

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE - 24 NOVEMBER 2016

Title:

DESIGNATION OF TAXI RANK – BRIDGE STREET, GODALMING

[Wards Affected: All Godalming Wards]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the designation of a new taxi rank (stand) for two vehicles in Bridge Street, Godalming.

How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Priorities:

The provision of an additional taxi rank in the town centre would help to promote the Council's corporate objectives of Customer Service and Community Wellbeing as it would offer an additional service to customers and greater accessibility of taxis in the town centre location. It would promote the protection of the public through providing an opportunity for taxis to be available on the rank during the evening and dispersing people from the High Street area at the end of licensing hours.

Financial Implications:

In addition to the cost of the necessary statutory notice in the press referred to in the report, there are resource implications for Waverley in relation to the cost of road marking and the provision of necessary signs in due course, all of which can be funded from the existing budget provision.

Legal Implications:

Section 63(1) of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1976 enables district councils to create taxi ranks in any highway in the district that are maintainable at the public expense, with the consent of the Highway Authority. Formal notice needs also to be given to the Chief of Surrey Police. This has been actioned.

Introduction

1. Local authorities are urged to keep under review the adequacy of taxi ranks in their areas, because the adequacy of supply of taxis is affected by sufficiency or otherwise of taxi ranks.
2. Generally the number of taxi vehicle licences issued by the Council is approximately 287, of which it is estimated that approximately 80 licensees operate in the Godalming area. Currently the Council has one taxi rank in Godalming comprising two stands in the Crown Court Car Park to the rear of the High Street. In addition there is a rank for 4 taxis at Godalming Railway Station, managed by South West Trains. Neither of these are considered to be a sufficient provision to offer a taxi service to customers shopping or socialising in the town centre.

3. Historically there have been repeated requests from hackney carriage drivers in the area for an additional taxi rank in the town centre vicinity, and most recently a petition was submitted from the Godalming hackney carriage drivers. The matter was referred to the Local Committee's Godalming, Milford and Witley Task Group who gave consideration to three possible locations for an additional rank. These were:-
 - i. outside the Jack Phillips Public House on the High Street
 - ii. parking spaces outside the Burys, opposite Bel and the Dragon;
 - iii. on BridgeStreet, Godalming adjacent to Waitrose Supermarket and opposite the Borough Hall.
4. The Task Group, with technical advice from the Senior Engineer at Surrey County Council and the Road Safety and Traffic Management Team of Surrey Police, assessed all three options and indicated support for the third option only. The Task Group would support the provision of two dedicated parking bays for taxis on the cobbled area to the right-hand side of Bridge Street, and a plan showing the location for the proposed new stands is attached as Annexe 1.
5. The Task Group was satisfied that there was already a wide pavement and that there would be benefit for older people, particularly since there was no other taxi provision nearby for customers of the Waitrose supermarket. It is also expected that an additional rank in this area would promote community safety by enabling people to leave the town centre more quickly at the end of licensing hours. It was, however, recommended that the taxi bays should be positioned in such a way that ease of loading/unloading for the Borough Hall users should not be impaired, and officers will take this into account when marking out the rank in due course.

Statutory Consultation

6. Waverley Borough Council is required to give notice to the Chief Officer of Police for the area in which the stand is situated and to also give notice of any proposal by advertisement in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district, and take into account any objections or representations in respect of the proposal. The consent of the highways authority has been received, with the requirement that the parking bays are situated adjacent to the carriageway and leave enough space for pedestrians to walk freely behind. There is currently a delineation marking on the block paviors which is where it is proposed the back of the rank ends.
7. Following the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee on 24 March 2016, officers have researched whether there are any additional legal procedures required to ensure the validity of the taxi rank for the purposes of road traffic enforcement in the future. The Road Traffic Regulation Order for the area covering the proposed taxi rank in front of Waitrose has been checked and at paragraph 11 there is an exemption for hackney carriages which are waiting wholly within a stand duly authorised under Section 63 LGMPA1976 and/or the byelaws. This means that a stand, provided it's legally created, would not contradict the no waiting order and hackney carriage drivers, provided they are positioned wholly within the stand, wouldn't be liable for tickets if waiting on the rank.

8. Officers have also discussed the proposals with Godalming Town Council. The Town Council has confirmed that they would not have any issues with the proposal, but have suggested that the start of the taxi rank is level with the main door to the Borough Hall, which would leave sufficient space behind the taxi rank for loading and unloading of equipment into the Borough Hall (staff canteen deliveries) and also for the Post Office van to park whilst servicing the post box.
9. The designation of a taxi rank is an Executive function and so approval will need to be sought from the Executive. In the event that members are minded to approve the designation of the new taxi rank, a public notice will be placed in the Surrey Advertiser with a consultation period of at least 28 days (this will span the Christmas period). Any representations or objections received will be brought back to the Committee for consideration, and for recommendations to be made to the Executive. If no objections are made or are made but subsequently withdrawn, the appointment of the taxi stand shall be effective on the date of expiry of the consultation period.

Timescale

10. Subject to approval from the Licensing and Regulatory Committee to progress with the procedure for designating the new taxi rank, the timescales are as follows:-

Licensing and Regulatory Committee	24 November 2016
Executive approval	29 November 2016
Public Notice placed in Surrey Advertiser	2 December 2016
28 day period of consultation, ending	6 January 2017
[If any representations received, taken to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee	26 January 2017]

Recommendation

That the Committee recommend to the Executive that approval be given to the designation of a new 2-vehicle taxi stand in Bridge Street, Godalming and officers be authorised to undertake the formal process for designating the stand accordingly.

Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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