

**READING BOROUGH COUNCIL
REPORT BY EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF ECONOMIC GROWTH & NEIGHBOURHOOD
SERVICES**

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	16 JUNE 2021	AGENDA ITEM:	
TITLE:	READING STATION SOUTH-EAST TAXI RANKING: PROPOSALS FOR STATUTORY CONSULTATION		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	COUNCILLOR PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Garrard Street in Reading town centre is currently accommodating a feeder rank for taxis operating from the 'horse shoe' rank, located to the south-east of Reading Railway Station.

Construction works for the Station Hill area redevelopment have already impacted on this feeder rank and as the scale of this work increases, it is anticipated that the level of impact will increase. Furthermore, it is expected that the eventual development will not accommodate this feeder rank in the future, with a possible closure of Garrard Street at its junction with Station Road in the longer term.

1.2 This report seeks approval for officers to undertake a statutory consultation on a proposal that will accommodate this taxi ranking elsewhere, taking into account the significant 'competition' for kerbside space between town centre stakeholders.

1.3 Appendix 1 - Plans show the existing, and proposed, on-street restrictions.

2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.

2.2 That the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to undertake statutory consultations for the restrictions proposed in Appendix 1, in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

2.3 That subject to no objections received, the Assistant Director of Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to make the Traffic Regulation Order and scheme delivery planning will commence.

- 2.4 That any objection(s) received following the statutory advertisement be reported to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.5 That no public inquiry be held into the proposals.

3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 The provision of waiting/parking restrictions and associated criteria is specified within existing Traffic Management Policies and Standards.

4. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 The Station Hill area redevelopment has been gaining momentum, with works recently commencing to demolish Garrard Street car park and commence construction work on the site that spans Garrard Street.

This work has already impacted on the taxi feeder rank that utilises kerbside space along the street and temporary restrictions have been put in place to facilitate the continuation of this feeder facility in the short-term.

With forthcoming major construction works and the expected longer-term removal of Garrard Street as a restricted through-road, officers have been considering viable options to accommodate taxi feeder ranking elsewhere in the vicinity of the station horseshoe rank.

- 4.2 There is limited kerbside space available in the town centre and a significant number of town centre stakeholders that are important to accommodate, such as taxi and bus operators, space for businesses to load and unload goods and disabled parking spaces. With Reading railway station being one of the busiest outside of London, these challenges are amplified in the immediate vicinity.

Officers have sought to develop proposals that provide a good compromise between stakeholders and provide minimal impact in this challenging area.

- 4.3 The proposals in Appendix 1 seek to increase the size of the horseshoe rank and provide a two-stage feeder facility.

The first feeder would be located on Blagrove Street (east-west section), near to the junction with Station Road. This bay would feed the horseshoe rank on a line-of-sight basis.

The second feeder would be located on Valpy Street and would feed the aforementioned bay on Blagrove Street. This second feeder would have an indicator device to show when there is space on the Blagrove Street bay, in which there would be a number of parking sensors in the road surface.

- 4.4 Officers have had informal discussions with Reading Taxi Association and Reading Buses while developing these proposals and will continue to engage with them throughout the scheme development to ensure good communication, understanding and to minimise impact to their services.

- 4.5 Officers recommend that the Sub-Committee approves the undertaking of the statutory consultation that is necessary to promote alterations to these on-street restrictions.

Should any objections be received, Officers will report these to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee (expected to be September 2021) so that they may be considered before a decision is made on whether the proposals should be implemented.

5. CONTRIBUTION TO CORPORATE PRIORITIES

- 5.1 This proposal contributes to the Council's priorities, as set out below:

- Keeping Reading's environment clean, green and safe
- Ensuring the Council is fit for the future

6. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Council declared a Climate Emergency at its meeting on 26 February 2019 (Minute 48 refers).

- 6.2 The decisions and recommendations of this report are not expected to have any significant environmental implications.

7. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION

- 7.1 A 21-day public statutory consultation will be undertaken and all objections considered by the Sub-Committee before a decision will be made on whether to implement the proposed changes.

- 7.2 The consultation will be advertised with local notices on street and in the local printed newspaper, hosted on the Council's website (the 'Consultation Hub'). Contacts from the local bus operators and taxi associations will be directly contacted by officers to make them aware of the consultation commencing.

8. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The creation of a new Traffic Regulation Order requires advertisement and consultation, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 9.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;

- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

9.2 It is not considered that an Equality Impact Assessment is relevant as the proposals are not deemed to be discriminatory to persons with protected characteristics. A statutory consultation will be conducted, providing an opportunity for objections/support/concerns to be considered prior to a decision being made on whether to implement the proposals.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Funding will need to be identified prior to the implementation of any scheme. This proposal is intended to be resourced using Transport Capital funding, which will include developer contributions (e.g. Section 106 contributions) wherever possible.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 None.