

Licensing Committee

1st December 2016

Is the final decision on the recommendations in this report to be made at this meeting?

Yes

Taxi Rank Update Report

Final Decision-Maker	Licensing Committee
Lead Director or Head of Service	John Littlemore
Lead Officer and Report Author	Lorraine Neale
Classification	Non-exempt
Wards affected	All

This report makes the following recommendations to the final decision-maker:

1. That the Committee notes the current situation regarding taxi rank provision and instructs the Head of Housing & Community Services to provide a further report following decisions on hackney carriage numbers and once the regeneration of Maidstone East and other parts of the Town Centre are at an advance stage of planning.

This report relates to the following corporate priorities:

- Great Place

Timetable –

Meeting	Date
Policy and Resources Committee	N/A
Council	N/A
Other Committee	N/A

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 That Members are advised of the progress on the subject of taxi ranks. The purpose of which is to agree the provision of taxi ranks and their hours of operation, including the local and practical issues associated with their provision.

2. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Committee will recall a report in September 2015, which summarised the outcome of a consultation around the provision of taxi ranks that took place with Hackney carriage proprietors concluding on 16 May 2014 and which was initially reported on in November 2014. This followed consideration of reappointing and reviewing ranks to fulfil the best use and enable proof of appointment which is mainly historic.
- 2.2 There were two predominant suggestions that arose from this consultation which were.
 - 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.
- 2.3 A Further consultation took place where the two suggestions were specifically put along with a request for any further suggestions.

Those further consulted were:-

- 1) Disabled and Community Groups – Consultation Period 11 – 22/08/14.
- 2) Transport Integration stakeholders – Consultation Period 26/09 – 17/10/14.

From that consultation there were 13 responses the summary results were:-

	Yes	No	Maybe	Did not answer the question
Q1	6	2	1	4
Q2	5	4	1	3

- 2.4 The further consultation response shows that there may be a need to provide further taxi rank provision in the areas specified and to start the physical creation or variation of all taxi ranks/bus stops provision in the Borough as detailed in the table below which represents the Traffic

Regulations remain in place for the current designated taxi spaces that still exist and are regulated by Maidstone Borough Council.

Road	Side of Road	Description	Spaces	Times
1. King Street	North	From a point 10 metres east of its junction with Wyke Manor Road in an easterly direction for a distance of 40 metres	7	24 hours
2. High Street	South	From a point metres east of its junction with Gabriels Hill, in an easterly direction for a distance of 13 metres	2	24 hours
3. Barker Road	South	From a point 11 metres east of the municipal car park in an easterly direction for a distance of 12 metres	2	Mon-Sun 7pm- 7am
4. Barker Road	South	From a point 39 metres east of the municipal car park in an easterly direction for a distance of 20 metres	3	Mon-Sun 7pm- 7am
5. Pudding Lane	East	From a point 26 metres south-east of its junction with Earl Street in a south- easterly direction for a distance of 39 metres	7	Mon-Sun Midnight - 7am
6. St Faiths Street	South	From a point 122 metres east of the junction with Fairmeadow for a distance of 29 metres	5	Mon-Sun Midnight - 7am
7. Earl Street	North	From a point 119 metres east of its junction with Fairmeadow in an easterly direction for a distance of 10 metres in an easterly direction	2	24 hours
8. Earl Street	South	From a point 23 metres east of its easterly junction with Pudding lane for a distance of 9 metres in an easterly direction	2	24 hours
9. Earl Street	South	From a point 18 metres east of its junction with Fairmeadow for a distance of 31 metres in an easterly direction	5	Mon-Sun Midnight - 7am
10. Earl Street	South	From a point 56.5 metres east of its junction with Fairmeadow for a distance of 16 metres in an easterly direction	3	Mon-Sun Midnight - 7am

There is also Taxi Rank provision at the following train stations
Maidstone East - spaces for 9/10 vehicles
Maidstone West – understood to be 5 vehicles.

