

Executive Report

Ward(s) affected: Friary and St Nicolas

Report of Licensing Team Leader

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## **Revocation of Hackney Carriage Stand at Guildford Park Road**

### **Executive Summary**

The report seeks a decision from Executive on the proposed removal of the Hackney Carriage Stand (Taxi Rank) on Guildford Park Road, outside the rear entrance to Guildford Station following the completion of the required statutory consultation as part of the wider Sustainable Movement Corridor works.

### **Recommendation to Executive**

That, subject to consideration of the single objection received to the proposal, the Executive is asked to consider the approval of the revocation of the rank.

### Reason(s) for Recommendation:

This proposal is part of the wider Sustainable Movement Corridor, which identifies a series of improvements for all modes of transport between the rail station, the University, Hospital and the Research Park. At the southern end of the corridor is Guildford Park Road. The removal of the taxi rank is part of a series of improvements proposed along Guildford Park Road.

### **Is the report (or part of it) exempt from publication?**

No

### **1. Purpose of Report**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek Executive approval for removal of the current taxi rank on Guildford Park Road, outside Guildford Station following the completion of the statutory consultation process.

1.2 The removal will be achieved through the process prescribed under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 (“the Act”) to appoint or revoke ranks.

## 2. Strategic Priorities

2.1 The removal of the rank will contribute to our fundamental themes as follows:

- **Place making** – making travel in Guildford and across the Borough easier.

## 3. Background

3.1 Taxi ranks are an important part of the Nation’s transport network. Ranks are a common feature in many towns and cities and provide a location where licensed taxis can legally park to wait for a customer who wishes to use a taxi, rather than drive around town centre streets waiting to be hailed.

3.2 Similarly having well defined and managed rank locations improves public safety through allowing customers to easily obtain a licensed taxi service and reduces the risks associated with touting and inconvenience to customers searching the streets for a service.

3.3 A local authority can appoint areas on streets or private land as taxi ranks for either continual or part-time use under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The creation of a taxi rank is not a straightforward process; the local authority must obtain the permission of the Highways Authority, give notice to the Police, publish a public advertisement in a local paper and take into account any objections or representations received within 28 days of publication, before a rank is appointed.

3.4 The Act states that the same procedure must be followed to revoke or alter a rank.

3.5 Following a review of rank provision, in 2016 the Executive agreed to appoint approximately 30 new rank spaces across town to complement current provision at North Street (outside the Friary Centre and Marks and Spencer) and Guildford Park Road.

3.5 There are also ranks provided by the railway company, for which an additional fee is payable for the use of the rank, at:

- Guildford Railway Station (approx. 10 spaces)
- Guildford London Road Station (3 spaces)

3.6 As part of the planned Sustainable Movement Corridor there are a number of proposed improvements along Guildford Park Road. The specific proposal in terms of the taxi rank is to remove the rank so that the bus stop is relocated nearer to the station entrance.

3.7 It is a very constrained area with many vehicles, pedestrians, cycles and the total daily 2-way flows at about 11,000vpd. A video survey was carried out to clarify

the extent of the complex travel movements in the area that included buses stopping, taxis waiting and dropping off, parking durations and pedestrians crossing. In working up the scheme there have been extensive consultations with Surrey County Council highways and passenger transport.

- 3.8 The Table below summarises the drop off and pick up flows outside the railway station on Tuesday 4 and Wednesday 5 December 2018 over 18 hours on each day. It shows low volumes of taxis and many more private hire and cars carrying out the act. By contrast the volumes of bus passengers averaged per day over the same 2 days are much higher, with westbound flows surveyed at 503 passengers and eastbound 377. It is these eastbound passengers that are planned to have a stop closer to the rail station entrance.

Row Labels	Count of Drop Off Amount	Sum of Drop Off Amount2	Count of Pick Up Amount	Sum of Pick Up Amount2	Sum of (hh:mm:ss)
Car	185		203	81	07:25:00
LGV	6		7	2	00:47:07
Private Hire Taxi	15		18	10	01:13:39
Taxi	2		3		00:04:00
Bus	7		41		00:02:18
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>215</b>		<b>272</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>108</b>

