



**Guidance for a Local Authority
Undertaking a Needs Analysis
in relation to
an Application for a Local Area Hackney Licence**

National Transport Authority,
Dun Scèine,
Harcourt Lane,
Dublin 2.
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1 Introduction

Regulation 22 of the Taxi Regulation (Small Public Service Vehicle) Regulations 2015 sets out the process for the obtaining of a local area hackney licence. Regulation 9 of the same document then sets out the process for the obtaining of a licence to drive a local area hackney, if the driver does not already hold a licence to drive small public service vehicles.

This Guidance Note is concerned with the process of obtaining a local area hackney vehicle licence, which requires a demonstration of the need for such a licence, including the carrying out by the relevant local authority of a needs analysis in relation to the application area.

2 Licence Applicability

The licensing of a local area hackney service is intended to address transport deficits that would not otherwise be addressed in certain rural areas. It is not intended to replace or displace conventional taxi or hackney services.

Under the applicable legislation, the National Transport Authority is permitted to grant such a licence if it is satisfied that the public transport needs of the area can only be met through the granting of a local area hackney licence. Taxi and hackney licences are available (requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles) for issue for all areas of the State – it is not intended that the local area hackney licence would replace those licences.

Accordingly, it is intended that the local area hackney licence would apply in certain rural areas which are likely to be too small to support a full-time taxi or hackney operation, and which are too far from adjacent centres to be serviced by taxis or hackneys from those adjacent centres.

The NTA is unlikely to grant local area hackney licences in the following cases:

- Towns or villages which already have a taxi or hackney service;
- Rural areas which are within a relatively short distance of towns or villages which already have a taxi or hackney service. While particular circumstances will vary, it is unlikely that areas within 5 or 6 kilometres of a town or village with a hackney or taxi service would qualify;
- Proposals which contain very extensive areas of operation (pick-up area), particularly where the area extends to include adjacent large towns which already have hackney or taxi services - see information in section 3; and

- Areas which already have a reasonable public transport provision through subsidised bus services, commercial bus services, rural transport schemes or voluntary transport services.

Likely attributes of a successful local area hackney application:

- A village or small rural area;
- No hackney service or taxi service provided in the area;
- Limited or infrequent bus services; and
- Limited or no coverage under a rural transport scheme.

3 Identification of Area to be served.

A key part of the licence application process is an identification of the area proposed to be served by the local area hackney service. To do this the applicant should prepare a map showing the relevant area and should provide this map to the local authority as part of his/her request for the local authority confirmation of the need for the service.

The map does not need to be very detailed but should show clearly the key characteristics of the area – villages/towns in or close to the area, key roads, and other significant features. An extract from an Ordnance Survey atlas or an extract from an online map programme should suffice. The map should have clearly marked on it the boundaries of the area proposed to be served by the applicant. This is meant to indicate the area of passenger pick-up of the proposed service – it does not preclude delivery of passengers to destinations outside of the pick-up area.

