Licensing Committee Report
Ward(s) affected: Friary and St Nicholas; Holy Trinity
Report of Head of Health and Community Care Services
Author: Mike Smith
Tel: 01483 444387
Email: mike.smith@guildford.gov.uk
Lead Councillor responsible: Councillor Graham Ellwood
Tel: 07899 846626
Email: graham.ellwood@guildford.gov.uk
Date: 28 April 2016

Review of Hackney Carriage Stands (Taxi Ranks) in Guildford

Executive Summary

The report seeks to advise Licensing Committee of the work on improving Hackney Carriage Stands (Taxi Ranks) in Guildford. The report seeks the support of the Licensing Committee on the proposed rank locations for adoption by the Executive.

Recommendation to Licensing Committee:

That the Licensing Committee recommends that the Executive appoint additional taxi ranks in the locations identified below subject to the consideration of any objections or representations received.

Bedford Road – 7 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking bays adjacent to Bedford Road Surface Car Park for a distance of 36 meters

North Street – 11 spaces (24 hour operation)
Length of single yellow line outside Vinyl Night Club and TGI Friday for a distance of 50 meters

North Street – 6 spaces (24 hour operation)
Outside Marks and Spencer and Paperchase for a distance of 30 meters

High Street (Lower end) – 4 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking Bays, outside Vision Express Opticians for a distance of 19 meters

Upper High Street – 5 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking bays outside Pizza Express and Oxfam for a distance of 26 meters

Millbrook (A281) – 4 spaces (22:30 to 04:30 daily)
Bus Stop on north-bound carriageway outside the Legion nightclub for a distance of 19 meters
1. **Purpose of Report**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline Guildford Borough Council’s proposals for taxi rank locations in Guildford and to seek the support of the Council’s Licensing Committee to adopt the proposed locations in this report as taxi ranks, by recommending the adoption of these ranks by the Council’s Executive.

2. **Strategic Priorities**

2.1 Improving taxi rank provision in the Borough will contribute to the Council’s fundamental themes and priorities as set out below:

   Our Borough: Improving access to an important, safe, form of transport in a vibrant town centre.

   Our Infrastructure: Improving access to a safe and regulated form of transport.

   Our Society – reduced crime through improving access to a safe and regulated form of transport.

3. **Background**

3.1 Taxi ranks are a vital part of the Nation’s transport network. Ranks are a common feature in many towns and cities and provide a location where licensed taxis can legally park to wait for a customer who wishes to use a taxi, rather than drive around town centre streets waiting to be hailed.

3.2 Similarly having well defined and managed rank locations improves public safety through allowing customers to easily obtain a licensed taxi service and reduces the risks associated with touting and inconvenience to customers searching the streets for a service.

3.3 A local authority can adopt areas on streets or private land as taxi ranks for either continual or part-time use under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The creation of a taxi rank is not a straightforward process; the local authority must obtain the permission of the Highways Authority, give notice to the Police, publish a public advertisement in a local paper and take into account any objections or representations received within 28 days of publication, before a rank is appointed.
3.4 Currently, Guildford Borough Council provides rank space for its 185 licensed taxis in the following locations:
- North Street, off Onslow Street, outside the Friary Centre (approx. 12 spaces)
- North Street, outside Marks and Spencer (3 spaces)
- Guildford Park Road, outside the railway station (2 spaces)

There are also ranks provided by the railway company, for which an additional fee is payable for the use of the rank, at:
- Guildford Railway Station (approx. 10 spaces)
- Guildford London Road Station (3 spaces)

3.5 Rank provision has not been reviewed by Guildford Borough Council for a number of years and it is acknowledged that provision could be improved, as it is good practice to review provision regularly.

3.6 The two main ranks have their own issues:

3.6(i) A permit for the station rank costs approximately £800 a year with a number of vehicles using the facility during the day when the station is busy with commuters. The number of vehicles using the area is frequently greater than the number of spaces, causing taxis to queue in the station car park to wait for a rank space to become available, restricting access to other car park users.

3.6(ii) The rank at the Friary is the main location, which customers head to looking for a taxi service in the night. This often causes the rank to become congested, with vehicles wishing to wait on the rank backing up onto the main A322/Onslow Street interfering with traffic flow, and using the North Street Carriageway as an additional rank lane. Customers also have to make their way to this location after a night out. This can either be through town where there is potential for them to cause noise and disturbance, or across the busy A322 road from the main nightclub.

3.7 The current limited arrangements also subsequently create unmanaged, informal arrangements at popular locations, which cause congestion and disorder placing an additional burden on the emergency services, and increase the risk of touting. Similarly, there are frequent public disorder issues caused by customers congregating in one location competing for a taxi after a night out which places an additional strain on the Police who wish for customers heading home after a night out to disperse quickly.

