2020 CONSULTANCY

Hackney Carriage Unmet Demand Study

FOR MILTON KEYNES CITY COUNCIL

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Milton Keynes Council is responsible for the licensing of Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles operating within the area. At present it retains a limit of the number of vehicles that can operate within Milton Keynes.

This taxi study has been undertaken by 2020 Consultancy on behalf of Milton Keynes City Council. A number of key taxi ranks have been surveyed and a passenger survey has also been carried out. The analysis of the surveys is detailed within this report.

An Unmet Taxi Study investigates Taxi operation within a specific area. To obtain an understanding of the demand and possible unmet demand of taxi service within Milton Keynes an Index of Significance of Unmet Demand (ISUD) was actioned.

Leeds University Institute for Transport Studies (see page 8) initially developed a tool to help understand taxi demand across a specific area. The tool was taken forward from subsequent studies and refined over time to allow accurate analysis of data. An ISUD is now the established tool within the industry which provides conclusions on overall taxi numbers within a study area. This study has taken cognisance of the 2010 Department for Transport Best Practice Guidance.

The study has two focusses which are, vehicles which can pick up passengers along the street and at designated taxi ranks or those that are privately hired and can be booked through an operator.

The survey results at key taxi rank locations show a picture of general good service and availability with some availability issues at peak times which is reflected within the overall ISUD score. Of the five ranks studied all show to have good security and accessibility with some having issues with general manoeuvrability and access to key trip generators.

As commuter patterns continue to return to a pre-covid 19 levels the taxi rank outside Milton Keynes train station remains the most used by passengers and taxis. Anecdotal evidence does show some instances where queues are forming with no taxis available. During the study period the outcome highlights that over 90% of passengers are having to wait less than one minute for a taxi, with Thursday being the day when people had to wait the longest. Responses from the passenger survey suggest that Friday and Saturday nights are the most difficult when looking to use a taxi.

Overall the majority of responses to the passenger survey show that most engagement with the taxi options within the city are positive. However, some issues around availability and access have been raised which should be investigated further.

The data recovered during the period shows that in most circumstances the demand vs availability for taxis was met, however when looking at the industry best practice measurement tool there is periods of unmet taxi demand across the ranks surveyed. Some recommendations have been made which are detailed at the end of this report.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Milton Keynes 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. Section 16 of the 1985 Transport Act provides guidance to limiting hackney carriage vehicle numbers, with such a restriction in place in Milton Keynes.

1.1 THE BEST PRACTICE GUIDANCE

This review of current policy is based on the Best Practice Guidance produced by the Department for Transport in April 2010 (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".

Current hackney carriage, private hire and operator licensing is undertaken within the legal frameworks first set by the Town Police Clause 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 operations. 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.

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 that then resulted in issue of the “Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards” (STPHVS) on 23rd July 2020. None of these resulted in any material change to the legislation involved in licensing. Other groups have provided their comments (including the Urban Transport Group and the Competition and Markets Authority) but the upshot remains no change in legislation from that already stated above.

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 utilising a public interest test determined by the Secretary of State. It also suggested the three-year horizon also be used for rank reviews and accessibility reviews. It is assumed the Government response to the Task and Finish Group is now effectively the current reaction to this extensive research. There was no mention of this topic in the STPHVS although that document did discuss wider review of the overall BPG document in the next consultation (see below).

1.2 CURRENT GOVERNMENT POLICY REVIEW STATUS

It is also understood that the revisions resulting from the recently closed Government Consultation will eventually lead to a more comprehensive review of the sections of the BPG not affected by the February 2019 Statutory Guide, as stated in para 1.8 of that document – “A consultation on revised BPG, which focusses on recommendations to licensing authorities to assist them in setting appropriate standards (other than those relating to passenger safety) to enable the provision of services the public demand, will be taken forward once the final Statutory Guidance has been issued.”

STPHVS suggests this wider BPG review will involve a consultation ‘later this year (2020) confirming the aim of making “clear recommendations on the measures licensing authorities should consider to enable the trade to react to the demands of passengers". This means the April 2010 BPG therefore remains valid for our review.

1.3 THE PRESENT BACKGROUND TO POLICY

A more recent restriction, often applied to areas where there is no 'quantity' control felt to exist per-se, is that of 'quality control'. This is often a pseudonym for a restriction that any new hackney carriage vehicle licence must be for a wheel chair accessible vehicle, of various kinds as determined locally.

In many places this implies a restricted number of saloon style hackney carriage licences are available, which often are given 'grandfather' rights to remain as saloon style. Within this quality restriction, there are various levels of strength of the types of vehicles allowed. The tightest restriction, now only retained by a few authorities only allows 'London' style wheel chair accessible vehicles, restricted to those with a 25-foot turning circle, and at the present time principally the LTI Tx, the Mercedes Vito special edition with steerable rear axle, and the Metrocab (no longer produced).

Others allow a wider range of van style conversions in their wheel chair accessible fleet, whilst some go as far as also allowing rear-loading conversions. Given the additional price of these vehicles, this often implies a restriction on entry to the hackney carriage trade. For some, this is complicated by local education authority rules on vehicles used on their contracts. Some authorities do not allow vehicles which appear to be hackney carriage, i.e. mainly the London style vehicles, to be within the private hire fleet, whilst others do allow wheel chair accessible vehicles.

The most usual method of distinguishing between hackney carriages and private hire is a 'Taxi' roof sign on the vehicle, although again some areas do allow roof signs on private hire as long as they do not say 'Taxi', some turn those signs at right angles, whilst others apply liveries, mainly to hackney carriage fleets, but sometimes also to private hire fleets.

1.4 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 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 authorities. 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 years. However, the three-year survey horizon has become generally accepted given the advice of the Best Practice Guidance (BGP) and most locations that review regularly do within that timescale.

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. The reaction of many authorities to that request was to remove limits. In due course, DfT produced a summary of the government guidance which was last updated in England and Wales in 2010 (but more recently in Scotland).

The BPG in 2010 also provided 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 three 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".

The latest STPHVS requires an update given to the DfT by the end of January 2021 in terms of consideration of the measures included in that document, principally production of a comprehensive policy document, review of if CCTV might be mandated and documentation of passenger complaints.

1.5 CASE LAW AND UNMET DEMAND

In respect to case law impinging on unmet demand, the two most recent cases were in 1987 and 2002. 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, which supersedes previous notes and DfT advice, 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. In the end a fresh survey was undertaken, finding no unmet demand.

1.6 MOST RECENT CHANGES RELATING TO DEMAND

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 either the remainder of the Equality Act or the Law Commission recommendations, or for the update of the BPG (except in the case of the latter where STPHVS suggests the next consultation should occur during the remainder of 2020).

1.7 THE 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.

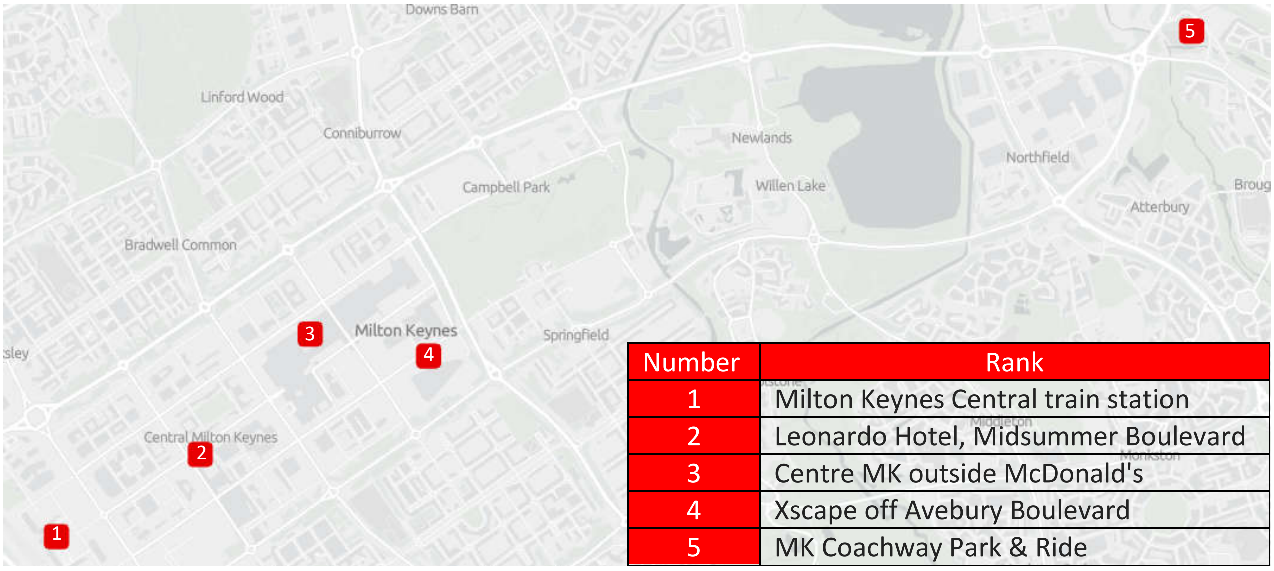
During September 2018 the All-Party Parliamentary Group on taxis produced its long-awaited final report. There was a generally accepted call for revision to taxi licensing legislation and practice, including encouragement for local authorities to move towards some of the practical suggestions made within 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.

2.0 BACKGROUND

Milton Keynes has a current population of 287,100 people as provided by the 2021 census. The previous census record which was given in 2011 outlined the population at 248,800. This increase of 15.4% is the second largest increase in the south east of England between the two census data collections. This indicates that the city is growing with services needing to be at the required level to facilitate the populations requirements.



Number	Rank
1	Milton Keynes Central train station
2	Leonardo Hotel, Midsummer Boulevard
3	Centre MK outside McDonald's
4	Xscape off Avebury Boulevard
5	MK Coachway Park & Ride

Figure 1 – Map representing locations of primary taxi ranks

The Milton Keynes Local Transport Plan 3 2011 – 2031 highlights that "The Taxis and private hire vehicles have an important role to play in providing a real and attractive transport choice in Milton Keynes. Functions include door-to-door alternatives to other forms of transport; late night public transport; completing the trip-end of a journey (e.g. from Central Milton Keynes Rail Station to a final destination); parallel service to community transport; and as a form of Home to School transport[1].

The responsibility for granting licences falls to the Council pursuant to the powers conferred by The Town Police Clauses Act 1847 and the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (as amended). This responsibility is delegated to the Regulatory Committee and Council officers.

[1] https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/Transport%20Vision%20and%20Strategy%20for%20Milton%20Keynes.pdf

The aim of the licensing regime is to protect the public. For this reason the aim and objective of the Milton Keynes Taxi Policy is Public Safety and Safeguarding. This includes minimising crime and disorder and the fear of crime; and protecting children and vulnerable adults[2].

In general, industry standards promote that the determination of conclusions about the significance of unmet demand should take into account the practicality of improving the standard of service through the increase of supply of vehicles. In doing this it is important to promote consistency throughout all authorities over time. In this regard, there are no mandatory requirements or significant guidance.

Therefore, the present legislation in England and Wales sees public fare-paying passenger carrying vehicles 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 this use (Principal ranks).

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

Drivers who operate private hire vehicles can only take bookings via an operator with the operator, driver and vehicle all being from the same authority. Whilst as previously mentioned a hackney carriage operator can accept on street passengers or at time phone call bookings.

Now the ability to book a vehicle by means of app is widely used, which has also led to confusion as to how the use of apps sit with present legislation. All these matters can impact on hackney carriage services, their usage, and therefore on unmet demand and its significance.

[2] https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2022-02/Milton%20Keynes%20Taxi%20Policy%202021%20v10.pdf

Local Authority	**Total Taxis**	**Total PHV**	**Total Licensed Vehicles**
All South East	**8,591**	**17,308**	**25,899**
Oxfordshire	1,057	1,233	2,290
Milton Keynes	**201**	**790**	**991**
Buckinghamshire	335	1,724	2,059
West Berkshire	119	137	256
Bracknell Forest	55	117	172
Reading	216	660	876
Slough	103	373	476
Windsor and Maidenhead	144	538	682
Wokingham	64	78	142
Portsmouth	202	721	923
Southampton	281	1,025	1,306
Hampshire	951	2,285	3,236
Surrey	1039	2,237	3,276
Medway	386	226	612
Kent	1517	1,991	3,508
West Sussex	651	1,388	2,039
Brighton & Hove	590	395	985
East Sussex	494	1,336	1,830
Isle of Wight	186	54	240

Table 1 – Total licensed vehicles by area

Although Milton Keynes has a very unique offering, it is important to see how Milton Keynes compares to areas nearby. The above table details the total number of taxis and private hire vehicles in area within the South-east. It also details the total amount of vehicles combined. This information is important to review on a regular basis to ensure that the total number of vehicles are in line with other areas whilst taking into account the unique characteristics of Milton Keynes.

Table 001 above shows that the area has a large number of licensed vehicles. As expected, the total number of private hire vehicles is greater than the total number of licensed taxis for all areas. Milton Keynes has the 9th largest total licensed vehicle number in the southeast. This is in part due to the unique economic offering and leisure infrastructure that is present within the city.

