

Appendix A

Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues

Feedback Responses from Interest Groups and Organisations

At its meeting on 18 February 2010 the Executive considered the above titled report that sought resolution of a number of key issues concerning the management of traffic in Newbury town centre as we move towards the opening of the new Parkway development. In section 8 of that report it was recommended that the proposed traffic management changes should be discussed with the various interest groups and organisations that represent Newbury town centre stakeholders so that they had an opportunity to provide feedback on them. The interest groups and organisations were contacted with a copy of the Executive report, offered a meeting to discuss the proposals and invited to send any comments that they might have to Mark Cole, WBC's Traffic Services Manager. Some consultees took up the offer of a meeting or invited Mark to attend one of their scheduled meetings and some just sent in their responses. The table below contains the issues raised or comments received together with officer responses.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	West Berkshire Disability Alliance	
	Written response received dated 29 March 2010.	
1	The removal of the buses from Newbury Town Centre will be welcome by many visually impaired people who find the continued presence of buses during the times other vehicles are not permitted to use Northbrook St, Bartholomew St and the Market Place intimidating and dangerous. However many ambulant disabled who will have to get from Park Way to Northbrook Street and other town centre locations will encounter difficulties. Wheelchair users are at present not able to access buses in many parts of the town centre because there are no kassel kerbs/boarding platforms. Also many wheelchair users find buses not suitable to access with above 'average' size wheelchairs.	<p>This is a balanced response and is a good example of the difficulty of satisfying stakeholders with varying needs.</p> <p>The new bus stops in Park Way will have kassel kerbs. Any town centre bus stops that remain in use after the final proposals and re-routeing of buses has taken place that still require upgrading will have kassel kerbs installed as soon as possible.</p> <p>WBC can do nothing about buses being able to accommodate wheelchairs that are above average size. Public transport vehicle manufacturers have to comply with current DDA standards at the time on manufacture and will react to changing standards. However buses in the fleet will continue to be used until they become life extinct.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
2	Taxis, Handybuses, Readibuses and other specialist transport will not now be able to drop-off / pick-up disabled people from the Town Centre from 10.00 am – 5.00 pm and we expect they will also have to use Parkway to drop-off and pick-up customers. We would like a drop-off / pick-up point to be set up in Pembroke Place by the toilets in the multi-storey car park, also seats to be erected. This would mean a shorter distance for the visually impaired and the ambulant disabled to have to walk to Northbrook Street.	Officers have investigated this proposal and established that there is insufficient road width and turning capability for these vehicles to be able to manoeuvre adequately at this location. However it is possible to provide a suitable drop-off / pick-up facility in the Northcroft Lane car park at the junction with Pembroke Road. This facility would be adjacent to the Northbrook multi-storey car park and its facilities and is only slightly more distant from Northbrook Street than the location proposed by the DA. The officer recommendation is that this alternative facility should be provided.
3	Many ambulant disabled are unable to walk more than 50 metres without resting. Therefore many seats will have to be provided in the Parkway project to assist the ambulant disabled with rest points. This will also apply to Bartholomew Street.	The approved plans that form a part of the Parkway planning application for which approval has been granted do include the provision of seats. The Disability Access Panel would have been consulted on the Parkway proposals before they were approved. If more seating was requested this could only be provided if the Parkway management company was willing to provide it because the links between Park Way and Northbrook Street are not public highway. Officers are not sure why additional seats would be required in Bartholomew Street but this may be possible to achieve.
4	New bus stops must have Kassel kerbs.	These will be provided.
5	If new bus stops are to have a Shelter consideration must be made to ensure that the buses stop allowing the ramps to be put down and a turning circle allowed for. The shelter at the post office is the case in point, for a wheelchair to get on a bus the bus entrance must be in line with the opening in the back of the Shelter.	The bus shelters being provided for the Parkway development will comply with current standards for disabled access.
6	The bus platform in Bartholomew Street needs to be removed and the paving made good.	It is likely that this bus lay-by will be used as a night time rank for taxis. This may mean that the platform will need to be retained, lowered or removed. A decision on this will not be made until the use of this lay-by is known.
7	We agree with the taxi forum that the rank in the Market Place should remain outside the 10.00 am to 5.00 pm window.	The officer recommendation is that the Market Place rank should be removed permanently. The reasons for this are set out in detail in the responses to the Taxi Trade submission below.