3.8 Improving access to a taxi service through increasing rank provision throughout the town would negate some of the above safety issues associated with customers and taxis waiting in one location during the night-time economy. The last Purple Flag review identified dispersal of night-time patrons as an area for potential improvement. Additionally increasing provision in areas close to the premises popular with the night-time economy would reduce some disorder issues associated with customers heading towards the main rank after a night
out from other areas of the town, and reduce the problem of vehicles waiting in a disorderly manner in other popular locations causing disruption.

3.9 In consultation with key stakeholders, the following sites have been identified for use as taxi ranks:

**Bedford Road** – 7 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking bays adjacent to Bedford Road Surface Car Park for a distance of 36 meters

**North Street** – 11 spaces (24 hour operation)
Length of single yellow line outside Vinyl Night Club and TGI Friday for a distance of 50 meters

**North Street** – 6 spaces (24 hour operation)
Outside Marks and Spencer and Paperchase for a distance of 30 meters

**High Street** (Lower end) – 4 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking Bays, outside Vision Express Opticians for a distance of 19 meters

**Upper High Street** – 5 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)
Parking bays outside Pizza Express and Oxfam for a distance of 26 meters

**Millbrook** (A281) – 4 spaces (22:30 to 04:30 daily)
Bus Stop on north-bound carriageway outside the Legion nightclub for a distance of 19 meters

3.10 The reasoning for these locations is discussed in Section 5 of this report. Maps of their locations are enclosed as Appendix I of this report.

3.11 The first stage of the adoption process is to seek the consent of the Highways Authority, in this case through the Surrey County Council Area Committee. This consent was obtained on the 23 March 2016, with the Decision Notice of this meeting enclosed as Appendix II of this report.

3.12 Following on from receiving the consent of the Highways Authority, the Lead Member for Licensing and the Head of Health and Community Care Services have given their consent to begin public consultation. A legal requirement is to place a notice in a local paper. Additionally, we are consulting with key stakeholders, have placed site notices and written to properties fronting and in the vicinity of each location and undertaken publicity.

3.13 Under the Council’s constitution, the Council’s Executive is required to appoint Hackney Carriage stands.

4. Consultations

4.1 The proposed rank locations have been identified in consultation with:
- The taxi trade
- Surrey County Highways
• Surrey Police – Road Safety Team
• Surrey Police – Borough Inspector
• Guildford Borough Council – Parking Services
• Guildford Borough Council – Major Projects Team
• Guildford Borough Council – Lead Member for Licensing and Community Safety
• Guildford Borough Council – Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure

4.2 Before ranks are adopted, legislation requires that the locations are subject to a period of consultation with the Police and the public. This is achieved by serving a notice on the Chief of Police and by publishing an advertisement in a locally distributed newspaper, allowing for a period of 28 days from the date of first publication for comments or objections to the proposals. The Executive will consider the results of this public consultation before deciding to adopt a stand.

4.3 In addition to the consultation required by law, we intend to undertake publicity of our proposals through the media, on our website, with other key stakeholders, letter drops to properties fronting onto the sites and through displaying site notices.

5. **Taxi Rank Proposals**

5.1 Guildford Borough Council is seeking support from the Licensing Committee to adopt all of the six options below as taxi ranks.

5.2 **Bedford Road**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Bedford Road Parking bays adjacent to Bedford Road Surface Car Park</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>36 meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spaces</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
<td>18.00 to 08.30 daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently there is a long on street parking bay located along the length of the Bedford Road Surface Car Park, which is provided for public on street parking between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours, there are no parking restrictions.
The advantages of this location are:

- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultantly taxis will not queue on the main road and obstruct traffic.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions, hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The bays are located close to Casino nightclub and Odeon cinema and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- This area is already a popular waiting area for the trade wishing to pick up pre-booked customers, with vehicles often parking in restricted areas causing congestion.
- Providing a dedicated rank facility in this area would improve safety through reducing competition from pre-booked vehicles waiting for pickups in the area, and reduce the number of customers crossing the main A322 from the nightclub to the taxi rank after a night out.

The disadvantages of this location are:
- The spaces are currently available to resident permit holders, as well as being available to the public. Designating these spaces as a taxi rank would reduce the availability to residents.

5.3 North Street

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>North Street, length of single yellow line Outside Vinyl Night Club and TGI Friday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>50 meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spaces</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
<td>24 hour operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Currently there is a single yellow line running for a length of about 50 meters adjacent to the Vinyl nightclub and TGI Friday.
The advantages of this location are:

- The site currently has a single yellow line. After 6pm there are no parking restrictions, hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The site is located in a busy shopping area and is well situated to serve the town during the day. It is also close to Vinyl nightclub and a number of other bars/restaurants and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy, particularly customers dispersing from establishments nearby.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain two-way traffic flow.

5.4 North Street

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>North Street Taxi Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Outside Marks and Spencer and Paperchase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>Additional 15 meters, making a total rank length of 30 meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spaces</td>
<td>Additional 3 spaces, making a total of number of 6 spaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
<td>24 hour operation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is currently a dedicated taxi rank on North Street, outside Marks and Spencer with space for 2 to 3 taxis to rank. The location is not well used by the trade and is often taken advantage of by both the trade and public as a convenient area to wait. This is compounded by the double yellow lines, which run the remaining length of North Street also used as convenient parking/waiting spaces.
It is anticipated that extending the rank to level with the lamp post in the picture below would encourage its use and reduce the associated problem with other motorists parking and waiting in this location.

