

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Licensing Committee
DATE	19 January 2021
EXEMPT	No
CONFIDENTIAL	No
REPORT TITLE	Application for changes to the City Centre Taxi Ranks
REPORT NUMBER	COM/21/004
DIRECTOR	Steve Whyte
CHIEF OFFICER	Fraser Bell
REPORT AUTHOR	Ruth Milne
TERMS OF REFERENCE	3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To request the following changes to Taxi ranks following discussions with the taxi trade due to current access restrictions on city centre streets through the Spaces for People programme.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee: -

- 2.1 Approves the proposal from ACC Spaces for People Project for the suspension (a) and appointment (b) of taxi ranks as detailed below and as illustrated in Appendices A to G in terms of Section 19 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982.

(a) Full Time ranks - Suspension

- **Hadden Street:**
Westbound feeder rank 7 No. stances – as shown in Appendix A
- **Back Wynd:**
Southbound rank 15 No. stances – as shown in Appendix B

(b) Full Time ranks - Appointment

- **Exchange Street:**
Northbound 7 No. stances - as shown in Appendix C
- **Rosemount Viaduct:**
Eastbound 12 No. stances – as shown in Appendix D
- **Exchequer Row/Shiprow:**
Northbound 10 No. stances – as shown in Appendix E
- **Union Row**
Southbound 4 No. stances – as shown in Appendix F
- **Justice Mill Lane**

Westbound 3 No. stances – as shown in Appendix G;

- 2.2 Instructs the Chief Officer - Governance to undertake the formal consultation on the proposal to suspend and appoint taxi ranks as detailed in 2.1, in terms of Section 19 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 with;
- Persons or organisations appearing to be representative of taxi operators in the area, ie. the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group.
 - The Chief Constable, Police Scotland.
 - The Public, by way of notice of the proposal in an advertisement in at least one newspaper circulating in the area giving 28 days for any objections or representations.
 - Aberdeen City Council as the Roads Authority;
- 2.3 Instructs the Chief Officer - Governance, if no objections received through the statutory process, to implement the suspension and appointment of these taxi ranks with the associated number of spaces at the locations detailed in 2.1 allowing the appointments to operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; and
- 2.4 Instructs the Chief Officer - Governance to report back to a future meeting of the Licensing Committee on the outcome of formal consultation if objections are received through the statutory process.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 As a result of the existing and impending health risk (at that time) from the COVID-19 pandemic, the UK Government announced on 23 March 2020 that people must stay at home and some businesses had to close.
- 3.2 During this initial lockdown period, the Scottish Government's Spaces for People (SfP) programme was launched. On the 15 May 2020, 9 days after an Urgent Business Committee instruction, officers submitted an application to the SfP fund and on the 26 May 2020, 11 days after submitting the bid, Sustrans awarded the council a £1.76million grant to take forward the Spaces for People measures.
- 3.3 Between 27 May and the 11 June, the Spaces for People interventions in the city centre, and several city district centres were planned and designed. Installation of these interventions started on 12 June and they continue to be monitored, evaluated and adjusted where deemed necessary.
- 3.4 At the Urgent Business Committee, held on the 30 of June 2020, officers reported back to committee on the success in relation to the application for funding, the works completed to date and an outline of future works being considered.
- 3.5 To address the Scottish Government's instructions on travel and physical distancing the Aberdeen SfP programme's desired outcome was to allow the

public to move about safely and travel efficiently, on the public road network. In the case of the busier city/district centre locations, the overriding design rationale was to provide sufficient space for walking, queueing pedestrians and queueing bus patrons to allow the public to observe the physical distancing guidance.

- 3.6 Specifically, in the city centre the section of Union Street between Market Street and Bridge Street, and the busy Belmont Street Area, were closed to motor vehicles whilst still allowing access for pedestrians and cyclists, and with time limited access for loading operations outwith the busiest part of the day.
- 3.7 These restrictions were imposed to allow for pedestrians to observe 2m physical distancing whilst visiting the city centre and feel safe in doing so. Public transport, normally operating within these areas, had then to operate within the remaining street space. Reallocating road space for pedestrians then required alternative kerbside space to be found for vehicles not now permitted in that area, namely the buses, taxis and blue badge holders. Timed deliveries were still permitted. These restrictions have been reviewed by the City Growth and Resources Committee and remain in place.
- 3.8 With access to Back Wynd restricted, taxis cannot legally take access to the taxi rank, such that temporary replacement ranks have been developed. A number of consultations, some specific to the taxi trade, were undertaken offering the opportunity to comment on suggested alternative locations and to identify others. These were well advertised on social media and in the Press to seek to reach as wide an audience as possible. Consultation summary below:

Communication	To	From	Response Nos.
Citizen Space (CS) survey (Public)	20/05/2020	13/07/2020	190
Initial Citizen Space survey (Taxi Trade)	04/06/2020	02/07/2020	166
CS survey on installed measures (Public)	11/06/2020		1153
Commonplace survey (Public)	12/06/2020	13/07/2020	183

- 3.9 A dedicated SfP Taxi Working Group was created on 15 July, as a forum to facilitate dialogue with the taxi trade on locations for temporary ranks and other Spaces for People issues. This Group continues to meet on an ongoing basis approximately every 3 weeks.