8	The taxi rank in the Wharf will need re-engineering if it is to become a proper rank. At present wheelchair users can only access a taxi if it comes out of the rank into the roadway. This is then dangerous for the wheelchair user.	It accepted that there will need to be some design changes to the current feeder rank in Wharf Street.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
9	At the crossing point at the south side of the bridge from the Library car park to the Wharf toilet car park good signage will be needed to ensure that people crossing now have to look left as well as right which is as now.	This will be investigated as part of the design changes to install the traffic lights that will control two-way traffic over the bridge.
10	We think a further consultation needs to be conducted if the Parkway shopping area is locked at night, which will then stop people going directly to the buses and taxis, also the car park. They will then have to either use the canal or go up to park Street as all the other rights of way to Park Way were given away with the Parkway project.	The routes through the Parkway development will not be locked at night. It is only the private residential areas that will have restricted access.
11	WBDA would still like to see the riding of cycles through the pedestrianisation banned, at present the cyclists seem to ride as and where they like, even going up the wrong way in Bartholomew Street.	There are no plans to ban cyclists from the pedestrianised zone. This issue has been debated long and hard and the officer view is that it should not be revisited until all of the town centre changes have been implemented and been in pace for at least a year.
12	WBDA would like to make an overall comment re: traffic management in Newbury. By continually restricting north/south (and visa versa) over the canal and railway ie pushing everything onto the A339 there seem to be increasing problems re: travel times for the north/south route especially during peak times, race meetings and lane closures. Many disabled people who live at home require services such as domiciliary/home care, meals on wheels, district nurses, etc (and family carers) which provide vital support. These services have notoriously always suffered from time pressures associated with travelling between clients/service users and to further exasperate these pressures because of poor traffic management will put unnecessary pressures on service users and service providers' front line staff.	The package of measures that are being put forward are designed to deliver the aspirations of Newbury Vision 2025 and to enhance the changes being brought about by the new Parkway development. The reason for the holistic approach being promoted is because there are varying needs that have to be balanced and a consensus reached that best delivers for the town centre stakeholders. It is considered that the interrelated measures being put forward achieve the necessary balanced approach.
TCP Accessibility, Parking & Transport Group		
Comments from meeting on 14 May 2010.		
13	During the hours 5.00 pm – 10.00 am vehicles are allowed in Market Place and taxis can therefore drop off and pick up even if the rank is removed. Suggested that there is a 'call button' in Market Place at that time so people can use.	This may be possible and will be investigated. The concern is that the button unit could be subject to vandal damage. It is not thought that it could be linked to the feeder rank traffic light system so it might be more appropriate to use nearby telephones to call a taxi.
14	If taxi rank is lost – then pedestrian signing is required (including in Kennet Centre).	Improved pedestrian signing has already been provided on the public highway for the Market Street rank. Additional signing can be provided if required.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
15	It is accepted by Newbury Buses that buses would not be in Northcroft Street but Parkway is only a 1 side destination which is a concern.	Not sure what the issue is here. There will be bus stops on both sides of Park Way, a traffic light controlled pedestrian crossing is being provided and there will be good links through the new development to Northbrook Street.
16	Newbury Buses has a concern re improvement proposals and buses trying to pass each other, and with buses turning off the bridge into Bear Lane.	It is very common for buses to have to negotiate residential estates that are narrow, have tight bends and parked vehicles. Wharf Road has some bends but is not too narrow and there will be no parked vehicles to obstruct the route. It is not considered that turning movement at the junction with Bear Lane will be any more difficult than many other tight turns that buses would have to make.
17	Buses using the bridge – Newbury Buses not convinced of any benefit. Buses from the north will terminate at Parkway and from the south terminate at bus station. No cross town service which could be quite significant. Retailers will be concerned if there is no cross town bus service.	It is considered that Park Way bridge offers the best alternative for buses if they are removed from Northbrook Street. It may be that Newbury buses will operate some services along the A339. Buses from the north will not be able to terminate at Park Way because they will not be able to turn round. They would have to drive over the bridge to turn round in the coach park and so it would be more sensible to continue south to other destinations or the bus station. The whole issue of cross town services will have to be discussed between WBC Transport Services officers and Newbury Buses staff if the proposals are to be implemented.
18	Bus Station is only guaranteed to 2012 as could be redeveloped.	WBC has plans in place to provide a bus lay over facility in the Wharf coach park if the Market Street development goes ahead and the bus station is closed.
19	There are already only a few bus services that operate commercially in the Newbury / Thatcham area and the majority are supported. It would not be beneficial to disrupt services further.	With the widespread changes that are coming to Newbury it is inevitable that there will be some disruption to bus services. However WBC Transport Services officers will work with bus operators to minimise disruption.
