



Agenda:

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Report from: The Chief Highways Officer

To: Licensing and Regulatory Panel

Date: 1st July 2008

Subject: Taxi Rank Provision - Update Report

Electoral Wards Affected:

City & Hunslet

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Eligible for Call In

Not Eligible for Call In
(Details contained in the report)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recent developments have identified that further actions are required to ease the issue of the number of taxis seeking rank space within the city centre. A further request for new and modifications to existing ranks has been received from the Taxi Trade. Work is ongoing to ease the demand and congestion currently being experienced within the city. This report seeks to keep members of the Panel informed.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 To update members on the current position with regard to taxi ranks within the city centre.

2.0 Background Information

2.0 Following a previous request from this Panel and members of the Taxi Trade Associations a review of the taxi rank provision within the city centre was undertaken. The review identified several actions which have now all been actioned and the final pieces of work have recently been completed.

2.1 Subsequently a new list of suggested locations for new ranks and modifications to existing ones has been submitted by the Taxi Trade representatives.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1** The last two pieces of the first review have recently been completed. They are the new 24 hour, 12 space rank on Greek Street and the changes requested by the Trade for the New Brigggate location. The Greek Street rank in particular has been well received especially during the busy night time periods.
- 3.2** Whilst the compact nature of the city centre and the numerous demands upon available kerbspace limits the opportunities to increase the number of taxi ranks, Highways Officers are investigating the various suggestions recently submitted by the Trade. The attached schedule identifies each of the Trade's suggestions, initial highway comments and further details agreed with the representative from the Trade at a meeting held on the 4th June. Highways officers are now working on actions to pursue the agreed measures as quickly as possible.
- 3.3** In recognition that not all of the suggestions can be pursued at the same time, the Trade has given an indication as to which ones they wish to see pursued first. This is also shown on the attached schedule.
- 3.4** Since January of this year there has been a big increase in the number of taxis attending the ranks at the Rail Station. This has led to a congestion issue along Boar Lane at peak times (inter city train peak periods rather than traffic flow peaks). This has resulted in many taxis queuing to turn into Boar Lane and affecting the movement of other traffic, especially buses along Boar Lane. In an attempt to ease this congestion a yellow box road marking has been provided at the Boar Lane / New Station Street junction. A scheme has also been developed to remove the central island at the Mill Hill junction in order that vehicles queuing to enter New Station Street do not block the through movements along Boar Lane.
- 3.5** A report has been submitted for consideration by the Joint Highways Technical Board for approval for the scheme and funding. It is intended to carry out the work as soon as approval is granted and the work can be programmed by a contractor.
- 3.6** At the recent meeting with representative from the Trade the opportunity was also taken to show them the proposed new taxi rank sign plates which will be provided in order to make the ranks more visible to the public. The signs will be much larger than the existing, all have a clear legend of 'TAXIS' on them and will indicate whether the ranks are 24 hour or only part time. The signs will be made from high reflective material and be double sided. The new signs were well received by the Trade and an example of a typical sign plate will be available at the panel meeting for Members to view.
- 3.7** The signs in question are subject to rules stated by the Government and in order to ensure the ranks can be enforced must accord with those rules. The new signs will be provided at all existing and future ranks although because of the number involved this will be a staged operation.
- 3.8** Correspondence is still taking place with officers from the Government Office with regard to the legality of using bus stops as taxi ranks after the bus services have stopped operating. The objective of acquiring a blanket approval that will allow ranks to be introduced at any bus stop within the Leeds District (subject of course to the necessary Orders being processed) is proving difficult to obtain. The next approach is to revert to a site by site application, which although not the preferred option, is looking to be the only way forward.

- 3.9** The locations agreed with the Police in order to have the most benefit for dispersal of people late at night will be pursued in the first instance.
- 3.10** Highways Officers are also assisting in the concept of providing taxi ranks within the city centre by liaising with those officers promoting the initiative and providing advice where appropriate.

4 Implications For Council Policy And Governance

- 4.1** This report does not affect Council Policy and Governance.

5 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1** The provision of new and amendments to existing taxi ranks is subject to traffic regulation Orders, which must follow a set legal procedure. The design work associated with the new ranks has begun, however, because of the number involved there will be a phased programme of work. The Trade has indicated which they wish to see progressed as a priority. Should any adverse comments be received to any of the advertise taxi rank draft Orders then they will be reported back to the Joint Highways Technical Board for consideration.

6 Conclusions

- 6.1** Following discussions with representative of the Trade a schedule of additional ranks and modifications to existing ones has been developed. Work has already started on progressing those regarded as having a higher priority.
- 6.2** The new taxi ranks will help reduce the high demand at particular locations and help cater for the recent additional taxi demands within the city centre.

7 Recommendations

- 7.1** Members are requested to note the contents of this report.