



Report of the Director of City Development

Scrutiny Board (City Development)

Date: 5 April 2011

Subject: LEEDS BRADFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT – PROVISION FOR PUBLIC HIRE TAXIS

Electoral Wards Affected: Otley & Yeadon

X

Ward Members consulted
(referred to in report)

Specific Implications For:

Equality and Diversity

Community Cohesion

Narrowing the Gap

Executive Summary

Work undertaken to investigate taxi congestion in the city centre developed initial proposals for a rank on White House Lane adjacent to Leeds Bradford International Airport. Initial consultation with local ward members and other stakeholders was undertaken.

The hackney carriage trade would like to see these proposals introduced. Local Ward members are broadly supportive of the proposal. However, LBIA are opposed to the rank on strategic, safety and operational grounds.

The necessary improvements to implement a successful pedestrian route to the proposed rank would have to be delivered with the co-operation of LBIA and ultimately officers question the extent to which a solution which is unilaterally imposed on LBIA will contribute to an integrated surface access strategy.

1.0 Purpose Of This Report

1.1 This report provides a briefing on the issues surrounding the initial development of a proposal for a taxi rank on Whitehouse Lane adjacent to Leeds Bradford International Airport. The report also summarises the consultation undertaken to date.

2.0 Background Information

2.1 At the Scrutiny Board meeting 8th February 2011 there was an action: that the Board's Principal Scrutiny Adviser, in consultation with the Acting Director of City Development, be requested to submit a report and recommendations on a Surface

Access Strategy and proposals for a Hackney Carriage rank for consideration at a future meeting of the Board.

- 2.2 Leeds Bradford International Airport (LBI) provides a vital service to the city and gateway to the Leeds City Region and beyond which was used by over 2.7 million last year and presently serves 74 different destinations. LBI contributes to the regional economy in the order of 3,000 direct / indirect jobs within City Region which equates to a total Gross Value Added (GVA) contribution of £98.5 million. In terms of access to the airport taxis catered for 15.4% of all surface passengers journeys in 2010.
- 2.3 As a result of the terrorist incident at Glasgow Airport which led to new Department for Transport imposed security requirements and the airport company's desire to progress its surface access strategy to improve public access and egress to the terminal a remodelling of the forecourts area was undertaken during 2007. The new arrangements for vehicular access were prioritised in favour of bus access and provided for a dedicated facility to deliver the service level agreement for Arrow Cars including DDA pick up and drop off. A separate area for pick up and drop off including Hackney and other private hire operators was provided where provision for 10 minutes waiting free of charge in this area.
- 2.4 In December 2009 a planning application for an extended terminal building with improved internal facilities and associated landscaping works was granted permission. A Section 106 agreement included details of travel plan measures, targets and management and requires a review of Surface Access Strategy in 2011. LBI are starting the consultation for this review in March and a meeting is to be scheduled with officers from Leeds City Council.
- 2.5 There are a total of 537 licensed hackney carriages in Leeds. The 2009 Hackney Carriage Demand Survey study has identified that there is no evidence of significant unmet demand for hackney carriages in Leeds. This conclusion is based on an assessment of the implications of case law that has emerged since 2000, and the results of the consultant's analysis.

3.0 Main Issues

- 3.1 Prior to January 2008, the provision of taxis at LBI was delivered through the ATA (Airport Taxi Association). The ATA operated from a dedicated taxi rank at the front of the terminal building with competing operators permitted to use the remainder of the forecourt. Competing operators were not allowed to ply for trade on airport premises, which was the subject of a commercial contract with ATA.
- 3.2 Following an extensive and compliant tender process, in January 2008 the contract was awarded to Arrow Cars. The tender process included a service level agreement with a monitoring regime which ensures availability of cars at all times, all cars are less than 4 years old and are DDA compliant. The SLA also ensures availability of cars will increase in line with airport growth.
- 3.3 The hackney carriages which formerly plied for hire at the airport have been dispersed to other parts of the city - and in practice the city centre, primarily at the railway station. The station offers a large volume of fares in one location and as such the hackney carriages are attracted to this location. One consequence of the changes to airport contract was that an increasing number of taxi operators began trading from the city centre which resulted in increased traffic congestion and delays at some key locations. As a result it was necessary to take action and the Council's traffic engineering sections investigated a number of measures. This included

improved management arrangements for managing taxis queuing to use the station rank which were subsequently implemented in conjunction with the taxi proprietors with some success. One option to further address the issues within the city centre which was raised during discussions with representatives from the taxi companies, was an examination of the airport situation. The taxi operators are of the opinion that the restoration of a facility at the airport would remove at least the 70 vehicles originally displaced into the city centre and reduce the congestion issues within the city.