Communication	To
City Centre measures start	12/06/2020
Email update issued to members of T&PHCG	17/06/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) set up	15/07/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) - Updates	31/07/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) - Updates	10/09/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) - Updates	08/10/2020
Letter to all drivers with rank change proposals	12/10/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) - Updates	29/10/2020
Taxi Working Group (TWG) - Updates	19/11/2020

- 3.10 In June a temporary rank was initially installed on Flourmill Lane. However, road safety issues, caused by the positioning of waiting taxis near and in its junction with Upperkirkgate, required that other alternative locations be found. Following consultation with SfP Taxi Working Group a rank has been established by Temporary Traffic Regulation Order on Rosemount Viaduct outside His Majesty's Theatre. Signage has been erected on Back Wynd and Upperkirkgate to direct the public to this new rank and also to the Hadden Street rank.
- 3.11 Through ongoing consultation with the SfP Taxi Working Group several additional temporary ranks have been proposed. Each suggested site has been fully considered, with the most viable emerging as Union Row, Justice Mill Lane and Exchequer Row/ Shiprow sites.
- 3.12 As additional loading restrictions are in place on Market Street to aid the flow for traffic bypassing the closure of Union Street, there has been a need to reallocate road space in this locality. For this reason, the Hadden Street rank has been reconfigured with the feeder rank moved to Exchange Street. This will allow the establishment of a loading bay on the south side of Hadden Street and aid loading for Market Street businesses.
- 3.13 The ranks listed in 2.1 of this report, with the exception of Exchequer Row/Shiprow, have road space preserved for their use i.e., signed and lined and with a Temporary Traffic Regulation Order (TTRO) in place to exclude other vehicles from parking within them. This report will consolidate them with the statutory licensing requirement for these ranks.
- 3.14 A Spaces for People update report was presented to City Growth and Resources Committee on 28 October 2020 which updated the Committee on the measures installed to date and recommended that a further report be submitted to the next Committee on 03 February 2021 to report on the ongoing monitoring of interventions.

3.15 The decisions taken at that meeting on the City Growth and Resources Committee on 28th October 2020 were as follows:

(a) Notes it is now seven months since COVID-19 was first detected in Scotland;

(b) Notes Council mobilised to deliver new and existing services for our communities and people particularly at-risk;

(c) Agrees COVID-19 threatens health and life, but also how we live our lives, and the Council working with the UK and Scottish Government is committed to suppressing the virus to the lowest possible level, and keeping it there, until the virus is no longer the threat it is now;

(d) Notes on the 25 May 2020 the Chief Planner and the Minister for Local Government, Housing and Planning, Kevin Stewart MSP wrote to local planning authorities encouraging them to take a; *“supportive, pragmatic and flexible approach to temporary developments and changes of use which would enable businesses to diversify or adjust the way they operate as the lockdown eases and many people can get back to work.”*;

(e) Notes 3.26 of the report *“It is therefore proposed that the programme of works will be further monitored over the coming months and a further report will be brought to the City Growth and Resources Committee on 3 February 2021 for the committee to make a decision on the how they wish the programme to proceed. In drafting the report, NHS Grampian’s Director of Public Health will be consulted in order to establish the level of transmission of the virus within the city, and the Local Police commander will be consulted in order to establish local levels of compliance with the public health measures in order to inform whether the existing measures are adequate”*;

(f) Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to monitor the remaining interventions and report to the next meeting of this committee at the earliest opportunity, to assess all modal data for the city centre, Rosemount and George Street and Torry and review the requirement for the measures to stay in place, including the possibility of opening Union Street to buses only in consultation with communities and the Disability Equity Partnership (DEP); and access for cars at the top end of Union Street and Market Street

(g) Agree to the removal of the temporary cycle lane at the Beach Esplanade, leaving the one-way system between Beach Boulevard and Wellington Street only, and continue to consult on options which could form part of a Beach Masterplan;

(h) Agree that individuals have a personal responsibility to adhere to Government guidance/legislation in order to protect themselves and other during Covid-19;

(i) Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to write to Sustrans/Transport Scotland to seek clarification on the date by which the funding must be spent, in the context that National Health Services (NHS), UK and Scottish Government advice suggests that the current pandemic conditions are likely to remain in place throughout the winter, and report back

to the 3 February 2021 City Growth and Resources Committee for direction on the removal of the interventions;

(j) Commends and Instruct the Chief Officer – Strategic Place Planning to work with Sustrans on Sustrans request to undertake a case study of the works undertaken in Aberdeen including the parklets and bus stops for the benefit of other local authorities throughout the UK; and

(k) Note that, as detailed in Appendices 4 and 5, further ongoing engagement with stakeholders has continued throughout which has led to some refinement of the original intervention proposals.