Fares can also vary from area to area. This is an important consideration when looking at unmet taxi demand. The following table details the cost of Hackney carriages per 2 mile journey. These figures should be taken as an approximation due to the fact they are often changing.

Local Authority	2 Mile Fare
Oxfordshire	£7.50
Milton Keynes	**£7.50**
Buckinghamshire	£6.00
West Berkshire	£8.60
Bracknell Forest	£7.80
Reading	£8.60
Slough	£7.20
Windsor and Maidenhead	£7.10
Wokingham	£8.20
Portsmouth	£7.40
Southampton	£7.60
Hampshire	£7.80
Surrey	£7.80
Medway	£7.00
Kent	£7.70
West Sussex	£7.60
Brighton & Hove	£8.10
East Sussex	£7.80
Isle of Wight	£7.10

Table 2 – Approximate cost for a 2mile journey across local authorities

The fares that Milton Keynes provide are approximately average when compared to other areas in the South-east. It is important to maintain a good understanding of the fares within an area to ensure that they are competitive. Competitive fares ensure that the use of taxis is consistent. If fares are too high, then passengers will be reluctant to use the facility and thus demand for the service will decrease.

3.0 WHEELCHAIR ACCESS VEHICLES (WAV)

In England, 14% of all licensed vehicles were wheelchair accessible in 2022. 55% of all taxi were wheelchair accessible while 2% of Private hire vehicles were wheelchair accessible. In London, all 14,600 taxis were wheelchair accessible as required by Transport for London's 'Conditions for Fitness' taxi licensing policy. In the rest of England outside London, only 40% of taxi were wheelchair accessible.

In London, only 1% of private hire vehicles were wheelchair accessible, whereas in the rest of England this figure is slightly higher at 4%. Generally speaking, metropolitan areas tended to have higher proportions of wheelchair accessible taxis, but lower proportions of wheelchair accessible PHVs.

Information is also available from sources on the level of wheelchair access vehicles within Milton Keynes. It must be noted that in most cases the values of wheelchair access vehicles on the private hire side are very approximate rather than that of the Hackney Carriage vehicles, which is more accurate. 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.

The information for levels of wheelchair accessible vehicles and the number of operators is shown in the table below.

Local Authority	Wheelchair accessible taxis	Wheelchair accessible PHVs
All South East	2415	983
Oxfordshire	225	51
Milton Keynes	125	30
Buckinghamshire	96	115
West Berkshire	74	7
Bracknell Forest	55	0
Reading	216	31
Slough	64	8
Windsor and Maidenhead	84	0
Wokingham	64	0
Portsmouth	84	30

Southampton	70	36
Hampshire	275	198
Surrey	171	111
Medway	5	67
Kent	278	140
West Sussex	134	15
Brighton & Hove	290	89
East Sussex	34	50
Isle of Wight	71	5

Table 3 – Wheelchair accessible vehicles across local authorities

Of the total taxi and private hire vehicles that operate in Milton Keynes 16% of the vehicles have wheelchair accessible capabilities. We therefore confirm that the level of provision and manner of provision of WAV style vehicles across the full licensed fleet in Milton Keynes appears to be appropriate. Consideration should be taken for measured re-analysis of the total numbers of wheelchair accessible vehicles across Milton Keynes on regular intervals.

4.0 MILTON KEYNES TAXI RANKS

Milton Keynes has a number of taxi ranks which are in operation and for the purposes of this study the five key ranks have been surveyed. Included within the unmet taxi study was an assessment on each taxi rank based on the following criteria:

- **Trip generators** – Trip generators are a consistent measure of how popular a taxi rank will be. If there are many varied trip generators within a short distance of a rank this not only improves the likelihood of have consistent customers but also provides a destination for taxis to escort passengers too.
- **Visibility** – The visibility of a taxi rank is vitally important in ensuring custom can locate where to get a taxi from. This will improve the likelihood of a high turnover of custom and higher probability of having substantial numbers of taxis servicing the rank.
- **Accessibility** – The accessibility of a rank is also important. It needs to be accessible from various directions both by footfall and by vehicle.
- **Rank Size** – The size of a rank will contribute to its overall popularity, with the larger the rank the higher probability of being serviced quicker due to the higher number of taxis that can service it.
- **Allows taxi manoeuvrability** – The ease at which a taxi can enter and rank and navigate out of the rank is important not only for the passenger but also for the licence holders. If it is hard to manoeuvre out of the rank, then it isn't going to be a rank that is serviced regularly.
- **Disabled Accessibility –** A rank should provide adequate facilities for disabled passengers to alight on and off an adapted vehicle. This would include sufficient pavement space and not located near an area where high numbers of people will congregate.
- **Security** – The security that is provided is of paramount importance. If a user of this facility doesn't feel comfortable when using it, they are highly unlikely to use the facility again. The security can be measure by how well lit the taxi rank and surrounding areas are and if the facility has CCTV in operation.

The assessment score is based on an overall maximum score being a total of 5 on each criteria. Which can provide a maximum score of 30 out of 30.

Score	Assessment
1	Doesn’t meet criteria at all
2	Below what is expected
3	Meets the expected criteria
4	Slightly above the expected criteria
5	Exceeds the expected criteria

Table 4 – Assessment scoring criteria

The table below details the five primary taxi rank based on the above assessment criteria.

Taxi Rank	Trip generators	Visibility	Access	Rank size	Disabled Access	Security	Total
Milton Keynes Central train station	4	5	4	4	4	5	**26**
Centre MK outside McDonald's	4	4	4	3	4	5	**24**
Xscape off Avebury Boulevard	3	3	3	3	4	5	**21**
Leonardo Hotel, Midsummer Boulevard	2	2	3	2	3	4	**16**
MK Coachway Park & Ride	2	4	4	3	4	5	**22**

Table 5 – Assessment score of each rank

The assessment scores for the five primary taxi ranks highlight a number of elements for consideration.

- All of the ranks score high on security and all ability access.
- The specific bult environment in and around the Leonardo Hotel rank highlights issues with manoeuvrability, the size of the rank and with some aspects of visibility. The ranks positioning within the city also has limited impact in terms of location to key trip generators.
- The ranks outside McDonalds and Xscape also highlight issues with manoeuvrability.
- Overall the taxi rank outside the train station performs well over the 7 areas of assessment. This co-insides with the ranks position in terms of taxi/passenger occupancy rates.

4.1 PATENT DEMAND MEASUREMENT (RANK SURVEYS)

Control of provision of on-street ranks in the Milton Keynes area is entirely with the authority itself, albeit being through the separate Highways department.

Chapter 4 provides a list of ranks at the time of this current survey. Our methodology involves a desktop study that involves current review both in advance of submitting our proposal to undertake this Unmet Taxi 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 1.9). The detailed specification of the hours included in the sample is provided in Chapter 5.2 detailed results by rank, day and hour are also included. A subsequent overview of all taxi ranks occurred on the following dates and times.

- Thursday 04th May 2023 – Friday 5th May 2023
- Friday 5th May – Saturday 6th May
- Saturday 6th May – Sunday 7th May

Of the 72 hours of recorded video footage, there were a total of 1652 taxis recorded at the locations specified. The rank observations were analysed to identify the usage of each site by passengers. For context, the table includes comparison to all previously available and identified values.

4.2 RANK USAGE BY LOCATION AND TIME

The information below details usage over time periods by rank

- Central Station – Significant activity between 00:00-1:00 and then moderate usage between 1:00-3:00. From 3:00 onwards to 6:00 there was no usage. 6:00 to 7:00 there was just one user. Following that from 7:00 till 8:00 there was moderate usage. Finally from 8:00 till 00:00 there was significant usage.
- McDonalds – There was no usage from 00:00 till 7:00. Following that there was light usage from 7:00 until 10:00. Finally from 10:00 – 00:00 there was significant usage.
- Xscape – There was no usage at this rank from 00:00 till the following 00:00.

Please see chapter 7.0 for further information and graphs.

5.0 MILTON KEYNES KEY TAXI RANK SURVEYS

Three taxi ranks were surveyed for this project from the morning of Thursday 4th of May 2023 to Sunday the 7th of May 2023. The locations were as follows.

Central Station, Milton Keynes

Centre Mk, outside McDonalds

Xscape, off Avesbury Boulevard

5.1 RANK SURVEYS

Surveys were undertaken using video cameras which recorded activity at the above mentioned ranks. The data which could be extrapolated included the number of taxis which were seen at the rank and the passenger movements including passenger arrival and departing times.

5.2 OVERVIEW OF OBSERVATIONS

During the study timeframe 1,652 taxis were observed frequenting the taxi ranks above with 1,144 taxis departing with passengers.

There are 201 number taxis licensed to operate within Milton Keynes. So of the 1,144 separate examples of taxi hire from the designated ranks this would equate to a total of 5.7 hires per vehicle or 1.9 hires per day of the above mentioned timeframe.

The total percentage of taxis that left the rank empty was 44% this can be for various reasons including deciding to move to an alternate rank due to no custom or moving due to scheduled commitments.

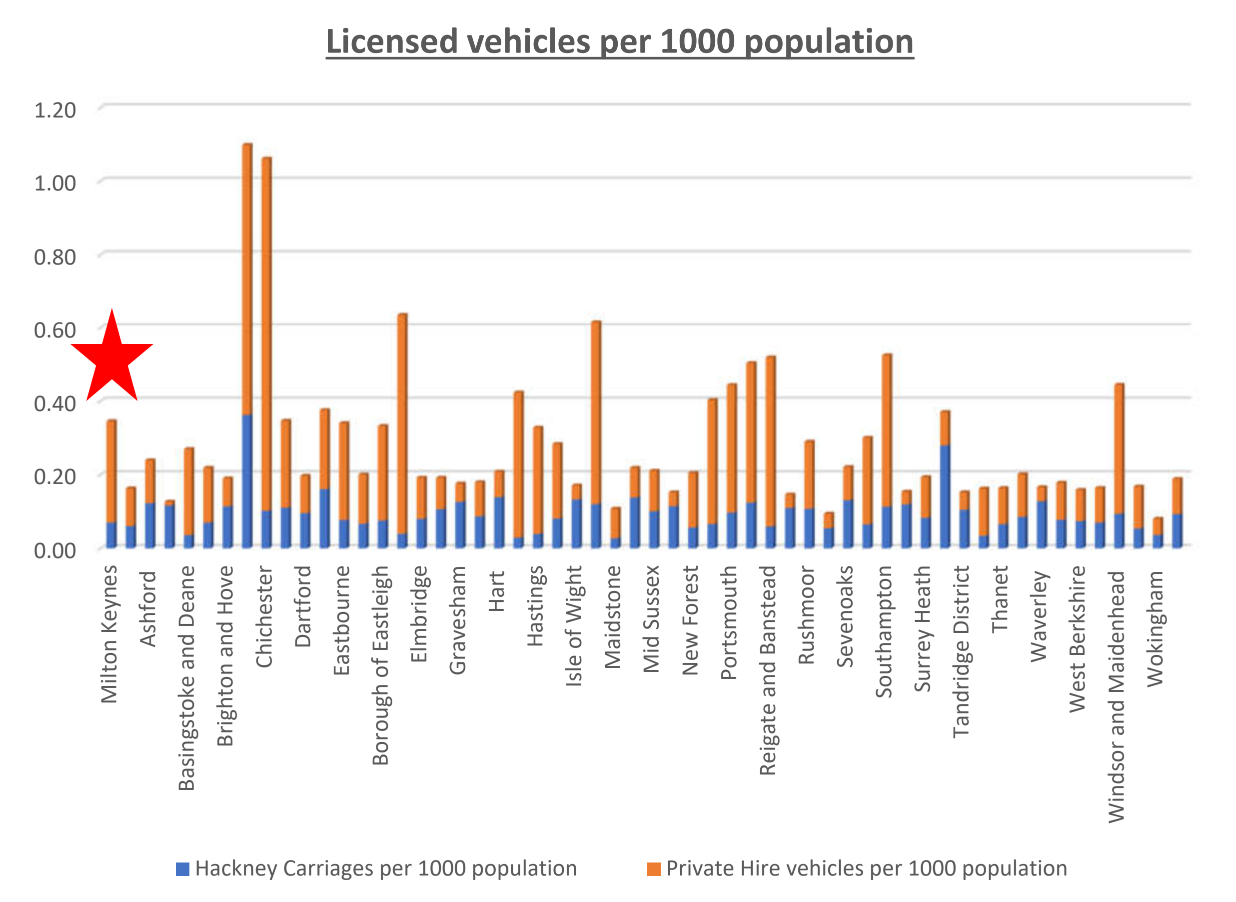


Figure 2 – Chart detailing licensed vehicles per 1000 population

It is difficult to determine what all licensed vehicles are doing at differing times in the day, week, and month. However, a greater understanding of the habits of existing licensed vehicles is required to be able to identify why at differing times there is unmet demand.

