

Report of Director of City Development

Report to Licensing Committee

Date: 10 April 2012

Subject: TRANSPORT FOR THE CITY CENTRE NIGHT-TIME ECONOMY

Are specific electoral Wards affected? If relevant, name(s) of Ward(s): City and Hunslet	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Are there implications for equality and diversity and cohesion and integration?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input type="checkbox"/> No
Is the decision eligible for Call-In?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? If relevant, Access to Information Procedure Rule number: Appendix number:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Summary of main issues

1. This report provides an overview of transport arrangements and issues associated with supporting the Leeds city centre night time economy. A range of matters are touched upon in the report including the role of rail and bus public transport services, and the service provided by the hackney carriage and private hire trades which is heavily relied upon by the public for the journeys particularly outward from the city centre.
2. Many of these matters are form continuing activities for example the development of taxi rank arrangements to meet the dynamic needs of the night time economy and recent discussions on the proposition for a "transport hub". All have planning and resource implications for the Council and its partners, particularly the Police. It is therefore considered there is merit in reviewing practice elsewhere in other core cities and convening a joint service site visit(s) and workshop to bring the key stakeholders together as a forum to take stock of the situation and to investigate new ideas and best practice to improve the situation and plan for the future.

Recommendations

3. Licensing Committee are requested to:

- i) Note and comment on the report.
- ii) Endorse the proposals for a review of practice in other core cities, a joint service site visit and stakeholder workshop to consider future strategy and actions for transport arrangements in relation to the city centre night-time economy.

1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1 This report provides a summary of transport issues in relation to the city centre night-time economy and sets out a proposal for further work to better understand the situation and by taking a joint service approach to develop future plans working with key stakeholders

2 Background information

- 2.1 Issues regarding the management of transport provision to support the night-time economy are a long standing matter which has been the subject of continuing concern. Various management measures are in place covering traffic management, public order and the management of public safety. Members of the Licensing Committee have asked for further consideration to be given to the situation particularly in terms of the management and provision made for public egress and dispersal from the city centre area in the late night / early morning period.
- 2.2 The particular areas of interest are:
Public transport provision.
- 2.3 Night bus service timetables are now limited to those commercial services running on the Headingley corridor with no services elsewhere after 11.30pm. Previous commercial services have been withdrawn and similarly subsidised proposals have not proved to be cost effective. In both cases due to low levels of usage such that they are unsustainable in economic and value for money terms. Experience from previous services also indicates that the majority of people do not find bus services an attractive option, especially for their journeys home late at night.
- 2.4 As with buses, for all, excepting Trans-Pennine airport services, timetables close down after 11pm. Rail has not been considered in detail and is known to be very expensive to operate with service standards set down in long term franchise arrangements. Previously it's been concluded that rail based interventions would not be economic or sustainable and have restricted potential to satisfy much of the late night travel need. The question here would be whether there is any viable role for extended rail provision?
- 2.5 It is therefore clear that the options and opportunities for conventional bus services are very limited commercially and difficult to justify in terms of the significant levels of public subsidy needed to achieve the level of coverage that would make a meaningful difference. The question is whether there are alternative models delivery, not yet considered, that might offer greater sustainability or whether in fact the potential of bus services to meet the specific needs of users' diverse travel patterns are a solution.
Hackney carriage and private hire provision.
- 2.6 These companies provide two distinctive types of licensed services to the customer and form the main mode of travel for people out of the city centre at

night. The distinction between the hail and ride nature of the hackney carriage and pre-bookable private hire can become blurred at night during the peak demand times when operators are working at full stretch. It includes issues around the provision and management of ranks for hackney carriages and the on-street management and dispersal of private hire vehicles. This matters for both operators and the public in terms of location, management and compliance with license conditions in conducting legitimate activities.

- 2.7 Discussions have taken place with the hackney carriage and private hire trades about establishing a night time “transport hub” to support the better management and dispersal of the night time business. The initial response indicated the initial proposal was unsatisfactory with attention being drawn to a range of issues. These included congestion at ranks, illegal parking and plying for hire by private hire vehicles. Views were also expressed that greater use of traffic Orders should be made to manage traffic at hotspot locations, with further dual use of bus stops and wider use of taxi marshals. Further discussions may therefore be merited to ascertain what the most practical and effective package or measures would be for the future management of the issues.

Public order management and street use.