- 3.16 It is considered prudent to formally appoint the proposed ranks, alongside the ongoing monitoring works, to ensure the current and proposed temporary ranks are afforded the proper legal status.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 With reference to paragraph 5.2 below, any costs for signage or lining a rank at these sites have been included in the Spaces for People funding and there will be no additional cost to Aberdeen City Council as a result of establishing temporary taxi ranks. Removal cost on the dissolution of the project measures is also covered within this funding stream.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Appointment of New Taxi Ranks

- 5.1 Section 19 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 authorises a licensing authority to appoint, after consultation, stances for taxis for the whole or any part of a day in any road within their area or on any land owned by the authority or, with the consent of the owner, on any land owned by him. A licensing authority may also from time to time, after consultation, vary the number of taxis permitted to be at each stance and alter the position of such stances or revoke the appointment thereof.
- 5.2 Section 19 further allows a licensing authority to erect and illuminate signs and cause lines or marks to be made on roads, indicating the limits of taxi ranks.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium(M), High(H)	Mitigation
Financial	The costs of implementing the recommendations and/or the cost of the signs and lining a rank exceed the budget	L	Close monitoring of the costs committed to the work and the budget available.

	provision available.		The cost of the signs and lining a rank are mitigated by prior agreement.
Legal	As per paragraph 5 above.	L	Compliance with the statutory requirements
Employee	There is no risk to employees arising from the recommendations of this report.	L	N/A
Customer	The proposal for new/suspension of temporary Taxi ranks at the listed locations in the city centre, and due consultation, will consider the provision of ranks/taxis for the customers and citizens of Aberdeen	L	The proposal and consultation on these new temporary taxi ranks in the city centre are vital for the continued operation of the taxi trade in Aberdeen and will be of great value to the Citizens of Aberdeen to maintain taxi services in the City.
Environment	There is no risk to the environment arising from the recommendations of this report	L	The unprecedented situation surrounding the Covid-19 situation sees the need for the changes in the taxi rank location and stances and these will revert once the need for the temporary Spaces for People project is removed. There is no significant change in the overall number of ranks and spaces (and therefore taxi vehicles) and therefore no change to the vehicle emissions due to these changes.
Technology	There is no risk to technology arising from the recommendations of this report.	L	N/A
Reputational	As a licensing authority there would be a reputational risk to the Council if it failed to undertake its legal duty to carry out the	L	

	statutory procedure in section 19 of the Civic Government (Scotland) Act for consideration and consultation on any proposed new taxi rank		
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7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
	The proposals in this report have no direct impact on the LOIP.
Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	These temporary taxi ranks in the city centre will allow the taxi trade to continue to offer the service to residents and visitors to Aberdeen that was provided prior to the national Covid-19 lockdown. A formal consultation is required to be undertaken and the responses considered before a taxi rank can be appointed.
Partnerships and Alliances	Section 19 of The Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982 requires a formal consultation process to be undertaken before a new taxi rank can be appointed. This includes consulting with representatives of taxi licence holders in the City and members of the public or other interested bodies, including potential customers and users of taxis and any proposed rank, by way of an advertisement in the local press. The Licensing Authority is also required to consult with the Roads Authority and Police Scotland. The Licensing Authority require to consider all responses to the consultation before making a final decision, and therefore all relevant views have been sought and will be considered before any rank is appointed.

8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality and Human Rights Impact Assessment	Completed and not required
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. APPENDICES (if applicable)

9.1 Appendix Details

- Appendix A – Hadden Street
- Appendix B – Back Wynd
- Appendix C – Exchange Street
- Appendix D – Rosemount Viaduct
- Appendix E – Exchequer Row/ Shiprow
- Appendix F – Union Row
- Appendix G – Justice Mill Lane

