

### **Taxi Rank Provision in Maidstone – Consultation 11 August – 22 August 2014**

Maidstone Borough Council is currently reviewing the taxi rank provision within the town centre and we invited the views of various Community and Voluntary Organisations on the current and future provision of ranks. We asked if it was felt there were enough and are they in the right place?

We are also considering two specific proposals for;

- 1) Establishing permanent taxi rank bays in the lower High Street following the completion of the High Street redevelopment.
- 2) Swapping the current taxi rank outside of 'Lush' in the upper High Street/top of Gabriel's Hill with the disabled parking spaces outside of Natwest Bank on the opposite side of the road.

#### **How you can respond**

Specific templates are not provided, however a response to the following question would be useful:

☐ Do you agree with the proposals outlined above? If not, what alternatives would you suggest and why?

We welcome your response to these questions as part of our consultation period. The deadline for receiving responses is no later than 4.30pm on Friday 22 August 2014.

**Please return your responses than 4.30pm on Friday 22 August 2014 to:**

**'Taxi Rank Provision in Maidstone – Consultation'**

Licensing Team

Maidstone Borough Council

Maidstone House

King Street, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6JQ

Alternatively, responses can be submitted by email to; [licensing@maidstone.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@maidstone.gov.uk) **Taxi Rank Provision in Maidstone – Consultation 11 August – 22 August 2014**

The steps following the end of the consultation will be to:

- ☐ Gather responses to the consultation
- ☐ Moderate responses and produce a report of recommendations
- ☐ Make recommendations to the Head of Housing and Community Services
- ☐ Seek approval from Cabinet by December 2014

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Thank you for your considered response to this consultation.

Yours faithfully

Lorraine Neale

Senior Licensing Officer

Town centre PCSO	<p>I think the proposed site is a better position as the current site opposite the bus stops sometimes causes congestion.</p> <p>It would stop any car from them coming up the High Street.</p> <p>My only concern would be where would the Blue badge holders then go, as the parking at the top of Earl Street in the pedestrian area is an issue some days, but further disabled bays in Earl Street down from the Pedestrian area would help.</p>
Voluntary Action Maidstone	<p>1) Establishing permanent taxi rank bays in the lower High Street following the completion of the High Street redevelopment.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Suitable for the night time economy, however in the day time it will prevent the space being used for its designed purpose.</p> <p>Will the curbs be raised to allow ramped access into the taxis?</p> <p>2) Swapping the current taxi rank outside of 'Lush' in the upper High Street/top of Gabriel's Hill with the disabled parking spaces outside of Natwest Bank on the opposite side of the road.</p> <p>Response:</p> <p>Who will be paying for the alteration to the curb height? The taxi parking has been designed so the ramp from the taxi meets the 160mm curb. If located outside NatWest, the curb will need to be raised as it only has a 60mm curb, thus creating an accessible taxi in-accessible.</p> <p>Parking outside NatWest, wouldn't this impact upon activities in Jubilee Square?</p> <p>Would this be a like for like swop i.e. the Blue Badge parking transferring to the Lush side of the High Street? If not, this would be a major step backwards for disable people.</p>

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	<p>Will the number of Blue Badge parking spaces be retained in the town? Blue Badge parking is becoming more and more limited within the town.</p> <p>Has an Equality Impact Assessment been carried out on the number of parking spaces available to disabled drivers?</p>
Community Engagement Officer for Maidstone	<p>For your information, I have received feedback from a visually-impaired resident, who uses assistive technology, that the <i>Taxi Rank Provision Consultation August 2014</i> (pdf) document:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">“was a good, 100% readable PDF, I can extract the text and put it into an email...to circulate.”</p> <p>I just wanted to let you know this because it’s nice to be able to report/compliment something that works well and is accessible.</p>
Member of the Public	<p>1) Establishing permanent taxi rank bays in the lower High Street following the completion of the High Street redevelopment.</p> <p>As regards to item 1 above we are against this proposal as this will cause a log jamming of vehicles in this location same as we have in King Street at present time why oh why spread this chaos to other parts of the town centre.</p> <p>We strongly suggest that MBC reduce the amount of Taxi Licences issued to rein back the over capacity at present which is the main root cause of the congestion in the town centre specifically King Street.</p> <p>2) Swapping the current taxi rank outside of ‘Lush’ in the upper High Street/top of Gabriel’s Hill with the disabled parking spaces outside of Natwest</p> <p>Bank on the opposite side of the road.</p> <p>As to Item 2 above</p>



