

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Licensing and Enforcement Committee	Date: 18 th June 2013
Subject:	Review of City Taxi Ranks	
Report Of:	Corporate Director of Services and Neighbourhoods	
Wards Affected:	All	
Contact Officer:	Mrs. Lisa Jones. Food Safety and Licensing Services Manager	
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Appendices:	1. Picture of current Taxi ranks in Gloucester City	
	2. Map of Taxi Rank Locations in Gloucester City	
	3. Pictures of Southgate Street	
Reference No.	ES21159	

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To update Members on Gloucester City's current Hackney Carriage ranks and the location of proposed additional ranks.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 Licensing and Enforcement Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- (1) The need for an additional Hackney Carriage rank located on Southgate Street adjacent to the New County Hotel to be monitored and assessed under a formal consultation.

AND

- (2) The taxi ranks no longer in use within the City, namely Brunswick Road and Quay Street, are retained for the time being, on the grounds that they may come back into regular use sometime in the future.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 Under Section 63 of Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the district council has the power to 'appoint stands for Hackney Carriages' on either the public highway or private land and the stands can be for either continual or part-time use.
- 3.2 Stands are vital if the Hackney Carriage trade is to be able to perform its functions and fully realise its potential of providing transport for individuals. It is especially

important that ranks are provided at locations that are suitable for disabled persons to access and at other locations which are convenient for use by persons for whom other forms of transport are less accessible, such as parents with prams or pushchairs and those who are infirm, as opposed to disabled. Vigilance is therefore required by the licensing authority in assessing whether the stands are in the right place, whether new ones should be created or whether obsolete ones should be removed.

3.3 A taxi/private hire survey for Gloucester City was carried out by Mouchel Ltd. in August 2010 and it identified a number of recommendations relating to the taxi ranks. The main recommendations included:

- The bus station rank could benefit from some operational re-design and use of the area by non hackney vehicles
- Access to Eastgate Street from 22:00hrs should be restricted as far as reasonably practicable.
- Continuation of the Marshalling scheme in Eastgate Street as an effective way to get people home at early hours of the morning.
- On road markings outside former clubs in Brunswick Road and Quay Street should be removed to free road space for other users.
- Discussion needed on provision of active ranks to the developing Docks area.

3.4 Permanent Hackney Carriage ranks are currently situated at the following locations:-

Taxi Rank Location	Spaces
Grosvenor House (Bus Station)	7
Railway Station (Private)	5
Oxbode	7
Brunswick Road (outside what was Jumpin Jaks)	8
Quay Street (opposite Minx Club)	6
Southgate Street (outside Baker Street Pub)	2
High Orchard Street (opposite Nando's restaurant)	2
High Orchard Street (opposite Pillar and Lucy Whse)	2
Llanthony Road (loading bay)	6

The map attached as appendix 2 shows the location of each of these ranks.

3.5 In addition, there is a temporary taxi rank located in the old Cambridge Street outside the main entrance to GL1 leisure centre. During April 2013 this new rank operated successfully over three consecutive weekends during the Eastgate Street trial closure period. If the Eastgate Street closure should become a permanent feature at some time in the future then it is intended that this rank would also be adopted on a permanent basis.

3.6 The 'Nightsafe Group' leading this project have requested Gloucestershire Highways apply for a 6 month experimental order to allow further improvements to be made to the associated road closures and changes in directional travel before a decision is made to make this a permanent measure. The Licensing Team are working closely with Gloucestershire Highways to take this forward and ensure a full consultation is carried out appropriately.

- 3.7 There are plans to create an additional rank on High Orchard Street once the multiplex cinema has been completed. This will service both the cinema and the new restaurants which are taking over the adjacent available units. Currently Nandos and Pizza Express are on site with Ed's Diner and Zizzi pasta restaurant soon to open. This supports the recommendation to consider active ranks in the developing Docks area however, as this is on private land, Members should just note this and are asked to support the work of officers to secure a rank for Taxis in liaison with the developers.
- 3.8 The redevelopment of the King's Quarter will see dramatic changes to Kings Square, the Oxbode and the Bus Station. Clearly the two taxi ranks in that area will need to be moved, amalgamated or redeveloped in some way, however, Members are not asked to consider these ranks at this point in time. It will be necessary that close liaison is maintained with 'Stanhope' the developers to ensure that suitable, 'fit for purpose' rank(s) are included in their plans at an early stage.
- 3.9 The taxi marshalling scheme has continued to run to date, however, this is no longer funded through the Safer Gloucester Partnership. The Council continue to seek sustainable methods to fund this scheme for the future, but the Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner has approved funding to support this scheme until March 2017. To date the Marshalls have operated on the rank on Eastgate Street, but they will move to the new location outside GL1 Leisure centre in line with the new proposals.
- 3.10 After discussions with the Hackney Carriage trade, they have advised Officers that they would like the possibility of adopting a rank in Southgate Street outside of The New County Hotel. There appears to be a demand for passengers to be collected in this area and the nearest taxi ranks to this area are on Brunswick Road and Southgate Street as can be seen on the map in Appendix 2.