Thursday 04th May 2023 – Friday 5th May 2023

Rank Location	Total taxis departing ranks empty	Total taxis departing ranks with passengers	Total taxi departing ranks	Total passengers departing ranks	Passengers dropped at rank by a taxi	Average passengers per taxi	Average vehicle waiting time at rank per taxi
Total for all locations	**140**	**402**	**542**	**523**	**64**	**0.96**	**00:25:59**
Central Station	51	348	399	452	24	1.13	00:44:37
McDonalds	61	54	115	71	39	0.62	00:21:57
Xscape	28	0	28	0	1	0	00:11:22

Table 7 – *Data from taxi ranks on Thursday through to Friday (hours/mins/secs)*

Friday 5th May 2023 – Saturday 6th May 2023

Rank Location	Total taxis departing ranks empty	Total taxis departing ranks with passengers	Total taxi departing ranks	Total passengers departing ranks	Passengers dropped at rank by a taxi	Average passengers per taxi	Average vehicle waiting time at rank per taxi
Total for all locations	**193**	**393**	**586**	**522**	**67**	**0.89**	**00:25:33**
Central Station	68	317	385	414	22	1.08	00:52:01
McDonalds	67	76	143	108	45	0.76	00:15:20
Xscape	58	0	58	0	0	0	00:09:17

Table 7 – Data from taxi ranks on Friday through to Saturday (hours/mins/secs)

Saturday 6th May 2023 – Sunday 7th May 2023

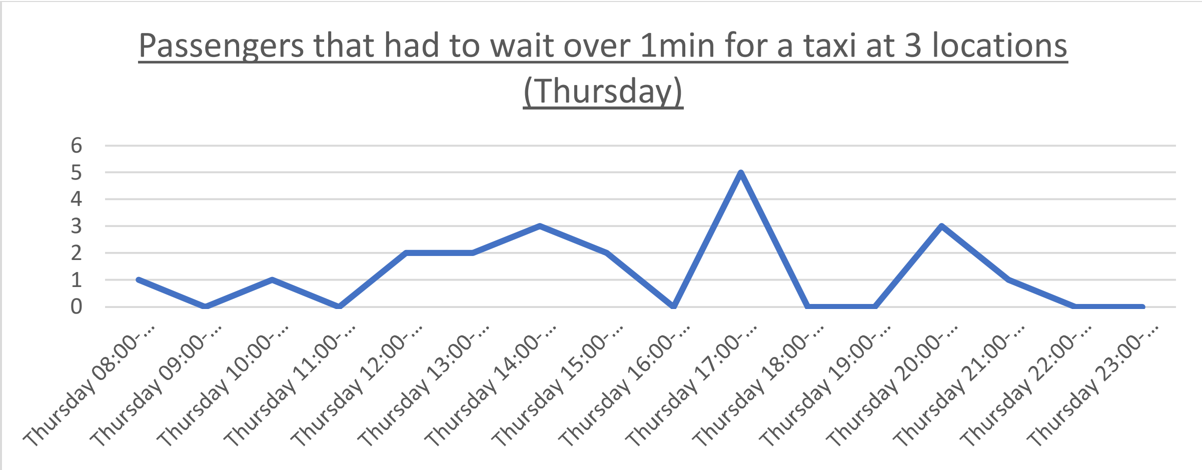
Rank Location	Total taxis departing ranks empty	Total taxis departing ranks with passengers	Total taxi departing ranks	Total passengers departing ranks	Passengers dropped at rank by a taxi	Average passengers per taxi	Average vehicle waiting time at rank per taxi
Total for all locations	**175**	**349**	**524**	**632**	**71**	**1.21**	**00:41:17**
Central Station	50	255	305	469	10	1.54	01:42:45
McDonalds	68	94	162	163	57	1.01	00:12:24
Xscape	57	0	57	0	4	0	00:08:42

Table 8 – Data from taxi ranks on Saturday to Sunday (hours/mins/secs)

Combined data across three days

Rank Location	Total taxis departing ranks empty	Total taxis departing ranks with passengers	Total taxi departing ranks	Total passengers departing ranks	Passengers dropped at rank by a taxi	Average passengers per taxi	Average vehicle waiting time at rank per taxi
Total for all locations	**508**	**1144**	**1652**	**1677**	**202**	**1.02**	**00:30:56**
Central Station	169	920	1089	1335	56	1.23	01:06:28
McDonalds	196	224	420	342	141	0.81	00:16:34
Xscape	143	0	143	0	5	0	00:09:47

Table 8 – Data from taxi ranks across all three days (hours/mins/secs)



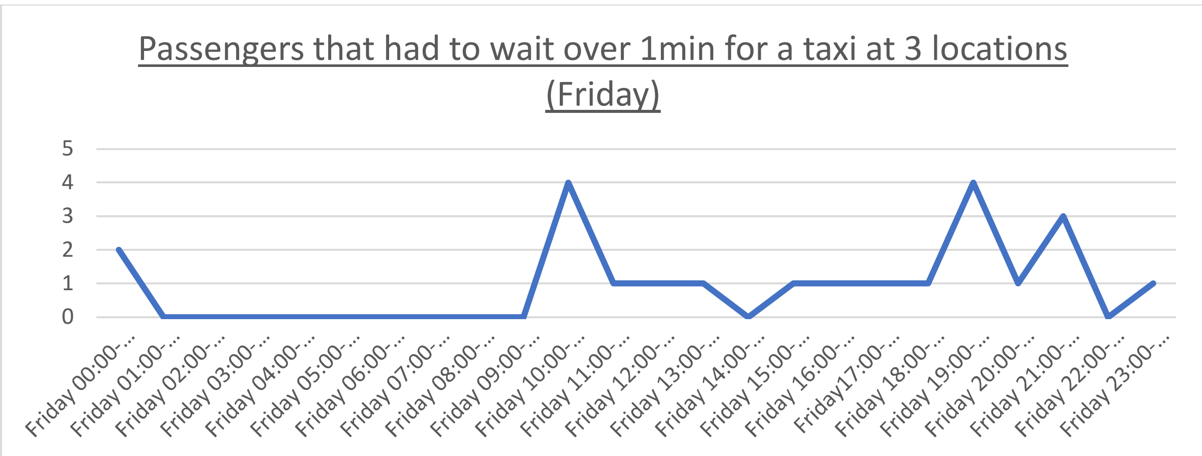


Figure 3 – Graphs showing passenger wait over 1min per day

6.0 EVALUATION OF UNMET DEMAND AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

It is important to define an agreed consensus about what constitutes unmet demand. A general definition is when a person turns up at a taxi rank and finds there is no vehicle there available for immediate hire. This can lead to a queue of people building up, some of whom 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 taxi 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 as unmet demand, but geometric delay and although we note this, it is not counted towards unmet demand being significant.

As stated in section 1.4 of the report the industry standard 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 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 complexities of the location and 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.

For the purposes of this report the 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 following explains the several components which make up the overall sum to calculate ISUD:

ISUD = Average Passenger Delay x Peak Factor x Steady State Performance x General Incidence of Delay x Seasonality Factor x Latent Demand Factor

An ISUD value of 80 or higher is generally taken as indicating there is significant unmet demand.

As previously discussed, the ISUD factor was developed fully in the early 1990's and has been used by several transport consultancies since that time for Unmet Demand Surveys. It provides a useful benchmark measure for the level of Unmet Demand that is present. It combines several intuitive measures of Unmet demand with the intention that locations where there are long delays in most hours for a high proportion of passengers produce very high values, where minimal delays for short periods affecting a small minority of passengers result in a low value.

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 where wait for a taxi is occurring. The only inclusion required for this component is that the sample of hours collected must include a fair element of such hours.

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 (APD) 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.

Peak factor (PF) 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.

Steady State Performance (SSP) is the percentage of weekday daytime hours in which queues are observed

General incidence of delay (GID) is the proportion of Hackney Carriage users travelling in hours where average passenger delay exceeds one minute represented as a percentage.

Seasonality factor (SF) 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. 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.

Latent demand factor (LDF) 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.

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 that might be apparent from the proportion of people experiencing a queue.

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, part of the evidence, and needs to be taken fully in context with other evidence provided.

ISUD Component	Milton Keynes 2023
Average Passenger delay	10.09
Off Peak Hours with notable queues	10
% of passengers travelling in hours with average queue over a minute	3.0
Seasonal factor	1.0
Peak Factor	0.5
Latent demand factor	1.7
Sum	**257.295**

Table 9 – ISUD Index for Milton Keynes

The result of 257.295 is higher than the 80 threshold which would suggest that the observed unmet demand might be significant. This also means that there is significant unmet demand across the ranks surveyed.

6.1 ISUD CONCLUSIONS

There was evidence of extensive passenger demand at public ranks within Milton Keynes. In particular photographic evidence of waiting occurring at the Central Station taxi rank. This in support of the ISUD sum above shows the significance of the findings.

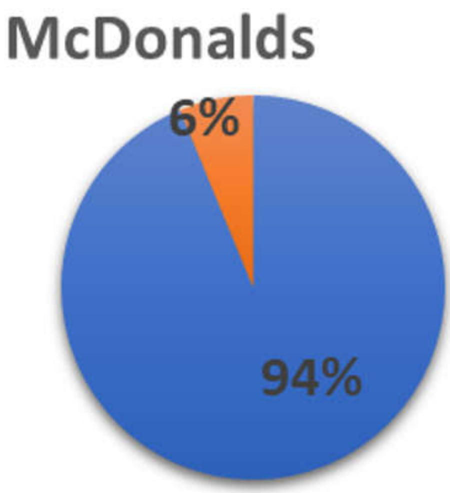
7.0 WAITING PASSENGERS

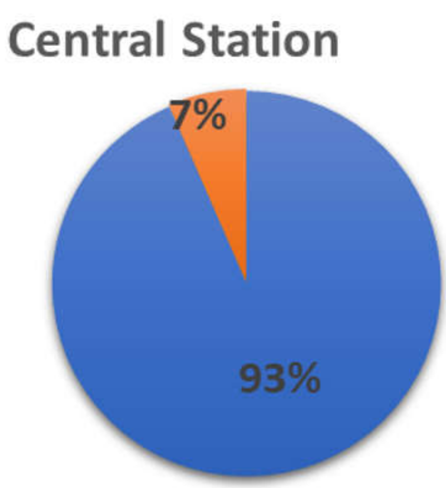
The implementation of cameras at the three sites allowed for data to be scrutinised once the assessment period was complete. A valuable opportunity came from being able to determine the length of time that passengers had to wait to alight a taxi. The three graphs above detail this information and have been broken down into the three days that make up the duration of the assessment period. The highest number of passengers waiting for 1min plus was observed on Thursday at 17:00 – 18:00 with the second largest number of passengers at four occurred on the Friday at 10:00-11:00. Overall the total number of passengers waiting per day are detailed in the table below.

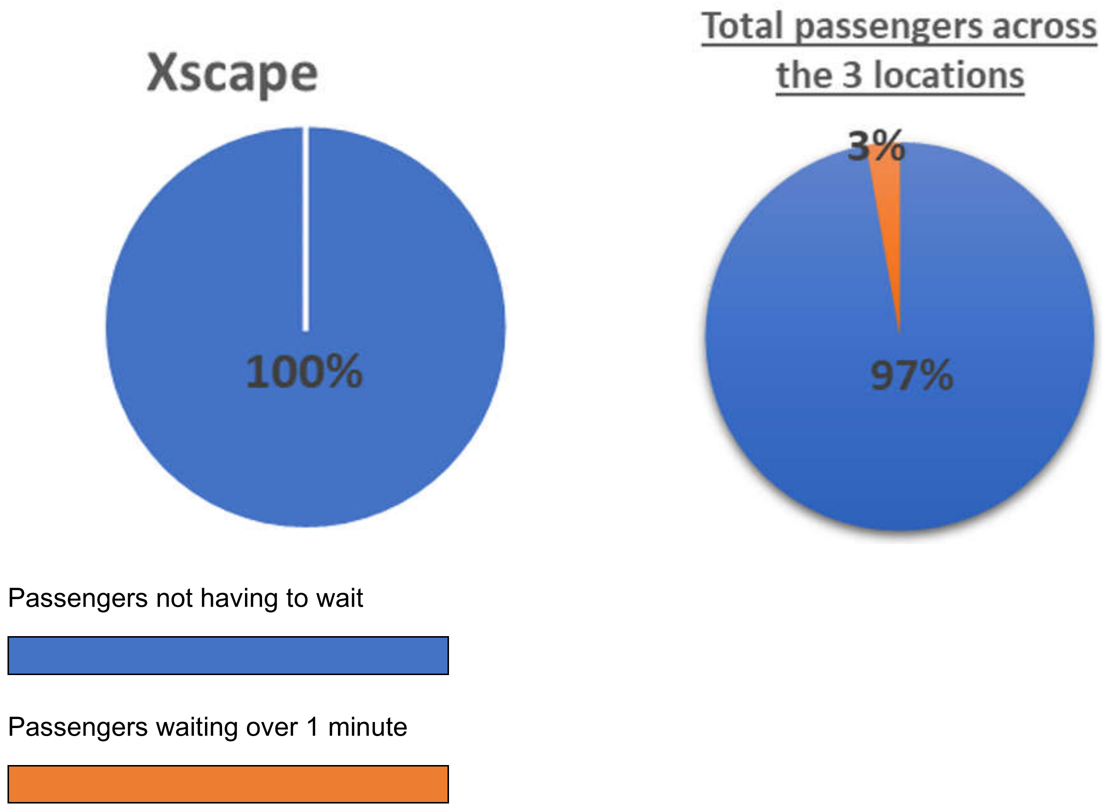
Day	Passengers waiting over 1min for a taxi
Thursday	20
Friday	22
Saturday	6

Table 10 – Total passengers waiting over 1min per day

The conclusion from this data is that there are far more people left waiting for significant periods on the Thursday and Friday than on the Saturday.







