

**PORTSMOUTH  
TRAFFIC, ENVIRONMENT & COMMUNITY SAFETY SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Inquiry about parking strategy  
Uber submission - January 2017**

Uber is a technology platform which allows people to tap a button for a safe, affordable and reliable ride from a fully licensed private hire driver in over 25 major towns and cities across the UK. Globally we serve over 400 cities across more than 70 countries. We believe that technology has the potential to make car usage more efficient, and in turn, reduce congestion, pollution and the need for parking in cities around the world.

Uber welcomes Portsmouth City Council's efforts to identify different ways of managing parking and congestion in the city. This submission sets out our views on how technology and ridesharing apps like Uber can help address the underlying causes of Portsmouth's parking and congestion challenges.

**Parking in Portsmouth**

As a Private Hire Operator in the city since November 2015, we have witnessed first hand the congested road network and the high demand for both on- and off-street residential parking at a number of locations across the city. Demand tends to peak during the summer months - particularly at weekends and when large events are being held.

At a basic level, we think the congestion and high demand on parking facilities is caused by:

- High numbers of people entering the city and parking their cars, which remain stationary and unused for the majority of the day. This overwhelms existing parking services, both on- and off-street in areas such as Gunwharf and Commercial Road.
- Increasing visitor/tourism numbers on weekends and during special events, such as the popular America's Cup.
- A lack of off-street parking at residential properties in the city centre.

The current parking allocation is unable to meet the needs of residents and visitors. Yet simply creating more parking spaces in the city centre is not an efficient use of space in a highly populated area. Instead, rather than solely focusing on parking, there is a need to consider how residents and visitors move around the city.

**Thinking ahead - Portsmouth's urban mobility strategy**

As the city continues to grow, Portsmouth City Council needs to think beyond parking. Projected increases in car ownership and usage will continue to put pressure on traditional approaches to parking provision.

Car usage within the city is expected to grow. The TECS Scrutiny<sup>1</sup> Panel states that by 2026 traffic in Portsmouth is predicted to grow by 16% in the morning rush hour, 27% in the evening rush hour and 23% in the weekend peak times. This will predominantly be driven by an increase in number of people commuting daily within the city but also the rise in popularity of internet shopping which will impact the traffic of commercial vehicles.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s12788/TECS%2028%20Sept%2016%20presentation.pdf>

Portsmouth's reputation as an attractive destination for students, shoppers, tourists, events and businesses will also attract more vehicles to the city, as will increases in house building (in line with the recent trend for conversion of housing stock to Houses of Multiple Occupancy).

Car ownership is also expected to rise over the next few years in Portsmouth, according to TECS<sup>2</sup> projections. Portsmouth is not the only city impacted. There are two billion of cars on the road in the world and thirty five million in the UK alone. This is equivalent of 1.08 times the active UK population. Whilst many believe cars are the problem, one should also consider how we currently use them: individually and inefficiently. The average car spends 95% of its life parked<sup>3</sup>, while large areas of prime real estate in the centre of our cities are dedicated to parking<sup>4</sup>.

As a consequence, other ways for people to enter and move about the city need to be developed or encouraged. We believe that Private Hire should be considered in this context, as a way of encouraging people to leave their vehicles at home and free up the city from unnecessary congestion and parking.

Our thoughts on potential approaches in Portsmouth are set out below.

### **How Uber and other app-based Private Hire operators can help combat parking and congestion**

#### ***i) Provide a viable alternative to driving into town***

Uber has proven that ridesharing services can reliably serve every corner of a city, including the parts that other means of transportation cannot reach. Today in Portsmouth, you can push a button and get a ride in less than four minutes on average.

