



Author/Lead Officer of Report: *John Priestley,
Senior Transport Planner*

Tel: 2734479

Report of: *Mr Tom Finnegan-Smith*
Report to: *Councillor Jack Scott*
Date of Decision: *12 October 2017*
Subject: *Taxi Rank Programme 2017/18:
Objections to Proposed New Ranks*

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Is this a Key Decision? If Yes, reason Key Decision:- | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| - Expenditure and/or savings over £500,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| - Affects 2 or more Wards | <input type="checkbox"/> | |
| Which Cabinet Member Portfolio does this relate to? <i>Infrastructure and Transport</i> | | |
| Which Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee does this relate to? <i>Culture, Economy and Sustainability</i> | | |
| Has an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been undertaken? | Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If YES, what EIA reference number has it been given? 1309 | | |
| Does the report contain confidential or exempt information? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If YES, give details as to whether the exemption applies to the full report / part of the report and/or appendices and complete below:- | | |
| <i>"The (report/appendix) is not for publication because it contains exempt information under Paragraph (insert relevant paragraph number) of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended)."</i> | | |

Purpose of Report:

It sets out officers' responses to objections and seeks a decision from the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure and Transport.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the reasons set out in this report outweigh any unresolved objections and that those taxi ranks approved by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability be implemented and the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The remaining proposed ranks are to be dropped from the TRO.

Introduce associated traffic signing and lining.

Inform the objectors accordingly.

Background Papers:

Examples of Traffic Regulation Order consultation letters (2)

Plans of proposed ranks (8)

Copy of press advertisement / on street notice (2)

| Lead Officer to complete:- | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1 | I have consulted the relevant departments in respect of any relevant implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist, and comments have been incorporated / additional forms completed / EIA completed, where required. | Finance: Julie Currey 27/07/17 |
| | | Legal: Richard Cannon 28/07/17 |
| | | Equalities: Annemarie Johnston 03/08/17 |
| <i>Legal, financial/commercial and equalities implications must be included within the report and the name of the officer consulted must be included above.</i> | | |
| 2 | EMT member who approved submission: | Edward Highfield 07/08/17 |
| 3 | Cabinet Member consulted: | Councillor Jack Scott 08/08/17 |
| 4 | I confirm that all necessary approval has been obtained in respect of the implications indicated on the Statutory and Council Policy Checklist and that the report has been approved for submission to the Decision Maker by the EMT member indicated at 2. In addition, any additional forms have been completed and signed off as required at 1. | |
| | Lead Officer Name: John Priestley | Job Title: Senior Transport Planner |
| | Date: 07 August 2017 | |

1. PROPOSALS

1.1 Transport Planning is in receipt of requests, from representatives of the taxi trade, for new taxi ranks at 28 locations in the city centre and suburbs. On 9 December 2016, Transport Planning emailed copies of this list to the representatives / taxi firms listed below:

Mr Aftab Ahmed, GMB Taxi Union
Mr Ibrar Hussain, GMB Taxi Union
Mr Hafeas Rehman, Sheffield Taxi Trade Association (STTA)
Mr Lee Ward, Alpha Taxis
Sheffield Eagle Taxi Association (SETA)

1.2 They were asked to select and forward a short list of their priority locations. They were informed that their choices would form the basis of the new taxi ranks programme for 2017/18.

1.3 As a result of this consultation, Transport Planning were able to commission Traffic Regulations to prepare a Traffic Regulation Order for new taxi ranks at the following eight locations:

1.3.1 Angel Street, east side, outside Castle House, an extension of the existing rank to accommodate three additional taxis, 24 hour operation

1.3.2 Arundel Gate, east side, loading bay outside the 02 Academy, a rank for seven taxis, operating 9:00pm - 4:00am

1.3.3 Boston Street, south side, outside Wilko, a rank for four taxis, operating 7:00pm - 3:00am

1.3.4 Ecclesall Road, northwest side, outside the Nursery Tavern (no. 276), an extension of the existing rank to accommodate two additional taxis, operating 6:30pm - 3:00am

