

SUMMARY OF RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION ON REVISION OF THE CONDITIONS OF OPERATION FOR LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES AND DRIVERS IN OLDHAM

Method/Originator of Response	Number Received
Responses to questionnaire contained in consultation document	52
Responses to website based e-mail	4
Responses from professional bodies (NHS, police, fire etc)	3
Responses from non-trade individuals (this may include people within the trade, but it was not clear that they had any involvement from their response)	29
Responses from within the trade (Hackney carriage and private hire and associated suppliers)	10
Responses from other sections of the Council	6
Total	104

For a Borough with a population of some 217,000 people (2001 census – taken from Halcrow unmet demand survey February 2004, page 2) this is clearly an extremely low response rate. When the number of licensees of hackney carriages and private hire vehicles (according to the above survey, there were 85 hackney carriages and some 850 private hire vehicles licensed in 2003) plus around 1300 licensed drivers are taken into account, it can be seen that even from the perspective of the hackney carriage and private hire trades, the response rate is extremely low. It is reasonable to infer from this low response that the majority of people likely to be affected by these proposals, both within the hackney carriage and private hire trades and as users of the services provided, did not feel that the proposals were unacceptable, or at least, so unacceptable as to be worth commenting on.

Making sense of these responses is a difficult task. The questionnaire attached to the consultation document did not exactly match the chapters of the consultation document. However the e-mail questionnaire did. Obviously responses by letter are not necessarily based upon those questions. It is also clear that some responses were coordinated, as the answers are identical in a number of cases. There has also been a coordinated campaign by Borough Taxis asking “customers who have difficulty getting into London type black cabs please write to. . .”, which generated a number of replies. Some of these are based upon the Borough Taxis’ request form, but I have no doubt they have also triggered some of the letters that have been received.

It would appear to be reasonable to take into account the fact that the professional bodies including the Police and Primary Care Trust were supportive of all the proposals.

The responses from the hackney carriage trade must be viewed in the light of the fact that the value of a hackney carriage vehicle licence within Oldham is estimated to be between £45,000 and £50,000. Clearly those who hold such licences would stand to lose a significant amount of money if the quantity of hackney carriage licences were to be increased.

In reasonably simple terms, the responses break down as follows:

Area of Consultation	Total Number of Responses on this point	For (Total and percentage)	Against (Total and percentage)	Unclear (Total and percentage)
Moving to an all purpose built wheelchair accessible hackney carriage fleet	95	20 (21%)	73 (77%)	2 (2%)
Relaxing advertising conditions for hackney carriages	62	28 (45%)	23 (37%)	11 (18%)
Introduction of emission standards	63	47 (74%)	10 (16%)	6 (10%)
Increasing the number of hackney carriage plates by either managed growth or delimitation	66	19 (29%)	45 (68%)	2 (3%)
Changing the hackney carriage fare structure	58	14 (24%)	38 (66%)	6 (10)
Introduction of the proposed dispersal scheme for Oldham town centre	61	40 (66%)	5 (8%)	16 (26%)

Area of Consultation	Total Number of Responses on this point	For (Total and percentage)	Against (Total and percentage)	Unclear (Total and percentage)
Introduction of a recognition scheme for drivers [it was not clear to a number of respondents what this referred to]	46	34 (74%)	5 (11%)	7 (15%)
Proposed alterations to private hire conditions	57	23 (40%)	16 (28%)	18 (32%)
Additional tests for prospective drivers	63	47 (75%)	13 (20%)	3 (5%)
Cabsafe	7	7 (100%)	0	0