



## SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Individual Cabinet Member Decision

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**Report of:** Executive Director, Place

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**Date:** 20 March 2014

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**Subject:** Objections to the Provision of Taxi Ranks at Rockingham Street, Carver Street and Burgess Street

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**Author of Report:** Dick Skelton Ext. 34479

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### **Summary:**

To report the objections to the introduction of three experimental taxi ranks in the City Centre and set out the Council's response.

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### **Reasons for Recommendations:**

The benefits of retaining these ranks outweigh the objections received, most of which have not been sustained.

#### The Rockingham Street Rank

The lead petitioner was contacted after the rank had been in place for several months and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank. No response was received.

The individual objectors were also contacted and two responded. Their views about the rank were the complete opposite of each other, with one saying the situation was worse than anticipated and couldn't sleep due to the noise from the taxis and the other stating that the noise, since the rank was introduced, was no worse than before.

#### The Carver Street Rank

The lead petitioner was contacted after the rank had been in place for several months and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank. No response was received.

#### The Burgess Street Rank

A few months after the rank was put in place, the person who objected was contacted and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank. No response was received.

**Recommendations:**

Make permanent the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the three taxi ranks in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

Inform the objectors accordingly.

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**Background Papers:**      Appendix A: Consultation letter sent to frontagers  
                                 Appendix B: Burgess St Rank Plan  
                                 Appendix C: Carver St Rank Plan  
                                 Appendix C1: Carver St Petition  
                                 Appendix D: Rockingham St Rank Plan  
                                 Appendix D1: Rockingham Street Petition

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**Category of Report:**      OPEN

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## Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

<b>Financial Implications</b>
NO Cleared by: Matthew Bullock
<b>Legal Implications</b>
NO Cleared by: Deborah Eaton
<b>Equality of Opportunity Implications</b>
YES Cleared by: Ian Oldershaw
<b>Tackling Health Inequalities Implications</b>
NO
<b>Human rights Implications</b>
NO:
<b>Environmental and Sustainability implications</b>
NO
<b>Economic impact</b>
NO
<b>Community safety implications</b>
NO
<b>Human resources implications</b>
NO
<b>Property implications</b>
NO
<b>Area(s) affected</b>
Central Ward
<b>Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader</b>
Leigh Bramall
<b>Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in</b>
Culture, Economy and Sustainability
<b>Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council?</b>
NO
<b>Press release</b>
NO



# **OBJECTIONS TO THE PROVISION OF EXPERIMENTAL TAXI RANKS AT ROCKINGHAM STREET, CARVER STREET AND BURGESS STREET**

## **1.0 SUMMARY**

1.1 To report the objections to the introduction of three taxi ranks in the City Centre and set out the Council's response.

## **2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD?**

2.1 Not adequately providing for taxis would impact on the choices available to many Sheffield people, as well as affecting the disabled and some businesses.

2.2 Taxis are considered to be an important part of the City's public transport provision. They provide door to door access for those without a car, for shopping and other purposes, are often essential for disabled people, can form part of an integrated journey along with other forms of public and private transport and are a safe form of transport for car drivers who wish to socialise.

2.3 Sheffield's evening and late night economy could suffer if proper provision is not made for taxis.

## **3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY**

3.1 By reducing the need to use private vehicles, reducing the likelihood of drink driving or driving when tired and encouraging integration of taxis with public transport, improved taxi rank provision will contribute to the delivery of:

- the '*sustainable and safe transport*' objective of the Corporate Plan;
- Policy W of the Sheffield City Region Transport Strategy 2011-2026 (*to encourage safer road use and reduce casualties on our roads*);
- the Council's Vision For Excellent Transport In Sheffield (*a better environment; a culture where the car is not always the first choice*).

## **4.0 REPORT**

### **Background**

4.1 The City Centre Taxi Rank Review and The Wider Taxi Rank Review Strategy reports were presented to Cabinet on 21 September 2005 and 10 January 2007 respectively, 'as the basis for future improvements to taxi rank facilities'.