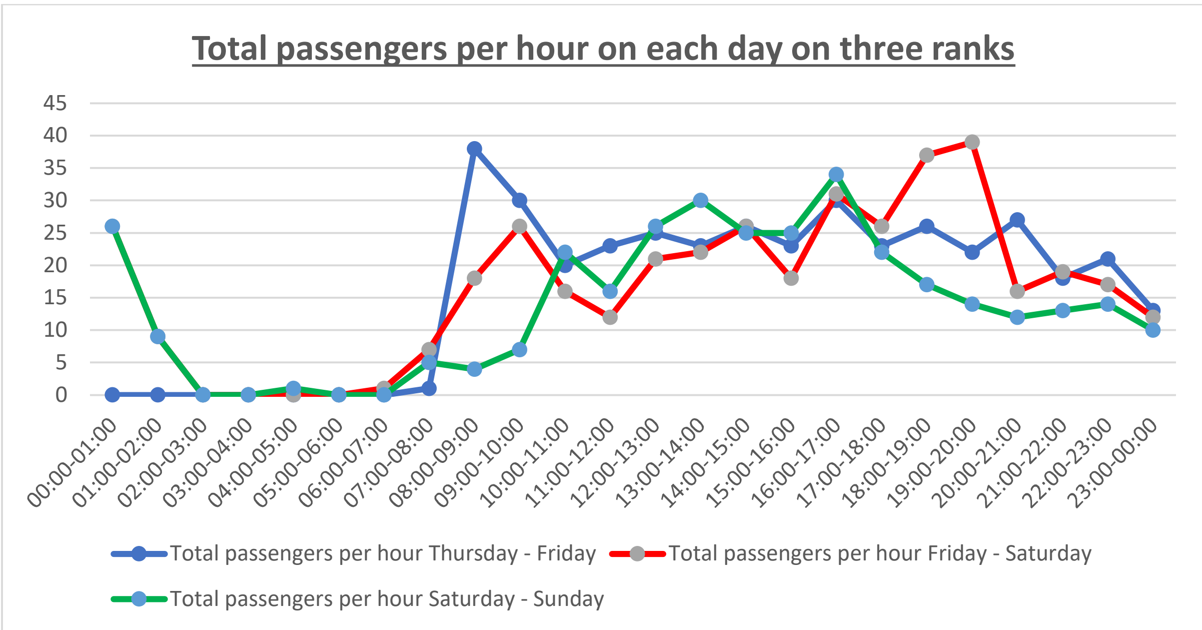


Figure 4 – Graphs showing total passengers per hour on each day

8.0 ADDITIONAL UNMET TAXI DEMAND IDENTIFIED

In addition to the taxi rank surveys that were undertaken between Thursday and Sunday morning, additional observations and site visits were undertaken. This included both from 2020 Consultancy team members during familiarisation site visits and ad-hoc assessments, and MK Council staff members. During these additional observations and site visits, there were a number of occasions where unmet taxi demand was experienced, most notably at Milton Keynes Central train station, but also MK Centre, and outside Leonardos. In some cases there were a number of passengers seen waiting for taxis, which should be acknowledged as part of the study.

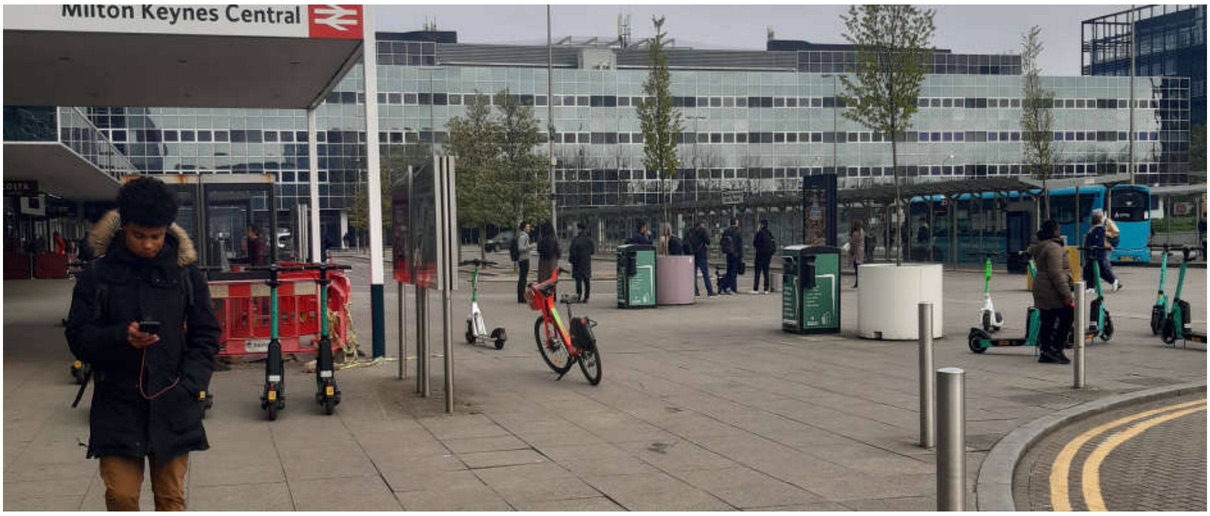
Figure 5 provides examples of these occasions, includes dates and times these observations were carried out.

Milton Keynes Central Tuesday 28th March 2023 at 09:41am

Milton Keynes Central Tuesday 18th April 2023 at 08:24am

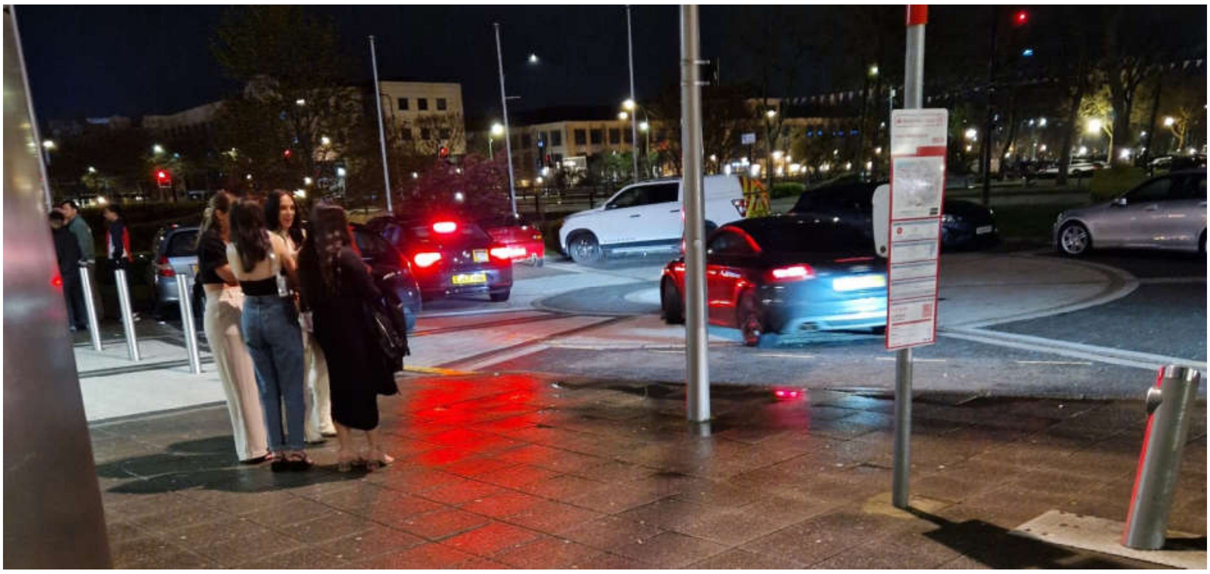
Milton Keynes Central Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 08:31am

Milton Keynes Central Wednesday 19th April 2023 at 08:33am



Centre MK - Friday 21st April 2023 at 20:00pm

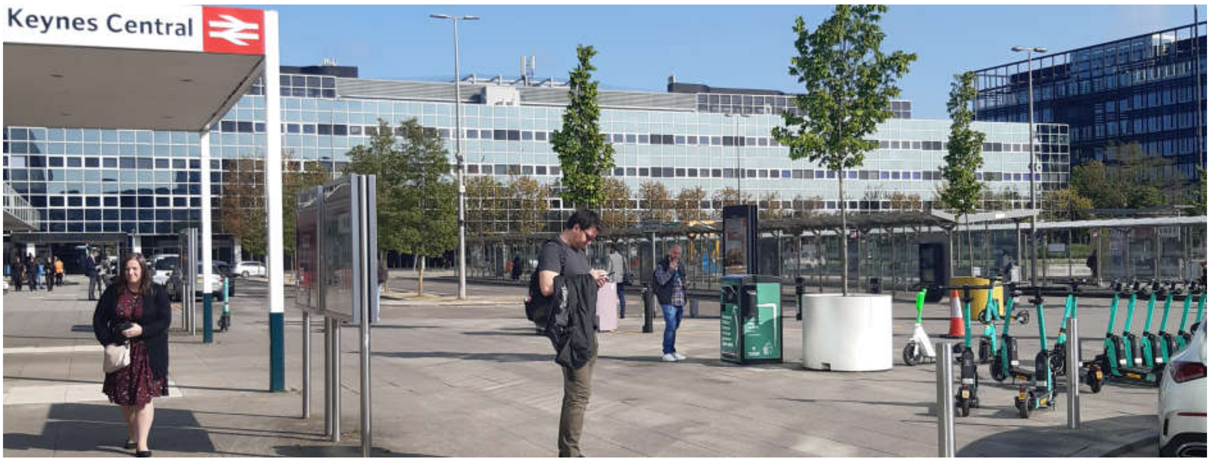
Leonardos - Saturday 22nd April 2023 at 23:18pm



Centre MK - Sunday 7th May 2023 at 14:10pm

Centre MK - Friday 12th May 2023 at 13:24pm

Milton Keynes Central Tuesday 16th May 2023 at 09:24am



Milton Keynes Central Tuesday 23rd May 2023 at 08:37am

Milton Keynes Central Tuesday 6th May 2023 at 08:47am

Figure 5 – Examples of unmet taxi demand during site visits & assessments

9.0 RAIL PASSENGER GROWTH

The total number of hires which can be expected from the Central Station location are based on the passenger footfall through the station. Therefore it is useful to consider this data when making an overall assessment of the unmet taxi demand and the demand on licensed vehicles.

Year	Total number of passenger entries and exits
2019 –2020	6,935,904
2020 –2021	1,207,226
2021 –2022	4,238,858

Table 11 – Total number of passenger entries and exits at Central Station, Milton Keynes

Passenger volumes through Central Station in Milton Keynes are substantial, above details the figures available for the last three years. This includes the impact that the Covid-19 pandemic had on the railway industry represented by the significantly lower total of 1,207,226 compared to the previous years figure. This was due to the national lockdown and subsequent perceived apprehension towards public transport use.

However, since then there has been a return in passenger volume facilitated by the ease of lockdown measures and subsequent confidence in travel. These total passenger figures highlight as to why the Central Station taxi rank is a popular destination for licensed vehicles to service. The nature of custom at this location is dependent on the sporadic nature of passenger arrival and exits. This can often lead to queues forming at differing times as highlighted by the images included above as part of the additional unmet taxi demand section.

10.0 PASSENGER QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

To support the Unmet Taxi Demand study, a stakeholder engagement exercise was undertaken to gain feedback from hackney carriage customers within Milton Keynes city. This is an important aspect of the project to better understand the views of customers, especially those that use taxi ranks on a regular basis. This may support or contradict the results of the taxi rank surveys. Although the evidence should be taken as anecdotal, it's a worthwhile exercise to compare the results with the survey data.

The stakeholder engagement task involved an online questionnaire that was embedded onto the MK Council website. In addition to this, 2020 Consultancy staff approached customers at taxi ranks during site visits to run through the questionnaire.

During the four week stakeholder engagement process, 172 respondents completed the questionnaire, either online or during the face to face interviews with 2020 Consultancy staff. The questionnaire included 18 questions. The results of these questions are summarised below.

Question 1 of the online questionnaire required the respondent to declare their age. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses. Of the 172 respondents 168 number gave an answer for this question.