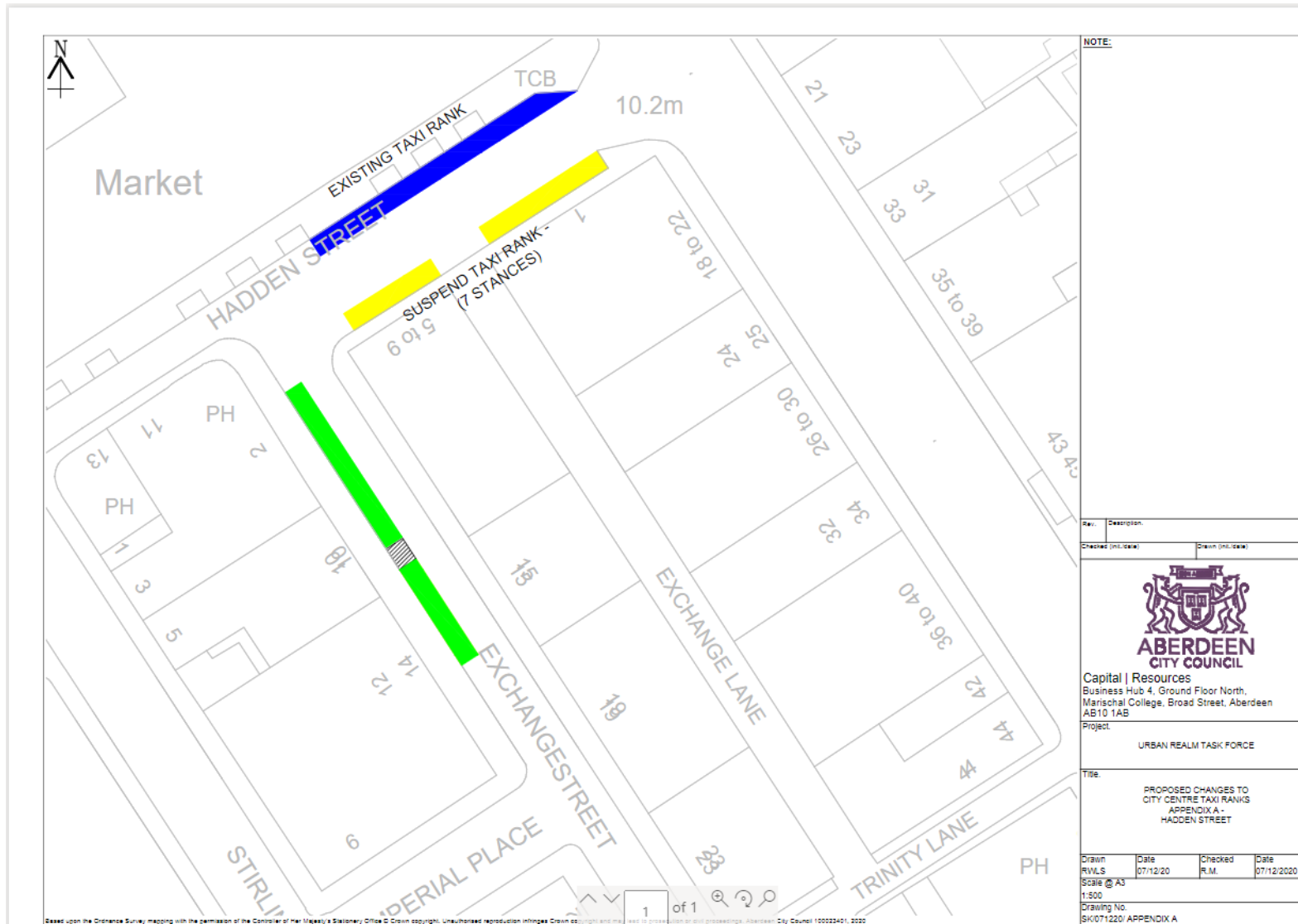
10. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

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APPENDIX A – HADDEN STREET (Suspension)



NOTE:

Rev.	Description
Checked (incl. date)	Drawn (incl. date)



ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL
 Capital | Resources
 Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North,
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Project:
 URBAN REALM TASK FORCE

