to phone for. Need of more at ranks scored just 2%.

The level of people saying they, or someone they knew, needed an adapted licensed vehicle increased from 2017 levels with most saying the need was for a WAV. None said they ever had any issue getting a vehicle that met their mobility needs.

93% felt there were enough hackney carriages in the area.

Key stakeholder views

As is becoming increasingly normal, no responses were received to the key stakeholder consultation. The only way such responses seem to be gained in the present climate is if this element is undertaken by already active council consultation departments.

Trade views

The only element of the 2020 survey completed was the driver survey, whose results were never reported. The 2025 survey received 134 completed and non-duplicate responses, about 4% of all drivers. 32% of these said they drove hackney carriages plus a further 9% saying they drove both hackney carriage and private hire. 80% said the licensed vehicle trade was their only or main source of income. 2% had left the trade and 6% planned to return when demand increased.

Though reduced, the level of experience in the trade remains high, although it is clear the bulk of new entrants have been in the private hire trade, with their average length of service 6.5 years compared to the 18.3 of the hackney carriage trade.

The relative inexperience in the private hire sector appears to include some ignorance of how they should obtain work with two saying they got 5% and 30% of their work from ranks despite clearly being private hire. There were a wide range of operating models which when taken together suggested 26% said immediate hire ranks, 49% immediate hire bookings, 22% advanced hire and 3% chauffeur or corporate (for the whole licensed vehicle industry).

The level of those working six days continued to reduce from 79% in 2017 to 57% 2020 and 48% now. However, more now worked seven days (3% 2017, 11% 2020 and 15% now). Average hours worked were now 34 (compared to 44 in 2017 and 43 in 2020). Responses suggested more private hire now worked late and overnight than hackney carriage.

Working around family commitments remained the main reason for when people worked, although this was reduced from the 44% of 2020 to 35% now. More chose to work busy times (27% compared to 21%) and a strikingly increased 20% (was 5%) chose to avoid times with busy traffic. The level of avoidance of disruptive passenger times was very similar.

A reduced level owned their own vehicles, though this might relate to the higher level of private hire input. The level of acceptance of pre-bookings was up to 77% from 47%, again partly due to private hire input. 53% of hackney carriage respondents said they did accept bookings – more than in 2020 but still less than the 64% of 2017.

26% of hackney carriages said they obtained all their work from ranks, with a further 11% obtaining between 75% and 99% from ranks and the balance from hailing. 14% said half from ranks and half from bookings. 23% of hackney carriages now said they had school contracts, one of which obtained 75% of their work from school contracts and just 25% from ranks.

38% of private hire got all their work from bookings with 10% saying they got all their work from a large app and 9% from another app.

76% felt there were enough hackney carriages in Oldham now – in 2020 all the hackney carriage respondents (there were no private hire) felt there were enough hackney carriages.

Top quoted rank was Tommyfield with 30% (28% 2020), with the Old Town Hall, although it was quoted by several names, with 25% overall (was 33% in 2021).

91% of hackney carriage respondents and 49% of private hire agreed the number of vehicles should continue to be limited. With hackney carriage only response in 2020 and 2017 this level had been 100%; the average was now 70% but with the private hire response now included.

Most of comments about benefits of the limit being retained now related more to the excess numbers of vehicles, this was also true of the section asking for benefits of removing the limit. Specific benefits quoted were experienced drivers, reduced congestion and better service.

Formal evaluation of significance of unmet demand

In 2025, all the main measures of unmet demand have increased apart from seasonality, the peakiness factor and latent demand (all of which remained the same). The index of significance of unmet demand is now the highest it has been in the last three surveys (8.87) but remains a long way from the industry accepted level of 60 that would suggest the unmet demand was significant.

Synthesis

Overall transport policy in the wider region supports licensed vehicles being available and integrated into the transport network. The local mayor is at the forefront of seeking to overcome the problems arising from the issue of out-of-town licensed vehicles and drivers.

There is evidence that overall use of licensed vehicles has increased, but much of the growth has been taken by large and or new companies, mostly through use of apps, whose usage is now nearly a third of quoted overall methods of getting licensed vehicles in the area. Estimated rank passenger numbers are 53% of what they were in 2017, with the main reduction being related to reduced levels of night travel from ranks. Shopping trips appear to be the mainstay of rank-based demand, with the Tommyfield rank being the busiest overall despite mainly operating in shopping hours.

The overall profile of demand on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays is now very similar, and the general profile over Friday and Saturday is remarkably similar to 2017 albeit generally at a lower level. However, there were some hours on Saturdays when 2025 flows were higher than 2017.