4.2 The reports' recommendations were based on consultations undertaken with:

- Sheffield City Council Taxi Licensing;
- Sheffield Taxi Trade Association;
- Sheffield Confederation of Private Hire Companies;
- Private Hire and Hackney Carriage Driver's Association of Sheffield;
- Sheffield City Council Highways Development Control;
- Sheffield City Council Parking Services;
- South Yorkshire Police Safer Neighbourhood Officers;
- South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive;
- Transport for All User Group.

4.3 The City Centre Review states:

**'Evening Attractions**

Sheffield has a growing number of restaurants, bars, nightclubs and theatres that are spread throughout the city centre.....Evening taxi facilities are needed close to these locations, particularly in respect of security and convenience. The ranks need to be operational at suitable times, particularly at the end of theatre shows and as pubs and clubs close at night.'

4.4 Local Transport Plans (LTP) 1, 2 and 3 all recognise the importance that taxis play in an integrated public transport system and therefore, the need to make adequate provision for them. The document "A Vision for Excellent Transport in Sheffield" also includes similar references with regard to taxis.

4.5 Since the review of the taxi strategy and proposals by Cabinet, new ranks have been introduced at many locations using Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO). These have only been introduced where there is clear demand.

**The Experimental Rank Proposals**

4.6 Three experimental ranks were proposed in Burgess Street, Carver Street and Rockingham Street. All three ranks were provided at the request of the taxi trade and their provision supported by the Police, night club managers and City Centre Management Team.

4.7 An example of the letter sent to all frontagers prior to installation of the ranks can be seen at Appendix A. One objection was made to the Burgess Street rank, one petition was received objecting to the Carver Street rank and there were seven individual objections and one petition received concerning the Rockingham Street rank. All the objections were received before the ranks were put in place.

**The Burgess Street Rank**

4.8 The scheme plan is shown at Appendix B. This rank has been provided to serve the Embrace night club and also as a 'feeder' for the Barkers Pool rank. The rank is for 20 taxis in total and replaces a smaller rank on the opposite side of the road, immediately outside Embrace. The first four spaces are 24 hour and the remaining 16 operate from 6.30pm

to 6am, some of which are dual use with a Pay and Display (P&D).

- 4.9 There was one objection from a resident of Pinstone Chambers prior to the rank being installed. Whilst the flats do not front onto Burgess Street, some have rear bedrooms overlooking a courtyard to the rear of buildings which do front onto Burgess Street. The substance of the objection, with regard to the taxi rank, related to more slamming of taxi doors, horns sounding and large numbers of late night clubbers waiting for taxis. The resident also wanted to know why residents of Pinstone Chambers had not been individually informed about the proposed rank and why the rank could not be provided further away from residents. The use of “nearby City Council parking lots, for example the one at the bottom of Charles Street which is not near any residences” was suggested.
- 4.10 Following delivery of the letter to frontagers the John Lewis store contacted the Council with some potential concerns, prior to the installation of the rank. Their concerns related to the impact the rank may have on littering around their premises and the potential abuse of their shop entrances by late night taxi customers.

#### **Officer Response**

- 4.11 It is a legal requirement to place Notices on street and advertise the intention to make an ETRO in the press. The Council goes further than this legal requirement and normally individually informs frontagers of any proposals through leaflets or letters. This ‘good practice’ was followed in this instance. Following the complaint, letters were also delivered to all residents of Pinstone Chambers. No further objections to the rank were received as a result – either at the time or since the rank was installed.
- 4.12 Although subjective, site visits before and after the rank was installed have confirmed that there appears to have been no increase in general disturbance, horns sounding, or any increase in the number of clubbers waiting for taxis. Indeed, now the new rank is in place it would appear that more people are managing to obtain a taxi ‘at the door’ leading to fewer people waiting or ‘walking off’ to flag a taxi down elsewhere. The situation appears no worse than was previously the case.
- 4.13 With regard to using remote ranks (e.g. Council car parks, etc.), this has been tried in the past and simply does not work. We have, for example, put ranks on side roads to West Street and Division Street and this proved wholly ineffective. People continued to flag taxis down on West and Division streets rather than walk to the ranks. This meant that the taxis waiting in the ranks got little custom and their use declined. The ranks in question were later removed as a result.
- 4.14 Several months after the installation of the rank the resident concerned was emailed asking if the situation was as bad as feared, worse or better. No response was received.
- 4.15 With regard to the concerns raised by the John Lewis store, their

Business Protection Team confirmed that "... the upside to the taxi rank means there are less 'undesirables' parking on Burgess St. There used to be a tendency for people to park on Burgess St and wait in their cars which did cause some trouble. We are happy with the taxi rank in its current location and see no reason to object. I don't believe we have seen a noticeable change in the presence of litter / food / vomit and instances of graffiti / vandalism around the premises since the taxi rank was put in place. We have no problems when opening or closing the shop that are created by the taxi rank...."