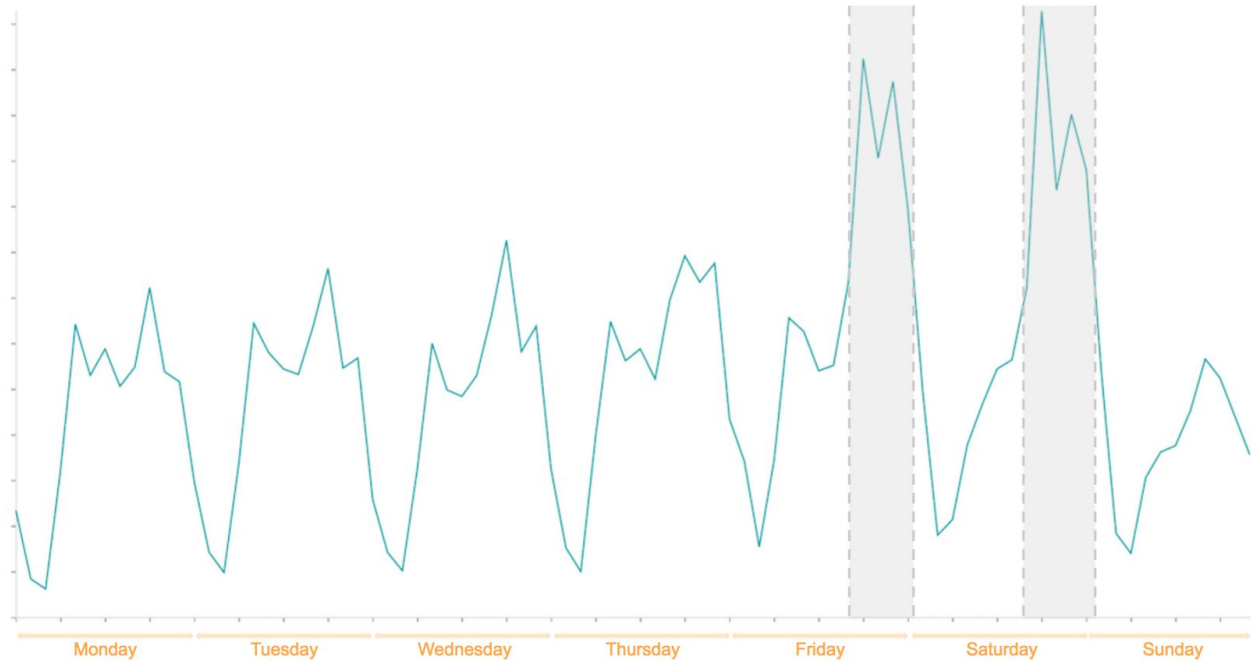
In fact, Uber's busiest hours in the island are typically later at night, after the bars close. That's when public transport is limited and hackneys may be hard to find. And it's definitely when a lot of people should not be behind the wheel.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://democracy.portsmouth.gov.uk/documents/s12788/TECS%2028%20Sept%2016%20presentation.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Professor David Shoup, *The High Cost of Free Parking*, [link](#).

<sup>4</sup> 16% of land in Central London is dedicated to parking. *Making Better Places* report, [link](#).