Table 1: Guildford Park Road Drop Off & Pick Up Survey & Duration by Mode

#### 4. Consultations

- 4.1 The removal of the rank was considered by the Licensing Committee on 27 November 2019, with Licensing Committee recommending Executive approve the removal of the rank, subject to the necessary consultation process.
- 4.2 The process also requires the consent of the Highways Authority, in this case through the Guildford Joint Committee. Although the meeting of the Joint Committee on 18 March 2020 was cancelled due to the Coronavirus crisis, contingency arrangements were put in place by Surrey County Council to deal with the business on that agenda, and members of the Joint Committee were asked individually by email whether they had any objection to the proposal. The deadline for responding to this was 13 April 2020, after publication of the agenda for this meeting. The Executive will be advised if any objections were received.
- 4.3 Before ranks are adopted (or removed), legislation requires that the locations are subject to a period of consultation with the Police and the public. This is achieved by serving a notice on the Chief of Police and by publishing an advertisement in a locally distributed newspaper, allowing for a period of 28 days from the date of first publication for comments or objections to the proposals.
- 4.4 The required notice was served upon Surrey Police, and a public notice appeared in the Surrey Advertiser on 17 January 2020 and in the Council's reception. In addition, a site notice was erected and the wider taxi trade were informed of the proposal at December's TAG meeting and of the consultation via our Taxi newsletter.

- 4.5 One response to the consultation was received from a Mr Nabi, a Hackney Carriage driver on 13 February 2020 which stated:

*“Please can you consider my request to keep this rank by the back of the station. I use this rank quite a lot during peak hours as well as many other drivers. We get a lot of university students and customers from the research park and hospital coming to the rank by the back of the station. If there is no rank by this side, fares will increase and we may lose customers. There are limited spaces by the front of the station so keeping this rank accessible will be quite beneficial for drivers during peak hours when there is a lot of traffic around the station as having the rank will allow us to wait here and be on time for pick-ups. When renovations for the train station will begin, it will be a lot more difficult as there will be fewer spots available by the front of the station so having the rank at the back will allow more drivers to wait. There's also been an increase in taxi drivers in Guildford so we are already short on spaces at the rank. Not only will this rank be beneficial for the taxi drivers, it will also be beneficial to public travelling, as it will decrease fares and waiting times for customers.*

*Many Thanks,  
Mohammed Y Nabi  
HCD Plate 77”*

- 4.6 In respect of the comments raised in the objection, Officers would advise as follows:

The rank is not well used and there are planned improvements to travel across Guildford as part of the wider Sustainable Movement Corridor which will deliver potential benefit to a greater number of customers. Directional signage within the station directs customers wishing to get a taxi to the front of the station. Customers are still able to hail or book a taxi in advance from the back of the station, with Table 1 above showing a number of pick-ups from this area but limited immediate hires. Taxi rank provision was comprehensively reviewed in 2016 where approximately 30 new rank spaces were appointed. Since this time, the number of licensed vehicles has not increased, but in fact fallen.

## **5. Key Risks**

- 5.1 There are no key risks associated with this report.

## **6. Financial Implications**

- 6.1 The cost of removing a taxi rank includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of removing the road markings.
- 6.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows Guildford Borough Council to recover the costs of providing taxi ranks through licence fees charged to licence holders. However it has been agreed that Major Projects will cover the cost of advertising and implementation of these works.

## **7. Legal Implications**

7.1 A local authority can adopt areas on streets or private land as taxi ranks for either continual or part-time use under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The statutory process provides that the local authority must obtain the permission of the Highways Authority, give notice to the Police, publish a public advertisement in a local paper and consider any objections or representations received within 28 days of publication before a rank is appointed. The Council's Executive has the authority to appoint a rank after the necessary approvals and consultation.

7.2 Section 63(5) of the Act states that the power to appoint ranks includes the power to revoke such appointment and requires the same statutory process to be followed.

## **8. Human Resource Implications**

8.1 There are no Human Resource implications.

## **9. Equality and Diversity Implications**

9.1 Under the general equality duty as set out in the Equality Act 2010, public authorities are required to have due regard to the need to eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation as well as advancing equality of opportunity and fostering good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

9.2 The protected grounds covered by the equality duty are: age, disability, sex, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, and sexual orientation. The equality duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination.

9.3 The law requires that this duty to have due regard be demonstrated in decision making processes. Assessing the potential impact on equality of proposed changes to policies, procedures and practices is one of the key ways in which public authorities can demonstrate that they have had due regard to the aims of equality duty.

9.4 The proposed removal of the rank to accommodate a bus stop nearer to the station entrance will improve access to the Station for a greater number of members of the public, including those with protected characteristics.

## **10. Climate Change/Sustainability Implications**

10.1 The removal of the taxi rank is part of the Sustainable Movement Corridor works intended to improve environmentally friendly and public transport in Guildford.

## **11. Summary of Options**

11.1 Following the statutory consultation Executive may either:

- Decide to remove the rank, or
- Decide not to remove the rank

**12. Conclusion**

- 12.1 Removing the taxi rank and relocating the bus stop to outside the station would improve access to the Station for a greater number of members of the public. The current rank is not well used. The Licensing Committee support these proposals.

**13. Background Papers**

[Minutes of Licensing Committee Meeting held 27 November 2019](#)

**14. Appendices**

None