The current Taxi rank space at North Street

The advantages of this location are:

- The site currently has double yellow lines hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The site is located in a busy shopping area and is well situated to serve the town during the day.
- The site is situated close to popular bars, take away premises, and well situated in the middle of town to serve the night time economy.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain traffic flow.

The disadvantages of this location are:

- There is a pick up point for Marks and Spencer close to this location and the location is currently popular with motorists parking for a short period of time to visit shops/banks in the vicinity.
- The current double yellow line is a popular parking location for blue badge holders.
The site is currently on-street parking bays provided for the public between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours, there are no parking restrictions. Behind the pay and display, bays are two spaces reserved for disabled parking.

The advantages of this location are:

- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultanty taxis will not queue and obstruct traffic in the road.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions, hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The bays are located close to the restaurants on Friary Street and are ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- The area is currently being used as an un-official taxi rank at night by the taxi trade.
5.6 Upper High Street

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Upper High Street Parking bays outside Pizza Express and Oxfam</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>26 meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spaces</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
<td>18:00 to 08:30 daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The site is currently on-street parking bays provided for the public between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours, there are no parking restrictions.

The advantages of this location are:
- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultantly taxis will not queue and obstruct traffic in the road.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions, hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- There are other, larger parking bays and the York Road car park close by enabling residents and visitors to park in the area.
- The bays are located close to the restaurants at the top of the High Street and G-Live Venue and are ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
### 5.7 Millbrook

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Millbrook (A281)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bus Stop on north-bound carriageway outside the Legion nightclub</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length</td>
<td>19 meters</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of spaces</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hours of operation</td>
<td>22:30 to 04:30 daily</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There is a bus stop located on the northbound carriageway of Millbrook outside the Legion nightclub and Yvonne Arnaud Theatre. The bus service is finished by 10pm in the evening.

The advantages of this location are:
- After 10pm, there is no bus service operating at this stop and hence allowing use as a taxi rank would not impact any bus service.
- The location is close to the Legion nightclub and Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain traffic flow.

### 6. Equality and Diversity Implications

6.1 Guildford Borough Council wishes to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.
6.2 The proposed locations do not reduce the number of accessible spaces provided for the use of disabled members of the public.

6.3 Increasing the number of locations where a licensed taxi service can be obtained will benefit the travelling public looking to utilise the service.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 The cost of adopting an area as a taxi rank includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of design and implementation.

7.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows Guildford Borough Council to recover the costs of providing taxi ranks through licence fees charged to taxis. The budget for 2016/17 includes an allocation for providing taxi ranks.

7.3 There are plans to redevelop Guildford Town Centre which may impact the long term operation of these sites, however even the short term operation of these sites would be value for money by improving public safety and reducing the burden on the emergency services resulting from the current limited arrangements.

8. Legal Implications

8.1 A local authority can adopt areas on streets or private land as taxi ranks for either continual or part-time use under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The creation of a taxi rank is not a straightforward process; the local authority must obtain the permission of the Highways Authority, give notice to the Police, publish a public advertisement in a local paper and consider any objections or representations received within 28 days of publication before a rank is appointed. The Council’s Executive has the authority to appoint a rank after the necessary approvals and consultation.

8.2 The first stage in the adoption process has been achieved by receiving approval from the Surrey County Council Area Committee for the identified locations.

8.3 This report seeks the support of the Council’s Licensing Committee on these plans by recommending the adoption of these ranks by the Council’s Executive, subject to the consideration of any representations or objections.

9. Human Resource Implications

9.1 The consultation, adoption and operation (including enforcement) of new ranks would involve an input of Officer time. All costs associated in providing ranks can be recovered from the taxi trade through the hackney carriage licence fee.
10. **Summary of Options**

10.1 This report seeks the support of the Council’s Licensing Committee on these plans by recommending the adoption of these ranks by the Council’s Executive.

10.2 The options available to Committee are either to support the proposals in whole or part, or not. The final decision to adopt any of the locations as taxi ranks lies with the Executive.

10.3 Officers feel that the proposed sites would make viable taxi rank locations as they have been identified by working with the taxi trade and key stakeholders.

11. **Conclusion**

11.1 Improving Taxi Rank provision in Guildford will improve public safety through allowing residents and visitors to more easily obtain a licensed taxi service. Having well defined rank locations in key areas, particularly late at night, will reduce the burden on partner agencies such as the Police. The Licensing Committee is therefore asked to support these proposals.

12. **Background Papers**

12.1 There are no background papers included with this report.

13. **Appendices**

13.1 The following Appendices are included with this report:

Appendix I – GIS Maps of Taxi Rank Locations

Appendix II – Surrey County Council Area Committee 23 March 2016 Decision Notice