

Gloucester City Council

Meeting:	Licensing & Enforcement Committee	Date:	10th December 2013
Subject:	Hackney Carriage Rank Survey		
Report Of:	Mrs Lisa Jones, Food Safety and Licensing Services Manager		
Wards Affected:	All		
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Appendices:	None		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE

1.0 Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To inform Members of the result of a survey into the feasibility of providing a Hackney Carriage Rank in the Southgate Street area of the City

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Licensing and Enforcement Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that Officers do not proceed with the creation and adoption of a new taxi rank in the vicinity of Southgate Street at this time.

3.0 Background and Key Issues

- 3.1 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, by virtue of Section 63, gives district councils the power to create and adopt stands (ranks) for hackney carriages for the whole or any part of a day on any highway or private land. A district council must consult with the police, the highways authority and, in the case of private land, the landowner before proceeding to create and adopt. There is also a requirement to advertise the proposal by way of a public notice and to take into consideration any representations made concerning the proposal.
- 3.2 Furthermore a district council may not create and adopt a stand so as reasonably to prevent access to any premises and, when deciding a position, shall have regard to the position of any bus stops which would be in use at relevant times.
- 3.3 On 18th June 2013, the Licensing and Enforcement Committee was presented with the findings of a City wide taxi rank review. As part of this review the Hackney Carriage trade advised Officers that they would like the possibility of adopting a new additional rank in Southgate Street area outside of The New County Hotel. The trade felt there was a demand for passengers to be collected in this area as the

nearest taxi ranks to this location are on Brunswick Road and Southgate Street (outside Baker St public house). Members therefore requested that Officers monitor and assess the need for an additional rank to be adopted in this vicinity and consider possible locations.

- 3.4 A survey was conducted to establish whether residents in Gloucester City considered there was a need for a Hackney carriage rank in the Southgate Street area of the City. 125 people participated in the survey, which was carried out by the Council's Customer Services team via telephone and via social media (Facebook).
- 3.5 Participants were asked: 'Would you use a taxi rank if there was one in the vicinity of Southgate Street/Kimbrose Way in Gloucester?'
- 3.6 The telephone and Facebook survey gave the result that 40% of those questioned would consider using a rank in the proposed area, however 58% said they would not and 2% were not sure. There is not therefore a clear mandate to support the creation and adoption of a rank in this location at this stage.
- 3.7 Preliminary discussion with the County Council Highways Authority suggested that a Hackney Carriage rank within the 'enhanced area' of Southgate Street goes against the pedestrianised environment that is being encouraged, reducing traffic flow through these parts. There is a possibility that an area in Kimbrose Way which is currently a loading/unloading bay could be utilised. However, this is within the pedestrianised area and would require an amendment to the TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) if Hackney Carriages were to be allowed to rank in this area during the day.
- 3.8 Although the positioning of a rank and times of operation are only at the proposal stage at this time, concerns have been expressed by the Gloucester City Centre Community Partnership, The Management of Cafe Rene, The Rector of St Mary de Crypt Church, Southgate Street and the Deacons of Brunswick Baptist Church on Southgate Street. The concerns include issues of potential anti-social behaviour, noise pollution and general nuisance.
- 3.9 It could be argued that these issues would conceivably be a problem with a night time rank as opposed to a daytime shoppers rank. During the day this area of Southgate Street is busy with buses and other vehicles also requiring access.

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. The Traffic Regulation Order would also apply in this case, so there would be a need to amend this, if Taxi's were encouraged to use this route during the day.

5.0 Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 The important aspect with regard to the creation and adoption of taxi ranks is that they need to be situated in a safe, easily accessible area, which people will want to use. Taxis are not obliged by law to use any specific rank and, unless there is a regular trade emanating from a rank, then the taxi trade could not reasonably be expected to support it.
- 5.2 At this time, there seems to be a lack of demand for a rank in this area and subsequently there is a risk that not enough drivers would support it by regularly using it. Is it therefore recommended that the Council do not to invest such time and money into formally consulting and adopting a rank for this area at this time.

6.0 Future Work and Conclusions

- 6.1 It is planned to carry out another demand survey investigating the demand for Hackney Carriages and Private Hire in the City in 2014. The last survey was carried out in 2010, but we are expecting changes in activity in the City. From December 2013, Eastgate Street will be closed on Friday and Saturday nights for a 6 month experimental period, so it would be interesting to see if the demand alters in different parts of the City following this closure. Development also continues in the area around the Quays/Docks which may again alter the demand for passengers to be collected in different parts of the City. The demand survey should reveal whether the demand changes to the area of Southgate St/Kimbrose way.
- 6.2 If Members decide that they would like Officers to pursue the option to create and adopt a Hackney carriage rank in the Southgate Street area further, there would need to be wider and more in depth consultation with both the Police and Gloucestershire Highways. It would also be important to consult with any obvious stakeholders such as persons who run businesses that may be affected by any changes to Traffic Orders e.g. shops, restaurants another stakeholders etc. who may be using areas to load or unload goods.

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 The cost of inserting a public notice in the local newspaper will be met out of the Hackney Carriage budget. The cost of amending Traffic Orders and the cost of replacing existing signs and road markings is estimated to cost around £3,000, this cost would also need to be covered by the Hackney Carriage budget.

8.0 Legal Implications

- 8.1 Contained within the body of the report.

9.0 Risk & Opportunity Management Implications

- 9.1 The risk management implications for this report are as follows:-
- Hackney Carriage stands are located so as unreasonably to prevent access to any premises,

- Hackney Carriage stands are located 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 located 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 and convenience particularly at times and in places when other forms of public transport are not available.

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:

The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976