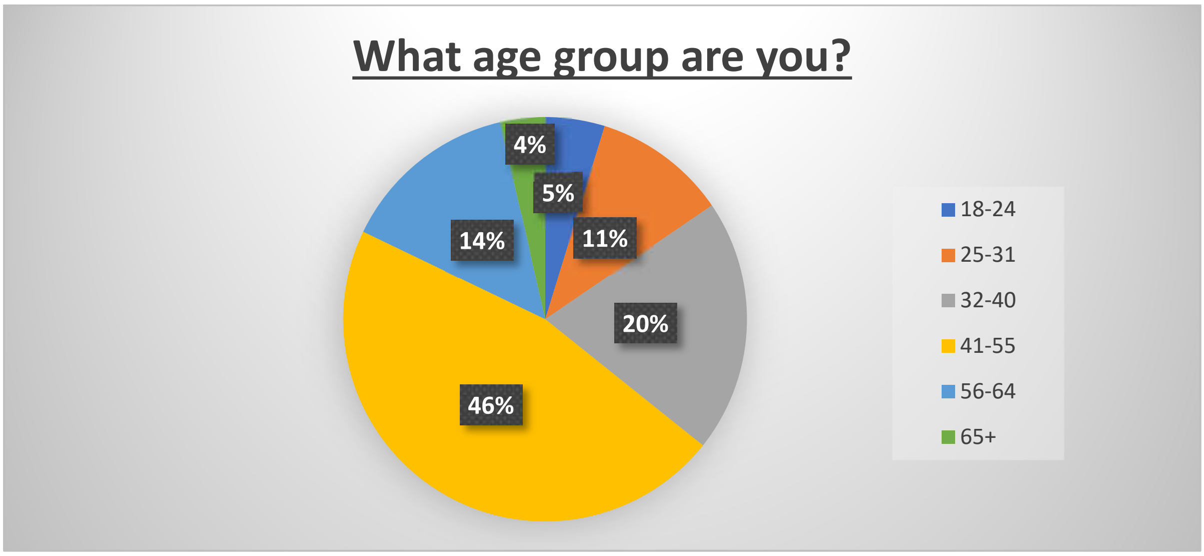


Figure 6 – Pie chart representing results of question 1

The results show that the largest age group represented by respondents is the 41-55 with nearly half the respondents being in this age range at 46%. The age group that was least represnted was the 65+ with only 4% of the overall responses being of this age.

Question 2 of the online questionnaire required the respondent to declare what best described them from a list. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

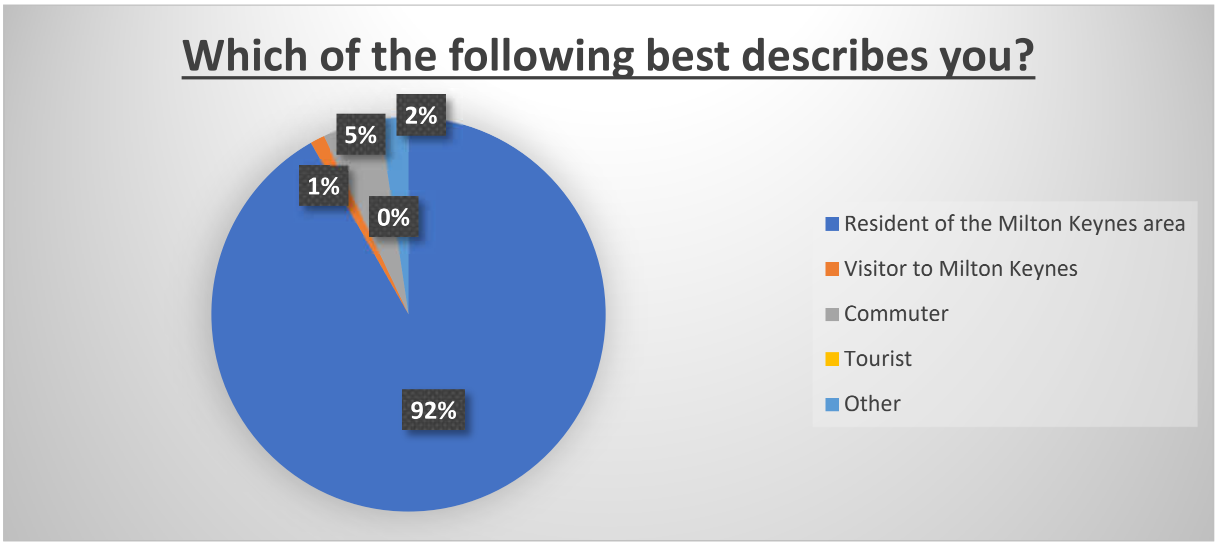


Figure 7 – Pie chart representing results of question 2

The list included residents of Milton Keynes, visitor to Milton Keynes and commuter or Tourist. The results show that the overwhelming majority of respondents are residents of Milton Keynes which was expected.

Question 3 of the online questionnaire asked respondents for the reason why they use taxis. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

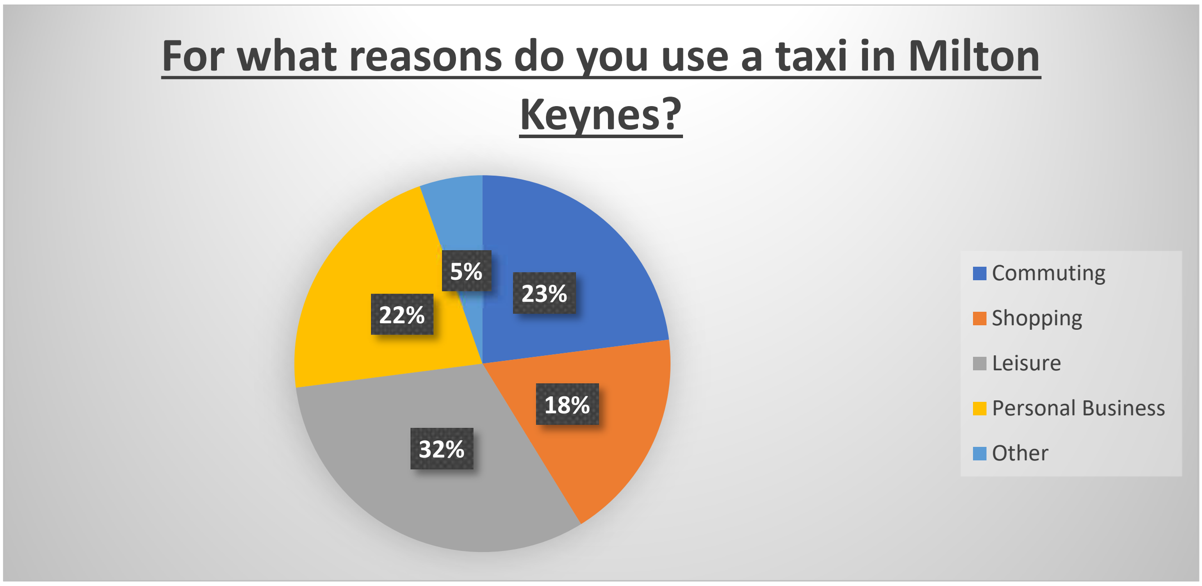


Figure 8 – Pie chart representing results of question 3

The results show that there is a fairly even spread across the options provided. The option selected most by respondents was Leisure with 32% of the overall responses. Second to Leisure was commuting with 23% of the responses. Next was Personal business at 22% of the responses. Shopping was then selected by 18% of the respondents and finally other which stood at the remaining 5% of the responses. This is encouraging as the wide selection of reasons for taxi use ensure that there are various avenues for taxis to ensure they can service a requirement.

Question 4 asks the respondents how frequently do they travel by taxi in Milton Keynes. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

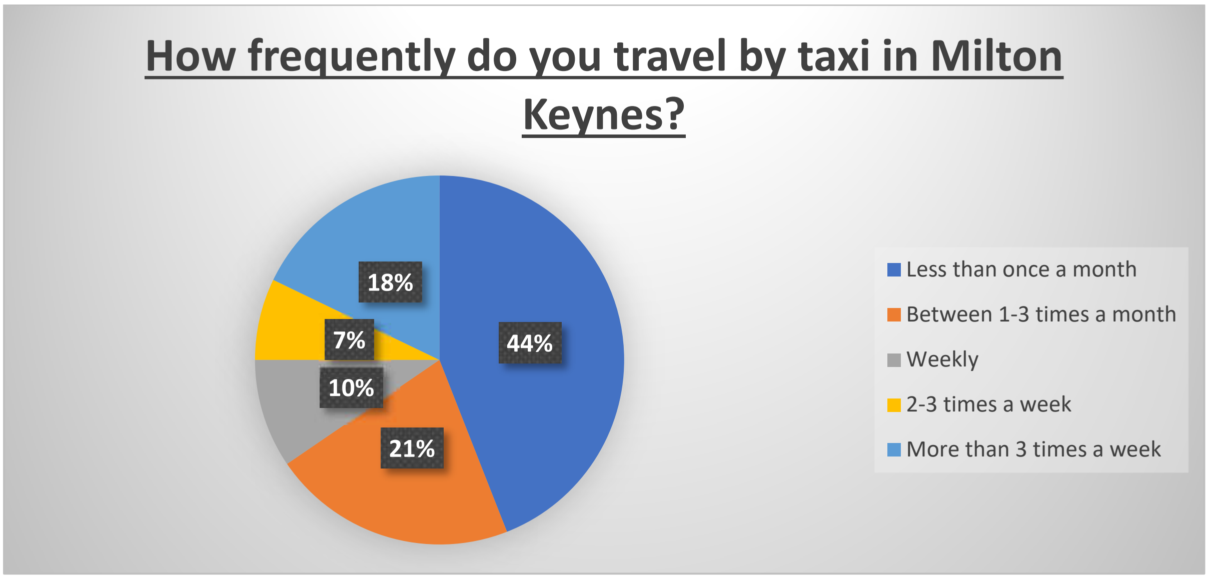


Figure 9 – Pie chart representing results of question 4

The results of the survey show that 44% of respondents travel less than once a month. The next most selected response was between 1-3 tmes a month which had 21% of the responses submitted. In comparison there are 18% of responses that come from people who use taxis more than three times a week which is encouraging for the taxi industry. The two least selected options were weekly and 2-3 times a week with 10% and 7% respectively.

Question 5 asks the respondents how frequently they use private hire vehicles in Milton Keynes. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

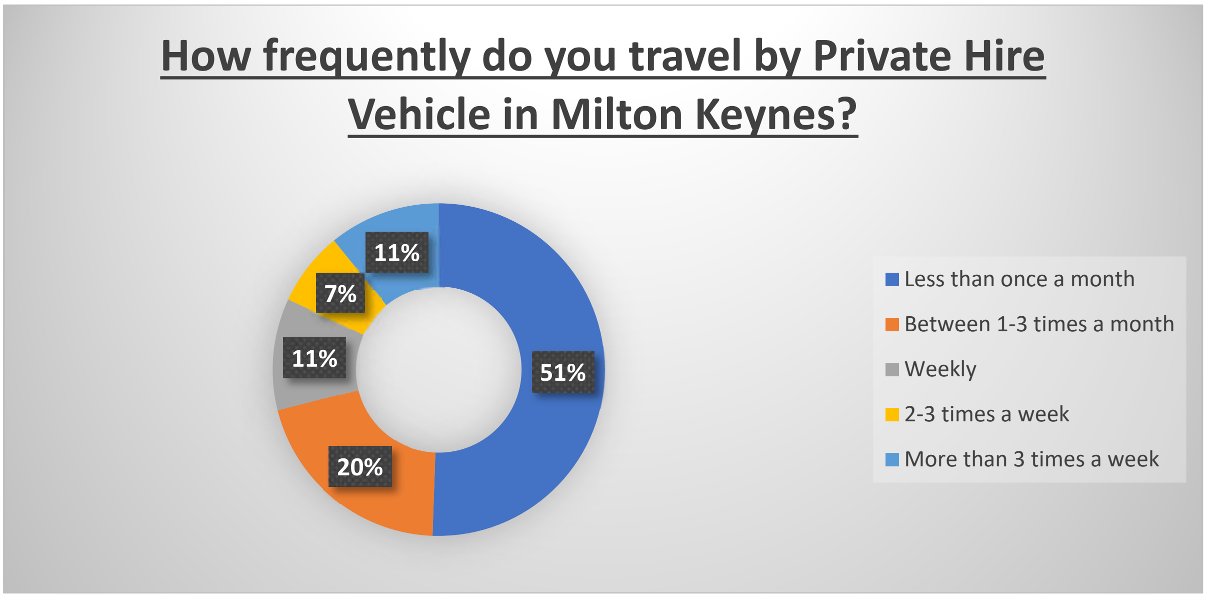


Figure 10 – Pie chart representing results of question 5

Over half of the responses submitted selected less than once a month at 51% of the responses. The next most popular response was between 1-3 times a week at 20% of the overall response. Joint third at 11% were weekly and more than 3 times a week. And finally 2-3 times a week was selected by 7% of the overall response.