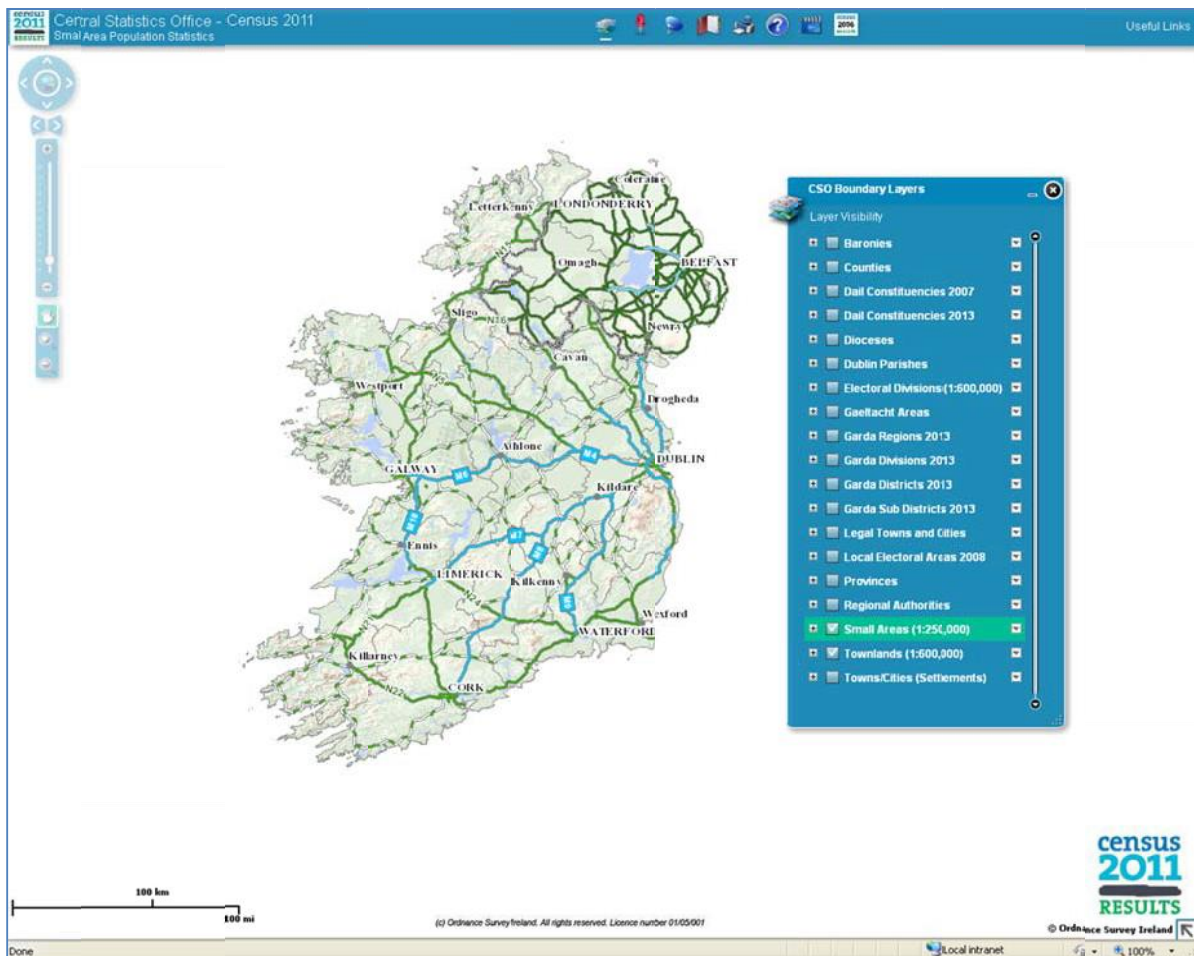
An application which proposes an extensive area of operation (pick-up area) is unlikely to be accepted by the National Transport Authority. Proposals covering large geographic areas, particularly where the area extends to include adjacent large towns which already have hackney or taxi services, are unlikely to be successful. The focus of a local area hackney licence is intended to be a local community and an appropriately sized operational area serving that community is more likely to be accepted for licensing purposes. While the size of the operational area will vary from place to place, it would be expected that many areas would be represented by a 5 to 7 kilometres radius from a defined central point, such as a village. For the avoidance of doubt, this indicates the area of passenger pick-up and doesn't preclude delivery of passengers to destinations outside of this area.

If an adequate map has not been prepared by the applicant, the first step for the local authority is to clarify with the applicant the relevant area and to either obtain from the applicant a revised satisfactory map or prepare such map itself with input from, and agreement with, the applicant.

4 Population of Proposed Service Area

Following establishment of the proposed area to be served - the area of pick-up of passengers – the Local Authority should prepare an estimate of the population of the identified community.

One way of doing this is to use the CSO interactive mapping tool – SAPMAP - available at <https://census.cso.ie/sapmap/> and display the layers titled “Small Areas (1:250,000)” and “Townlands (1:600,000)”. This will provide Census 2011 information on population numbers and population characteristics.



The population total should be summated for the combined CSO Small Areas or Townlands within the proposed local hackney area. Where the proposed service area only partially includes a CSO Small Area or Townland, the relevant population to be included in the summation can be estimated approximately by reference to the proportion of the Small Area or Townland within the identified service area.

5 Characteristics of Proposed Service Area

In addition to determining the population of the proposed area, the Local Authority should assemble information on the key characteristics of the proposed service area, based both

on information provided by the applicant and on its own knowledge of the area. This should include:

- Villages or towns included in the proposed service area;
- Schools, pubs, post-offices, shops or churches within the designated area; and
- Key destinations in terms of hospitals, clinics, shops, entertainment locations in the towns or other locations outside of the designed service area.