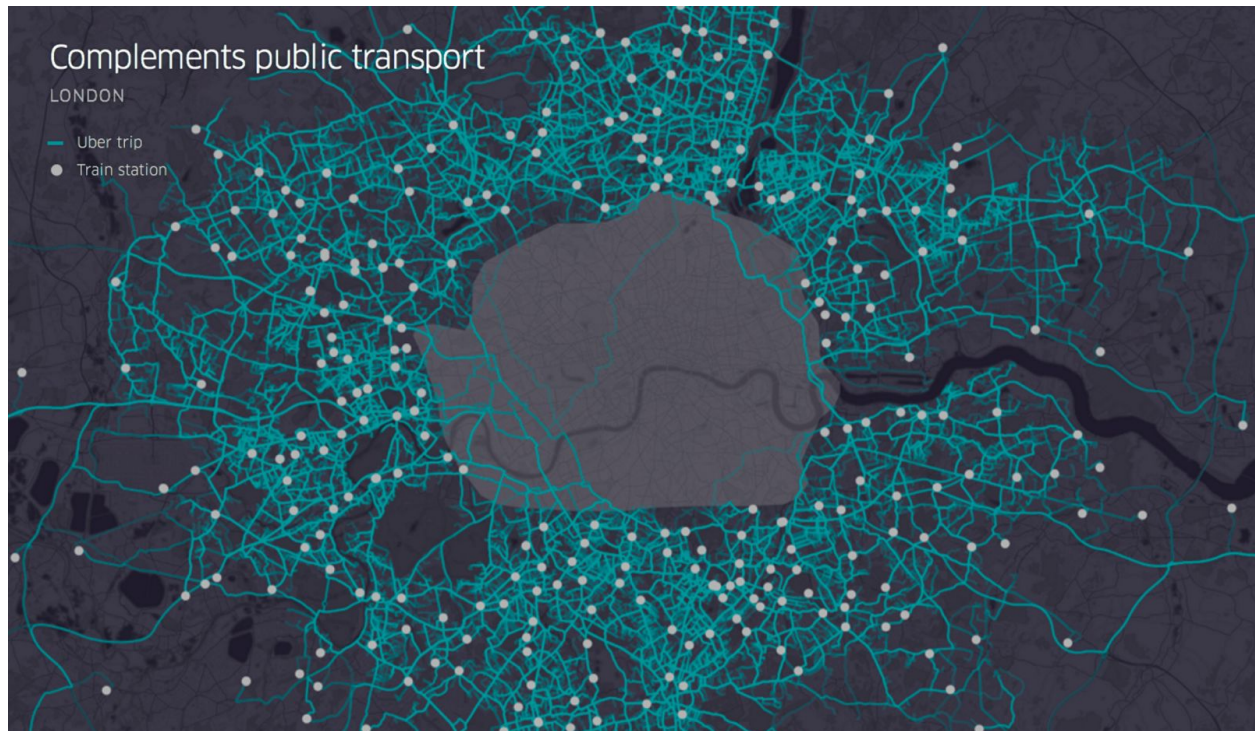
*Uber trips distribution by time in Portsmouth for the week commencing 12th December 2016*

## ***ii) Complement public transport***

By making it easier and faster to get around cities and their surrounding areas without the need to drive, Uber complements public transport in helping to reduce people's dependence on cars and cut congestion in the centre - all while extending the reach of existing systems at no extra cost to the taxpayer. For example, in London 4 in 10 Uber trips start or end within 200 metres of a tube stop, and 20% of Uber trips start or end in an area underserved by public transport<sup>5</sup>. By complementing existing mass transport systems, we're able to extend their reach at no extra cost to the taxpayer.

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<sup>5</sup> Identified as areas over half a mile from stations outside Zones 1 and 2.



Just recently London Underground launched the Night Tube to help people get home late at night. Almost immediately, Uber saw a decline in pickups near many central London Tube stations and an increase in pickups at stations in the outer boroughs. In other words, Londoners are taking the Night Tube to get out of central London and Uber to get the last mile or two home (see above).

In Portsmouth, Uber has successfully complemented public transport when supporting large events in 2016, in the likes of America's Cup and Victorious festival in Southsea when tens of thousands of people commuted towards the city center. We helped reduce congestion by providing a reliable service with an expected time of arrival averaging under six minutes during peak times.

### **iii) Launch innovative services to reduce congestion and improve air quality**

With a vibrant private hire and technology sector there is the ability and incentive for innovative urban mobility services to be built and trialled.

In London Uber has been able to launch UberPOOL, a service that lets riders share a vehicle with another passenger to get from A to B. This gets more people in fewer cars, reducing the number of cars needed to move people around the city and cuts the cost of travel further. In the first year, more than 2 million people chose to share their ride in London with UberPOOL, taking 1.3 million miles off the road saving 98,000 liters of petrol and 231 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub><sup>6</sup>.

UberPOOL is just one example of how encouraging innovation in urban mobility can benefit cities, another is Electric Vehicles. In December 2016 Uber extended its Electric Vehicle programme outside of London to Newcastle. Newcastle has invested in its charging infrastructure and building a proportionate and cost effective licensing process. This has allowed the economics of electric vehicles to be viable and

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<sup>6</sup> Uber analysis, August 2016

investments into proving this new technology sustainable. To date Uber's EV pilot in the UK - the largest in Europe - has clocked up 170k miles and saved 101 metric tonnes of CO2.<sup>7</sup>

More exciting innovations are on the horizon too that could improve congestion and air quality too. The economics of innovative technologies are finely balanced. A forward looking and business friendly environment must exist in order to realise those technologies potential and develop sustainable solutions to Portsmouth's urban mobility challenges,.