20	A bus link to / from the railway station is not feasible due to traffic delays - keen to develop bus services in the area.	This point is not directly related to these current proposals for Newbury town centre. Again Transport Services officers will be happy to work with bus operators to help develop bus services that link to the station.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Newbury Banks and Building Societies	
21	Letter sent to all Newbury town centre banks and building societies by Mark Cole on 26 May 2010. A copy of the Executive report of 18 February 2010 was enclosed. The letter advised that the proposals being put forward do not have any adverse affect on the Banks or Building Societies within the pedestrianised zone and offered them the opportunity to advise the Council of any concerns or difficulties that they might have or to provide feedback on the report should they wish to. They were asked to respond by 30 June 2010.	A total of 14 letters were sent out and no replies have been received.
	Ambulance Service	
	E-mail received dated 28 May 2010.	
22	No reason to contest or object to these plans. Provision has been made for maintaining access to pedestrianised areas within and around Northbrook and Bartholomew streets. Would use of Park Way Bridge by emergency vehicles in either direction be permitted under exemption (ie – emergency response) once change of use has been designated to 2 way bus traffic with camera enforcement. Particular concern if vehicles needed to access the Library / market and wharf areas from the North, alternative routes around would incur an unacceptable response delay. For incidents in/around Parkway or Camp Hobson and Victoria park being accessed by vehicles responding from the South, a similar situation would exist.	Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) will set up so that emergency service vehicles are permitted to use Park Way bridge in both directions during an emergency response. The distance between the stop lines at the traffic signals at each end of the bridge will be such that inter-visibility between them is unlikely to be possible. If the emergency service vehicles went through a red light there is a danger of them meeting a bus in the narrow middle section of the bridge. A bus would find it very difficult to reverse so extreme caution would be needed by the emergency service vehicle driver. This response was sent and a thank you was received from the Ambulance Service.
	Newbury Town Centre NAG	
	Mark Cole presented the Council's proposed changes to traffic management in Newbury at the meeting on 8 June 2010. The NAG almost entirely focussed on the issues concerning the proposal to remove the taxi rank from Market Place. This was essentially because the taxi trade was well represented at the meeting and has strong views about retention of this rank. The NAG's position is as follows:	

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
23	<p>Removing the rank from Market Place would give disabled and elderly people a problem. It is a long way to walk to the feeder rank in the Wharf if you are incapacitated in any way. It is best to get people out of Market Place quickly. A specific area was needed in the Kennet Centre area for disabled pick up. Access into the Kennet Centre was restricted by the height of the vehicles. This also applied to the Northbrook Street car park. For ambulant disabled the criteria was not being able to walk more than 50 metres without sitting down. The Wharf was a lot further than 50 metres from Market Place. Additional seats would be needed if the new rank became active. Wheelchair access would need to be improved as current access is too narrow. In Wharf Street the lighting is very poor by Document House and pedestrians could be in danger of being hit by vehicles. The decision of the NAG is that Market Place rank should be retained – certainly at night even if it is lost during the day.</p>	<p>The feeder rank in Wharf Street is not that distant from the Market place rank although it is acknowledged that it is further than 50 metres away. A new rank has been provided in Market Street near the Kennet Centre entrance. It is only taxis, transit vans or mini buses over 2.0 metres in height that cannot access the two multi-storey car parks but many taxis that have been converted to carry wheelchairs can get access. There are existing areas in both of these car parks with large numbers of blue badge spaces that are rarely, if ever, full that are suitable for drop-off or pick up. All standard taxis that carry blue badge passengers who do not use wheelchairs or infirm passengers who do not have a blue badge can get access. If the proposal to remove the Market Place rank is confirmed, sites for additional seats will be explored. It is accepted that some engineering changes will be required at the feeder rank to improve access for wheelchair users. If the proposal goes ahead it would not be difficult to enhance the street lighting. The reasons why officers recommend removal of the rank in Market Place at all times are set out in detail in subsequent sections below.</p>
24	<p>WBC should be consulting policemen on the beat as they may have a better idea of what was needed.</p>	<p>Mark advised that WBC must obtain the official Police position with regard to its proposals. The official view will take account of the views of beat officers.</p>
25	<p>One attendee was concerned that the traffic management changes proposed would increase traffic on the A339 but others thought this was the appropriate role of the A339.</p>	<p>Mark advised that bringing forward the end of pedestrianisation hours from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm was designed to give some extra capacity during the pm peak.</p>
26	<p>It was suggested that one of the car parks in West Street could be used for pick-up and drop-off by Handybuses, Readibuses or Taxis and other vehicles equipped for carrying disabled passengers. Mark agreed to look at this before reporting back to Members on the feedback from stakeholders.</p>	<p>We have identified a location in the Northcroft Lane car park in Pembroke Road, which is situated alongside the Northbrook multi-storey car park. This is well placed for access to the town centre shops. It is intended that and area on the edge of the car park will be converted for use by Handybuses, Readibuses or Taxis and other vehicles equipped for carrying disabled passengers only that will be enforced by the Civil Enforcement Officers. These vehicles will only be permitted to drop-off and pick-up. Not to wait for extended periods.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Newbury Buses	
27	Mark Cole presented the Council's proposed changes to traffic management in Newbury at a meeting in Reading on 9 June 2010 and sought the view of the bus company on the proposals.	Newbury Buses have reluctantly accepted that they will need to come out of the pedestrianised zone in order that the Council can provide the relaxed town centre experience for visitors that it is seeking to create. They confirmed that they will not raise an objection when the traffic regulation orders are advertised but they have requested additional bus stops at the northern end of Park Way. These will be provided. They have some concerns about congestion in the Wharf area delaying services but Mark advised that with southbound traffic over Park Way bridge limited to buses taxis and cycles only the situation should be better than at present.