6 Transport Services operating within the Proposed Area.

In carrying out the needs analysis, a local authority will need to address and identify the position regarding existing transport services within the proposed area of operation. This should be examined under the headings of:

- Existing licensed taxi and hackney services;
- Public (subsidised) bus services;
- Commercially licensed bus services;
- Rural transport services; and
- Train services.

Each of these is addressed in the sections below.

6.1 Existing Licensed Taxi and Hackney Services

This is perhaps the most important segment of information to be identified as part of the needs analysis – what, if any, taxi and hackney services are already being provided in the relevant area.

The information that is required comprises:

- Identification of taxi and hackney services operating within the proposed service area; and
- Identification of taxi and hackney services operating from an adjacent town or other area but providing services to the relevant community.

This is information which can only be obtained locally. Sources of such information can include:

- The applicant – he or she should be asked by the local authority to set out in detail what hackney or taxi services operate in the area or are based in another adjacent area but provide services to the relevant community;

- Local authority personnel based at local offices, maintenance depots or other facilities in the relevant area. Alternatively council personnel residing in the relevant area or covering the area as part of their duties – such as a road maintenance supervisor - should be consulted to ascertain what taxi or hackney services exist within the relevant area;
- A taxi representative group (where such a group exists) in the nearest main town;
- The nearest office of An Garda Síochána. The local gardai are frequently a good source of information in relation to small public vehicle services in their area; and
- The local priest, shopkeeper or publican may also be able to provide information on who, if anyone, operates a taxi or hackney service in the area.

It is important that the needs analysis by the local authority establishes clearly what, if any, taxi or hackney services are operating in the locality. While virtually all of the remaining information is obtainable through non-local sources, this detail can only be obtained locally and is the most important aspect of the needs analysis. Accordingly, it is necessary that a local authority who is considering endorsing the need for a local area hackney licence, does adequately check and establish what existing services are in operation in the application area.

The needs analysis should report the outcome of the local authority's enquiries. It should state what, if any, services are operating and any information obtained, such as hours of operation of existing services, where the service is based and any other relevant details. If possible, the name(s)/ address(es) of the existing service provider(s) should be stated.

6.2 Rural Transport Services:

The Transport Co-Ordination Unit based in the local authority (or the adjoining local authority) covering the relevant area should be consulted regarding Rural Transport Services operating in the locality.

With the assistance of the Transport Co-Ordination Unit, the following information should be gathered for the relevant area:

- The identification of the rural transport routes services operating in the proposed local hackney area including schedules, frequency and key stopping points within the community; and
- A description of any community car services provided by the rural transport group in this area, including relevant schedules and frequency.

Details of the rural transport services can be obtained also by using the “*Interactive Public Transport Route Maps*” facility, which can be accessed under the “*Plan a Journey*” section of the Transport for Ireland website.

Assistance can be obtained from the Rural Transport Services section of the National Transport Authority in relation to any information not available from the local authority's

Transport Co-Ordination Unit or from the website section referenced above. See email contact details later.

6.3 Public (Subsidised) Bus Services:

Details of the publicly subsidised bus services in the relevant area should be provided. In most cases these services are provided by Bus Éireann. The information to be gathered should include:

- The identification of all routes stopping in the designated area and the key destinations served by those routes; and
- The frequency and schedules of the services.

Details of these services can be obtained also by using the “*Interactive Public Transport Route Maps*” facility, which can be accessed under the “*Plan a Journey*” section of the Transport for Ireland website.

6.4 Licensed Commercial Bus Services:

Details of the licensed bus services in the relevant area should be provided. The information to be gathered should include:

- The identification of all routes stopping in the designated area and the key destinations served by those routes;
- The frequency and schedules of the services; and
- The name of the operator of the services.

Details of these services can be obtained also by using the “*Interactive Public Transport Route Maps*” facility, which can be accessed under the “*Plan a Journey*” section of the Transport for Ireland website.

6.5 Train Services

Where applicable, and it is recognised that this will rarely be the case, details of the train services in the relevant area should be provided. The information to be gathered should include:

- The location of the relevant train station if located in the designated area; and
- The frequency and schedules of the train services stopping at that station.

6.6 Assistance

For assistance with the Transport Services information that is required, the following sources are helpful in addition to the website facility mentioned earlier:

- the relevant Transport Co-Ordination Unit regarding Rural Transport Services;

- www.buseireann.ie for details of public subsidised bus routes;
- individual operators regarding Licensed Commercial Bus Services;
- www.irishrail.ie regarding rail services; and
- the sources mentioned in section 6.1 regarding taxi or hackneys operating in the defined area, or based nearby.

