

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	LICENSING
DATE	19 FEBRUARY 2019
REPORT TITLE	TAXI DEMAND SURVEY – TAXI RANK REVIEW
REPORT NUMBER	GOV/19/180
CHIEF OFFICER	FRASER BELL
REPORT AUTHOR	LYNN MAY
TERMS OF REFERENCE	No. 3

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the results of an informal consultation with Police Scotland, the Council's Road's service and the Taxi and Private Hire Car Consultation Group on suggestions for new taxi ranks at Upperkirkgate and Guild Street and the future of the ranks at St Andrew's Street and Dee Street.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

That the Committee:-

- 2.1 note the result of the informal consultation of the report and agree not to proceed with any action at present.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 In June 2017 the Committee instructed officers to incorporate within the Taxi Demand Survey, to be carried out in 2018, a review of the provision and location of taxi ranks in the City. The Demand Survey carried out a detailed review of the ranks as instructed.
- 3.2 As part of the taxi rank review, the existing ranks in the City, including the night ranks were each visited and assessed. The existing ranks were generally found to be suitable and well located for existing demand and patterns of use.
- 3.3 However the review found that two ranks were largely unused, the rank on St Andrew's Street and the rank on Dee Street which is split into two separate bays.
- 3.4 Members of the public and the trade were asked, during the review, if they could identify new locations which would be suitable for the establishment of a new rank.

The first location thought to be suitable for a new rank, is on Upperkirkgate. The second suggested location is on Guild Street.

- 3.5 An informal consultation was undertaken to establish the viability of these sites for the development of new ranks and the variation or removal of existing ranks.
- 3.6 The Council's Traffic Management and Road Safety Team advised, in summary, that they did not support the suggested location for a new taxi rank at Upperkirkgate as this particular layby is currently designated for disabled parking for those accessing Marischal Square and Marischal College. In addition they did not support the suggested location for a new rank on Guild Street due to the proximity to a very busy junction which would create road safety issues as vehicles would back up onto Carmelite Street, as already seen by the formation of an informal taxi rank outside the Station Hotel, a copy of their full response is attached to this report (Appendix 1).
- 3.7 In relation to the rank at St Andrew's Street, which was unused during the period of review, the Road Safety Team also advised that although additional signage may assist customers in finding the rank, it may actually be difficult to attract drivers or customers to this location. In relation to the rank on Dee Street, officers have observed that the section of the rank beyond Langstane Place is not used by drivers or customers. Therefore they would support the removal of this part of the rank and its conversion to parking provision. They noted however that as part of the City Centre Masterplan there are proposals to pedestrianise this area which will in turn reduce the options for drivers exiting Dee Street.
- 3.8 Police Scotland advised in their response that they were also not in favour of the location on Guild Street becoming an official rank due to the potential for congesting traffic flow. In relation to the suggested new rank at Upperkirkgate the Police also confirmed that the layby in question is a disabled parking area. They further commented that the demand for such disabled spaces in that area was likely to increase and therefore this would not be recommended as a new rank. They advised that they had no issue with either the St Andrew's Street or the section of the Dee Street rank beyond Langstane Place being closed. A copy of their full response is attached to this report (Appendix 2).
- 3.9 A report regarding the rank review was placed on the agenda of the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group meeting on 3 October 2018. The meeting also considered the responses which had been received from Police Scotland and the Council's Traffic Management and Road Safety Team. The Consultation Group agreed -
- (i) to request that the following views of the Group be reflected in the report to the Licensing Committee:-
 - (a) no action be taken to remove St Andrew's Street rank until suitable rank locations are identified at Marischal Square and Guild Street;
 - (b) no action be taken to reduce the rank on Dee Street until works to pedestrianise the area around Langstane Place, Dee Street and Crown Street have been finalised: and
 - (c) that further work be undertaken to determine suitable rank locations

to serve the railway station and the area around Upperkirkgate / Marischal Square.

(ii) to note that a report would be submitted to the Licensing Committee in due course.

- 3.10 Members should also note that the City Centre Master Plan includes the Station Gateway Development Brief - https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Station_Gateway_Development_Brief.pdf. This includes proposals to relocate the current taxi rank at the Railway Station to South College Street, although it is noted that the final location must be easily accessible with a direct link to the Station.
- 3.11 Given the results of this informal consultation, officers will carry out a further consultation on an informal basis with the Chief Officer-Operations, as representative of the Council as Roads authority, the Chief Officer Strategic Place Planning, the Chief Constable, Police Scotland, the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group, and the Disability Equity Partnership to determine suitable rank locations to serve the Railway Station and the area around Upper-Kirkgate and Marischal Square.
- 3.12 In the meantime no action will be taken to remove the rank at St Andrews Street until suitable rank locations are identified in the Marischal Square and Guild Street areas. In addition no action will be taken to reduce the rank on Dee Street until works to pedestrianise the area around Langstane Place, Dee Street and Crown Street have been finalised.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications as a result of this report.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising as a result of this report.

6. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

	Risk	Low (L), Medium (M), High (H)	Mitigation
Financial	If there is to be a formal consultation and creation of new ranks in the future, this will exceed the budget provision available.	L	Close monitoring of the costs committed to any future work agreed and the budget available.
Legal	As per paragraph 5 above.	L	Compliance with the statutory requirements if any future action on creation of new ranks.
Employee	There is no risk to employees arising from	L	N/A

	the recommendations of this report.		
Customer	The Taxi rank review and subsequent consultation consider the provision of ranks for the customers and citizens of Aberdeen	L	The assessment and provision of taxi ranks in the City will be of interest to the Citizens of Aberdeen to help improve taxi services in the City.
Environment	There is no risk to the environment arising from the recommendations of this report	L	The Taxi Demand Survey recommended there be no increase in the limit of taxi licences granted. Any new taxi ranks agreed after further consultation will be offset by the reduction or removal of underused ranks.
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 review and consult on the provision of taxi ranks in its area.		As this report is presenting the results of an informal consultation, after the review of the City's taxi ranks, for consideration and recommending not to proceed with any action at present, any risk is mitigated.