	Weavaway Travel	
28	This bus company that provides some services in and around Newbury was briefed along with other stakeholders before the Council published its town centre report to the Executive in February. Since it raised no concerns about any of the proposals it was not approached again as part of this feedback exercise.	
	Newbury Town Council	
	Newbury Town Council had raised queries regarding WBC's proposed traffic management changes that Mark Cole had responded to. The responses and the full report were duly discussed at Newbury Town Council's Planning and Highways Committee meeting on 21 June 2010, with the following minuted result:	
29	Concerns were raised regarding the volume of traffic that would be transferred to the A339.	It is known from experience that even when traffic queues back on the A339, it still feeds through the traffic lights at the Sainsbury's roundabout reasonably quickly. There are often times when drivers use the route through Park Way and over the bridge when it is congested and sit in queues when the A339 is moving freely. Since the Parkway project has been under construction it is evident that less traffic is using the Park way route and the A339 has coped well. In addition the proposal to bring the end of pedestrianisation time forward to 5.00 pm will provide Northbrook Street as another peak time route. Taking all of these factors into consideration, it is considered that these concerns have been addressed.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
30	Some concern was raised over possible congestion in Wharf Street.	There is no reason why there should be congestion in Wharf Street if the proposals are adopted. At present outside pedestrianisation hours traffic from all directions and from the Wharf car parks can use this route if required. With the proposed measures the only traffic using Wharf Street will be taxis, cycles, traffic from the Bear Lane direction or cars from the car parks that wish to use this route. There is no logical reason why traffic should divert from Bear Lane through Wharf Street because it will arrive back at the same point at the southern end of Market Place as it arrives at if it continues straight along Bear Lane. Consequently it is extremely unlikely that there will be any congestion in Wharf Street.
31	If proposal to change time of pedestrianisation to 5.00 pm is approved, Members felt that a significant education programme is required for Members of the public.	Agreed. There will need to be a programme of advanced publicity and this is planned.
32	If the Taxi rank is moved to Wharf Street Members request that adequate signage be installed informing people of the change of location.	This would be done.
	Corn Exchange	
	In response to a request from the TCP to its members to send feedback to WBC, the Corn Exchange commented in an email dated 22 June 2010 in respect of their elderly or disabled customers as follows:	
33	It would be a more pleasant experience for our customers sitting outside but would make access harder for patrons with mobility problems who are used to being dropped off at the front door. They are particularly thinking about café concerts and lunchtime concerts during the Spring Festival. We have a blind lady with a guide dog who gets picked up from right outside the door. Patrons who walk with sticks would become reliant on the Duty Manager to bring the wheel chair round to the drop off point at the back of the building.	It is always going to be a balance and we are very keen to make the pedestrian zone traffic free. Although it is proposed to remove the rank from Market Place it is possible for drop-offs and pick-ups by taxi drivers to be pre-arranged either at the drop off point at the rear of the Corn Exchange or at a point nearby outside of the pedestrianised zone. It is not an offence for a taxi to stop on roads with parking restrictions for this purpose although it would be if the taxi parked for an extended period.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Thames Valley Police	
	Formal response received in emails dated 29 June 2010 and August 2010.	
	Roads Policing	
34	No objections to many of the proposals that are subject to this consultation document providing that the burden on enforcement is catered for through engineering and technology methods.	It will be by number plate recognition on Park Way Bridge and by the Council's own Civil Enforcement Officers.