#### **iv) Reduce car ownership**

Whilst it might seem like the distant future, technology has the potential to reduce private car ownership. Services like Uber are already discouraging private car ownership and usage. In a recent opinion poll of more than 1,000 Londoners<sup>8</sup> conducted by YouGov:

- 28% of Londoners who used to own a car say they no longer do so because they can use alternatives like Uber instead. This rises to 42% among recent Uber users.
- 1 in 5 Londoners (19%) say they are less likely to buy a car in future because of alternatives like Uber. This rises to 32% for those who have used Uber in the last six months.

These changes in attitudes to car ownership are reflected in the latest transport data. DVLA figures<sup>9</sup> show that uptake of driving licences is falling amongst the young. The data reveals that the number of driving licences held by under-25s is down 6.2% since November 2012. There has also been a decline among 16-27 and 16-30 year olds. With fewer people choosing to drive their own car or become licensed, parking and congestion challenges can be addressed.

#### **v) Partnerships**

Cities like Portsmouth struggling with congestion and pressures on parking should take an innovative approach to working with partners who can help them respond to the challenge. In the US, city authorities and transport operators are partnering with Uber to provide better access to public transport and ease congestion, be it for particular events or over extended periods. For example:

- In Summit, New Jersey, the city recently agreed a partnership with Uber to help local residents access the rail station, whereby trips are subsidised to match the price of an all-day parking permit, so reducing demand for parking and helping taxpayers avoid the need to fund an expensive new car park.
- In California, during *Superbowl* week Caltrain partnered with Uber to extend the reach of uberPOOL beyond San Francisco - where the service is normally limited to in the area - making it available to a much larger population along the train operator's route. The POOLtrain allowed train passengers to share their rides when heading to or from a Caltrain station, helping to get more people into fewer cars.
- In Florida, Uber and the Pinellas Suncoast Transit Agency (PSTA) have been working together to increase the use of public transport, jointly subsidising Uber fares to and from bus stops to solve the 'first and last mile' problem in the county.

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<sup>7</sup> Uber analysis, January 9th 2016

<sup>8</sup> YouGov poll commissioned by Uber and conducted from 28 October-1 November 2016.

<sup>9</sup> Data sourced from DVLA and published by [DfT](#). It covers England, Scotland and Wales from November 2012-March 2016 (the earliest and latest available DVLA figures).

- In Pennsylvania, Uber and the Southeastern Pennsylvania Transportation Authority (SEPTA) are partnering to increase access to the transport system throughout the region. During the pilot phase, discounted Uber rides are being made available to and from 11 of SEPTA's busiest stations to help bridge the 'first and last mile' gap, and reduce demand for parking spaces.

### **Opportunities for Portsmouth City Council**

We would encourage Portsmouth City Council to consider:

- Conducting a feasibility study into how local Taxi and Private Hire can complement public transport on the city's outskirts to decrease congestion in the centre.
- Situate dedicated pick-up and drop-off points at outlying bus stations to make 'first and last mile' connections easier.
- Work with taxi and Private Hire Operators in subsidising fares to and from stations or Park and Ride sites.
- Offer personalised budgets for door-to-door transport, allowing people with disabilities or access needs to take advantage of innovative new services to travel easily and affordably around their city.
- Establish a pilot scheme aimed at increasing access to community hubs for older people and those with limited mobility.

### **Conclusion**

We welcome this review and agree that parking and congestion is a serious issue that needs to be resolved for the benefit of the city. We think that the challenges with parking are symptomatic of a much wider question around Portsmouth's urban mobility strategy and how people access the city, which will only increase in importance as Portsmouth grows.

We believe Portsmouth should set the ambitious goal to reduce car ownership and usage in the city centre, and consider how innovative ridesharing and Private Hire apps can play a part in achieving this goal. Ultimately, such efforts to alleviate congestion at scale in Portsmouth can only be achieved with regulation that enables innovation and flexible working. Excessively onerous barriers to entry to driving on platforms such as Uber could limit the ability of policymakers to shift people away from private cars to a transport ecosystem that can help make the most of the public transport network and ease congestion.