

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE Licensing

DATE 2nd December 2009

DIRECTOR Gordon McIntosh

TITLE OF REPORT Review of Existing Taxi Ranks in City Centre

REPORT NUMBER: EPI/09/126

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform members of the current physical condition of the existing taxi ranks within the City Centre area of Aberdeen, the works required to improve them, and of the details pertaining to carrying out a full taxi rank demand survey which would gather information relating to demand and usage of the existing taxi ranks.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that members agree to:

- a) Instruct officers to carry out improvements identified in Appendix A to existing taxi rank locations when funding becomes available.
- b) Instruct officers to carry out consultations with taxi representatives and the Taxi/Private Hire Car Consultation Group regarding locations, taxi rank usage and improvements to existing and proposed taxi ranks annually.
- c) Instruct officers to identify the detailed costs for a full taxi rank demand survey and undertake this in financial year 2010/2011 should funding become available.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications this financial year as road marking improvements, highlighted in bold in Appendix A, would be funded from the existing 2009/10 road maintenance budget at an estimated cost of £500. The installation of dropped kerbs, highlighted in bold in Appendix A, would be funded from the existing 2009/10 cycling, walking and safer streets budget at an estimated cost of £5,000.

Discussions with taxi representatives would be carried out using existing resources and would have no detrimental effects on capital or revenue budgets within financial year 2009/10 or future years. However any works generated from these discussions could have financial implications on existing and future budgets.

No existing budget, within financial year 2009/10, has been identified to contribute to the undertaking of a full taxi rank demand survey. The estimated cost to carry out a taxi rank demand survey is approximately £25,000. The estimated cost has been calculated from the previous taxi rank demand survey completed in 2004, which cost £21,500, with an additional fifteen percent included for inflation and cost increases.

4. SERVICE & COMMUNITY IMPACT

The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a 'sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all'.

Within the Single Outcome Agreement 2009 (SOA 09) 14 of the 15 national indicators are directly or indirectly linked to the Local and Regional Transport Strategies (LTS & RTS) both of which recognise the important contribution to the transport network that taxis and private hire cars can make.

The project will contribute to the delivery of the transport aims of Vibrant, Dynamic and Forward Looking by continuing to invest in proper maintenance of roads, pavements and street lights.

The LTS, which recognises that taxis provide a form of public transport 24 hours a day, anywhere in the City to everyone, has been subject to an Equalities & Human Rights Impact Assessment therefore no further assessment has been carried out.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6. REPORT

Background

On 2 September 2009 the Licensing Committee resolved that a report be provided on a proposed review of all taxi ranks in the City. The Licensing Committee Convenor expressed an interest that an annual review of taxi ranks be investigated and instigated.

This report has been circulated and discussed at the 16 November 2009 Taxi/Private Hire Car Consultation Group meeting. The group had no comments to make on the report.

Existing Taxi Ranks Review

A survey of all existing taxi ranks within the City Centre has recently been completed. The survey focused on the road markings, regulatory signing,

information signing and street lighting of the existing taxi ranks with the findings detailed in the table in Appendix A.

The survey revealed eight of the City Centre taxi ranks require road markings relined as the existing road markings are weathered and are not clearly visible, and footway dropped kerbs require to be installed to make them accessible for all on Justice Mill Lane, Little Chapel Street, Frederick Street, Exchequer Row, Union Row, Diamond Street, Hadden Street and Dee Street. It is proposed that for the first seven of these ranks road markings and footway dropped kerbs would not be relined or installed until the discussions with taxi representatives and the demand survey had been carried out to determine whether there is a requirement to reline these ranks or whether the ranks should be removed.

Dee Street taxi rank road markings and footway dropped kerbs will be installed this financial year to improve visibility of road markings and improve access for all at this well used taxi rank. It should be noted that Hadden Street taxi rank footway dropped kerbs will be installed during the Green Townscape Heritage Initiative Streetscape Works.

Regulatory signing for all City Centre taxi ranks was inspected and complies with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 manual. It was noted that a number of the existing regulatory signage were showing initial signs of weathering and may require renewal in forthcoming years.

Pedestrian information signage directing pedestrians to taxi ranks has been installed throughout the City Centre.