35	Timed restrictions do raise concern as they are often misunderstood, and confusing to some motorists. Without positive engineering in place, some measures could lead to high levels of abuse.	Rising bollards are to be retained as physical restriction to access to the pedestrianised zones during times when vehicles are not permitted.
	Newbury Town Centre Operational Policing Team	
36	In response to the document they raise the following comments / concerns in relation to crime and disorder and road safety within the town centre should some of these proposals take place. They have asked that these are considered prior to formal advertisement.	Agreed.
37	There is quite rightly a desire to eradicate traffic from the town centre, especially during the daytime where footfall from shoppers is highest.	Noted.
38	Proposal to allow traffic to flow into the town from 5.00 pm as opposed to 6.00 pm as it is at present would cause potential for conflict with pedestrians who are used to the pedestrianisation lasting until 6.00 pm. To allow traffic to flow from 5.00 pm means that shops will still be open and there would be an increased potential for that conflict to occur. See also 42 below.	This issue is covered in the report to the Executive on 18 February. It says that on balance bringing forward the pedestrianisation end time from 6.00 pm to 5.00 pm is beneficial and should be done. It also says that the initial risks to pedestrians caused by the changed environment between 5.00 pm and 6.00 pm could be managed with sufficient advanced publicity and use of temporary signs.
39	During the day cannot see a problem with the taxis being excluded from Market Place. Agree that the taxis should not be allowed during the pedestrianised hours as the buses will cease to flow into the town during these times as well. Shoppers will become familiar with knowing where to obtain taxis home, namely the Wharf for Market Place and Northbrook Street for the north end of the town and Parkway.	Noted.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
40	<p>Observation regarding the movement of the taxi rank from the Market Place would be that it is more relevant after midnight when the night time economy drinkers leave the local nightclubs. The taxi rank is visible to those who are coming into the Market Place from night clubs such as 'Fevers' which is directly opposite, this means that many drinkers are able to quickly get transport home and so do not hang around when the potential for disorder increases. If this rank were not there it is suggested that the bus stop outside the Post Office could be made into a time specific rank for a couple of taxis to ensure that drinkers could see waiting taxis and know that there was transport available. It is more about visible presence, once drinkers come out of pubs and clubs looking for a way home quickly. The quicker they can find that transport the quicker they go home and so the potential for disorder and assaults reduces. It is understood also that the taxis would also be allocated more spots in Bartholomew Street, Market Street, north end of Northbrook Street and the Wharf and so this would become local knowledge and give a good spread of available ranks around the town centre. But the need for some visibility of taxis, even if not directly outside the Nightclub as it stands now, in order to ensure quick dispersal of large groups from clubs and pubs is emphasised.</p>	<p>The proposal to convert the bus stop outside the post office to a night time only rank is considered to be a reasonable compromise to enable the Market Place rank to be removed as proposed. See detailed response in 43 below. Officers recommend that this proposal be adopted.</p>
Local Police Area Commander - Robin Rickard		
41	<p>I agree that all traffic should be removed from the Town centre during the day.</p>	<p>Conformation of support for removal of all vehicles during pedestrianisation hours.</p>
42	<p>The risk presented by bringing forward the time of traffic flow to 5.00 pm will need to be proactively managed but clearly this is in hand.</p>	<p>See officer response in 38 above.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
43	<p>There is a great deal of research that demonstrates that the more effective late night transport arrangements are the less violent crime is likely to occur. Newbury is well served by late night licensed premises and a significant amount of disorder and assaults are reported in the vicinity of licensed premises at or around closing time. After midnight the only public transport that is available is taxis and the closer that they can be made available to licensed premises the better. I understand the desire to remove the taxi ranks from the Market Place but it would be necessary to provide ranks as close by as possible therefore the proposal to site ranks outside the Post Office from 00.10 hours would appear to be viable and sensible.</p>	<p>The last bus to use the bus stop outside the post office is at 00.08 am on Fridays and Saturdays. We currently have a decision from the Newbury Town Centre Task Group and from the Executive in favour of completely removing taxis from Market Place at all times. Consequently this alternative location for a night time only rank is a reasonable compromise. It will only be possible to accommodate 2 or possibly 3 taxis at this location and it will not be possible to provide any feeder rank signalling system. It should be noted that it is unusual to provide a feeder rank signalling system of the type we have in Newbury. In most towns ranks are just provided at various locations and taxi drivers occupy them and or cruise around looking for spaces. However it is proposed that we also provide a night time rank to hold 5 or 6 taxis in the lay-by that is currently a bus stop in Bartholomew Street north. Also as the report proposes we are also planning to convert the current feeder rank in Wharf Street to a formal rank so there will be plenty of rank spaces in the vicinity of the licensed premises.</p>