1.3.5 Fitzwilliam Street, northeast side, outside nos. 83 - 87, a rank for seven taxis, operating 8:30pm - 8:00am

1.3.6 Mappin Street, east side, the three existing on-street pay and display parking bays, between West Street and Charlotte Lane, to be designated as a rank for three taxis, operating 8:30pm - 8:00am

1.3.7 West Street, south side, the loading bay outside Rockingham House (nos. 119 - 123), to be designated as a rank for four taxis, operating 8:30pm - 8:00am

1.3.8 West Street, south side, the bus lay-by outside Domino's Pizza, William Hill, Varsity Bar (nos. 167 - 173), to be designated as a rank for seven taxis, operating 12:15am - 5:00am

1.4 It should be noted that Mr Hussain (GMB Taxi Union) wanted a taxi rank in an alternative location on Boston Street: outside the entrance to 'The

Forge' student accommodation. This is not possible, however, because the carriageway width is insufficient to accommodate a taxi rank. The site outside Wilko was offered as an alternative.

- 1.5 Traffic Regulations officially advertised the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) on 23 June 2017 by means of an advertisement in the local press and notices on street. Letters and plans had already been delivered to affected frontagers on the 14th - 16th June.

2. HOW DOES THIS DECISION CONTRIBUTE?

- 2.1 The proposed taxi ranks will provide legitimate ranking facilities at locations where there is a high demand for taxis, primarily in the evening and at night. There is no impact on climate change because taxis are already plying for trade in, or close to, all of these areas. There is no economic impact. The situation will, however, be improved for pedestrians seeking to catch taxis at night as there will be more official ranks to which people can go with a reasonable chance of a taxi being available. On balance this proposal is considered to have a beneficial effect on the customer experience.

3. HAS THERE BEEN ANY CONSULTATION?

- 3.1 The Traffic Regulations Section has conducted the standard consultation that is legally required for a Traffic Regulation Order. An advertisement was placed in the press and notices were put up on street. A letter and appropriate plan of the proposals was delivered to frontagers in each area.
- 3.2 The proposals have received nine letters of objection relating to five of the proposed ranks. A full summary of the objections received and officer responses is given in the table at Appendix A below. No expressions of support have been received.
- 3.3 At a meeting between officers from Parking Services, Taxi Licensing and Transport Planning on 13 July 2017, officers from Taxi Licensing stated that, to their knowledge, the taxi rank for which there is the greatest need is the one on Arundel Gate. This is due to the large number of people in this area who want taxis between approximately 10:30pm and 4:00am. Transport Planning therefore wrote to SYPTE on 14 July 2017 and asked if they and the bus operators, would be prepared to drop their objections to the use of the loading bay outside the 02 Academy as a taxi rank if the start time was put back either to 10:30pm, or to 11:30pm, when there is a second surge in demand.
- 3.4 SYPTE replied on 1 August 2017, to say that a start time of 11:00 hours would be a compromise acceptable to the bus operators.

4. RISK ANALYSIS AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

4.1 Equality of Opportunity Implications

4.1.1 Overall there are no significant differential, positive or negative, equality impacts from introducing the new taxi ranks. The project should be positive for everyone by improving access to this transport option.

4.2 Financial and Commercial Implications

4.2.1 The total cost of implementing this scheme, including the commuted sum payment for ongoing maintenance costs, is to be funded from the allocated capital budget for 'Taxi Facilities' within the Local Transport Plan. In line with the Council's capital approval process the initial business case was approved by the Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities Board on 13th July 2016 and the CAF for the capital budget was endorsed by the Capital Programme Group (CPG) on 25th July 2016. The final business case, which had no changes to the costs, was then approved by the Thriving Neighbourhoods and Communities Board in September 2016. The contract award for Taxi Rank Improvements made in 2016/17 was approved at CPG on 21 November 2016 and will be subject to a separate ICMD Report. The contract award for these works in 2017/18 is expected to go to CPG in September 2017.

4.3 Legal Implications

4.3.1 The Council has the power under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) where it appears to the Council that it would be expedient to make it for, inter alia, avoiding danger to pedestrians and other road users or for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. Before the Council can make a TRO, it must consult with relevant bodies in accordance with the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. It must also publish notice of its intention in a local newspaper. Where objections are received, Regulation 13 places a duty on the Council to ensure that these objections are duly considered. These requirements have been complied with. Although there are outstanding objections from SYPTE, the TRO is not considered to have the effect of prohibiting or restricting the passage of public service vehicles along the roads included within the TRO such that a public inquiry must be held.

