



LICENSING

Committee

Various Ward Relevance

25th January 2010

ADDITIONAL TAXI RANKS – EVESHAM ROAD

(Report of the Head of Environment)

1. Summary of Proposals

To consider proposals to provide additional and alternative permanent Hackney Carriage Ranks on Evesham Road, Headless Cross.

The area of Evesham Road is mostly residential but has a vibrant night time economy with a number of licensed premises which are very popular. The current provision of 3 rank spaces has proved to be inadequate and Hackney Carriages ranking up illegally has added to the existing congestion problems. The proposals within this report change the current arrangements adding more rank spaces in safer positions to help reduce those issues, which are enforceable by relevant agencies.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is asked to **RESOLVE** that

- 1) **the new and alternative taxi ranks, as detailed on the Map at appendix 1 of this report, following consultation with the Redditch Taxi Association, the West Mercia Police and Highways Department be approved and advertised as required under the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976:**
 - a) **re-siting of the rank on the pavement outside the White Hart on Evesham Road to on the road opposite the White Hart.**
 - b) **a new rank on Evesham Road outside Steps Night Club.**

subject to which,

2) **EITHER**

- a) **authority be delegated to the Director of Environment and Planning Services, in consultation with the Chair of the Licensing Committee, to finalise the Order where there are no objections;**

OR;

- b) **any objections received following public advertisement be reported back to the Licensing Committee for consideration.**

3. **Financial, Legal, Policy, Risk and Climate Change / Carbon Management Implications**

Financial

- 3.1 The cost of installing new ranks by the County Council Highways Department, to include any necessary signs, road markings and road works is:-
- 3.2 £1500 – This cost is an estimate by the County Council and has not been included in the current year's budget, however, in consultation with finance the money can be found from the existing budget.

Legal

- 3.3 Under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, the Borough Council may from time to time appoint stands (ranks) for Hackney Carriage for the whole or any part of a day in any highway in the district which is maintainable at the public expense and, with the consent of the owner, on any land in the district which does not form part of a highway so maintainable and may from time to time vary the number of Hackney Carriages permitted to be at each stand.
- 3.4 Before appointing any stand or varying the numbers to be at each stand, the Council is required to notify the Police for the areas in which the stands will be situated.
- 3.5 The Council is required to give public notice of the proposals by advertising in at least one local newspaper and take into consideration any objections or representations in respect of such proposals which may be made to them in writing within 28 days of the first publication of the notice.
- 3.6 A District Council may not appoint a stand:
 - a) so as unreasonably to prevent access to any premises;
 - b) so as to impeded the use of bus stops, or in such a position to interfere with access to any station or depot of any passenger road transport operations, except with the consent of those operators;

- c) on any highway except with the consent of the Highways Authority.
- 3.7 It is necessary for ranks to be signed and the road marked out accordingly.
Policy
- 3.8 See legal implications:
Risk
- 3.9 The current provision of rank space on Evesham Road is for three spaces. This rank is situated on a pavement close to a licensed premise "The White Hart". There is some doubt as to the legalities of this rank; the problem of encouragement by the Local Authorities of Hackney Carriages parking on the narrow pavement and issues around enforcement for both the Local Authority and West Mercia Police.
- 3.10 There is also major traffic congestion on Evesham Road especially during the evening with Hackney Carriages and privately owned vehicles parking both sides of the road. This new proposal will help legalise Hackney Carriages ranking up on Evesham Road and enable responsible authorities to enforce the new order, discourage Hackney Carriages parking on pavements and reduce the risk of accidents and road blockages.

Climate Change / Carbon Management

- 3.11 The regular maintenance of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire vehicle fleet will ensure that the vehicles are fit for purpose and will work towards keeping exhaust emissions to a minimum.