- 2.5 It was determined that we set up a working group made up of representatives of the trade and officers in order to progress matters. The Working Group once established would enable the practical processes to

be started in the physical creation or variation of taxi ranks/bus stops etc. Letters were sent on 7 May 2015 to the relevant parties inviting them to attend a meeting on 27 May 2015, there was one response received to attend and then subsequently withdrawn, the meeting was cancelled as there were no attendees.

- 2.6 A course of action was pursued to consider new provisions as suggested by consultation. However an e-mail subsequently received by the Head of Housing and Community Services from Kent Police on 10 August 2015 asked that the Council consider these locations for taxi ranks;-
The bottom of Gabriel's Hill
Pudding Lane
Near the Royal Star Arcade
Bottom of High Street
(the proposal of moving the Taxi rank from outside Lush to the opposite side of the road from Royal Star arcade was discussed as part of the consultation). They also suggested that there be one rank that extends from the High street to King Street and that it be trialled for a 3 month period to see if it could provide the desired effect.
- 2.7 MBC Parking Services Department advised that although KCC (through an agent) were involved in the town centre road layout during the High Street regeneration and made the original changes to the Traffic Regulation Orders, any further changes would be made by the relevant MBC Department to the traffic order making or variation process. KCC would not be able to consider any variation to the roads or rank provision without being provided with evidence of significant support from all stakeholders (including political support) through formal reporting and consultation.
- 2.8 Before Maidstone Borough Council could again appoint all taxi ranks/bus stops provision in the Borough as detailed in the table at 2.4 it would have to obtain confirmation of consent from South Eastern Railways for the ranks on non highway land at Maidstone East and West railway stations. South Eastern Railway responded to an approach on 17 June 2016 that "they are not in support of the taxi ranks at the stations in Maidstone becoming adopted".
- 2.9 An Unmet Demand Survey was due this year and was completed in September 2016 by Vector Transport Consultancy. The report highlights that of the 10 ranks that are recognised as being official, only 3 of them are utilised, with 66% of all hiring's being taken at the High Street Rank.
- 2.10 Given the response from South Eastern Railways and information that has arisen from the Unmet Demand Survey which is that only 3 taxi ranks are regularly utilised; it may not be advisable to continue with the re-adoption of all ranks at this time. Also there is to be some significant regeneration of the town around the area of Maidstone East Station which could have a significant effect on future taxi rank provision and a proposed consultation on options relating to Hackney Carriage numbers.

3. AVAILABLE OPTIONS

- 3.1 To continue with taxi rank provision as i currently appointed being aware that this is historic and continue to review possible changes to improve provision. Investigate rank provision after the regeneration at Maidstone East Station and decision on hackney Carriage numbers with a view to adopt ranks at the most suitable locations and removing those that are no longer used.
- 3.2 Continue to re appoint ranks to update records but be aware that this will cause issues for the station ranks, require traffic regulation Order work and will not take account of changes consulted on and possible future changes needed following regeneration.

4. PREFERRED OPTION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A completely new review of taxi rank provision in the Borough after the regeneration at Maidstone East Station and following consultation on Hackney Carriage numbers and appointment /removal of of ranks at the most suitable locations as appropriate to have a positive impact on the economic vitality of the town by providing efficient and effective siting of ranks for the use of members of the public where the demand is and provide clarity for the Authority and the trade.

5. CONSULTATION RESULTS AND PREVIOUS COMMITTEE FEEDBACK

- 5.1 N/A

6. NEXT STEPS: COMMUNICATION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE DECISION

- 6.1 N/A

7. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES AND IMPLICATIONS

Issue	Implications	Sign-off
Impact on Corporate Priorities		[Head of Service or

		Manager]
Risk Management		[Head of Service or Manager]
Financial		[Section 151 Officer & Finance Team]
Staffing		[Head of Service]
Legal	Historic appointment of ranks may cause difficulties with future evidence but changes made without proper consultation and for good reason could be challengeable.	[Legal Team]
Equality Impact Needs Assessment		[Policy & Information Manager]
Environmental/Sustainable Development		[Head of Service or Manager]
Community Safety		[Head of Service or Manager]
Human Rights Act		[Head of Service or Manager]
Procurement		[Head of Service & Section 151 Officer]
Asset Management		[Head of Service & Manager]

8. REPORT APPENDICES

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None