Street lighting was inspected at all City Centre taxi ranks. A number of street lights, which covered the taxi ranks, were not operational on the evenings of the surveys and the information has been passed to Aberdeen City Council's Street Lighting Team to rectify. All taxi ranks within the City Centre are covered with street lights fitted with white lamps which can have a positive impact on people's perception of increased safety in the City Centre. As part of Aberdeen City Council's street lighting programme an additional two floodlights are being installed in the vicinity of the Chapel Street taxi rank this financial year.

Trinity Street and Exchange Street taxi ranks have not been included within the proposed improvements within this report as the 3rd June 2009 Licensing Committee approved the removal of the two ranks as a result of the Green Townscape Heritage Initiative Public Realm Streetscape Works.

Consultation with Taxi Representatives

It is recommended that discussions with taxi representatives and the Taxi/Private Hire Car Consultation Group be carried out regarding locations, taxi rank usage and improvements to existing and proposed new taxi ranks annually. Results of the discussions will be reported back to a future Licensing Committee.

Taxi Rank Demand Survey

A taxi rank demand survey was previously carried out in May / June 2004 with 725 hours of information collected. The objective of the study were primarily to determine whether or not there exists a significant unmet demand for Hackney Carriage services in Aberdeen; and to determine the number of licences required to meet any identified unmet demand in Aberdeen. The study was based around three data collection exercises:-

- A rank observation programme;
- A series of on street interviews; and
- A mobility impaired user survey.

The rank observation information provided the balance of supply and demand i.e. average delay, for customers and drivers, and total demand; the demand/delay profiles; and the effective supply of vehicles.

The series of on-street interviews provided destination information, customer satisfaction information, frequency of taxi / private hire vehicle usage, deterrents to increased taxi / private hire vehicle usage and desired improvements to rank facilities.

The mobility impaired user survey, which was sent to a total of 1,000 local disabled residents, provided a more general picture of how disabled people perceived their quality of taxi/private hire service to have been. The respondents were asked how satisfied they were with three aspects of their last trip, namely: wait delay time; ease of access to the taxi/private hire vehicle and driver assistance.

The cost for the full taxi demand review was £21,500 in 2004, therefore it is anticipated that the costs for the survey, with inflation and associated costs, would be approximately £25,000 in 2010/2011.

There are currently no financial budgets identified to carry out the taxi demand review.

7. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=2636&sID=1150>

[http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Data/Licensing%20Committee/20050110/Minutes/SubIndex\\$Minutes.pdf](http://committees.aberdeencity.gov.uk/Data/Licensing%20Committee/20050110/Minutes/SubIndex$Minutes.pdf)

Appendix A

Location	Information Signage Required	Regulatory Signage Required	Lining Required	Dropped Kerb Required	White Lighting Installed	Recommendations / Information
Back Wynd	No	No	No	No	Yes	No work required.
Bridge Street (Part Time Rank)	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Chapel Street	No	No	No	No	Yes	2 additional floodlights are to be installed this financial year.
Dee Street	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Reline taxi rank road markings. Install dropped kerbs.
Diamond Street	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
*Exchange Street	No	No	No	No	Yes	Previously approved for removal by 3 rd June 2009 Licensing Committee.
Exchequer Row	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Fredrick Street	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
** George Street	No	No	No	No	Yes	Temporary rank as St Andrew Street not in operation.
Hadden Street	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Install dropped kerb as part of the Green improvements.
Justice Mill Lane	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Little Chapel St	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Rubislaw Place	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
**St Andrew Street	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Rank temporarily not in operation.
*Trinity Street	No	No	No	No	No	Previously approved for removal by 3 rd June 2009 Licensing Committee.
Union Row	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Union St Night Time Rank A	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	Works will only be carried out after demand survey and discussions with taxi representatives completed.
Union St Night Time Rank B	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	ACC Street lighting team has been informed of defective light at this location. Install dropped kerb.
Union St Night Time Rank C	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	ACC Street lighting team has been informed of defective light at this location. Install dropped kerb.

* Rank to be removed as part of Green Townscape Heritage Initiative Streetscape Works.

** Temporary Rank whilst building works underway on St Andrew Street.