

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Licensing Committee

6 June 2018

Report title	Support for City Centre Taxi Rank Review and Consultation	
Wards affected	St. Peter's	
Accountable director	Ross Cook, Place	
Originating service	Licensing	
Accountable employee(s)	Greg Bickerdike	Section Leader
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Report to be/has been considered by	None	

Recommendation(s) for decision:

The Licensing Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the commencement of a review of the taxi rank provision and traffic regulation orders within the City centre.

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To seek the approval of Licensing Committee to review the taxi rank provision and Traffic Regulation Orders in the City centre

2.0 Background

- 2.1 Drivers of hackney carriages licensed by City of Wolverhampton Council may ply for hire anywhere across the City. The City centre taxi ranks enable hackney carriage drivers to stand for hire in locations convenient to customers, without obstructing the highway.
- 2.2 A Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) is necessary to appoint a taxi rank. Once a TRO is in place, it is an offence for any vehicle other than a hackney carriage to wait in a taxi rank under Section 64 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.
- 2.3 There are currently several TROs in place for taxi ranks across the City centre. However, there are issues with the accuracy of current taxi rank TRO records and they cannot be relied upon for prosecutions.
- 2.4 Drivers of private hire vehicles may not wait in taxi ranks, nor may they ply or stand for hire. Journeys must be pre-booked, with passengers collected from a pre-arranged location.
- 2.5 Drivers of private hire vehicles licensed by City of Wolverhampton Council are prohibited from waiting on double yellow lines. They are also prohibited from obstructing any road, pavement, or thoroughfare at any time.
- 2.6 Representatives from the hackney carriage trade have reported the unauthorised use of taxi ranks by private hire drivers to pick-up and drop-off passengers.
- 2.7 Representatives from the private hire trade have reported a lack of areas in the City centre where drivers are able pick-up or drop-off passengers without contravening the Council's private hire driver licence conditions or committing an offence. They also report the issue of customers requesting to be picked up from taxi ranks. The purpose of a taxi rank is to be conveniently located and cause no obstruction to traffic, which is an ideal, albeit illegal, collection point for private hire passengers. The operators report that employees working in private hire booking offices may not know where taxi ranks are in the City, inadvertently creating a difficult situation for drivers booked to collect a passenger from a rank which is surrounded by double yellow lines.

3.0 Progress, options, discussion, etc.

- 3.1 This report seeks the approval of Licensing Committee to review the taxi rank provision and traffic regulation orders within the City centre. This review will require input from Highways, Legal, Parking Services, Planning and Regeneration. Consultation with the trade through the Council's working groups will inform the review. The impact on the road

network and visitor numbers caused by the Westside Development will also need to be considered.

- 3.2 The intended outcome of the review is sufficient ranking provision for hackney carriages and sufficient locations for private hire drivers to pick-up and drop-off passengers in the City centre. The findings of the review will inform a single TRO which covers the City centre. The necessary notifications will then be issued, with a consideration made of any valid objections and representations. The existing TROs will be revoked, as a single TRO will simplify future variations, enforcement and prosecutions for offences.

4.0 Financial implications

- 4.1 Highways have estimated that the cost to undertake a review of the TROs will be in the region of £6,000, covering both internal support of the process and external costs such as advertising. An equivalent budget has been set aside within Licensing to meet a recharge from Highways for this work.

[GE/25052018/G]

5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 A District Council may appoint stands for hackney carriages under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act. The power to appoint stands for hackney carriages includes the power to revoke such appointment and to alter any stand so appointed.

Before appointing new ranks or varying existing ranks, the Council must:

- Obtain permission for the highway authority or landowner
- Give notice to the Chief Constable of West Midlands Police
- Give notice to the public by advertisement in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district
- Take into consideration any objections or representations in respect of such proposal which may be made to them in writing within twenty-eight days of the first publication of such notice

Once the review is completed, the relevant permissions, notice and consultation requirements will be fulfilled.

[SH/25052018/C]

6.0 Equalities implications

- 6.1 Improving the provision of hackney carriage and private hire transportation will provide greater ease and accessibility to the City centre for those with mobility issues. An equalities impact assessment will be completed as part of the review.

7.0 Environmental implications

7.1 There are no environmental implications.

8.0 Human Resources implications

8.1 There are no Human Resources implications.

9.0 Corporate Landlord implications

9.1 Where the review finds that there is demand for a taxi rank or private hire vehicle pick-up or drop-off area not on the highway, permission will need to be obtained from the landowner. If this is the Council, permission will be required from Corporate Landlord.

10.0 Schedule of background papers

10.1 Report to Licensing Committee Wednesday, 27th September 2017 - Consultation Exercise on proposed amendments to Driver, Vehicle, Operator conditions – Appendix 2: Conditions Relating to The Issue of a Licence to Drive a Private Hire Vehicle