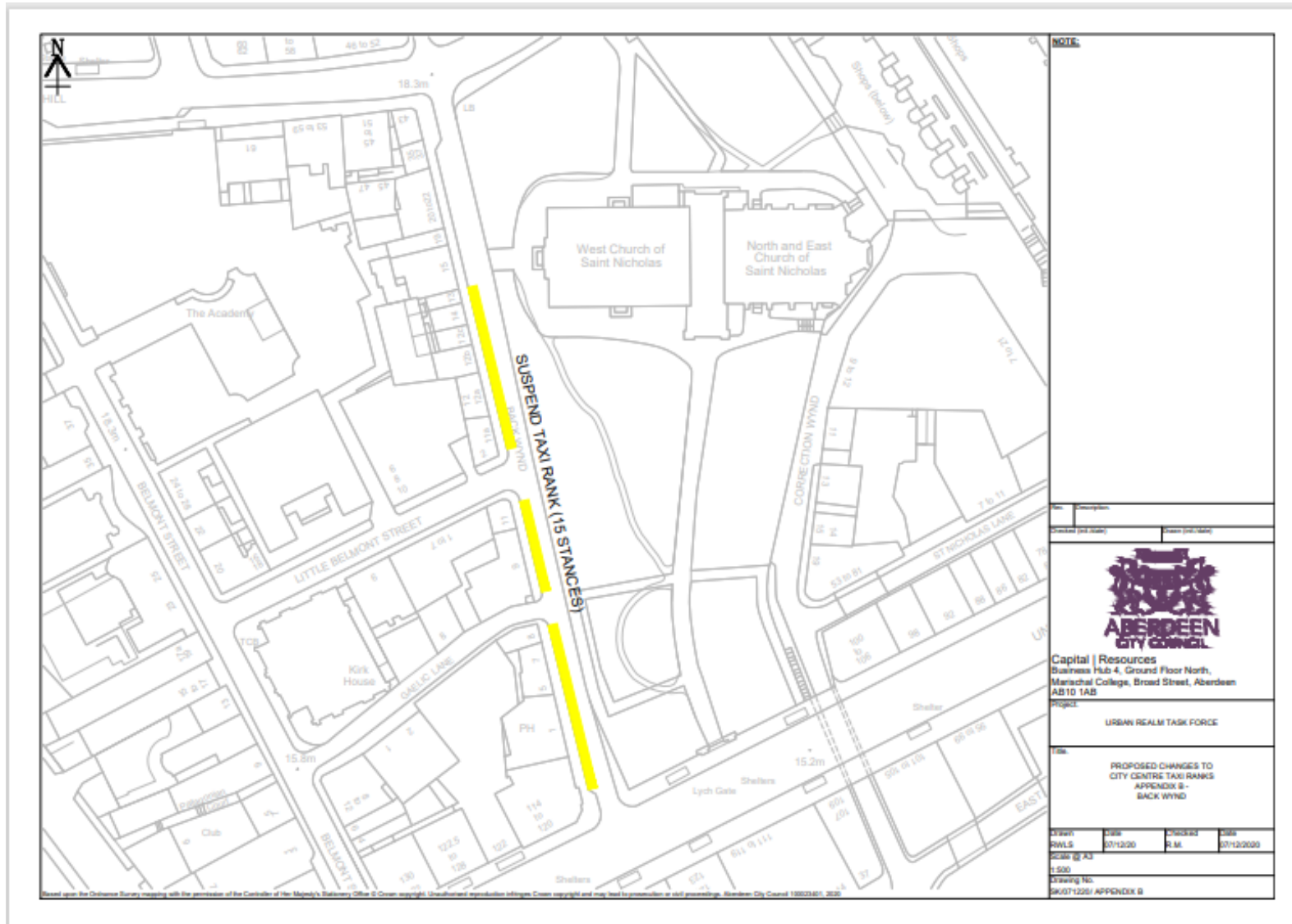
Title:
 PROPOSED CHANGES TO
 CITY CENTRE TAXI RANKS
 APPENDIX A -
 HADDEN STREET

Drawn	Date	Checked	Date
RVLS	07/12/20	R.M.	07/12/2020

Scale @ A3
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 Drawing No.
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APPENDIX B – BACK WYND (Suspension)



APPENDIX C – EXCHANGE STREET (Addition)