	Newbury Retail Association	
	<p>Mark Cole presented the Council's proposed changes to traffic management in Newbury at the meeting on 13 July 2010.</p>	
44	<p>The consensus of those present at the meeting was that all southbound traffic over Park Way bridge should still be permitted and not limited to buses, taxis and cycles only. There is however no objection to removal of buses from Northbrook Street and the rest of the pedestrianised zone.</p>	<p>Unfortunately this decision is not workable. If we remove buses from the pedestrianised zone, which is the consensus that came out of the public consultation on Newbury Vision 2025, it follows that they would need to relocate to Park Way. This is where new bus stops are to be provided as part of the S278 works for the Parkway development. It is known from previous experience during town centre projects that two way traffic lights on Park Way bridge causes extensive congestion if normal traffic is permitted to use the bridge. Consequently it is recommended that we continue with the proposal to remove buses from the pedestrianised zone and prevent all traffic except buses, taxis and cycles from using the bridge.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Newbury Town Centre Partnership	
	The Acting Chairman responded on behalf of the TCP in an email dated 16 July 2010 as follows:	
45	The TCP supports your package of proposals to deliver a truly pedestrianised Town Centre. As you are aware, some of our Partners are in direct discussion with you, namely the Police and Bus companies. One of the Partners, a Law firm, wants to record their support but also their regret that in the past the Community had not provided for a 2 lane Park Way bridge.	Noted.
46	The Newbury Society also support the recommendation but ask, that at implementation of the 5.00 pm change, the traffic light changes on the Town Bridge should allow more time as in the evening southbound, only 3/4 cars get through before the lights change. (Ideally linked to the Bollard timers).	If all of the proposals for Newbury town centre are adopted the phasing of all of the traffic lights will be checked and adjusted as necessary.
47	Our Newbury Retail Association colleagues support the withdrawal of buses from the pedestrianised areas but do not support the proposed changes to ban the southbound use by private cars over Parkway Bridge.	As discussed above in the Newbury Retail Association section this would not be a workable solution.
	Taxi Trade	
	A meeting was held on 10 June 2010 with representatives from West Berkshire Hackney and Private Hire Association (WBHPHA) and Cabco Hackney Carriage Drivers Association (CABCO) at the Council's offices to discuss the proposed traffic management changes and seek feedback. It was agreed at the meeting that WBHPHA and CABCO would provide a formal written response to the Council's proposals. This was duly received on 30 July 2010 in the form of minutes of the meeting together with a covering letter. There is some dispute between the taxi representatives and Council officers about the accuracy of the minutes and the relevance of some of the content to the purpose of the meeting - to obtain feedback on the Council's proposals as contained in the Executive report dated 18 February 2010. However all of the points have been set out below with appropriate officer responses.	As the points raised by WBHPHA and CABCO are in the form of minutes and are attributed to specific attendees by their initials it is necessary to identify who they are. Those in attendance were: Mark Cole (MC) - WBC Brian Leahy (BL) - WBC R Brown (RB) - WBHPHA A Lutter (AFL) - WBHPHA K Archibald (KA) - CABCO D Oram (DA) - CABCO R Spencer-Jones (RSJ) - WBHPHA A Vass (AV) - WBHPHA

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Market Street Rank	
48	MC and BL discussed why this new rank was not being used to its full potential, especially during weekend nights. KA suggested the rank is not located in a high footfall area and it therefore needs improved signage in the Kennet Centre to direct shoppers to the rank. The rank can be used at weekend nights, but it will need a taxi marshal to supervise the reverse flow through the bus station and onto the new rank. There will be issues with U-turns. More discussion is needed. This can be dealt with as a service request.	Not directly related to the report proposals and is an existing service issue. Additional signs have been provided though.
	Other Ranking Issues	
49	AV suggested that additional timed ranks be established in Bartholomew Street where the bus stops are currently located. This has the advantage of using the existing seating and shelters which will provide some assistance to the elderly and disabled.	MC's recollection is that it was he who indicated to the meeting that we were looking into this possibility. AFL subsequently confirmed in an email on 17/06/10 that he was keen for this to be pursued. Timed ranks will only be outside of pedestrianised hours of operation.
50	The street furniture need not be removed after the buses are removed thus saving expense.	It may be necessary to remove the Kassel kerbs at the bus stop because they may be too high for taxis. MC has advised AV of this and he has indicated that he will advise in due course whether or not they need to be lowered.
