

WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING AND REGULATORY COMMITTEE - 24 MARCH 2016

Title:

PROPOSED TAXI RANK - GODALMING

[Wards Affected: All Godalming Wards]

Summary and purpose:

The purpose of this report is to obtain approval from the Committee for the continued work into the designation of a new taxi rank comprising two stands 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:

There are resource implications for Waverley in relation to the cost of road marking and the provision of necessary signs in due course, 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.

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 Bridge Street, 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. Officers are currently researching 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 and support from the Committee is requested to facilitate this.
8. The designation of a taxi rank is an Executive function and so approval will need to be sought from the Executive in due course. Officers propose to bring a full report to your next meeting setting out the requirements for the designation of the taxi rank and seeking approval to recommend to the Executive, if minded to do so. 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 28 days. Any representations or objections received will be brought back to the Committee for consideration, and for recommendations 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.

Recommendation

It is recommended that the Licensing and Regulatory Committee supports the principle of a new taxi rank in Bridge Street, Godalming and asks officers to explore and progress the proposal further, with a view to a report being presented to the next meeting.

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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