7. OUTCOMES

Local Outcome Improvement Plan Themes	
	Impact of Report
Prosperous Economy	The provision of sufficient and suitable taxi ranks are essential to the development of and investment in infrastructure necessary for commuters and visitors to the City. The City Centre Master Plan includes the Station Gateway Development Brief which includes proposals in relation to the Railway Station taxi rank.

Design Principles of Target Operating Model	
	Impact of Report
Customer Service Design	Further informal consultation to find suitable alternative sites for new Taxi Ranks, will ensure we better cater for customer need in the City Centre.
Partnerships and Alliances	As a result of this informal consultation a wider consultation will be undertaken to ensure any

	decisions taken on any new taxi ranks will be fully informed and the best locations selected for the City.
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8. IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	Outcome
Equality & Human Rights Impact Assessment	Completed and no impact
Data Protection Impact Assessment	Not required
Duty of Due Regard / Fairer Scotland Duty	Not applicable

9. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 9.1 The Report to the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group On Taxi Demand Survey Suggestions Regarding Taxi Ranks in Aberdeen City and the Minute to the Taxi and Private Hire Consultation Group on 3 October 2018.
- 9.2 The City Centre Master Plan – Station Gateway Development Brief - https://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Station_Gateway_Development_Brief.pdf

10. APPENDICES (if applicable)

- 10.1 Appendix 1 – Consultation Response from Traffic Management and Road Safety Team, Aberdeen City Council
Appendix 2 – Consultation Response from Police Scotland

11. REPORT AUTHOR CONTACT DETAILS

Lynn May
Solicitor, Licensing Team
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Good afternoon Lynn,

Many thanks for consulting with us on the outcome of the Taxi Demand Survey Report with regards to the provision of taxi ranks within the city centre. Please find our comments below.

- St Andrews Street – lack of signage. This could be addressed by the introduction of pedestrian signage from George Street to assist customers in finding the rank. If the rank has not attracted patronage to date, it may be difficult to attract drivers or customers to this location. Please confirm whether you would wish signage to be added and whether the taxi trade would provide some assurance of attendance at this location, if signage were in place.
- Dee Street – Officers have observed that the section of Dee Street rank beyond Langstane Place is not utilised by taxi drivers or customers. We would support the removal of the section beyond Langstane Place with the kerbside being converted to parking provisions. It has been noted that vehicles within the upper section of Dee Street rank queue back up onto Union Street during the later hours of operation, before the night time ranks take over. This causes safety issues for the junction and I would be interested to understand if this was noted to be a problem within the survey? It should also be noted that, as part of the City Centre Masterplan, proposals are being consulted on to pedestrianise Langstane Place between Dee Street and Crown Street on a 24 hour basis, with the remainder of Justice Mill Lane, Langstane Place and Windmill Brae route being pedestrianised during the hours of the night time economy. This will reduce the options for drivers exiting Dee Street.
- Upperkirkgate Layby – the layby on Upperkirkgate has been allocated for disabled parking for those accessing the Marischal Square development and Marischal College. We would not wish to remove this provision and therefore do not support this recommendation for a taxi rank. During the development of Marischal Square it was agreed that a pick up and drop bay be provided on Queen Street to allow taxis easy access to the site in view of there being public buildings and a hotel in close proximity. This is not a rank but will assist taxis and private hires under course of business.
- Guild Street – an informal taxi rank has developed within the layby at the front of the Station Hotel on Guild Street. As indicated within your enquiry, the proximity of this “rank” to the very busy junction of Carmelite Street and Guild Street creates regular road safety issues as vehicles back up onto Carmelite Street where drivers have limited forward visibility due to the wall at the back of the footway. We would not support the creation of a taxi rank at this location on road safety grounds.

Any changes to the existing taxi rank provision will require amendment of an existing Traffic Regulation Order and this team will be responsible for carrying out the TRO consultation and implementation, so please don't hesitate to get in touch when the proposals have been confirmed. Please note that TROs are subject to consultation and if objections are received they will be reported to Committee, the outcome of the process cannot be guaranteed.

APPENDIX 1

Please give me a shout if you require any further information.

Kind regards,



| Team Leader

Aberdeen City Council | Traffic Management and Road Safety | Operations and Protective Services | Operations

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OFFICIAL

Lynn

We have no issues with either rank being closed but do have some comments in relation to the two proposed ones.

Guild Street - there would only be room for three or four cars, at the most. The lay-by ends on a box junction. There exists the potential for drivers to queue to get onto the small rank, thereby congesting traffic flow. Even stopping briefly on the box junction (which is on the bend of the road) to enter an imminently available space could constrict flow.

We are aware it has unofficially become a drop-off point. If it was to become an official rank, the dropping off option would not be feasible if vehicles are on the rank and if not, those wishing to enter the rank could complain at being hampered from doing so. We are not in support of this becoming an official rank. If it was however to go ahead we would suggest the presence of the marshals at the rank during weekend nights.

Upperkirkgate - this lay-by could accommodate three vehicles only (excluding the current double yellow lines within the bay). The existing road markings indicate it is a disabled parking area. As the Mariscal Square complex becomes increasingly occupied with commercial outlets, I imagine the demand for disability spaces will increase and not diminish. I suggest consultation with disability groups re this proposal, if not already done. We also have the concern that during weekend night time hours, it is quite apart from the ranks that benefit from the presence of marshals, so would suggest that be put in place, if it was to go ahead.

Thank you

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