

READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	3 NOVEMBER 2016	AGENDA ITEM:	14
TITLE:	GARRARD STREET AND STATION APPROACH - TAXI RANK REVIEW		
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report is to inform the Sub-Committee of a proposal to change the current taxi rank provision in and around Reading Station.
- 1.2 In 2011, a temporary taxi rank was introduced in Garrard Street as a feeder facility for taxis collecting passengers at the rank on Station Approach - known as the horseshoe rank.
- 1.3 The redevelopment of both Thames Tower, and Station Hill have now reached a stage where the temporary rank in Garrard Street can no longer be maintained. Removing the Garrard Street feeder rank will also require the removal of the rank in Station Approach.
- 1.4 This report also proposed a number of changes to existing traffic orders in the town centre to minimise the impact this proposal will have on the taxi trades.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee note the report.
- 2.2 That in consultation with the Chair of the Sub-Committee, the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to

carry out a statutory consultation on the proposed new waiting restrictions as detailed in paragraph 4.9 of this report and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

- 2.3 That subject to no objections received, the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order.
- 2.4 That any objections received following the statutory consultation be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.5 That in consultation with the Lead Councillor for Strategic Environment, Planning and Transport and Ward Councillors, that the Head of Transportation and Streetcare be authorised to make minor alterations to the proposals following the Statutory Consultation process.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 To secure the most effective use of resources in the delivery of high quality, best value public service.

4. THE PROPOSAL

- 4.1 In April 2011, a series of changes were made to the movement and waiting restrictions in Reading Town Centre in preparation for the redevelopment of Reading Station. Various changes were also made to the taxi ranks throughout the Town Centre to take into account the changes to Station Hill and the new footprint of the Station Western Gate Line and entrance.
- 4.2 To assist the Hackney Trades whilst Station Hill was closed (to build the new Station layout and to build the new lowered southwest interchange), it was agreed to provide a temporary feeder rank in Garrard Street to link to the rank located on the east side of the station, also known as the Horseshoe Rank.
- 4.3 The new Station and interchanges were opened in 2014/2015 and all works are now complete.
- 4.4 Throughout the redevelopment of Reading Station, Officers were also closely monitoring the redevelopment of Station Hill by Sackville/Stanhope and Thames Tower. It was acknowledged by all that there would be a requirement to close Garrard Street at the eastern end to facilitate construction of these developments at some point, and this would mean losing the temporary feeder rank.

- 4.5 The developers of Thames Tower have recently approached the Council to progress the section 278 highway works associated with the development. The highway works will include repaving the entire footway on the east elevation of Thames Tower with materials matching the existing paving on the Station southern public square, a rationalisation of the existing street furniture, relocation of the bus inspectors hut and improvements to the existing central island where the statue of King Edward VII is located.
- 4.6 These works will require the closure of the bus stops, and footway whilst they are carried out. A temporary footway will have to be provided within the bus stop layby and horseshoe rank to cater for the very high pedestrian movements to and from the Station. The works are currently planned to commence at the beginning of January 2017 until February/March 2017.
- 4.7 Clearly, to facilitate the works, the taxi rank in Garrard Street and the horseshoe rank in Station Approach will have to close under a temporary traffic regulation order.
- 4.8 With this in mind, Officers believe that due to the duration of the Thames Tower works, and subsequent future phases of the Station Hill development, the point has been reached where the Garrard Street feeder rank is no longer fit for purpose and would recommend permanently closing it from commencement of the Thames Tower S278 Highway works. Officers would also recommend permanently closing the horseshoe rank, as there is no alternative taxi feeder location in Blagrove Street, and the future management and operation of just a five space rank would pose a risk to the overall operation of the Town Centre traffic system by overranking.
- 4.9 To help alleviate the impact of this change on the taxi trades, Officers propose introducing the following permanent changes in the Town Centre:-
- Convert the bus stop on the north side of Station Hill (near the Railway Club) to a permanent taxi rank.
 - Make the bus stops on the south side of Station Hill (Football services) shared use (Bus and Taxi).
 - Convert a section of Greyfriars Road on the west side into a feeder rank to Station Hill.
 - Change the current bus only restriction on the eastern side of the northern interchange to permit taxis, and allow the right turn out of the interchange to Vastern Road.
 - Review a potential route for taxis to the current bus only section of the northern interchange from the head of the taxi rank
 - Review the locations of the existing part time ranks in Station Road with a view to a continuous rank rather than split between bus stops.

- Improve signs within the Station and on the highway to the north and south of the Station to direct members of the public to the taxi ranks.
- Utilise the road space previously used as the horseshoe rank as a bus stop to ensure drop off/private hire vehicles do not use the area.
- Adjust the following existing taxi ranks:-
 1. Move the Friar Street shared use rank outside Hickies to the bus stop outside the County Court in Friar Street.
 2. Change the operational time of the rank in Gun Street to 9pm -6am.
 3. Change the rank in Bridge Street to 8pm-8am and promote a new taxi rest facility between 8am and 8pm.
 4. Investigate shared use ranks in the disabled bays) located in St Marys Butts (only to operate 8pm-8am and Kings Street.
 5. Change the existing Oxford Road rank located near Cheapside to a permanent rest rank.

4.10 Members are asked to review the contents of this report and the proposed recommended actions.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS

5.1 The delivery of the projects outlined in this report help to deliver the following Corporate Plan Service Priorities:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing infrastructure to support the economy.

6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

6.1 The projects have and will be communicated to the local community through local exhibitions and Council meetings.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any Statutory Consultation will be completed in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996..

8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 The Council has carried out an Equality Impact Assessment scoping exercise and considers that the proposals do not have a direct impact on any groups with protected characteristics.

9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None relating to this report.

10. BACKGROUND PAPERS

10.1 Traffic Management Sub-Committee and Strategic Planning and Transport Committee reports.