4.0 Alternative Options Considered

- 4.1 An alternative option to creating a Hackney Carriage stand is to provide a taxi hailing point. This can take the form of a sign on a post or any specific point to inform the public that a Hackney Carriage should regularly pass that location to enable them to hail a taxi. Members of the public can hail a taxi anywhere in the City, but by providing a specific hailing point, drivers will know where they are to ensure they regularly pass by. This option has been suggested to members of the trade; however no suggestions have come forward to consider suitable locations for hailing points within the City.
- 4.2 In consideration of the request for a possible taxi rank in Southgate Street, this could be a good place to trial the use of hailing points, particularly is there is a lack of space to designate a taxi rank.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 Members are recommended to consider the request from the taxi trade for a possible rank in the Southgate Street area near the New County Hotel. Further consultation with Gloucestershire Constabulary, Highways and members of the public would be necessary to assess the benefits of locating a taxi rank in this area.

Appendix 3 shows pictures of Southgate Street to enable Members to see where the potential rank spaces sit.

5.2 Consideration needs to be given to taxi ranks which are no longer serving a useful purpose and whether they should be removed to free access to these areas for other highway users. The Quay Street rank and the Brunswick Road Rank are the obvious ones here as they were designed to serve Envy and Lansons and Jumpin Jaks. The 2010 taxi survey stated that the surveyors site visits confirmed that the ranks are unused and have no potential for re-use unless the licensed premises nearby reopen.

5.3 Members should have regard to the possibility that at some time in the future these clubs may re-open albeit under a different guise. Given the costs involved in adopting a new taxi rank, it seems more beneficial to retain these taxi ranks for the present time, in case they do become more frequently used again as removal would require the Council to repeat the adoption process and incur those costs again.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

6.1 It would be advisable to undertake a wider consultation on the location of ranks with all stakeholders including the Police, the Highways Authority and the travelling public who regularly use taxis including disabled groups. Hailing points can also be considered at this stage.

6.2 Following an assessment to determine the need to create a new Hackney Carriage stand, the Council must give notice to the Chief Officer of Police and publish a public notice in one local newspaper to allow for a 28 day consultation period in which to accept representations.

6.3 The Council is adopting a new website which is intended to be launched by August 2013. It is planned to publish the location of all the City taxi ranks on the new website and to provide further information in the pubs and clubs to help customers identify where they can get a taxi.

6.4 Licensing Officers will be following the progress of new developments planned for the City Centre, particularly relating to Kings Square, the Oxbode and the Bus Station. Members will be updated on any significant changes and the team will actively engage in any consultations proposing changes to the taxi ranks in these areas to ensure they are suitable for the City's needs.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The cost of advertising and adopting additional ranks and improving the signs on existing ranks can be covered under the existing Hackney Carriage budget from Hackney Carriage fees.

8.0 Legal Implications

8.1 The modern and most satisfactory method of creating a hackney carriage stand is under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 Section 63. Any stands created under byelaws are now deemed to have been made under Section 63(1) and the byelaws themselves cease to have effect (Section 63(4)).

- 8.2 The power for the Council to appoint hackney carriage stands (more commonly, and sometimes referred to in this report as taxi ranks) is contained in Section 63(1) of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. This legislation enables the Council for the purposes to appoint taxi ranks in any highway in the district that is maintainable at public expense, with the consent of the Highway Authority and with the consent of the land owner on any land in Gloucester which does not form part of the highway. It must not unreasonably prevent access to any premises or impede buses.
- 8.3 Before creating a taxi rank, the Council must give notice to the Chief Officer of Gloucestershire Constabulary. It shall also give public notice of the proposal by advertisement in at least one local newspaper circulating in Gloucester and consider any responses received as a result of this public consultation. This consultation process must allow a minimum of 28 days for people to respond (Section 63(2)).
- 8.4 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 section 64 makes it an offence for any person to 'cause or permit any vehicle other than an hackney carriage to wait on any stand for hackney carriages' and this is a comprehensible ban on all other vehicles.
- 8.5 Hackney Carriage stands on the Public Highway must be marked out and signed in accordance with the Traffic Sign Regulations and General Directions 2002, Regulations 11 and Schedule 6. In particular, the road markings must be coloured yellow.

(Legal Services have been consulted in the preparation this report.)

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 9.1 The risk management implications for this report are as follows:-
- Hackney Carriage stands are appointed so as unreasonably to prevent access to any premises,
 - Hackney Carriage stands are appointed so as to impede the use of any bus stops and where it will impact on access to any station or depot of any road passenger transport operators, except with the consent of those operators.
 - Hackney Carriage stands are appointed on any highway without the consent of the highway authority.
 - Consultation inadequate.
- 9.2 The risks identified above are all low due to the actions / risk responses taken.

10.0 People Impact Assessment (PIA):

- 10.1 The Screen stage considered risks to customers in the areas of gender, disability, age, ethnicity, religion, sexual orientation or community cohesion.
- 10.2 The PIA Screening Stage was completed and did not identify any potential or actual negative impact, therefore a full PIA was not required.

11.0 Other Corporate Implications

Community Safety

11.1 It is important that the travelling public have ready access to licensed taxis at all times of the day to ensure their safety.

Sustainability

11.2 Hackney Carriage and Private Hire licensed drivers provide an important addition to the public transport provision in the City and so contribute to environmental sustainability.

Staffing & Trade Union

11.3 None

Background Documents:

Town Police and Clauses Act 1847

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976

Department for Transport: Taxi and private hire vehicle licensing: best practice guidance (March 2010)

Mouchel Report 'Gloucester City Council Taxi/Private Hire Survey' August 2010