- 3.4 Recognising that the changes to the ranking provision at the airport was one of the factors in the congested city centre situation, options were investigated for providing for taxis at the airport. This resulted in the development of an option for an on-highway taxi rank in the vicinity of the airport on White House Lane. The original concept was to consider providing a rank on the highway by virtue of road markings and the relevant Traffic Order i.e. a relatively low cost option; however, the narrow width means that it is only possible to provide a rank within the extents of the adopted public highway by widening the carriageway into highway verge. The cost of implementing this scheme has been estimated at £80,000. A mini roundabout provides a turning facility to ensure that the A658 is used to access the roundabout and not the minor roads within the surrounding area. The proposal is shown on the attached drawing at appendix A.

Consultation

- 3.5 At the time of developing the proposals an initial consultation exercise was undertaken by the Council's Traffic Engineering Section on 6th October 2010. The consultees have also been contacted during the preparation of this report to ensure their current views were obtained. The views are summarised below.

Ward Members

- 3.6 Ward members for Otley and Yeadon broadly support the proposals, believing hackney carriages provide an alternative means of accessing the airport and a rank on Whitehouse Lane will prevent taxis parking on the roads surrounding the airport while waiting for a fare, hence reducing congestion. Doubts were expressed about the siting of the rank, being too far from the airport entrance, however, given LBIA's position no other short term alternative seemed available.

Taxi operators

- 3.7 The representative for Leeds Taxi Owners Ltd, Streamline/Telecabs made reference to a number of issues at 8th February scrutiny board including:-
- The fact that hackney carriages provide a public service
 - That the loss of the taxi contract at the Leeds Bradford International Airport some years ago had created hackney carriage congestion in the city centre
 - The need to offer the public using the airport a choice between private hire and hackney carriages
 - The suggestion that a hackney carriage rank could be provided on Whitehouse Lane with a commitment that his Associations would part fund this venture
 - The lack of disabled taxis at the airport by the current operator

Access Committee for Leeds

- 3.8 Consultation response not received at time of writing, verbal update to be given at the board.

Emergency Services

- 3.9 The police questioned the safety and legibility of pedestrian routes to the rank from the terminal building. No other responses were received.

Leeds Bradford International Airport

- 3.10 LBIA are opposed to the rank on Whitehouse Lane on the following grounds:
- The proposals raise serious safety concerns for the operation of the airport. The proposals could impede the ability of our emergency services to respond to airport incidents. It is critical that traffic flows freely along Whitehouse Lane. This is why there are currently double yellow lanes across this entire frontage.
 - The proposals raise serious safety concerns for pedestrians. The proposals do not provide safe waiting areas for customers, the pavement width is insufficient, there is no shelter and there is no safe or practical route for customers to walk to the proposed taxi rank from the terminal building. Taxi drivers would also be forced to navigate traffic when entering and exiting their vehicles. Furthermore there is also no facility or potential location for a facility to store trolleys and the gradients make pushing trolleys impractical.
 - The proposals prejudice future airport development. The appearance of the airport street frontage is being assessed as part of the review of the airport masterplan. The airport has already delivered a significant investment in the remodelling of a new forecourt, will be delivering further considerable improvement to the appearance of the airport through the terminal extension and in the future is now planning to create a distinctive and cohesive approach to its street frontage to create an airport that represents a gateway to Leeds and the region, which we can all be proud. These proposals prejudice future options being considered through the review of the masterplan. These have been shared with the Local Planning Authority.
 - The proposals prejudice the airport's surface access strategy and s106 agreement for the terminal extension. LBIA is committed to developing a co-ordinated and sustainable surface access strategy. A critical element is to manage taxi operations and other traffic within and adjacent to the airport and the movement of people within and adjacent to the forecourt. Surplus taxi movements within the forecourt and around the local highway network will undermine the surface access strategy and impact on the s106 agreement in respect of the review scheme. The movement of passengers across the forecourt to local roads would with the forecourt arrangement and car park management, and would be impractical and unsafe. This also conflicts with the airport's surface access strategy.