The reduced flow levels are evidenced by 2017 having four hours when there were a total of over 100 passengers travelling from ranks. In 2025 the peak flow is 80, and this also occurs at 21:00 Saturday compared to the peaks of 02:00 and 03:00 in 2017 in the early hours of Sunday morning.

Overall, even with lower passenger numbers, delays to the public and the overall performance statistics for the hackney carriage operation have worsened since 2017. Much of this appears to be at the Spring Garden Street rank although there was some passenger delay Friday lunchtime, in the peak Friday hour of 23:00 and on Sunday evening at the Old Town Hall rank, and in two hours on Sunday mornings at Tommyfield. The marginal worsening of the peak to average ratio also helps to explain the worsening of service levels.

There are a high level of out-of-town licensed vehicles active (21% of the sampled licensed vehicles seen). 16% of these were found to be from one large out-of-town licensing authority. Apps are strongly preferred by customers – nearly a third of their quoted ways of getting licensed vehicles. These factors explain how overall demand for licensed vehicles appears to have increased whilst rank usage has reduced, a national trend. This has led to more hackney carriages obtaining school contracts and more finding work from booking circuits, although the level of mixed fleets in Oldham (ones with both hackney carriage and private hire operating) has always been high. It is accepted this is a way people say they would use hackney carriages more, were more available by phone, but that does draw away from service to ranks (and this can be seen in the ISUD statistics which have worsened since 2017).

It also appears that, again with national trends, hackney carriages are better able to obtain sufficient remuneration to enable them to choose not to work less preferable times. Unusually compared to national trends, for Oldham it appears that private hire have extended their operating hours to cover this change, although it may also be that more people are finding it possible to make app and other bookings more of the time due to the high level of competition forcing private hire to work longer hours. The public also seemed less aware of rank locations now than in 2017.

The picture with reference to disability service is encouraging, with more people observed using wheelchairs to travel from ranks in 2025, and a significant growth in people being assisted into vehicles at ranks – mainly at Tommyfield. This matches the quoted increase in need for such vehicles and the observed level of WAV at ranks was very close to the actual level in the fleet.

The overall licensed vehicle service is felt to be 'good' and people took time to give encouraging comments which should be shared with the trade overall.

One concern arises that some of the more recent private hire entrants do not appear to be fully clear about how they can obtain work, or perhaps what terms to use for the work they obtain.

Strong support remained for retention of the limit, not just from hackney carriage but also from 49% of private hire respondents. A major concern raised was the high level of vehicles active in the area – a concern not only to hackney carriage but also to private hire.

Conclusions

There are many encouraging signs from this latest collection of evidence about the Oldham licensed vehicle trade. Service to those needing adapted vehicles seems to have increased need but also has seen increased usage of vehicles at ranks. The overall service is counted to be 'good' with respondents taking time to provide compliments.

The limit policy remains supported by both hackney carriage and private hire alike. It is providing stability to the trade overall and therefore benefit to the public. Hackney carriage activity on phone booking and app booking circuits is a positive move albeit appearing to have some negative impact on rank service (although the bulk of this is at Royton rather than in Oldham).

Strong competition and move to use of modern methods of getting licensed vehicles does appear to have increased the overall level of licensed vehicle usage with the national trend of reducing rank usage being seen markedly here. Some hackney carriages have taken advantage of reacting to this change positively.

There is concern that recent private hire entrants at best are confused about how they can legitimately obtain fares or at worst are taking advantage of apps to believe they can pick up people as if at ranks. This may need education of the trade and public.

9 Recommendations

On the basis of the evidence gathered in this unmet demand survey for Oldham, our key conclusion is that there is no evidence of any unmet demand for the services of hackney carriages either patent or latent which is significant at this point in time in the Oldham licensing area. The committee is therefore able if it so wishes to retain the limit, and at its current level.

The marginal increase in the ISUD value suggests that the spare plate should be offered and kept available in case someone might wish to use this to help improve service to ranks, although such usage cannot be stipulated with its issue.

Consideration is needed to improve the enforcement of feeder ranks – some authorities use technology to do this more effectively.

Public and trade education is needed to explain and confirm the modern ways that people can get licensed vehicles, and the ways that are not legal or safe (e.g. do not take private hire from ranks, focus on using apps which tell you high levels of detail about the vehicle and driver that will service your request). This could be fed back to the team working with the Region Mayor to improve overall understanding of how licensed vehicles should operate.

Strong benefit would be gained from publicising the good views held by customers of the overall service provided, and the good service provided in the area to those needing adapted vehicles, particularly WAV style.

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