### **The Carver Street Rank**

- 4.16 The scheme plan is shown at Appendix C. This rank has been provided to serve several clubs and pubs on Carver Street and replaces a smaller rank that was located on the opposite side of the road. The rank is for 17 taxis and shares space with P&D bays. The time of operation of the rank is 6.30pm to 6.00am.
- 4.17 The Council received a petition of objection signed by 13 people. The petition is attached at Appendix C1.

### **Officer Response**

- 4.18 The Carver Street rank petition is non-specific with regard to particular problems and simply objects to the taxi rank ETRO. The petition comes from residents of the Cambridge Court flats on Carver Street. The flats are situated on the lower part of Carver Street, at its junction with Division Street.
- 4.19 The rank was made larger and placed on the opposite side of the road to the original rank at the request of taxi drivers, club managers and had particular support from the Police, who had safety concerns at how the street as a whole was operating.
- 4.20 The lead petitioner was contacted after the rank had been in place for several months asking if the situation was as bad as feared, better or the same. No reply was received.

### **The Rockingham Street Rank**

- 4.21 The scheme plan is shown at Appendix D. This rank has been provided to serve the SOYO night club. The rank is for 13 taxis in total and all of the rank is on double yellow lines. The rank operates from 6.30pm to 3.00am, although the originally proposed times were 6.30pm to 6.00am.
- 4.22 There were seven individual objections from Rockingham Street residents and a petition received, all prior to implementation of the rank. The petition was from residents of the Phoenix Court and Flockton Court flats (95 signatures), both of which front onto Rockingham Street and the front page of the petition is attached at Appendix D1. The petition objects to the ETRO on the grounds that "the street is subject to "Interim Planning Guidance on Night Time Uses" due to 245 flats and apartments adjacent or opposite the proposed ranks. The guidance



states “the amenity of existing and future residents should be particularly protected from undue noise and disturbance after a reasonable time of night.”

- 4.23 The substance of the individual objections, with regard to the taxi rank, are an expected increase in noise late at night, general disturbance and unsocial acts, increased difficulty in accessing private (flat) car parks, increased traffic congestion and a suggestion that the rank should be provided away from the club and local residents. Many also complained about SOYO being allowed to open until the later time of 2.30am (from 12.30am).

### **Officer Response**

- 4.24 Providing a taxi rank outside the premises should not increase the level of anti-social behaviour and may even reduce it, as people leaving the club should be removed from the immediate area more quickly than might otherwise be the case (as there are to be more taxis available, immediately at the club entrance). For the same reason the general amount of noise disturbance from people on the street may also be expected to decrease. Although subjective, site visits before and after the rank was installed have confirmed that there appears to have been no increase in general disturbance or noise, or unsocial acts (none of the latter were observed on site visits) and taxi representatives confirm that the rank is well used, particularly over the weekends. There have been no reports of difficulty accessing car parks since the rank has been installed.
- 4.25 The planning guidance referred to in the petition generally refers to uses that require planning permission. Rockingham Street is not in the designated 12.30am closing time zone, but it is in a designated housing area. The issue of noise emanating from SOYO and its customers would have been a consideration at the time the original permission was granted and the later submission for extended hours of use. The recognised need for a rank arose from these earlier decisions.
- 4.26 The issue about providing more ranks away from the venue and the reasons why this has not been found to work in practice is covered above.
- 4.27 The people who had written to the Council and the lead petitioner were contacted after the rank had been in place for several months asking if the situation was as anticipated, better or worse. Two responses were received. One from Flockton Court (flats opposite the rank) and who also signed the petition, stating ‘If I am honest the noise on Rockingham Street is worse. The taxis never switch off their engines and that's all I can hear all night.’ The second from a resident of Smithfield house (adjacent to the rank and the closest residential block to SOYO) which stated “In all honesty I haven't really been affected by the taxi rank. I don't like the fact that it's there, but I don't have any specific complaints.”
- 4.28 Given that, since the rank has been installed, only two people of those who initially objected have commented, it may perhaps be concluded

that the perceived problems have largely not materialised, even though the two comments received are diametrically opposed.