4.3.2 In making its decision the Council must consider the importance of facilitating the passage of public service vehicles and of securing the safety and convenience of persons using or desiring to use such vehicles. It must also be satisfied that the approved scheme will secure the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians). Provided the Council is so satisfied, it is acting lawfully and within its powers.

4.4 Other Implications

- 4.4.1 The measures will be delivered using existing staff resources. There are no other implications.

5. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The only alternative put forward was SYPTE'S suggestion that a taxi rank could be introduced on Snig Hill instead of Angel Street. Snig Hill is not, however, regarded as a viable alternative location due to it being too remote from the existing rank (approximately 80m walking distance) and therefore, from the area in which there is a requirement for taxis.
- 5.2 The only other alternative is to not introduce five of the eight proposed ranks (Angel Street, Arundel Gate, Boston Street, Mappin Street and West Street outside numbers 167 - 173). Given the repeated demands from the taxi operators for new ranks, plus the need for more ranks to be provided to meet the transport needs of the public, this is not considered to be an acceptable option.

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 The proposed measures will provide taxi ranking facilities at locations, requested by representatives of the taxi trade, where there is perceived to be a large customer base. This will, therefore, be of benefit to the public.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 Having considered the responses to the consultation it is recommended that decisions on the individual ranks be made as follows:
- 7.1.1 Angel Street. It is recommended that the objections received from SYPTE be overruled and that this rank be introduced.
- 7.1.2 Arundel Gate. Taking into consideration the objections from SYPTE and the O2 Academy and the officer observations, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability is recommended to decide, as they deem most appropriate, either to uphold or overrule the objections to this rank.
- 7.1.2.1 In consideration of the possible use of this loading bay as a bus stop *and* the potential for conflict with vehicles servicing the O2 Academy, versus the demand for taxis at this location, it is further recommended that if the Cabinet Member does decide to overrule the objections that the loading bay be designated as a taxi rank, but with revised operating times of 11:30pm - 4:00am. This is intended to reduce the potential for vehicle conflict, with buses and service vehicles, but to address the demand for taxis during the busiest time.

- 7.1.3 Boston Street. In consideration of the objections from Mr Bromley (Wilko), Mr Hussain (GMB Taxi Union) and Mr Najib (SETA), it is recommended that this proposed rank be abandoned.
- 7.1.4 Ecclesall Road. SYPTE have expressed reservations concerning the expansion of this rank, but have not formally objected to it. It is recommended, therefore, that the expansion of this rank be implemented.
- 7.1.5 Fitzwilliam Street. No objections have been received in respect of this proposed rank. It is recommended, therefore, that this rank be introduced.
- 7.1.6 Mappin Street. It is recommended that the objections from Mr Hambleton (Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind) and Mr Sephton (Sheffield City Centre Residents Action Group) be overruled and that this rank be introduced.
- 7.1.7 West Street outside nos. 119 - 123. No objections have been received in respect of this proposed rank. It is recommended, therefore, that this rank be introduced.
- 7.1.8 West Street outside nos. 167 - 173. Taking into consideration the objections from Primesite UK Ltd., and the officer observations, the Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability is recommended to decide, as they deem most appropriate, either to uphold or overrule the objections to this rank.
- 7.2 It is recommended that the reasons set out in this report outweigh any unresolved objections and that those taxi ranks approved by the Cabinet Member for Transport and Sustainability be implemented and the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. The remaining proposed ranks are to be dropped from the TRO.
- 7.3 Introduce associated traffic signing and lining.
- 7.4 Inform the objectors accordingly.