Question 6 asks the respondent to advise which taxi ranks they use. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

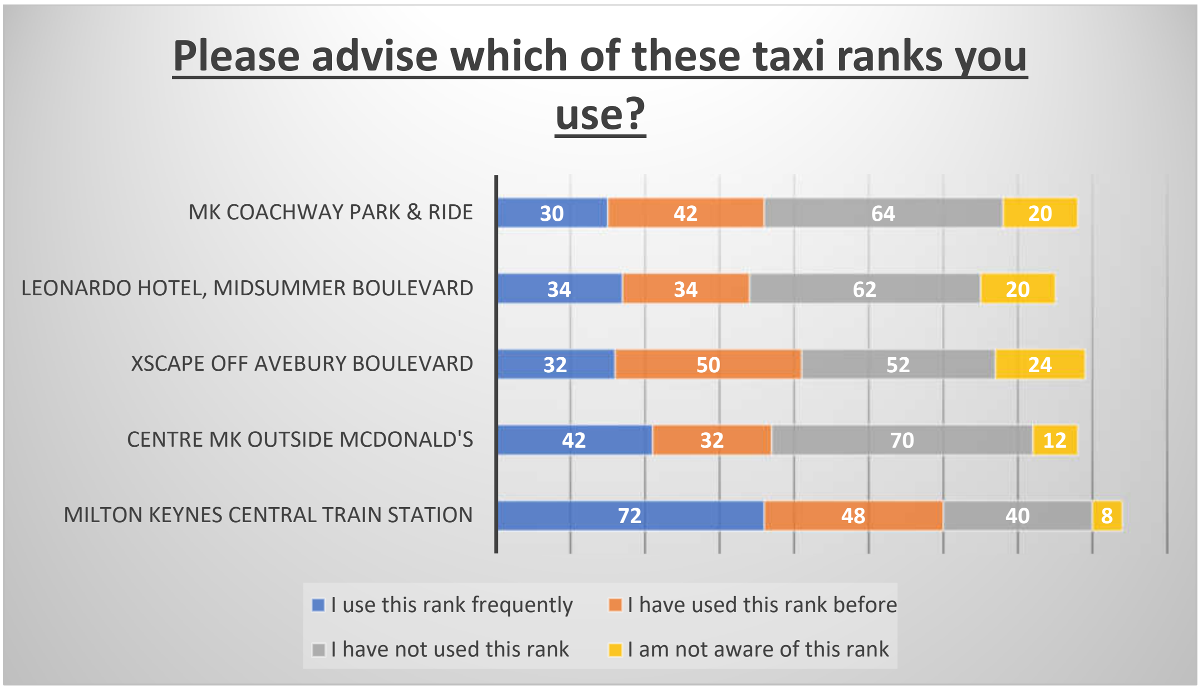


Figure 11 – Pie chart representing results of question 6

The results have been complied and represented below. The rank that is used most frequently by respondents is the Central station. The rank that has been least selected by respondents most is the taxi rank outside McDonalds at Centre MK. The results show that the rank that was selected by respondents as dthe one they have been least aware of was Xscape off Avebury Boulevard. Potentially the reason for this could be that this rank is prodimantly servicing the needs of leisure users whilst other taxi ranks service additional needs such as business and transport links.

Question 7 asks if there has been an occasion within the last three months where a respondent has given up waiting for a taxi because no taxis were available. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

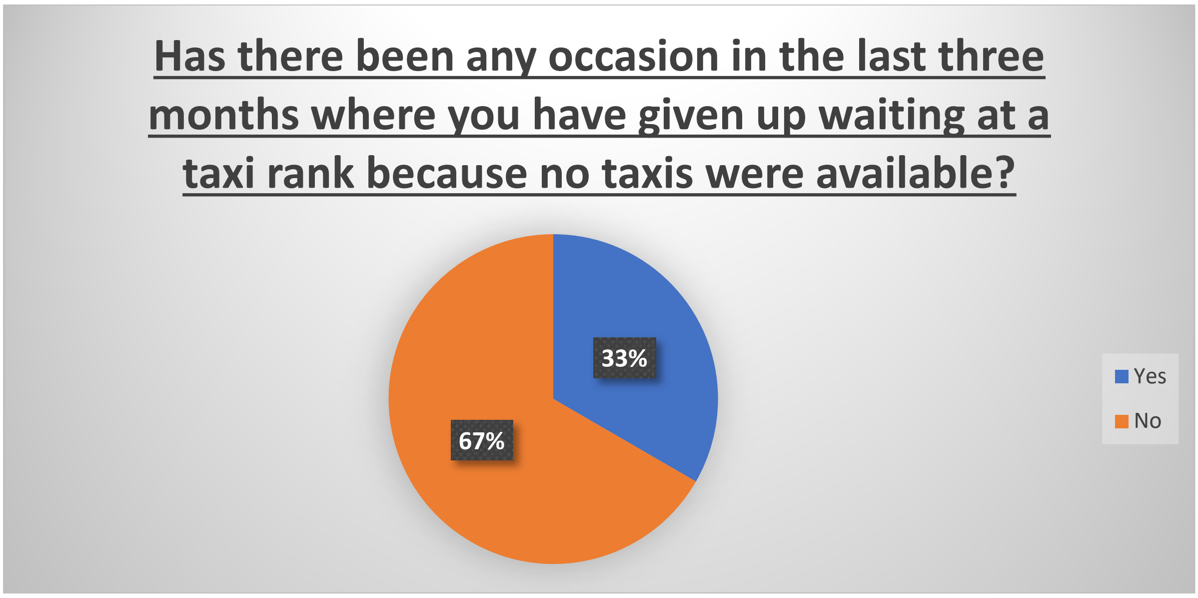


Figure 12 – Pie chart representing results of question 7

The results show that 67% of respondents selected no whereas 33% of respondents selected yes. The results are important in showing that 33% of respondents have had issues obtaining a taxi at a rank location.

Question 8 asks the respondent if the answer to the previous was correct then to state which taxi rank location this occurred at. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

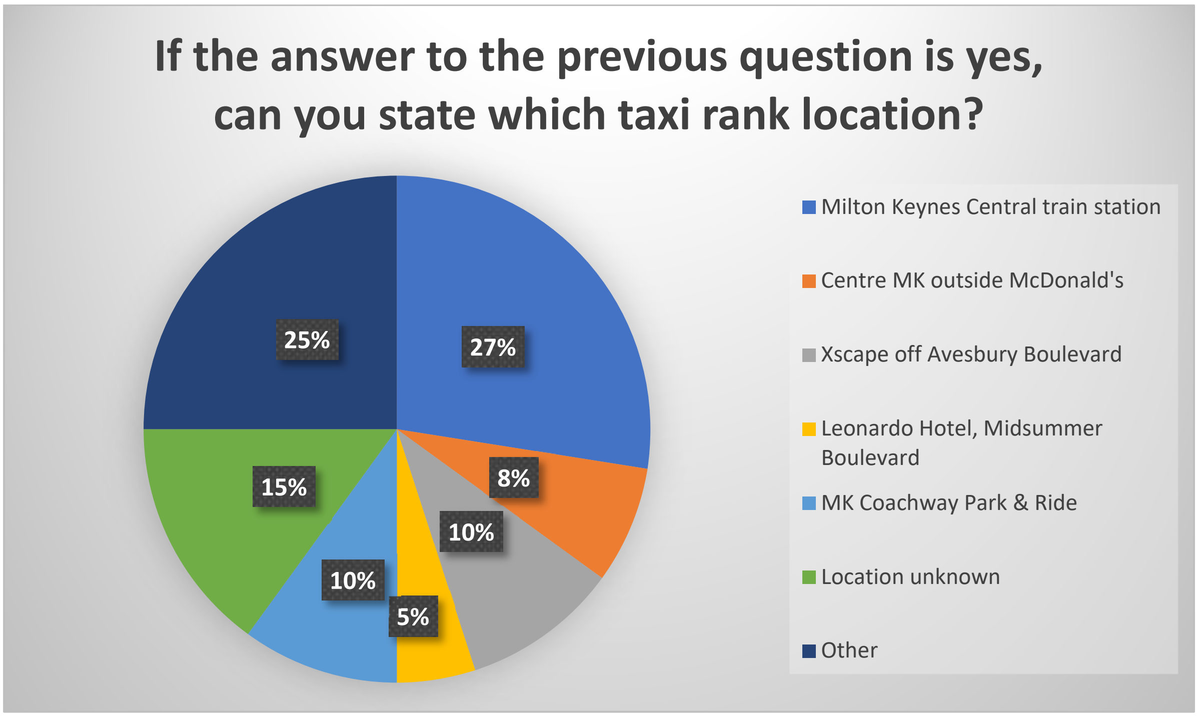


Figure 13 – Pie chart representing results of question 8

The two most selected taxi ranks were Central Station with 27% of the responses and other with 25% of the responses. The breakdown of these responses are predominatly directed at the Hospital which has no formal taxi rank. The next most selected response was location unknown with 15% of the overall response rate. Subsequent to this the next most selected option was both the MK Coachway park and ride and Xscape off Avesbury Boulvevard with 10%. Finally the least most selected two selections are Centre MK outside of McDonald's at 8% and Leanardo Hotel oustide Midsummer Boulvevard with 5% of the overall response.

Question 9 asked 'Have you experienced a delay waiting for a taxi. If so, please state at what location this occurred and how recent it was? This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

	Milton Keynes Central station	Centre MK	Xscape	Leonardo Hotel	MK Coachway Park & Ride
Within the last week	16	16	10	8	8
Within the last month	18	4	14	10	8
Within the last 3 months	24	14	12	14	10
More than 3 months ago	20	10	10	12	8
I haven't experienced a delay	74	54	42	48	50

Table 12 – Table representing results of question 9

The question allowed for multiple responses to ensure it encapsulated the whole of Milton Keynes rather than focusing predominantly on the more popular taxi ranks. This ensured a broad overview of the whole taxi service within Milton Keynes. As detailed below the largest number of examples of having to wait have occurred at the Central Station taxi rank. However, this is the most popular taxi rank within Milton Keynes, so this is to be expected. The remaining results are moderate in that most options have been selected by some respondents. This suggests that delays and issues occur across all taxi ranks.

Question 10 asks respondents approximately how long the delay was? This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

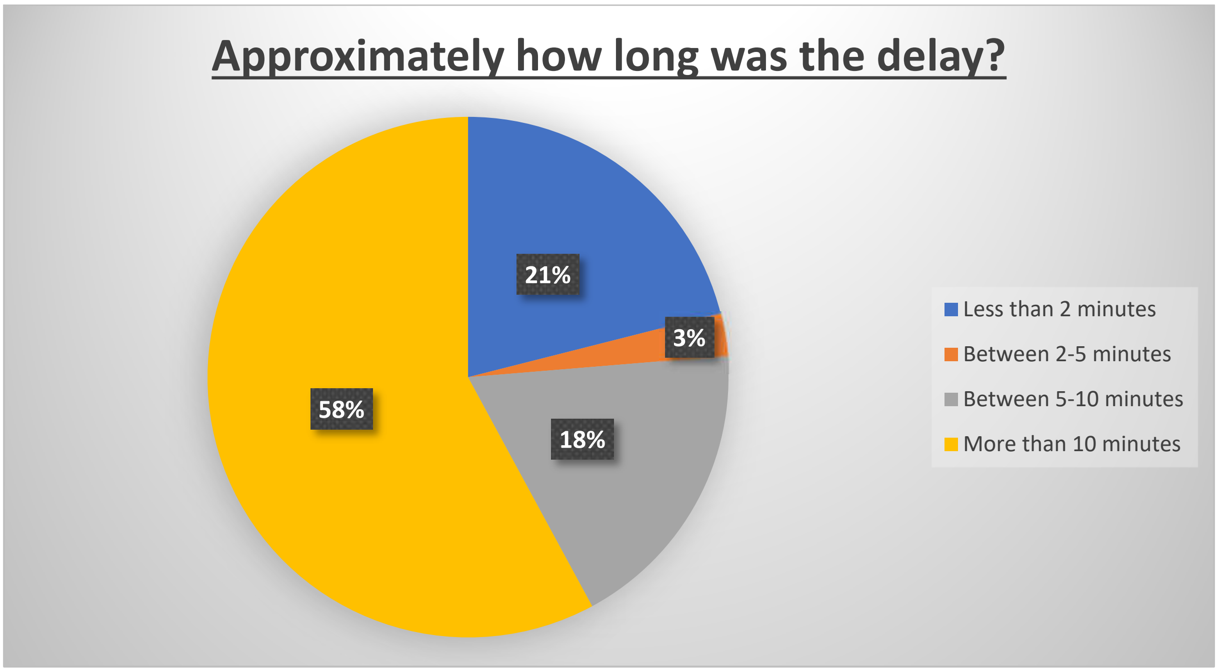


Figure 14 – Pie chart representing results of question 10

Over half of the respondents at a total of 58% detailed that the delay experienced was more than 10mins. The next most selected option was less than 2mins at 21% of the overall responses closely followed by between 5-10 minutes at 18% of the total responses. The least selected option was between2-5 minutes at a total of 3%. The results show that generally if users experience delays, then they are substantial periods of time with over 76% of delays being 5 minutes or above.