Issues

- 3.11 White House Lane is public highway and Leeds City Council has the powers to introduce a Hackney Carriage rank at this location.
- 3.12 Given the safety concerns expressed by the police and LBIA an independent expert view on safety issues was sought from Leeds City Council's road safety team. They expressed concerns regarding the lack of a convenient continuous pedestrian route

from terminal to the proposed rank and as such felt these safety concerns would need to be addressed to provide a successful scheme. They also expressed a view that the proposed mini-roundabout to allow u-turn access to the rank would require review to achieve a safer arrangement.

- 3.13 In order to provide a safe pedestrian route to the proposed rank the co-operation of LBIA would be required to enhance the route across their forecourt and parking areas. Plan shown at appendix B shows the available pedestrian routes from the terminal to the rank. The distances range between 260m for the shortest route across the pick up / drop off area and 440m for the accessible route.
- 3.14 Passengers arriving at the airport unfamiliar with the city are not likely to understand the difference between the airport contracted private hire operator and the hackney carriage off site provision. With no signing or explanation of choice given they will most likely use the airport contracted option that they would be naturally guided to. Therefore the potential use of the hackney carriage rank is limited to those passengers familiar with the city and airport layout, and willing to negotiate an extended route to the proposed rank, in order to receive a perceived improved and cheaper service.
- 3.15 LBIA has a duty to produce a Masterplan and Surface Access Strategy. Within this strategy the provision for Hackney Carriages is limited to a pick up and drop off area. Taxi provision is provided on a contracted basis to a single company with a standard of service guaranteed with a service level agreement. The addition of a competing provision would be confusing to passengers and would reduce the airport companies ability to control the quality of provision.
- 3.16 The airport is also obligated to meet passenger mode share targets as part of the recent application for the terminal extension (details were presented in a report to February Scrutiny Board). Payments are incurred for failure to meet these targets and without the control over surface access provision LBIA would be hindered in delivering these targets.
- 3.17 Funding of the proposal; since the development of the proposal, significant budget cuts have been announced by Central Government which have significantly affected the Integrated Transport Block element of the Local Transport Plan and the Traffic Management Capital Programme. Whilst the external offer of a £20k contribution is noted and appreciated, this would still leave £60k to be found from Leeds City Council Highways and Transportation Budgets, which would be difficult at the present time.

4.0 Consultation

- 4.1 Initial consultation on the proposal was conducted by Traffic Management in October 2010. Following the last two sessions of the Scrutiny Board, Ward Members and previous consultees have been invited to confirm their position and these are summarised in the previous section.

5.0 Legal And Resource Implications

- 5.1 This report raises no specific legal implications.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 The proposal for a hackney carriage rank at the airport was one option investigated and developed in response to issues within the city centre and representations from the hackney carriage trade regarding service levels at the airport.
- 6.2 The road safety team have concerns with the proposals due to issues with the pedestrian route and the proposed mini-roundabout.
- 6.3 Any improvement to the pedestrian route to the proposed rank would have to be delivered with the co-operation of LBIA.
- 6.4 In order to solve the congestion issue within the city centre the officer view is that other more localised solutions should be considered. Whilst the proposed rank has some support from Ward Members and the taxi operators, the proposals are not supported by LBIA and the pedestrian routes are unsuitable.
- 6.5 To solve any issues regarding taxi provision at the airport the officer view is that Leeds City Council should work with LBIA to provide an integrated solution within a agreed surface access strategy.
- 6.6 It is clear from the consultation responses that there is no common opinion and the opposing views are unlikely to be reconciled. Therefore scrutiny board must consider the balance between the views expressed and understand the potential implications of any recommendations.

7.0 Recommendations

- 7.1 Members of the Scrutiny Board are requested to consider and comment on the content of this report.

8.0 Background information

- 8.1 Background documents relating to this report are as follows:
 - i. Leeds Bradford International Airport Master Plan 2005 – 2016
<http://www.leedsbradfordairport.co.uk/airportcompany-airportmasterplan.php>

Appendix A – Scheme drawing for proposed White House Lane rank

Appendix B – Pedestrian routes to proposed rank