APPENDIX A

Objections Received and Officer Response

| Objections by Location | Number Received | Officer Response |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <p>Angel Street <i>Mr Nathan Broadhead, Bus Network and Performance Manager, SYPTE</i>, objected on the grounds that this rank is heavily abused, which regularly puts buses and taxis in conflict, resulting in congestion and delay to buses. SYPTE consider that the proposed expansion will exacerbate the abuse of the rank, in terms of over-ranking, with even more vehicles being parked opposite the bus stops and reducing visibility for road users and pedestrians crossing the road in a “high volume pedestrian area”.</p> <p>SYPTE offered the option of possibly using some of the unused bus stops on the west side of Snig Hill as a taxi rank.</p> | <p>1</p> | <p>It may be that over-ranking occurs due to the high demand for taxis in this location. Far from exacerbating the problems of over-ranking and bus / taxi conflict an enlargement of the rank, may, in fact, help to reduce them by providing much needed additional ranking space.</p> <p>It is not considered that increasing the capacity of this rank should be detrimental to pedestrian safety.</p> <p>Snig Hill is not regarded as a viable alternative location because it is too remote from the area in which there is a demand for taxis.</p> |
| <p>Arundel Gate <i>Mr Nathan Broadhead, SYPTE</i>, objected on the grounds that this loading bay is under consideration as a possible new bus stop location. This is due to the lack of bus stops on Arundel Gate relative to the number of potential passengers.</p> <p><i>Mr John Goodall, Building Manager, Lambert Smith Hampton, Pond Street Complex, Flat Street</i>, objected on the grounds that “the area is too busy to start with”</p> <p><i>Ms Holly Remzi, Operations Coordinator and Office Manager, Academy Music Group (AMG)</i> objected on the grounds that:</p> <p>Taxis ranking in the lay-by may obstruct lorries trying to load / unload equipment at the O2. This, in turn, could deter promoters from using this venue in the future.</p> <p>Customers exiting the O2 will congregate at the taxi rank, obstructing other customers who are still seeking to exit the venue. This would be exacerbated if customers from the Crucible and Lyceum Theatres are also queuing for taxis.</p> | <p>3</p> | <p>Officers from Taxi Licensing report that there is a particularly heavy demand for taxis in this location at night. Taxis rank in the southbound carriageway and also at the bus stops on the opposite side of the road. One consequence is that southbound traffic is constrained to use the northbound carriageway, with adverse implications for road safety.</p> <p>If the area is “too busy” this will be with people leaving the nearby entertainment venues, for whom an official taxi rank would be beneficial.</p> <p>The ready availability of taxis should help to clear customers away from the O2 more quickly. As taxis rank on the west side of Arundel Gate, outside the Crucible Theatre, there is no requirement for theatre customers to wait for taxis outside the O2 Academy.</p> <p>Taxis are already ranking outside the O2 Academy. The rank will not, therefore, change the situation in respect of an evacuation of the venue.</p> <p>The existence of even a small taxi rank will help to reduce congestion on Arundel</p> |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>In the event of an emergency occurring, a taxi rank could potentially impede an evacuation of the 02, particularly if taxi customers from the theatres were also there.</p> <p>As the rank can only accommodate seven taxis it will not reduce taxi congestion.</p> <p>Ms Remzi claims that the Police have identified the area outside the 02 as one that could be targeted by terrorists. Consequently, 02 staff, apparently, try to disperse departing customers as quickly as possible. AMG consider that a taxi rank will impede, rather than assist, that process.</p> | | <p>Gate.</p> <p>The 02 Academy does attract large numbers of customers for certain events. The 02 often do not, however, open their doors at the advertised time. This results in large numbers of customers queuing outside the venue, also providing a potential target for terrorists.</p> <p>There is a possible alternative use of this loading bay as a bus stop and taxis ranking may obstruct vehicles trying to load or unload equipment at the 02 Academy. There is, however, a heavy demand for taxis at this location which suggests that a rank would be beneficial. A possible compromise solution may be to move the start time of the taxi rank back from 9:00pm to 11:30pm.</p> |
| <p>Boston Street <i>Mr Bromley, Estates Manager, Wilko.</i> Mr Bromley objected on the grounds that customers, including people with disabilities, park on the footway in this area and that Wilko's delivery vehicles use this area to park and unload goods. They also consider that the rank would attract drunks and so increase problems with littering and vandalism.</p> <p><i>Mr Hussain (GMB Taxi Union) and Mr Najib (SETA)</i> both objected on the grounds that the rank is in the "wrong location" (because it is not outside The Forge) and again requested that the rank be positioned outside the entrance to The Forge.</p> | 3 | <p>As stated in paragraph 1.4 above, Mr Hussain wanted a rank in a location where it was not possible to provide one. Two Council officers met Mr Hussain on site but, during a long discussion, he continually refused to accept that it was not possible to provide a rank where he wanted it, neither would he agree to consider the other options put forward by officers.</p> <p>In consideration of the objections from Mr Bromley, Mr Hussain and Mr Najib, it is recommended that this proposed rank be abandoned.</p> |
| <p>Ecclesall Road This rank commences operation at 6:30pm when the bus lane finishes and finishes at 3:00am. SYPTTE withheld any objections <i>provided</i> that the City Council commits to enforcing the operational times of the taxi rank.</p> | | <p>Given Parking Service's limited staff resources, the Council can only commit to enforcing compliance with the operational times as far as those resources permit. If abuse of those times occurs and causes severe difficulties for the bus operators then the extension of this rank will be revoked.</p> |
| <p>Fitzwilliam Street No objections have been received in respect of this proposed rank.</p> | | |
| <p>Mappin Street <i>Mr Steven Hambleton, Sheffield Royal Society for the Blind,</i> based at 5 Mappin Street, stated</p> | 2 | <p>The Council's Civil Enforcement Officers work 7.00am - 9.00pm Monday to Saturday and 9:00am - 5:00pm on Sundays so it will be possible for them to</p> |