Question 11 ask the respondent to detail on what time this delay occurred. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

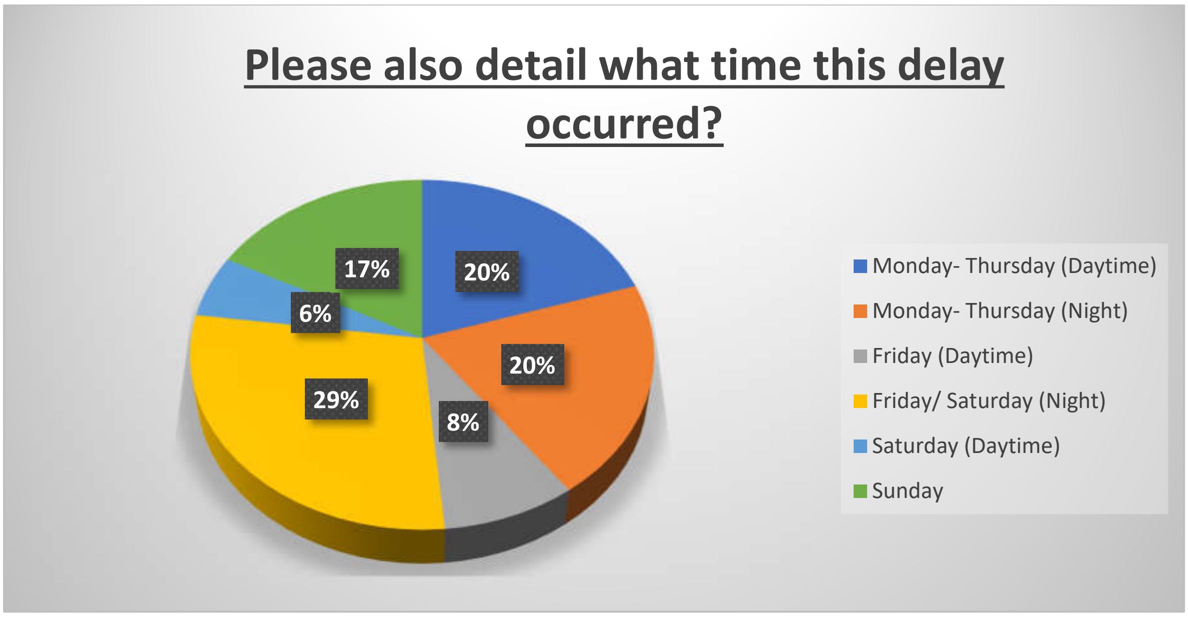


Figure 15 – Pie chart representing results of question 11

There were various options detailing both weekend and weekday and also whether it was night or day. The results show that the highest selected option was Friday/ Saturday (night) which had 29% of the total response. The joint second most selected option was Monday-Thursday (Daytime) and Monday-Thursday (Night) with 20%. The next most selected option was Sunday 17%. The final two options are Friday (Daytime) and Saturday (Daytime) with 8% and 6% respectively.

Question 12 asks when the respondent believes they have the most difficulty obtaining a taxi. This single selection question allowed for a tabulation of responses.

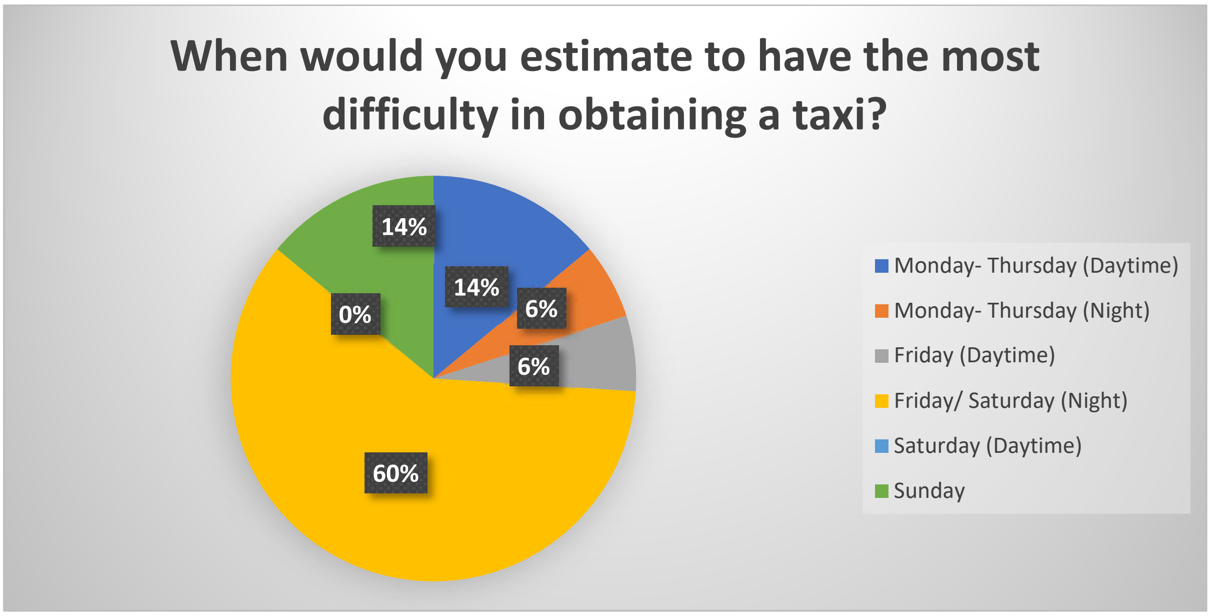


Figure 16 – Pie chart representing results of question 12

The results above show that over half the respondents at 60% believe that the hardest time to obtain a taxi is Friday/Saturday (Night). The joint second most selected option is Monday-Thurday (Daytime) and Sunday with 14% of the overall respondents each. Lastly the Friday (daytime) and Monday – Thursday (Night) have been selected by 8% of the overall respondents apiece. This would again allude to the leisure reason for taxi use.

Question 13 asks when would you estimate to have the most dfficulty in obtaining a private hire vehicle. This selection question allowed for a tabulation of responses.

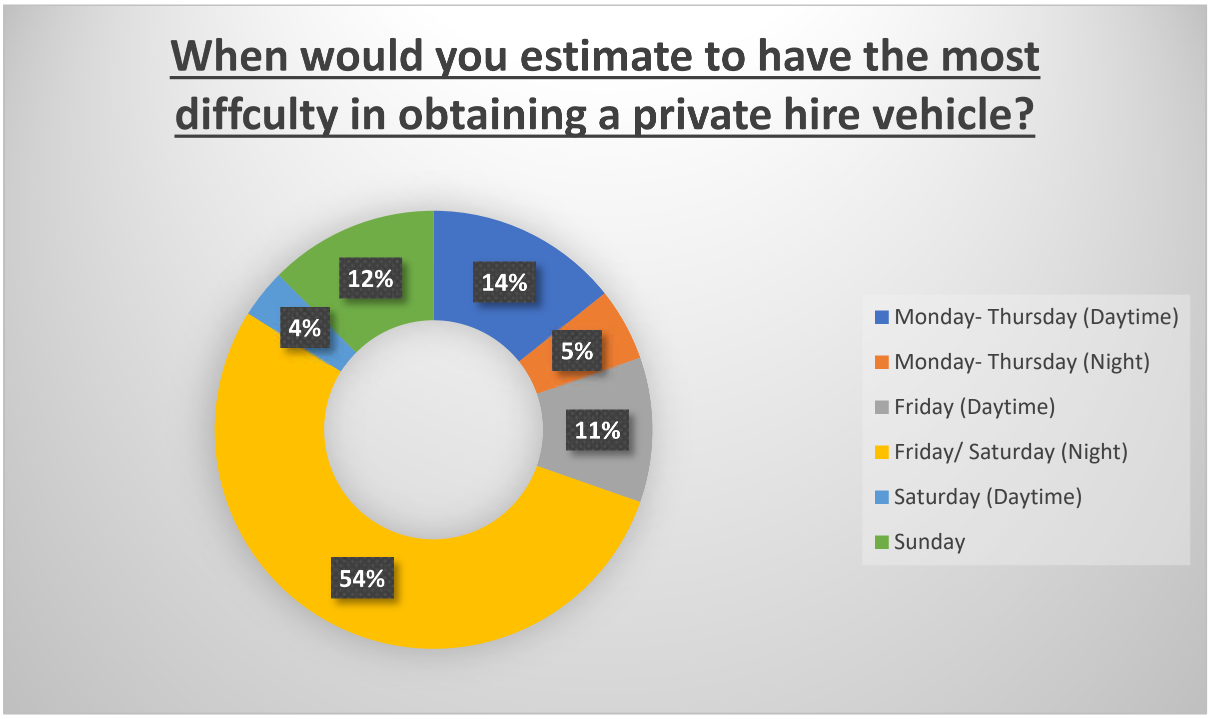


Figure 17 – Pie chart representing results of question 13

The results show that over half of respondents at a total of 54% believe that the hardest time to obtain a private hire vehicle is on a Friday/Saturday night. This is the same result as the previous question which alludes to the servicing of taxis generally being for nightime leisure custom. The next largest response was attributed to Monday-Thursday daytime at 14%. Following this there was Sunday which had an overall response rate of 12% folowed by Friday daytime at 11%. The remaining percentage was spread across Monday- Thursday (Night) at 5% and lastly Saturday daytime at 4%.

Question 14 asks the respondent if they consider themselves or anyone they know to have a disability which would means they needed an adapted vehicle. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

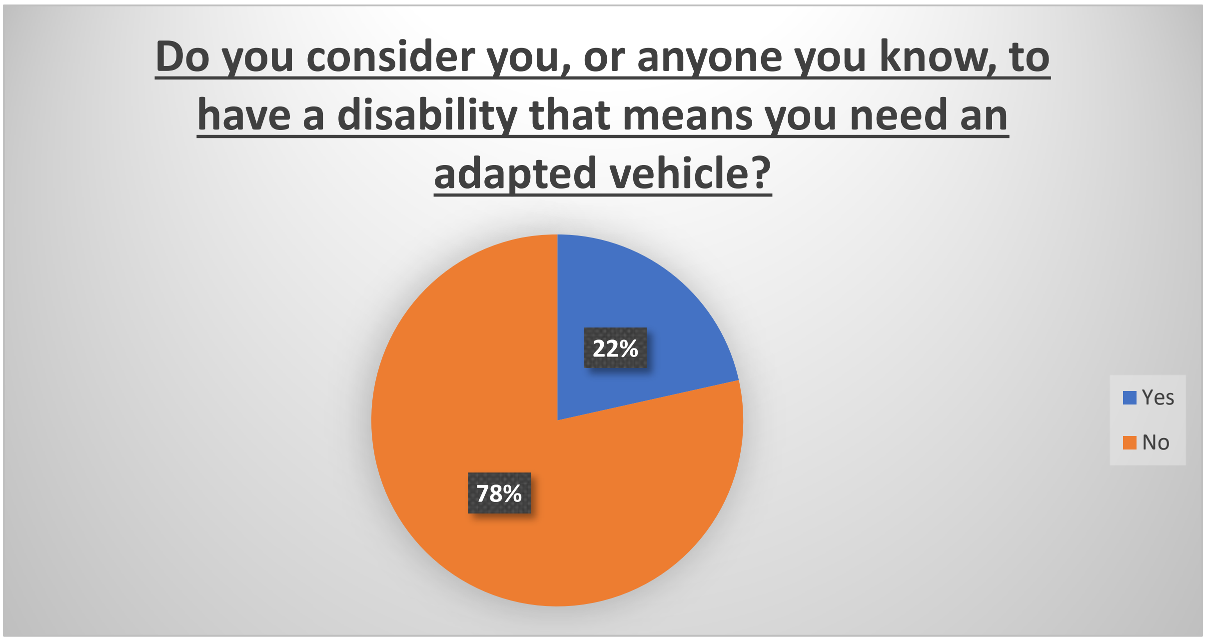


Figure 18 – Pie chart representing results of question 14

As the chart below details 78% of the responses received were for no and 22% of the responses received were for yes. The results how the importance of having a varied fleet with adaptive vehicles which can ensure that all service needs are met.

Question 15 asks if yes, how would you describe the experience. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

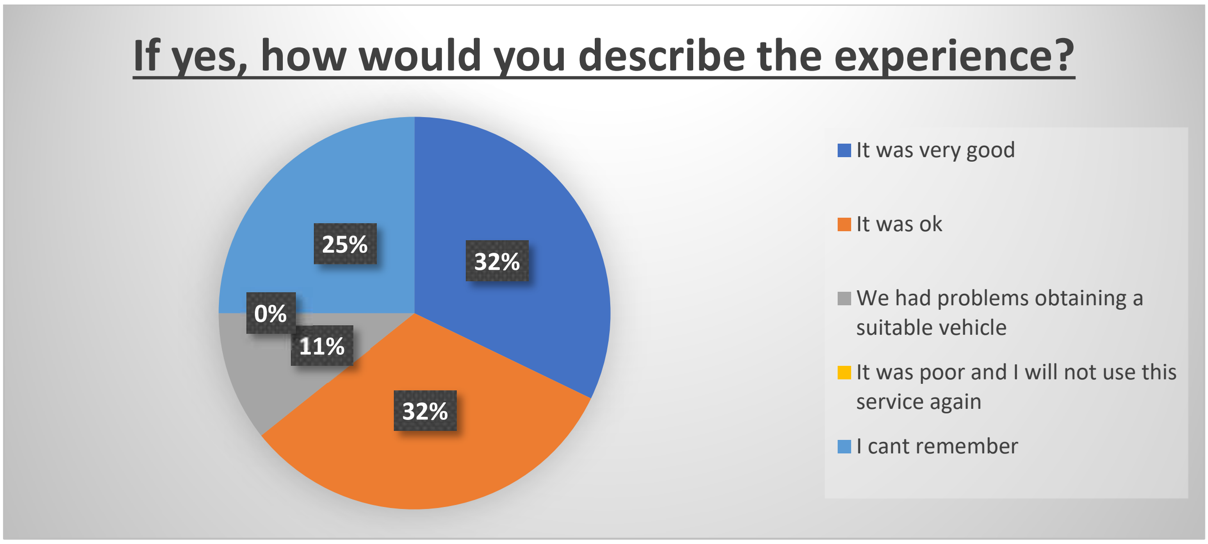


Figure 19 – Pie chart representing results of question 15

The results of this question are detailed above and show that there are two options which have been selected by 32% of the respondents. Both It was very good and it was ok had 32% followed closely by I can’t remember at 25%. We had problems obtaining a vehicle was selected by 11% of the overall respondents and it was poor and will not use this service again received no responses. The results are encouraging as 64% of the responses were for options which suggest the service for disabled passengers is running ok if not better. There are 11% of the overall responses which suggest there are some issues obtaining an appropriate service. This is significant to suggest the adaptive vehicle service needs to be given an overall review.