For additional assistance in compiling the Transport Services, please contact the NTA via taxis@nationaltransport.ie.

7 Local Authority Assessment Report

Having gathered the information referred to in the previous section, if the Local Authority determines that it wishes to support an application for a local area hackney licence, it should complete a report to accompany the candidate's application setting out the following information:

1. Candidate name and address;
2. Proposed area of operation of local area hackney service – this should include a map of the proposed area. For the avoidance of doubt the proposed area will represent the area of passenger pick-up – it does not preclude delivery of passengers to destinations outside of the pick-up area;
3. Details of the proposed area:
 - Population;
 - Key characteristics of area in terms of villages or towns included in the proposed service area and schools, pubs, post-offices, main shops and churches existing within the designated area; and
 - Key nearby destinations in terms of hospitals, clinics, shops, entertainment locations in the towns or other locations outside of the designed service area.
4. Details of existing transport services operating within the designated area setting out:
 - Details relating to taxi and hackney services operating in the proposed area stating the number of taxi and/or the number of hackneys known to provide services in the area and whether services are provided from taxis or hackneys located in adjacent towns or other areas. Any other available details gathered in relation to such services should also be provided such as operator names (if available), general times of operation (if known), etc.
 - Details of rural transport services, including any community car services, operating in the designated area;
 - Details of any publicly subsidised or commercial bus services operating in the area;

- Details, where applicable, of any rail services provided to the relevant area; and
- Any other relevant information on existing transport services.

5. Local Authority Recommendation

Prior to making its determination as to whether to confirm the need for a local area hackney licence to be granted, the Local Authority should consider the following factors:

- (a) that the regulatory position is that a local area hackney licence can only be granted where the National Transport Authority is satisfied that the public transport needs of the area can only be met through the granting of a local area hackney licence;
- (b) the fact that taxi and hackney licences are available (requiring wheelchair accessible vehicles) for issue for all areas of the State – it is not intended that the local area hackney licence would replace those licences; and
- (c) that it is intended that the local area hackney licence would apply in certain rural areas which are likely to be too small to support a full-time taxi or hackney operation, and which are too far from adjacent centres to be serviced by taxis or hackneys from those adjacent centres.

The Local Authority should then determine whether or not to confirm the need for a local area hackney licence to be granted in respect of the relevant application. If it determines that it will confirm the need for the local area hackney service, this should be the concluding recommendation of the Local Authority's Assessment Report.

6. Local Authority Contact Person

The report should conclude with the name and contact details of the appropriate person in the local authority who can clarify any issues with the report when the application is being processed by the National Transport Authority.

8 Local Authority Confirmation Letter

Where the Local Authority has concluded the demand analysis in relation to an application for a local area hackney licence and has determined that it should confirm the need for such licence, it should provide a confirmation letter to the applicant, signed at Director of Services or County Manager level, attaching the Assessment Report and confirming the Local Authority's view of the need for a local area hackney service.

It is then a matter for the applicant to provide his full application, inclusive of the confirmation letter and accompanying assessment report, to the National Transport Authority. While processing the application, the National Transport Authority may contact the local authority to clarify aspects of the assessment report details.