| | | |
|---|----------|---|
| <p>that they did not object to the proposed rank, but did not support it due to concerns that taxis would rank in the parking spaces during the day time, thereby reducing the availability of on-street parking and that motorists would be parked in the spaces after 8:30pm.</p> <p><i>Mr Peter Sephton, Sheffield City Centre Residents' Action Group</i>, objected on the grounds that the rank would create disturbance for city centre residents due to noise from vehicle engines, horns, drivers talking, customers talking, plus pollution when taxi drivers leave their diesel engines running when ranking.</p> <p><i>Mr Sephton</i> also complains that taxi drivers do not observe the rules controlling the use of ranks and that the enforcement and control of taxi ranks, by the City Council, is lax or non-existent and that until the situation improves, no new ranks should be considered.</p> | | <p>take enforcement action against motorists who park in the rank between 7.00am and 8.00am and between 8.30am and 9.00pm Monday to Saturday and against any taxi drivers who are ranking between 8:00am and 8:30pm.</p> <p>Choosing to live in a busy city centre, with a proliferation of bars, pubs, clubs and other entertainment venues, means that late night noise will be a fact of life. When people are wandering around seeking to find or flag down a taxi the problem becomes more persistent. The presence of designated taxi ranks, to which people can go with a reasonable chance of a taxi being available, helps to reduce this problem.</p> <p>Taxi drivers are aware that they <i>should</i> switch their engines off when parked but this is simply not enforceable.</p> <p>If the taxi rank on Mappin Street is introduced and taxi drivers misuse it then Parking Services and / or Taxi Licensing, as appropriate, will be tasked with taking enforcement action against them.</p> |
| <p>West Street, 119 - 123 No objections have been received in respect of this proposed rank.</p> | | |
| <p>West Street, 167 - 173 This rank is to operate 12:15am - 5:00am to avoid conflict with bus services. SYPTE withheld any objections <i>provided</i> that the City Council commits to enforcing the operational times of the taxi rank.</p> <p><i>Primesite UK Ltd.</i>, owners of the residential property at no. 165 West Street, which comprises 11 flats, objected on the grounds that residents will be disturbed by noise from taxi engines, the slamming of taxi doors, customers waiting in the area and pollution from taxi engines all of which will compromise residents' sleep and prevent them from opening windows for ventilation at night.</p> | <p>1</p> | <p>Given Parking Service's limited staff resources, the Council can only commit to enforcing compliance with the operational times as far as those resources permit. If abuse of those times occurs and causes severe difficulties for the bus operators then this rank will be revoked.</p> <p>Living in a city centre, with bars, pubs, etc means late night noise will be inevitable. When people are wandering around looking for a taxi the problem is more persistent. Having designated ranks helps to reduce this problem.</p> <p>It is accepted, nevertheless, that the objections raised by Primesite UK Ltd. have validity.</p> |