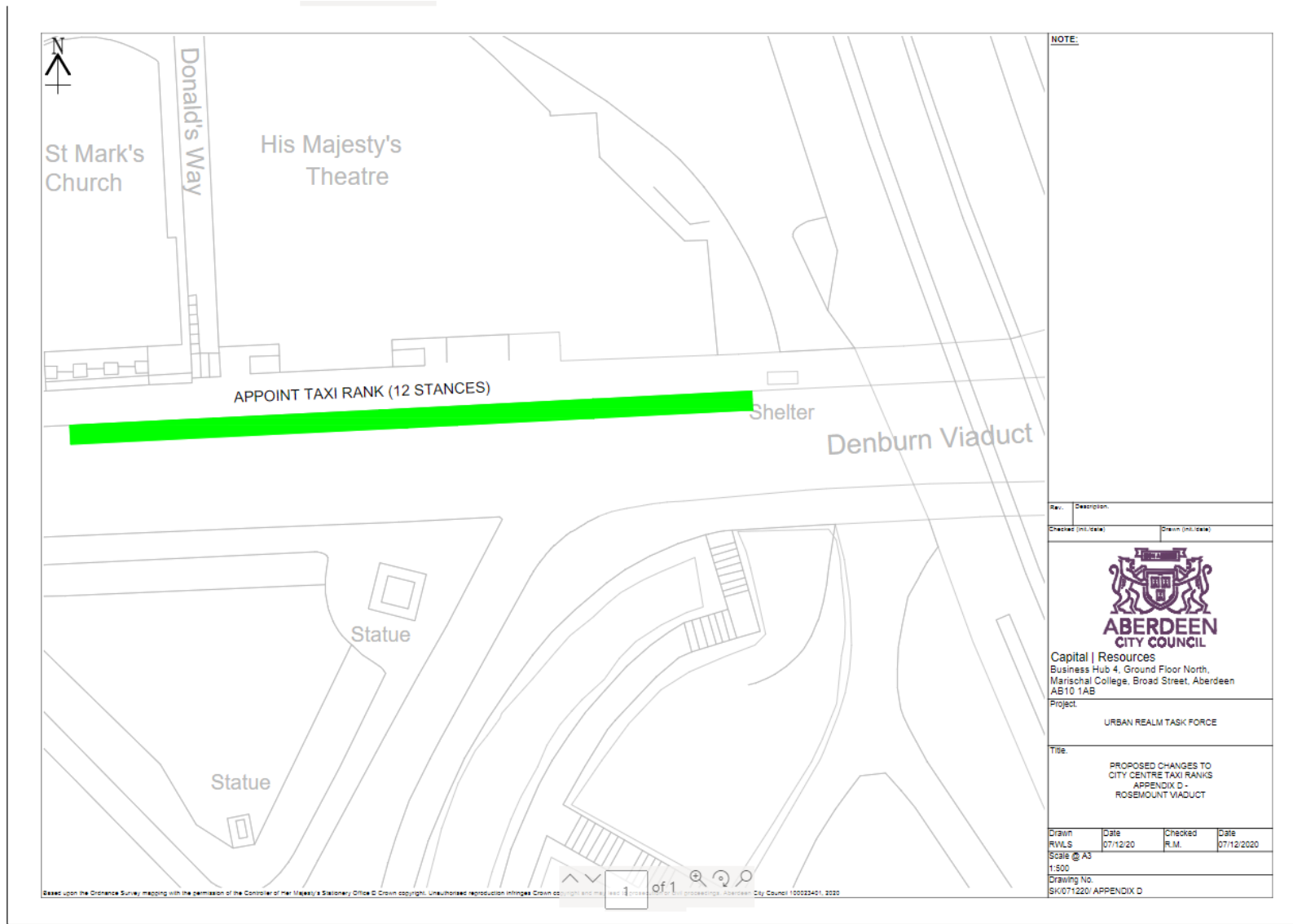


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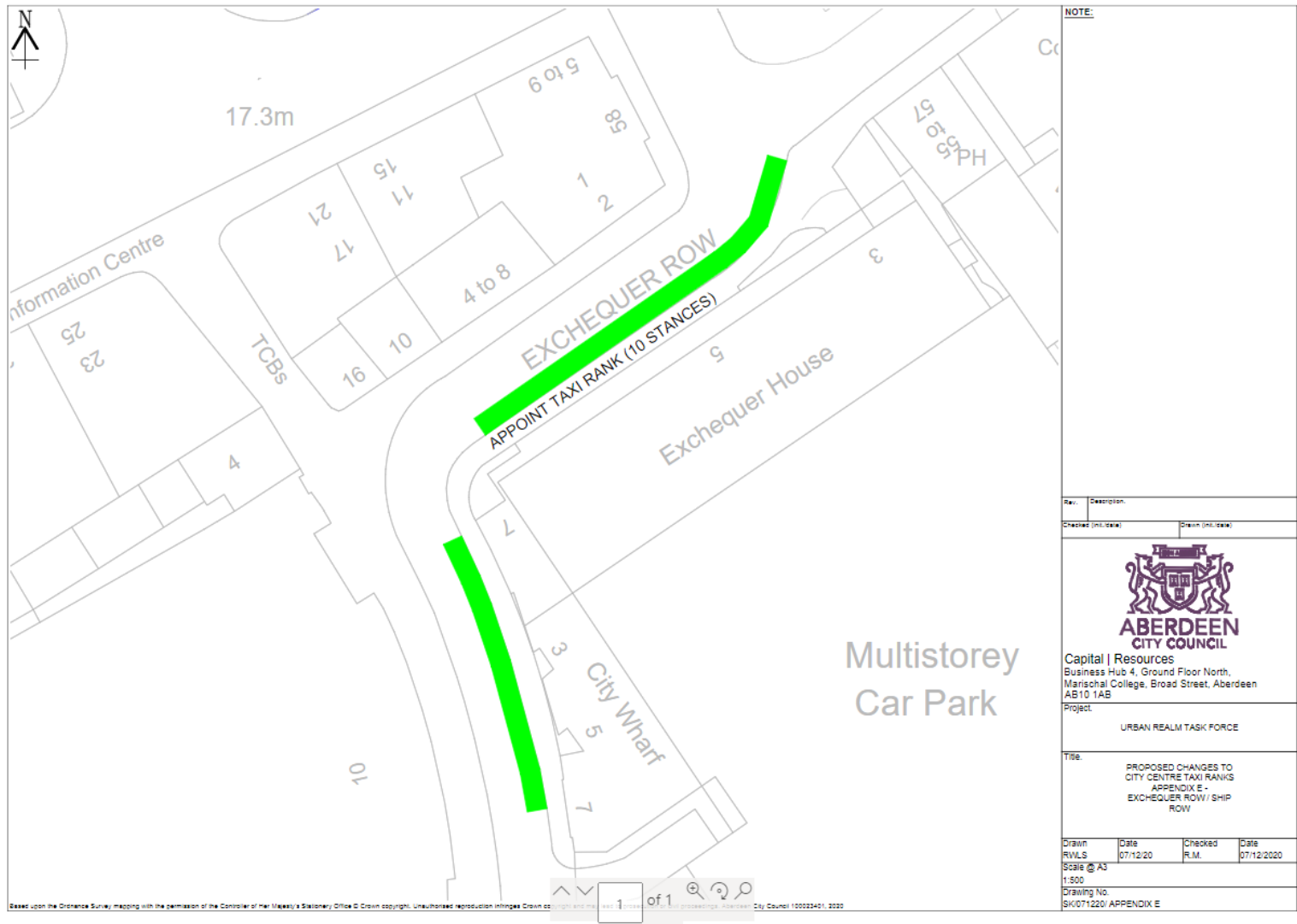
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 ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL Capital Resources Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB			
Project: URBAN REALM TASK FORCE			
Title: PROPOSED CHANGES TO CITY CENTRE TAXI RANKS APPENDIX C - EXCHANGE STREET			
Drawn RVLS	Date 07/12/20	Checked R.M.	Date 07/12/2020
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APPENDIX D – ROSEMOUNT VIADUCT (Addition)