51	This may also solve the problem of drivers ranking outside the Snooty Fox in the small hours.	Agreed.
52	This suggestion was well received by MC and BL who felt that this will offer low cost service improvements for the public, particularly the elderly and disabled using the Bartholomew Street shopping facilities.	If Kassel kerbs have to be removed the costs will be higher. This facility may be used by the elderly or disabled but would only be available at night.
53	SERVICE REQUEST: Review signage and install improved signage in the Kennet Centre.	Done - extra signs have been provided on the public highway.
54	SERVICE REQUEST: Review Bartholomew Street as possible additional ranks and develop considered proposals for consultation with the trade.	Timed ranks including this one are being considered / worked up as part of the Newbury traffic management proposals as we move towards the Parkway development opening.
	Market Place Rank	
55	The main issue for these stakeholders is the removal of the market square taxi rank.	It is recognised that the proposed removal of the rank in Market Place is of concern to some stakeholders and particularly unpopular in the taxi trade.
56	MC stated that he did not believe the rank could be moved back to outside the Wagon and Horses. He advised the current rank scheme was "set in stone" and it would take a full members vote to change it.	This is not what MC said. He said that Members currently want the Market Place rank removed as per the resolution in the report. He felt that it was unlikely that they would agree to relocate the rank at additional expense prior to a decision on whether or not a rank was to be retained in Market Place.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
57	<p>DO, SB and AV raised the question of the “traffic light” and commented that the system failed completely under pressure. When taxi traffic is busiest (at say 02:00 hrs. on a Saturday) the traffic light system cannot work fast enough and the system gets out of kilter. There is no solution to this problem. There are then no cars on the rank and the light is out.</p> <p>Customers then have to wait, sometimes for as long as ten minutes until a taxi arrives on the rank. By this time there is usually quite a crowd and the most aggressive ones take the first cab. This system failure increases the fear of crime and violent disorder for the taxi drivers and is an actual and real source of violence on the taxi rank.</p> <p>MC suggested that the taxis should ignore the taxi queue and move to where the front of the rank should be, rather than pick up from the back of the rank, thus exacerbating the problem with the traffic light.</p> <p>AV happened to mention that this advice would result in people getting run over. At the busiest times people will stand in the road to stop a taxi rather than see it drive past to the front of the rank.</p> <p>Both MC and BL were adamant that the traffic light system worked well and did not break down under pressure. BL said he had video evidence to prove the traffic light system worked.</p> <p>All the trade representatives stated that this was absolutely incorrect. The point was made that the taxi drivers are the best qualified people to judge this issue as that are the ones actually using it and seeing it repeatedly fail to perform at the busiest times.</p>	<p>This is not relevant in terms of the proposals in the report. MC and BL indicated that they did not think there is a problem with this facility and that it works well if correctly used by the taxi drivers. The system has subsequently been checked independently by an engineer from the Council’s traffic signal contractor Siemens. He has found no problems with the operation of the traffic light system providing that the taxi drivers move forward in the Market Place rank when a taxi leaves and that the taxi at the back of the queue parks in the correct position to be detected by the loop. An adjustment has been made to the time out setting that operates automatically when there has been no taxi movement for a period of time. The controller was originally set to reset after 35 minutes but has now been changed to reset after 2 hours. This should resolve any difficulties that the taxi drivers may have previously experienced. We will continue to check and review the facility as necessary.</p> <p>MC did not say that the drivers should ignore the queue - he did say that for the signal system to work properly the drivers needed to pull forward so that the rear taxi is not over the loop detector.</p> <p>BL did not say he had video evidence. What he said was that in the past he had been able to view CCTV footage showing that the system was working properly when it had been reported as faulty.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
58	AFL explained that this was why the drivers had trialled a system of putting two cars outside the Wagon and Horses so there was a continuous relayed line of sight from the feeder rank to the main rank. This worked perfectly and prevented any problems in feeding taxis up to the main rank. This action reduced the fear of crime and violent behaviour and ensured that revellers were cleared out of the market as fast as possible. That was until the police threatened to prosecute taxi drivers for stopping outside the Wagon and Horses. This action increased the fear of crime and violent behaviour and ensured that revellers were not cleared out of the market as fast as possible.	There is no parking at any time in Market Place other than in the 4 car rank for which the traffic regulation order exists. Consequently the trial referred to was a parking offence and the police were correct to stop this.
	Market Place Main Rank Options	
59	MC and BL explained that the proposal to fully pedestrianise the Market Square during the day would not prevent traffic from passing through the Square after 17:00 hrs. This will enable the Council to achieve its vision of two 64 seat open air restaurants.	The vision is to maximise use of Market Place for events as well as an area for pavement cafés.
