

Lancaster Licensing Area Demand Survey

Thank you for our recent discussions during October 2025. This note covers the cost of a full survey beginning with a focus on rank work being undertaken in mid-November 2025. Please note that LVSA (Licensed Vehicle Surveys and Analysis) is a joint trading name covering CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd and Vector Transport Consultancy. The actual legal entity for invoicing will be CTS Traffic and Transportation Ltd.

Introduction

LVSA have kept ourselves at the forefront of the developing needs of licensing authorities both in terms of ensuring they keep to the latest Government Guidance, updated in November 2023 after your last survey. Notwithstanding this, the need for the classic unmet demand elements to meet the needs of Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act remain within our core methodology.

The aim is to provide the licensing authority with early warning of impending issues that affect vehicle licensing allowing them to attempt to tailor policy to best suit. We believe this fits well with the duties of the licensing authority in light of both Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act and the still latest Best Practice Guidance (BPG).

During 2025 we have undertaken or are undertaking 18 demand surveys under the LVSA banner. These included surveys for local areas including Wyre.

In total, across all our demand survey activity, LVSA has undertaken 281 similar studies for some 108 different authorities with six studies for four authorities, five studies for 11 authorities, four studies for 16 authorities and 20 studies for three authorities, demonstrating good repeat business. Our full list of authorities served can be provided on request.

We can provide written references for two recent authorities, Liverpool and Wyre, if necessary. Further referees can be provided if necessary.

Background

Through our two taxi experts, and principally Ian Millership, we were involved in undertaking your last demand survey (reporting in 2023, but with the bulk of the data collection in 2022) and also copies of your previous surveys many of which were undertaken by the main taxi expert who would lead your new study. We have also attempted to keep up with developments in your area over the intervening period since your last study. This gives us unrivalled knowledge of your area and its licensing history and practices.

Under the LVSA umbrella we now undertake almost all demand surveys in both England and Scotland at this time. In Scotland we also provided advice and have undertaken private hire restriction surveys.

You provided us clarification regarding current rank provision. We have updated the level of vehicles and drivers from the DfT surveys undertaken each March to the latest end of March 2024 information to inform our thoughts regarding your potential study needs (DfT have not published their 2025 information this time).

Methodology

We have identified several potential work items that will build up to provide the comprehensive review you aspire to. We discuss each below:

Trade consultation

Our standard all-trade consultation as required by the current Best Practice Guidance (BPG) provides independent feedback to us of key parameters such as:

- The current involvement in the trade
- What type of involvement they have, i.e. drive, own, operate and what kind of vehicle
- How they obtain their trade
- What ranks they utilise or areas they service

This is undertaken by your either posting or electronically contacting drivers to provide them the explanation and access to the questionnaire (preferably completed on-line).

Our current preference for any demand survey update is that the driver survey occurs in advance of the main rank work. This has the benefit of being able to tailor the expected rank demand work to those ranks that drivers say they actually use. It also allows other elements of the work to be tailored to identifying evidence of issues that drivers raise.

However, some authorities have the strong belief that undertaking any work in advance of the rank work can lead drivers to 'play up' to the survey by ensuring ranks are covered more than they might normally be. Our methodologies are designed to minimise the chance for such behaviour to skew the results (see further below). We can therefore undertake that survey after the rank work, but that delays the reporting time by around two months.

We would provide you with updates on returns every week once the initial issue of the survey by yourselves had been made.

Public views

A current version of our standard demand survey on-street consultation would be undertaken in the two main centres covering up to 100 interviews in each of Lancaster and Morecambe. This would identify current views from the public in the area about their present and proposed use of licensed vehicles, and provide an up to date set of direct views.

This public consultation also identifies the key 'latent demand' element of the study by asking people if and when they had given up waiting for hackney carriages either at ranks or by hailing.

Some authorities now have well-developed consultation sections. We could provide an online version of the on-street interview form for your consultation section to promote, either based on your internet, or feeding into our servers, as suits. If the former option was used, your consultation section would need to forward us the electronic results to interpret. We have provided an extra cost for our element of this offer. In a recent survey, this added some 200 extra interviews to the public tapestry and was very valuable in adding to the information gathered on-street (which is essential to gain non-user information, whereas the social media based version tends to focus on users, and often those with a strong view).

Testing of rank-based demand

The ultimate way to keep any authority away from any possibility of legal challenge regarding unmet demand significance is to have direct information about demand at ranks. This is the most expensive part of any study yet also the clearest evidence of performance. Our report would highlight from various sources evidence about the likely locations where unmet demand might be developing that could be significant (SUD).

We now believe that your rank work could be undertaken during November 2025. This matches the November 2019 date for your previous study. Content would be confirmed at inception.

The rank work will include sample observation of active plates on all three days of the survey to provide the level of activity of the hackney carriage (and other) fleets at key points around the central area. This is critical to understand how many plates are providing the observed level of service to the public at the ranks.

Results from the rank work will be tested using the industry standard 'Index of Significance of Unmet Demand' (ISUD) which identifies level of public service provided from the appropriate inputs from both rank and on-street interviews. We will also follow the spirit of the suggested public interest test outlined by the Law Commission although principally led by the current BPG document guidance at the time of undertaking the survey work.

Key stakeholders

We would approach a range of key stakeholders as defined in the BPG to seek their views of the impact of the present hackney carriage (and private hire) service provided on their customers and businesses.

This would include:

- supermarkets
- pubs
- bars
- night clubs
- hotels
- leisure attractions
- public transport providers
- other appropriate groups

We would also include disability representatives.

We would advise that the present culture is lack of response to any form of stakeholder consultation, given that our work is not statutory, but we will use all available methods to seek to obtain views. We would also draw on any formal discussions or representations made to the licensing authority in this regard (which are usually rare, but some of which you have mentioned particularly on the disability facet).

Again, this element could also be promoted internally by your consultation team if possible, again adding value.

Overall summary

The results from each of the above reviews would be drawn together to provide a comprehensive review of the state of the industry as far as is known in 2025. This would highlight trends and inform possible policy decisions. The report would be built up and reported as each section of work was concluded to ensure the licensing authority, committee and trade could be kept aware at all times of the latest state of knowledge of the industry and its potential future.

Study costs

Our estimated fee for undertaking your study would be £ 12, 250 + VAT.

Overall reporting is included in each element above

Further details can be provided once initial consideration by yourselves of the options above have been undertaken.

The proposed payment schedule of staged payments would be agreed on appointment

We would also advise you that we utilise the services of a factoring company as part of the payment process, more details of which will be provided to you at Inception.

This price does not include a presentation of results to committee. A cost for a virtual or for a face-to-face presentation could be provided if and when necessary.

Further contact can be made by email to ian.millership@ctstraffic.co.uk; by mobile phone on 07976 344254, or by prior agreement to 0121 558 2259 as long as your phone system does not withhold its number, or in last resort to our main office number on 01772 251400.