Question 16 asks how would you assess the availability of taxi within Milton Keynes. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulaion of responses.

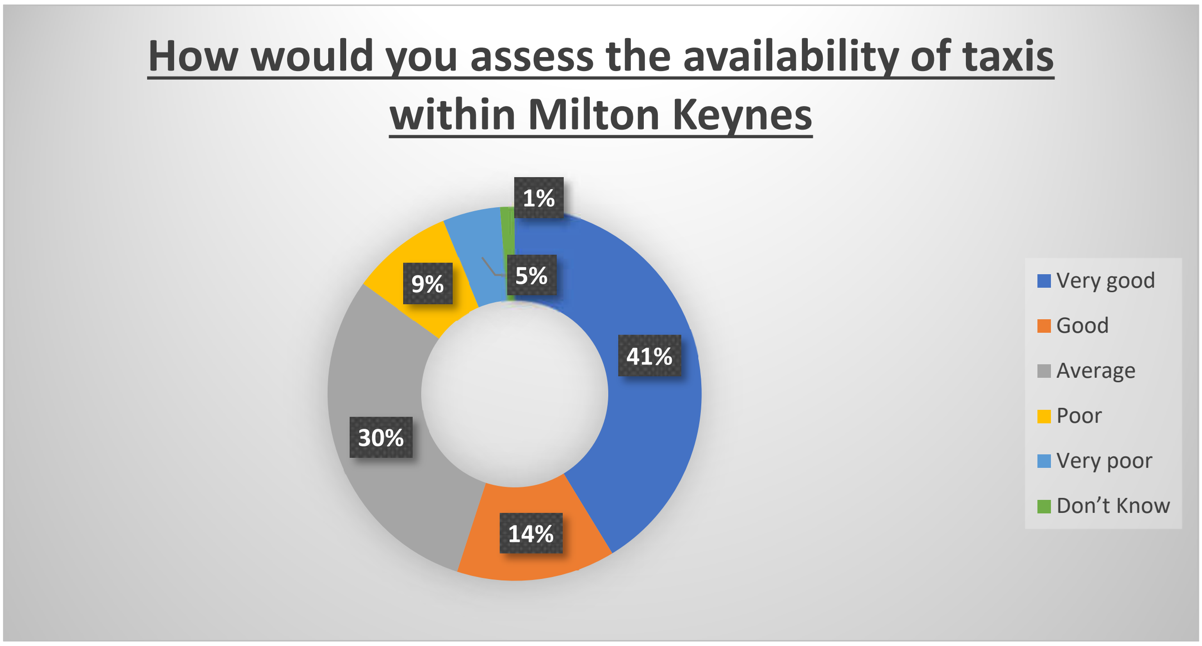


Figure 20 – Pie chart representing results of question 16

The results show that 41% of the overall responses were for very good, with the following largest percentage being average at 30%. Following on the next most selected option is for good at 14%. The remaining options were poor at 9%, very poor at 5% and don’t know at 1%. These results are encouraging with 55% of the overall responses being postive and in addtion 30% of the responses being for average. A response of average with experience should be reagarded as postive as this quote often means that the sevice meets requirements.

Question 17 asks what would encourage you to use a taxi or use them more often. This single selection question allowed for a simple tabulation of responses.

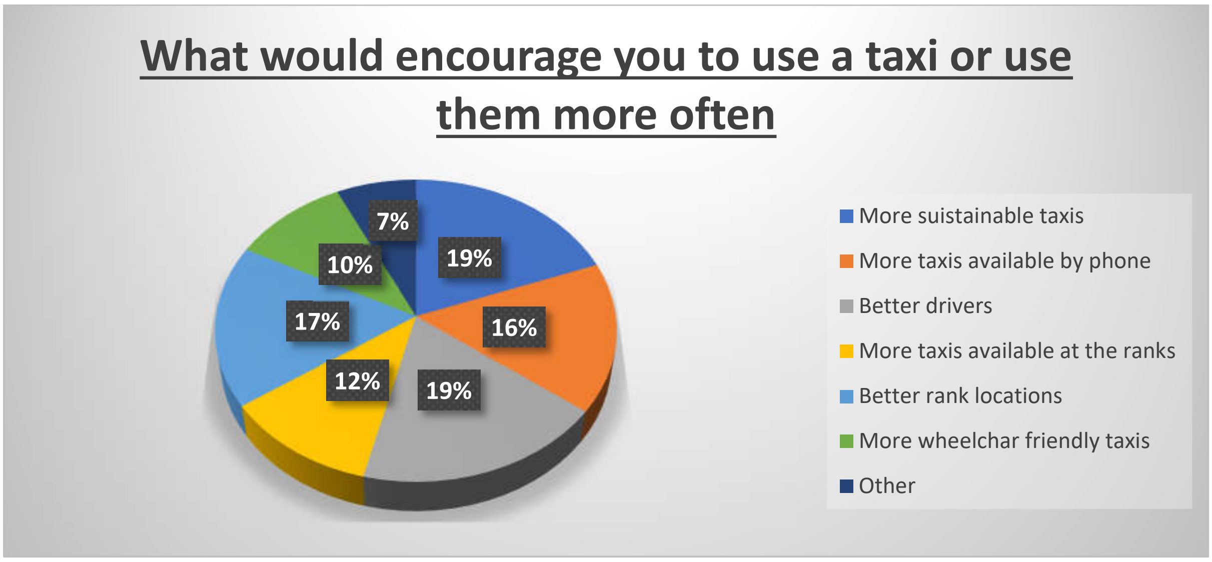


Figure 21 – Pie chart representing results of question 17

The results show that there is a general even spread between all options provided. There are two options with the highest percentage of responses are better drivers at 19% and more sustainable taxi at 19% followed closely by better rank locations at 17%. The next most selected option by respondents was more taxis available by phone at 16%. The remaining three options were more taxi available at the ranks at 12%, more wheel chair friendly taxis at 10% and finally other at 7%. The other option came with an opportunity to detail what in particular the respondent would want with the predominant response being cheaper fares.

Question 18 asked if you have any additional comments on taxis in Milton Keynes, please use the comment box provided.

There were 22 individual comments provided and range various topics regarding taxi. Please see Appendix A below for more details.

11.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The activity at the ranks could be described as in keeping for a city of the size, scale and population of Milton Keynes. The general pattern follows a steady level of activity during the day on weekdays, with increased levels of activity in the week day mornings period and during the evenings on Friday and Saturday nights. Passenger waiting was observed at various times of day and night throughout the study period and as a result the data shows that the level of passenger waiting did not form extensive passenger queues for lengthy durations.

The level of taxi demand follows a logical pattern of activity surrounding commuters and the night time economy within this city and this is highlighted within the report via the graphs and tables.

The passenger questionnaire results allow for a greater understanding of the passenger demographics, passenger reasoning for taxi use and the potential for further expansion of journeys made by taxi across the city and general improvement of the sector. Approximately half of those who completed the questionnaire are between 41 and 55 of years of age and predominately utilise taxis for leisure and commuting purposes.

22% of those who utilise taxis identify with having a disability which has a significant impact on the adaptability and access requirements of the city's taxi fleet. 41% of those who replied to the questionnaire stated when asked how they would assess the availability of taxis within the city as very good with 5% stating they felt it is very poor, which would tend to demonstrate that the public believe that a good service, in the main, is being provided.

Taking account of availability and passenger waiting over all periods within the ranks studies, the Index of Significant Unmet Demand value is below the threshold which would suggest that unmet demand is significant at times and further action may be required.

12.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are proposed to assist in the ongoing management of unmet taxi demand within the city:

- Milton Keynes is a city that will see significant growth over the coming years. To ensure that any unmet taxi demand is identified further taxi studies would provide a larger, more robust data set and aide with any future decision making. In parallel to that as travel patterns return to a more normal state after the Covid pandemic, taking cognisance of commuter patterns and seasonal trends will allow for a greater understanding of current and future demand.
- Any future study should also pay particular attention to the night time economy demand at peak times.
- Liaise with Taxi providers during the passenger demand peaks at the train station should be encouraged.
- The findings from the passenger surveys should be investigated further with a view of improving performance and passenger experience as well as establishing a greater understanding of the potential taxi demand.

APPENDIX A - PASSENGER QUESTIONNAIRE – FURTHER COMMENTS

Please note that these comments have been left unedtitted.

1	I use MK Connect more often than taxis. Taxis are too expensive. However, MK Connect availability can be poor particularly at peak times, but it surprises me how often they are empty when they arrive when it is so difficult to book onto one.
2	There are enough taxis available
3	it's confusing which taxi you can get from a rank without prior booking and which ones are pre booked. Trying to order a taxi is sometimes impossible we've had to walk home miles in the dark on several occasions which isn't exactly safe. This makes us reluctant to go out.
4	Since covid taxis are much harder to find and much more expensive
5	I try to use taxis by hailing but this is very difficult even in CMK away from CMK station
6	Only ever use Uber, Bolt or Skyline Taxis in MK. The ease of pre booking and tracking on apps make it the best option.
7	The taxi service in MK is quite appalling, particularly Skyline, which I have now stopped using altogether for the following reasons: The price can vary by as much as £5 for the return journey using the same route (this is before 11pm at night); the drivers have no idea where they are going, even with satnav/google maps and 9 times out of 10 I had to give directions for my return journey, not just within the estate I live on which I could understand, but actually getting to the estate in the first place (CMK to Shenley is 3.5 miles and not difficult); the cars were often grubby & smelly; some of the drivers were quite rude (I'm registered disabled, not that that should make any difference, and am not so quick on my feet); and I completely disagree that they are allowed to charge £3.75 before they even move - this is the starting fee for all journeys, although it seems to be anything up to £5 in the evenings. I thought that rule only applied to the black cabs, not the pre-booked ones). Several of my friends & neighbours have stopped using Skyline as well for the very same reasons
8	seem to change whatever they like
9	There are very few private hire firms in Milton Keynes now, companies like Skyline appear to have the monopoly and are unreliable, over priced at peak times and sometimes feel unsafe. The smaller companies struggle to compete with limited availability and over promise and under deliver. When trying to order a taxi from home or a venue I have found I have been given misleading wait times and have often been late to events or appointments. The current private hire taxi provision in MK is poor, over priced and disappointing.
10	Improving Leonardo hotel and having one in front of Xscape at old rank. Please not forget 12th Street which fully parked by private hire drivers and private cars.
11	Some taxi drivers smoke in their vehicles, some taxis are not clean enough and smells. Taxis must be checked and monitored by taxi enforcement officers more often and frequently. Some drivers refuse customers for short distances and they overcharge customers too and change the rates manually as well. Checks should be done More Often.
12	There are too many taxis but we need taxi rank at xcape hospital stadium mk
13	I have never had to wait for a taxi at any if the ranks as there is always lots of taxis waiting. Unlike other cities where i have had to wait upto 1hr on occassions
14	There is a high demand for taxi services in MK area and the waiting times are long, it may be beneficial for the council to consider allocating more taxi licenses/Plates to new drivers. This could potentially increase the number of available taxis on the road and reduce the waiting times for passengers
15	Looking a taxi rank xcap building and hospital thnks
16	Looking a taxi rank xcap building and hospital thnks
17	MILTON keynes So many cab driver licences from other council. Uber is licences from LONDON how comes they operate here. No taxi rank in Hospital. Council should provide taxi rank in Hospital for Public.

18	Taxi service very best in Milton Keynes. Keep continue as same quality when ever.
19	There is so many taxis queue at the station, i spoke to driver they say minimum one hour to a fare. Sometimes 2 to 3 hour. Mk hospital there is no rank for taxi. Council should provide a taxi rank at hospital. Xscape don't have official rank.
20	I am a frequent user of private hire and taxi. Only uber private hire is the worst but MK taxi and private hire are promptly available with decent waiting time.
21	Hackney Carriage was delimited in 2002, after waiting 12 years or more, requiring a London Taxi which every Hackney driver was going to have to have! Then after wasting £31,500, on a black cab, you changed everything and shut it. MK licensing has obliterated the trade by allowing cross border drivers with no knowledge of the area in! Not knowing the shortest way, overcharging etc! I could go on but it would be a waste of my life… much like cabbing in MK for 33 years!

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