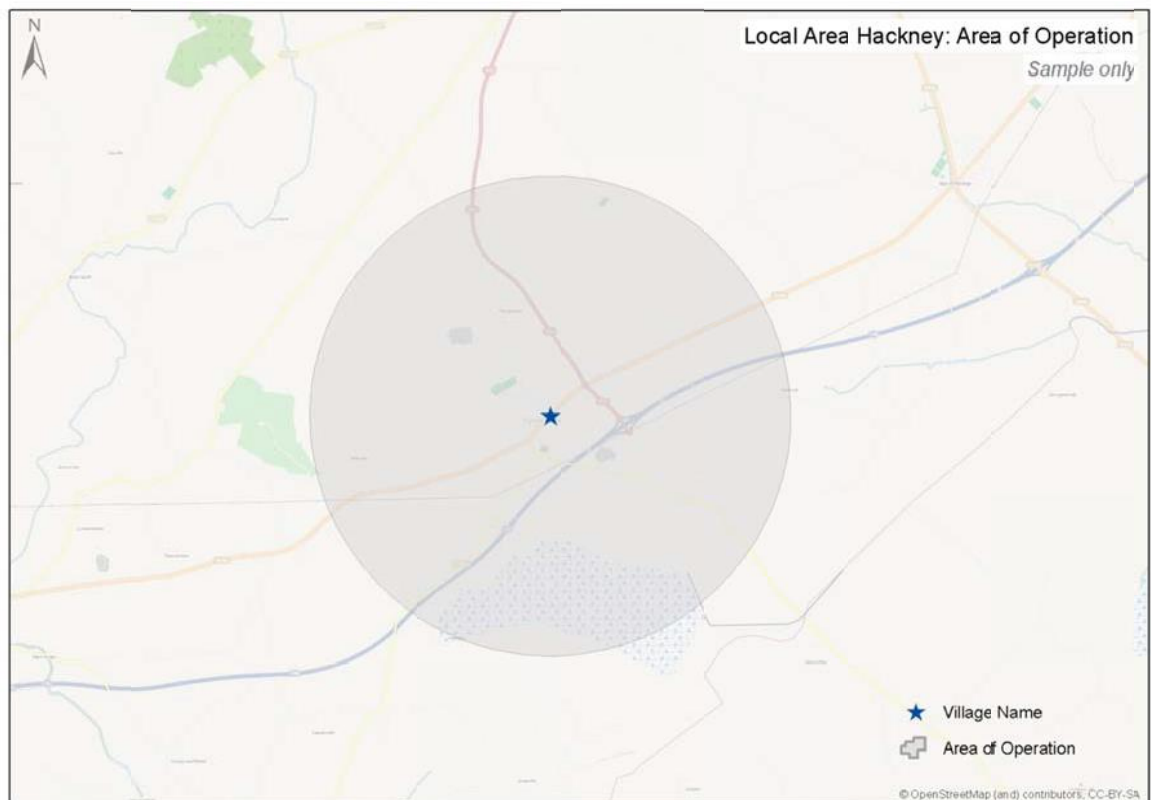
Worked Example

1. Candidate Name and Address:

Joe Bloggs, Address 1, Address 2, Co. Somewhere.

2. Propose Area of Local Area Hackney Licence:

The proposed area for the local area hackney service is centred on the village of VillageName located about 10 kilometres south of the town of TownName. It extends approximately three kilometres in each direction around the VillageName and is bounded in the west by the regional road RXXX. A map of the relevant area is indicated below.



Population: The approximate population of the designated area is 952 people based on the census 2011 information. A large proportion of the population, in excess of 25%, are in the 65+ age bracket.

The village of VillageName is a small village with a single public house and a shop / post office.

The nearest GP office is 10 kilometres away in the town of TownName. The nearest hospital is in the county town of CountyTownName, approximately 25 kilometres away. The closest Catholic Church is located in TownName.

3. Existing Transport Services:

(a) *Taxi or Hackney Services*

There are no taxi services or hackney services available in the designated area. While we have no Council facilities in the area, we have consulted with Sergeant Name based in the Garda Station at TownName who covers this area and he has confirmed that there are no licensed taxis or hackneys in this area. We have also contacted the owners of the public house and the shop/post office in VillageName and they also confirmed that there are no licensed taxi or hackney operators in this area.

(b) Rural Transport Services

Under the Rural Transport Programme, a minibus service operates one day a week, each Friday, providing transport from the local area to TownName. It collects passengers from outside the post office in VillageName at 10.30 in the morning and returns them to the same location at 3.00 pm in the afternoon.

(c) Public Bus Services

There are no Bus Éireann services operating in the designated areas. There is one commercial bus service which operates on Monday of each week. It is a service linking TownName 1 to TownName2, which stops in VillageName at 8.30 in the morning travelling to TownName 2 and at 4.30 in the afternoon travelling towards TownName 1. There are no other commercial bus services in the area.

(d) Rail Services

VillageName is not on a rail line and there are no rail services operating in the designated areas.

(e) Other Relevant Information

None identified.

4. Recommendation:

In light of the transport deficit existing in the area which is the subject of this application for a local area hackney licence and having regard in particular to the lack of taxis and hackneys operating in this area, it is recommended that LocalAuthorityName confirms the need for this local area hackney service.

5. Contact Person in Local Authority:

The relevant contact person in the LocalAuthorityName in relation to this assessment is:

Name:

Position:

Department:

Email: ----- Telephone: -----