Report

4. Background

- 4.1 The Hackney Carriage rank currently sited on Evesham Road is on the pavement outside the licensed premises "The White Hart".
- 4.2 There is known severe congestion on Evesham Road; on one occasion an Ambulance could not get through because of residential parking and the number of Hackney Carriages that were ranked up.
- 4.3 Complaints have been received from residents of Evesham Road regarding the traffic problems and other related issues.

5. Key Issues

- 5.1 The licensed premises on Evesham Road have a thriving night time economy and the lack of rank spaces has been a problem and has helped to create congestion issues which are un-enforceable under the current rank arrangements.
- 5.2 A site visit was undertaken with the Leader of the Council, West Mercia Police and the Licensing Manager to discuss the issues and try to find a solution to the problems.
- 5.3 The allocation of a proper rank outside Steps night club and the moving of the rank off the pavement and onto the road opposite the White Hart where the bus stop is situated were felt to be a part solution to the problems.
- 5.4 The siting of the new ranks will be in opposite directions and at bus stops which are not used between the hours of 7pm and 7am.
- 5.5 The Highways Authority will cover the cost of any required amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's).
- 5.6 The Highways Authority have to apply to the Department for Transport for special authorisation to have bus/taxi & taxi/loading facilities sharing the same carriageway space, as these are non standard arrangements. This shouldn't pose a problem but the Highways Authority needs to do this before the start of formal consultation on the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO's) from their side.
- 5.7 When the Highways Authority have resolved this issue they will forward the relevant information to the Local Authority to enable the advertisement of the new ranks. This is expected to be early in this new year.
- 5.8 It is expected that there will be 6/7 rank spaces available outside steps night club and 3 spaces opposite the White Hart. This will be an increase of 6 to 7 spaces on the current arrangements.
- 5.9 West Mercia Police alongside Civil Parking Enforcement Officers and Licensing Officers can then enforce the appropriate legislation which in turn may help the heavily congested areas.
- 5.10 The Redditch Taxi Association, Highways Agency, West Mercia Traffic Police and West Mercia Police Officers (beat officer) have been consulted on this proposal between 1st October 2009 and 31st December 2009 and are in agreement with the suggestions.

6. Other Implications

- Asset Management - None
- Community Safety - Provision of the new ranks will improve the safety of residents and users of the licensed premises. Reducing to a minimum the walking distance of those enjoying the night time economy of Evesham Road whilst also having a reduction impact on the congestion within the area.
- Human Resources - None.
- Social Exclusion - Provision of the new ranks will improve the service to those using the licensed premises including local residents by reducing other related issues such as congestion, noise and litter etc; by getting visitors to the area away quickly.
- Environment / Sustainability - None.

7. Lessons Learnt

- 7.1 The area of Evesham Road has a vibrant night time economy and is densely populated. There are a number of licensed premises in the area which are very popular. The current provision of 3 rank spaces has proved to be inadequate for the area and has had an adverse impact; Hackney Carriages, when the rank is full are currently parking half on and half off the pavements, u – turning in the street and generally adding to the already heavily congested areas. At the closing time of these licensed premises the area becomes extremely busy and it is essential to get these visitors away from the area safely and as quickly as possible to help reduce any noise, litter and other related issues.
- 7.2 The provision of two ranks each facing opposite directions will cut down on u-turns; provide adequate transport for visitors leaving the area and help ease the congestion problems.

8. Background Papers

Details of previous rank allocation on Evesham Road.
Email from Redditch Taxi Association

9. Consultation

- 9.1 This report has been prepared in consultation with relevant Borough Council Officers.
- 9.2 Other consultees were Redditch Taxi Association; West Mercia Traffic Police, West Mercia local beat officers, the Leader of the Council and the Highways Agency.

10. Author of Report

The author of this report is Sue Garratt (Licensing Manager), who can be contacted on extension 3032 or (e-mail: sue.garratt@redditchbc.gov.uk) for more information.

11. Appendices

Appendix 1 – Map of Evesham Road showing proposed new ranks.