

Item 7 Hackney Carriage Ranks – Andover town centre

Report of the Head of Administration (Portfolio: Corporate)

Recommended:

- 1. That a temporary hackney carriage rank be created in Bridge Street, Andover whilst the existing rank is rendered inoperable by road works; and**
- 2. That a permanent evening's only hackney carriage rank for two vehicles is created at the junction of London Street and Winchester Street, Andover.**

SUMMARY:

- The Bridge Street highway enhancement scheme in Andover will see the creation of an evening only hackney carriage rank at the junction of London Street and Winchester Street.
- As part of this works the existing rank in Bridge Street needs to be temporarily relocated to an alternative location whilst works are undertaken. The creation of new ranks needs to be formally approved by this Committee.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Bridge Street enhancement scheme in Andover is currently underway and will see works undertaken to London Street, Bridge Street and Winchester Street. These works include the creation of an evening only (6pm to 8am) hackney carriage rank at the junction of London Street and Winchester Street to replace the existing unused rank at the northern end of London Street.
- 1.2 In addition, the existing rank in Bridge Street will be retained and the road resurfaced. Whilst these works are undertaken that rank will need to be temporarily relocated to the opposite side of Bridge Street so that there continues to be a rank available. The creation of ranks, even temporary ones, must be formally undertaken to comply with legislation.

2 Background

- 2.1 The existing night-time rank in London Street fell out of use some time ago and has not been utilised since. Its poor location has not helped. The need for a rank in this area of town has been highlighted previously as in the evenings the area is busy with persons leaving licensed premises many of whom need to get a taxi home. The creation of a new rank will greatly assist with the dispersal of crowds that tend to congregate in this area particularly late on Friday and Saturday evening.
- 2.2 The existing rank in Bridge Street remains the town's only main rank and so it is important that this facility is retained and refurbished. This will happen as part of the current enhancement scheme works thus necessitating the relocation of the existing rank to a temporary location whilst the works are undertaken.

3 Corporate Objectives and Priorities

- 3.1 Aside from the Council's statutory responsibilities, the licensing of hackney carriages relates to the SCHEME priority of 'creating stronger and safer communities'. Licensing of hackney carriages reduces the potential for illegal plying for hire by unlicensed vehicles and also licensed private hire vehicles. It provides transport for the public who may not have any safe alternative means of transport available.

4 Consultations/Communications

- 4.1 The works associated with the Bridge Street enhancement scheme have been the subject of full consultation exercise undertaken last year by officers of the Borough and County Councils with a variety of interested parties including town centre retailers, the Police, local members and the Test Valley Taxi Association.

5 Options

- 5.1 The only alternative option to that recommended in this report would be not to formally approve the creation of the new temporary and permanent ranks. This approach is not recommended as it gives the ranks no legal status which might create difficulties should the Council need to formally take action in relation to the ranks e.g. prosecuting the drivers of vehicles other than hackney carriages parking on the ranks.

6 Option Appraisal

- 6.1 For the reason outlined in paragraph 5.1 above, the formal creation of the ranks by means of the decision of this Committee is recommended. The Bridge Street rank has already been temporarily relocated and is not expected to move back to its original location until late January 2009. For the reason mentioned above it is nonetheless felt appropriate to retrospectively seek formal approval for the temporary relocation of this rank. The new rank at the southern end of London Street is not expected to become operational before April 2009.

7 Risk Management

- 7.1 An evaluation of the risks associated with the matters in this report indicate that further risk assessment is not needed because the changes/issues covered do not represent significant risks and have previously been considered by officers and Councillors involved in the enhancement scheme consultation.

8 Resource Implications

- 8.1 There are no direct resource implications as a result of this report. Any costs associated with the creation of the ranks have already been included in the budget for the enhancement scheme of which the Borough Council is a contributor.

9 Legal Implications

- 9.1 As described in paragraph 5.1 above, it is suggested that the formal creation of the ranks will give them a clear legal status.

10 Equality Issues

- 10.1 As the creation of these ranks does not constitute a change in policy a full Equalities Impact Assessment has not been undertaken. It is worth noting that national studies show that taxis are used significantly by some of the more vulnerable and disadvantaged members of the community who do not have access to their own private transport and for whom taxis provide an essential safe form of transport.

11 Other Issues

- 11.1 Community Safety – see paragraph 3.1 above.

- 11.2 Environmental Health/Sustainability Issues – the provision of hackney carriages may lead to slightly less reliance upon private motor vehicles, although the effects are more difficult to quantify.
- 11.3 Property Issues – none.
- 11.4 Wards/Communities Affected – Andover and the surrounding environs.

12 Conclusion

- 12.1 The Bridge Street enhancement scheme will see enhanced provision with the existing rank in Bridge Street being refurbished and a new night-time rank provided in London Street. The Bridge Street works require relocation of the existing rank and these changes should be formally approved by this Committee.

<u>Background Papers (Local Government Act 1972 Section 100D)</u>			
Correspondence regarding Bridge Street enhancement scheme held on file in Licensing Section.			
<u>Confidentiality</u>			
It is considered that this report does not contain exempt information within the meaning of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended, and can be made public.			
No of Annexes:	Nil		
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