APPENDIX E – EXCHEQUER ROW/SHIPROW (Addition)

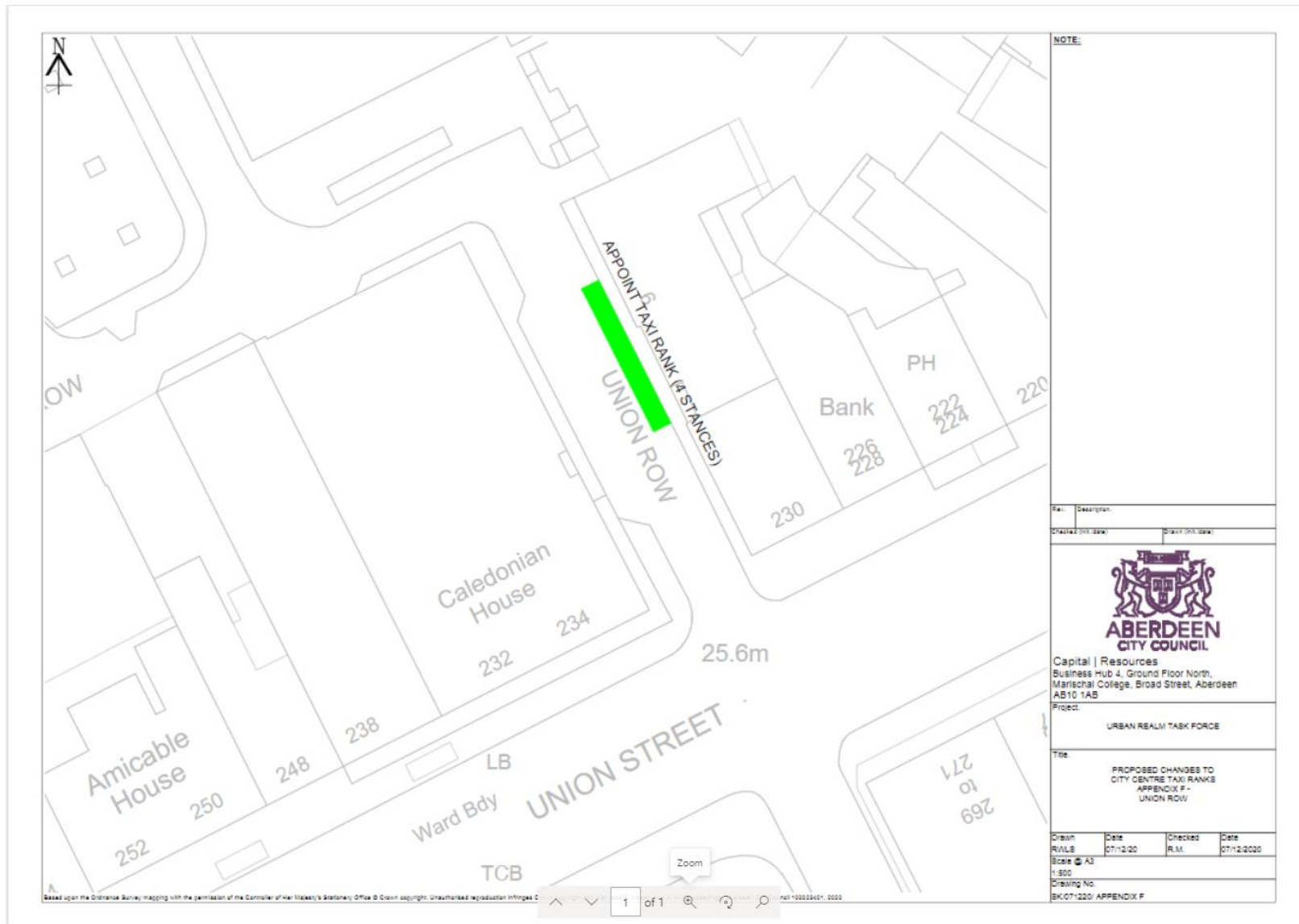


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 ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL Capital Resources Business Hub 4, Ground Floor North, Marischal College, Broad Street, Aberdeen AB10 1AB Project: URBAN REALM TASK FORCE Title: PROPOSED CHANGES TO CITY CENTRE TAXI RANKS APPENDIX E - EXCHEQUER ROW / SHIP ROW			
Drawn	Date	Checked	Date
R.V.L.S	07/12/20	R.M.	07/12/2020
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APPENDIX F –UNION ROW (Addition)