## **5.0 RELAVANT IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no legal or financial implications arising from this report. Each individual rank is intended to improve the overall accessibility and choice for all Sheffield residents. The equality impact is, therefore, considered to be positive. Improving accessibility and both road and personal safety, are contained in the overall priorities of the LTP. Schemes funded through these programmes are expected to address this whenever appropriate and are, therefore, judged not to materially impact on community safety.

## **6.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 6.1 The locations of the ranks were agreed with taxi representatives, club owners and the Police.
- 6.2 No alternative options were considered. Past experience of placing ranks remote from venues has simply not worked. Most people simply walk towards their next destination and flag a taxi down on the way. The drivers waiting in the remote rank lose trade and the rank becomes little used. Picking customers up at the venue may also help to reduce anti-social behaviour and noise remote from the venue, as there are fewer people walking the streets looking for a cab.

## **7.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 7.1 The benefits of retaining these ranks outweigh the objections received, most of which have not been sustained.

### **7.2 The Rockingham Street Rank**

The lead petitioner was contacted after the rank had been in place for several months and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank. No response was received.

The individual objectors were also contacted and two responded. Their views about the rank were the complete opposite of each other, with one saying the situation was worse than anticipated and couldn't sleep due to the noise from the taxis and the other stating that the noise, since the rank was introduced, was no worse than before.

### **7.3 The Carver Street Rank**

The lead petitioner was contacted after the rank had been in place for several months and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank. No response was received.

### **7.4 The Burgess Street Rank**

A few months after the rank was put in place, the person who objected

was contacted and views sought as to the practical impact of the rank.  
No response was received.

## **8.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

8.1 Make permanent the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the three taxi ranks in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984

8.2 Inform the objectors accordingly.

**Simon Green**  
**Executive Director, Place**

**3 March 2014**

## Appendix A

### Development Services

Director: L Sturch, MRTPI

Traffic Section: 2-10 Carbrook Hall Road, Sheffield S9 2DB

Email: [brian.hey@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:brian.hey@sheffield.gov.uk)

Fax No. (0114) 273 6182

Officer: Brian Hey

Tel: (0114) 273 6086

Date: 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012

The Occupier

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order City Centre Taxi Ranks – Burgess Street**

Please find attached documentation relating to a proposed Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) in the vicinity of your property.

The taxi trade association has asked the City Council to provide additional taxi rank spaces on Burgess Street to improve the service offered to the public.

The City Council has agreed to provide taxi rank spaces as requested but on an experimental basis. This will enable the taxi ranks to be introduced and an assessment made as to how well they operate, and also whether they cause problems for other road users and occupiers of adjacent properties, before a decision is made on whether to make them permanent or not.

The attached plan shows the proposals for Burgess Street which may remain in place for a period of up to 18 months from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 2012.

The City Council will be considering in due course whether the provisions of the ETRO should continue in force indefinitely. Any person wishing to object to making the proposals permanent may do so. To comply with the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 an objection must be in writing, must state the grounds of the objection and be sent to The Director of Development Services, at the address given above within a period of six months from the 29th November, 2012.

One of the reasons for using an ETRO is to try the proposals first, so that any comments made can be based on the actual situation as it relates to that location. Therefore, it is suggested that you may wish to wait until after the rank is introduced before making your views known (you will have until 28 May 2013 to get any comments to us). There is a chance that the rank will be put in place before Christmas, but it is more likely to be in the New Year.

If you have any queries regarding the taxi ranks please contact Richard Skelton, 0114 273 4479, or by email at [richard.skelton@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:richard.skelton@sheffield.gov.uk).

If you have any queries about the ETRO process please contact me on 0114 273086, or by email at [brian.hey@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:brian.hey@sheffield.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully

pp Brian Hey  
Senior Engineer  
Traffic Regulations Group

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