- 2.8 There have been several reviews and arrangements introduced to make improvements to the situation on street at the travel hot-spots, for example measures to have shared taxi use with bus stops and provisions to close Upper Briggate. Considerable time and energy over the years has been expended to seek effective solutions. Notwithstanding this issues continue to be reported regarding traffic behaviours at certain locations and there is known to be a level of dissatisfaction within the taxi trade. Further possibilities for the management of certain hot spots (for example Call Lane where traffic surveys have been initiated to gain a better understanding of the situation) have been suggested by the Police and as outlined above in the response to initial discussions on the “transport hub” concept.
- 2.9 In terms of the management of hackney carriage provision, there has been a significant and continuing effort to tailor rank provision to meet the demands of both daytime and night time economy. In this regard one of the key constraints is identifying suitable locations and space for ranks at the most popular locations, and especially at night when the focus shifts to different locations ensuring that this can reflect an economy that is dynamic. Measures have also been put in place to support policing, for example provisions to close Upper Briggate to traffic when necessary.
- 2.10 Action is also being taken to adapt taxi ranking arrangements at night. Currently of the 84 ranks and 397 spaces in the city, 69 ranks and 332 spaces (36 shared/part time with 149 spaces) are in the city centre. Since 2009 a total of 16 new ranks comprising 75 additional spaces have been provided including 9 ranks (41 spaces) for evening / night time use. Schemes for a further 3 ranks (11 spaces) are being prepared. There is a need to understand if further measures are feasible and, if they are worth pursuing, over what time frame.

Engagement.

- 2.11 As the preceding sections have indicated there are a range of issues already being considered, including the points made concerning the “transport hub”. It has also been suggested that more innovative solutions not previously examined may exist. Perhaps these may come from other wider stakeholder interests in the city centre rather than being driven by the public authorities. It’s not entirely clear what such additional solutions could be and therefore a new approach may be needed to tease these out and establish their usefulness. For this reason recent inter-service discussions have concluded that a stakeholder workshop approach may have some value in adding to the existing stakeholder dialogues. Of course such an approach will need be grounded by practicality and be able to address matters of deliverability. There seems to be merit also in reviewing practice elsewhere in other core cities and perhaps attending site visits to observe potential solutions.

3 Main issues

- 3.1 It is proposed that to take forward this long standing matter the following actions are pursued in the new municipal year:
- a) A night-time site visit by officers with the Police and members of the Committee; followed by
 - b) A stakeholder workshop involving officers, elected members, police and key stakeholders including Metro and public / private hire representatives.
 - c) Reviewing practice elsewhere in other core cities and perhaps undertaking visit.
- 3.2 The site visit(s) will allow the observation and discussion of the issues concerned and provide the first hand knowledge for further considered discussion in a workshop session.
- 3.3 The joint service workshop will bring together all the key stakeholder parties to:
- Take stock of the current situation and the issues of concern
 - Receive advice and evidence from those managing the situation
 - Learn from past practice and best practice from elsewhere
 - Brainstorm the issues and possible solutions identifying opportunities for innovation
 - Critically examine the options and identify those with potential for further investigation and delivery
 - Agree key outcomes required
 - Consider stakeholder funding and resource issues

- Agree an action plan
- Identify task owners and timelines

4 Corporate Considerations

4.1 Consultation and Engagement

4.1.1 The report details proposals for further engagement through a stakeholder workshop to consider future measures and options for transport arrangements that support the city centre night time economy.

4.1.2 There is ongoing consultation and engagement from within the Highways and Transportation Service in terms of city centre traffic management and the provision and review of taxi rank facilities.

4.2 Equality and Diversity / Cohesion and Integration

4.2.1 An EDCI screening has been prepared for this report. This indicates at this time that full Equality Impact Assessment is not required. It notes however that there are potentially a range of issues associated with transport arrangements for the night time economy that would need reviewing as future options are considered.

4.3 Council policies and City Priorities

4.3.1 The management of transport for the city centre night time economy supports the best city priorities business and living.

4.4 Resources and value for money

4.4.1 This report does not have specific resource implications. The proposed workshop arrangements will be met from within existing resources. The outcome and any actions arising from further discussions and the proposed workshop would be the subject of further review and consideration at that time.

4.5 Legal Implications, Access to Information and Call In

4.5.1 The report does not have any specific legal implications. Any legal matters arising from the outcome of further work would be dealt with at that time.

4.6 Risk Management

4.6.1 The effective co-ordination of night time transport arrangements is an important aspect of provision for the economy both in terms of quality of experience and enjoyment for visitors and their safety.

5 Conclusions

5.1 This report has summarised key areas of activity pertinent to the provision and management of transport to serve the city centre night economy. The Council plays an important role in this process, however to function well the delivery of services needs strong and robust partnership arrangements that are capable of

effectively managing the complex needs and issues that arise in one of the largest night time economies in the UK. In order to take stock of the position this report advocates holding a joint service workshop as means for bringing key stakeholders together to support the development of plans and interventions for the future.

6 Recommendations

6.1 Licensing Committee are requested to:

- i) Note and comment on the report.
- ii) Endorse the proposals for a review of practice in other core cities, a joint service site visit and stakeholder workshop to consider future strategy and actions for transport arrangements in relation to the city centre night-time economy.

7 Background documents¹

7.1 There are no background documents relating to this report.

¹ The background documents listed in this section are available for inspection on request for a period of four years following the date of the relevant meeting. Accordingly this list does not include documents containing exempt or confidential information, or any published works. Requests to inspect any background documents should be submitted to the report author.