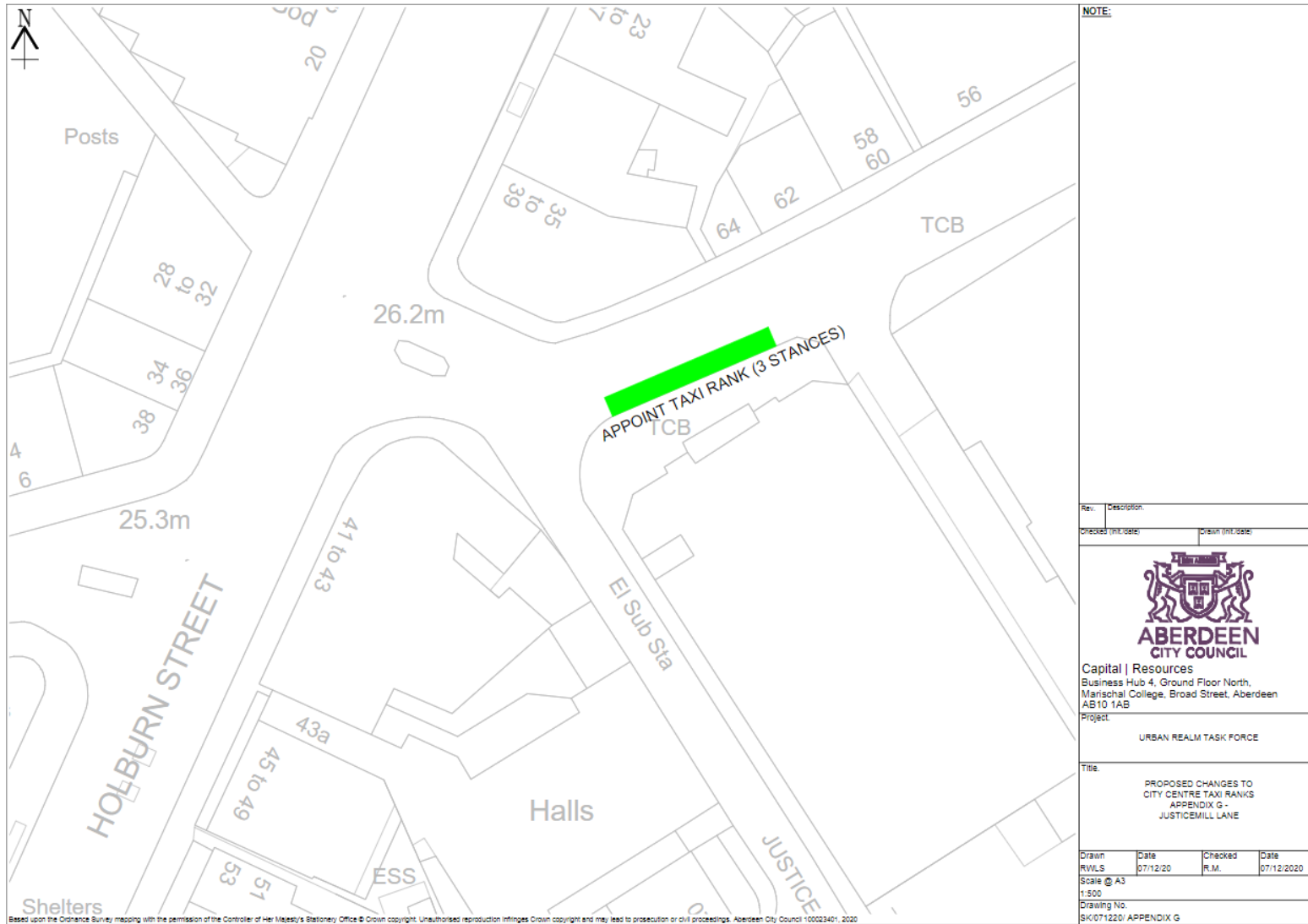


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Project: URBAN REALM TASK FORCE			
Title: PROPOSED CHANGES TO CITY CENTRE TAXI RANKS APPENDIX F - UNION ROW			
Drawn	Date	Checked	Date
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APPENDIX G – JUSTICE MILL LANE (Addition)



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 PROPOSED CHANGES TO
 CITY CENTRE TAXI RANKS
 APPENDIX G -
 JUSTICEMILL LANE

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