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	<p>We suggest to leave the parking bays outside Nat/West bank as they are well used by the Disabled Persons &amp; the Bank's delivery/collection service. (taxi's will be an eyesore in what is the towns Central Square).</p> <p>As to the Taxi stand outside Lush's at the top of Gabriels Hill This in our opinion be made available for the Police &amp; Emergency Vehicle as at present they park there vehicles all over the central concourse which was originally meant for the general public to use (in passing at a very great expense to the tax payers of Maidstone).</p>
Chief Inspector	OPTION 2 Please
Guide Dogs Mobility Team Maidstone	I have no specific comment regarding the proposed changes to the taxi ranks, other than a presence in the lower High Street would seem beneficial, particularly to those with limited mobility.
Member of the Public	<p>As a disabled driver, 99% of the time I come into the town centre I am unable to get parked close to where I need to be.</p> <p>Three spaces in Earl Street and four outside Natwest (but only if others park sensibly - all too often only three get parked there), the last ten occasions I've tried to shop in town the only spaces available were mill street or the narrow road opposite the mall main entrance. If I want to go to Earl street or week street, those are too far away, as I cannot do the hills.</p> <p>When you demolished the multi storey where somerfield used to be we lost yet more disabled spaces. If you want Maidstone to be disabled friendly then the taxi rank by lush AND the spaces at Natwest should be disabled spaces. Taxi ranks can be at the bottom of the high street and in king street, with a call point button system by queens monument.</p> <p>All too often I shop elsewhere - in places where I can get parked close enough to where I want to shop. Canterbury has whole car parks dedicated to disabled parking only, this encourages able bodied people to use public transport and allows the disabled population the ability to shop where we want rather than where we can park.</p>

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Member of the Public	<p>re: the relocation of the taxi rank</p> <p>It makes sense for the taxi rank to be in as central a location as possible – outside The Mall seems ideal. Moving to the edge of the town centre doesn't seem to improve its availability?</p> <p>Mind you, perhaps moving it to the lower High Street will stop the ambulances parking in disabled parking bays there. There are at least two parked in these bays at the lower High Street every morning from 10:30am as the crew eat in the Riviera café, quite unbelievable this is allowed to continue. I suspect this is for another department, perhaps you would forward this on for me.</p>
Town Centre Manager	<p>In response to the two specific proposals as outlined in your consultation document.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The plan to establish a permanent taxi rank in lower High street is supported by MTCM, albeit we feel it will take some time to become established. This forward thinking by MBC is commended.</li> <li>2. Sadly we cannot support the proposal to move the main “Lush” taxi rank to the Natwest Bank disabled bays, and feel somewhat bemused at the reasoning behind the proposal. The current situation appears to be working well and we fail to see any benefit from the proposed move.</li> </ol> <p>Our main concerns are two-fold. Firstly we imagine taxis would have to leave the “holding” area in King Street, drive down High Street past the proposed new site before executing a U-turn in High Street to return Up High Street to the proposed bay, and this manoeuvre could potentially have safety implications.</p> <p>Secondly we are concerned at the potential congestion in the Natwest Bank area on Saturday nights. This area is very close to Rose Yard (Source Bar) and Muggleton Inn, both of which are high pedestrian venues, and for this reason we feel that the managing of the late night taxi rank will be fraught with problems.</p> <p>I do hope these views can be included in your recommendations to the Head of Housing and Community Services.</p>

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Hackney Driver	At last someone is listening to the drivers only they know what's best move them now
Twitter comments about taxis	 <p>The screenshot shows a Twitter thread. The top tweet is from <b>Maidstone council</b> (@maidstonebc) dated Aug 16, stating: "We're consulting on provision of #taxi ranks in the town centre. If this affects you, have your say at <a href="http://bit.ly/11xtxQ1">bit.ly/11xtxQ1</a> #Maidstone". Below it is a reply from <b>deborah butler</b> (@IWILLNOTGOAWAY) dated 57m, replying to @maidstonebc: "Fill the High street with them along with buses as High street hasn't got much left - both Barclays Banks going now too". The tweet includes a timestamp of 2:05 PM - 22 Aug 2014 and options to expand, reply, retweet, favorite, and view more.</p>  <p>This section shows the continuation of the conversation. It features the same reply from <b>deborah butler</b> (@IWILLNOTGOAWAY) dated 57m, replying to @maidstonebc: "that huge paved area costing millions outside closed down Chicagos would do". It includes a timestamp of 2:05 PM - 22 Aug 2014 and options to view conversation, reply, retweet, favorite, and view more.</p>