

Licensing Committee Report

Ward(s) affected: Friary and St Nicolas

Report of Licensing Team Leader

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Date: 27 November 2019

## **Removal of Hackney Carriage Stand at Guildford Park Road**

### **Executive Summary**

The report seeks to advise Licensing Committee of the proposed removal of the Hackney Carriage Stand (Taxi Rank) on Guildford Park Road, outside the rear entrance to Guildford Station. The report seeks the support of the Licensing Committee on the proposed removal for adoption by the Executive.

### **Recommendation to Licensing Committee:**

That the Licensing Committee recommends that the Executive:

- Agrees the removal of the current taxi rank on Guildford Park Road (Southern carriageway) outside Guildford Station subject to compliance with the statutory procedure

### **Reason(s) for Recommendation:**

This proposal is part of the wider Sustainable Movement Corridor, which identifies a series of improvements for all modes of transport between the rail station, the University, Hospital and the Research Park. At the southern end of the corridor is Guildford Park Road. The removal of the taxi rank is part of a where series of improvements proposed along Guildford Park Road.

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to outline Guildford Borough Council's proposals for removal of the current taxi rank on Guildford Park Road, outside Guildford Station, and to seek the support of the Council's Licensing Committee to recommend the removal of the rank by the Council's Executive.
- 1.2 The removal will be achieved through the process prescribed under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 ("the Act") to appoint or revoke ranks.

## **2. Strategic Priorities**

2.1 The removal of the rank will contribute to our fundamental themes as follows:

- **Place making** – making travel in Guildford and across the Borough easier.

## **3. Background**

3.1 Taxi ranks are an important 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 The Act states that the same procedure must be followed to revoke or alter a rank.

3.5 Following a review of rank provision, in 2016 the Executive agreed to appoint approximately 30 new rank spaces across town to complement current provision at North Street (outside the Friary Centre and Marks and Spencer) and Guildford Park Road.

3.5 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)

## **4. Proposed Changes**

4.1 As part of the sustainable movement corridor there are a number of proposed improvements along Guildford Park Road. The specific proposal in terms of the taxi rank is to remove the rank so that the bus stop is relocated nearer to the station entrance.

- 4.2 It is a very constrained area with many vehicles, pedestrians, cycles and the total daily 2 way flows at about 11,000vpd. A video survey was carried out to clarify the extent of the complex travel movements in the area that included buses stopping, taxis waiting and dropping off, parking durations and pedestrians crossing. In working up the scheme there have been extensive consultations with Surrey County Council highways and passenger transport and the preferred option is the 7<sup>th</sup> iteration.
- 4.3 The Table below summarises the drop off and pick up flows outside the rail station on Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2018 over 18 hours on each day. It shows low volumes of taxis and many more private hire and cars carrying out the act. By contrast the volumes of bus passengers averaged per day over the same 2 days are much higher, with westbound flows surveyed at 503 passengers and eastbound 377. It is these eastbound passengers that are planned to have a stop closer to the rail station entrance.

Row Labels	Count of Drop Off Amount	Sum of Drop Off Amount2	Count of Pick Up Amount	Sum of Pick Up Amount2	Sum of (hh:mm:ss)
Car	185	203	81	95	07:25:00
LGV	6	7	2	3	00:47:07
Private Hire Taxi	15	18	10	10	01:13:39
Taxi	2	3			00:04:00
Bus	7	41			00:02:18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>215</b>	<b>272</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>108</b>	<b>09:32:04</b>

Table 1: Guildford Park Road Drop Off & Pick Up Survey & Duration by Mode

## 5. Consultation

- 5.1 The first stage of the process is to seek the consent of the Highways Authority, in this case through the Surrey County Council Area Committee. This consent will be requested at their meeting on 11 December 2019.
- 5.2 Before ranks are adopted (or removed), 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 results of this public consultation will be considered by the Executive before deciding whether to remove the current stand.
- 5.3 In addition to the consultation required by law, we intend to undertake publicity of our proposals with stakeholders in the trade via our newsletter.

## 6. Equality and Diversity Implications

- 6.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

- 6.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.
- 6.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of equality duty. The implications of changes to the policy will be assessed when the draft policy is formulated for consultation.
- 6.4 The proposed removal of the rank to accommodate a bus stop nearer to the station entrance will improve access to the Station for a greater number of members of the public.

## **7. Financial Implications**

- 7.1 The cost of removing a taxi rank includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of removing the road markings.
- 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 licence holders. However it has been agreed that Major Projects will cover the cost of advertising and implementation of these works.

## **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 statutory process provides that 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 Section 63(5) of the Act states that the power to appoint ranks includes the power to revoke such appointment and requires the same statutory process to be followed.
- 8.3 The first stage in the adoption process will be achieved by requesting approval from the Surrey County Council Area Committee.

## **9. Human Resource Implications**

- 9.1 There are no Human Resource implications.

## **10. Summary of Options**

- 10.1 This report seeks the support of the Council's Licensing Committee on these plans by recommending the removal of the rank by the Council's Executive.
- 10.2 The options available to Committee are either to support the proposal or not. The final decision lies with the Executive.

## **11. Conclusion**

- 11.1 Relocating the bus stop to outside the station would improve access to the Station for a greater number of members of the public. The current rank is not well used. The Licensing Committee are therefore asked to support these proposals.

## **12. Background Papers**

- 12.1 There are no background papers included with this report.

## **13. Appendices**

- 13.1 There are no appendices in this report.

*Please ensure the following service areas have signed off your report. Please complete this box and do not delete*

<b>Service</b>	<b>Sign off date</b>
<i>Finance / 151 Officer</i>	<i>30 October 2019</i>
<i>Legal / Governance</i>	<i>31 October 2019</i>
<i>HR</i>	
<i>Equalities</i>	
<i>Lead Councillor</i>	
<i>CMT</i>	<i>12 November 2019</i>
<i>Committee Services</i>	<i>19 November 2019</i>