60	AFL commented that the Newbury weather was hardly conducive to open air dining and enquired as to what bad weather protection the wet and frozen and wind-blown diners would be allowed to have and asked what estimates had been made as the number of days the diners would be able to eat out during the day and during the evening? The estimate for the inconvenience to the increasingly pressurised taxi trade would be a loss of some earnings and for 24 hours inconvenience for 365 days per year. MC believed that some sort of coverings would be permitted but was not aware of any estimate of how many days the outside restaurants would be able to operate.	The whole point of the Market Place improvements was to create an area for such use. This is part of the Newbury Vision 2025 for which there is public support. Two 64 chair licences are already issued but have not been taken up yet. There is no reason why the loss of this single rank should affect earnings providing other ranks are available (others are being explored as indicated above). It is up to the licensees how many days they operate subject to the limitations imposed by the Council under the licences. MC has been misquoted here because it is known that some operators will utilise umbrellas with their pavement cafés.
61	BL advised that after 17:00 hrs taxis and all other traffic would be permitted to use the market as usual. DO commented that it is hardly helpful to open air dining to have cars and vans driving through the market, but banning taxis. Four stationary taxis would be much more appropriate. BL advised that he believed that members want to remove taxis from the Market as part of the Newbury Vision.	All vehicles can drive through Market Place after the end of pedestrianised hours. There is no proposal to change this.
62	The taxi reps discussed the impact of the proposed changes on the different taxi companies and independent taxis. It seemed that the financial impact on the taxi trade and on different sections of the taxi trade have not even been considered in the planning process.	The reasons why the Council is proposing the removal of the Market Place rank are set out in the report. If this proposal goes ahead customers will become aware of alternative rank locations and there would be advanced publicity to make the changes clear.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
63	MC then reviewed the options as follows:-	The taxi trade representatives at the meeting put forward some additional options. These were discussed / reviewed along with the Council proposal (ie removal of the Market Place rank and conversion of the Wharf Street feeder rank to a formal rank). These other options were not tabled by MC. Officer assessments of the options and the particular points made by the taxi trade are covered below.
	Option 1	
64	Move the rank back to the other end of the market as a permanent 24 hour taxi rank, (as per drawing attached as " Appendix 1 "). This option solves a number of issues. The trades comments are as follows:-	This does not conform with the Council's current aspiration to remove all but emergency service vehicles during pedestrianisation hours and to encourage use of Market Place for events and pavement cafés. There are currently two 64 chair license holders for the provision pavement cafes at this end of Market Place and the rank in this location would not be conducive to the atmosphere that is being sought. It is accepted that these two license holders have so far failed to make use of their licenses but it is expected that this situation will change as economic conditions improve. It is also anticipated that there will be more applications for pavement cafés, especially when the new Wetherspoons opens. If Members were mindful to retain a night time rank in Market Place it is recommended that it should be in its current location.
65	Taxis stay in the Market, protecting income for the taxi trade.	Under the proposals being developed there will be plenty of ranks in and around the town centre from which the taxi drivers will be able to ply their trade and continue to earn their income.
66	Providing a higher standard of service for the public, including the vulnerable and the elderly who rely on taxis as their only form of transport.	There is no obvious reason why this option would offer a higher standard of service.
67	There is a visible line of sight from the front of the feeder rank to the back of the main rank, thus speeding flow of taxis at peak times.	It is true that there would be a visible line of sight of the back of a rank positioned in this location in Market Place from the feeder rank. However when taxis left from the front of the Market Place rank and the others moved forward the first taxi waiting in the feeder rank would move forward but the next taxi would have to wait until the first one disappeared from view before proceeding. This would continue until the Market Place rank was full and the taxi at the back could be seen. This is no different from how the current traffic light system works.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
68	Removes reliance on the traffic light and sensor system that always fails to work at peak times. (The taxi reps explained that traffic light only allows one car at a time up from the feeder to the main rank. At peak times taxis are taken faster than this system allows and the system then shows no red light at the feeder, so no cars move up to the main rank. This creates a rowdy crowd on the rank and there is usually pushing and shoving for cars. This leads to increases in crime and disorderly behaviour and fear of crime.	This is not the case as the red light at the feeder rank will show at all times that there is no taxi parked on the loop detector at the rear of the Market Place rank. So if more than one taxi leaves the rank and the drivers move forward as they should the red light will remain on until the rear position over the loop detector is occupied.
69	BL advised that he disagreed completely with this assessment and stated that the traffic light system worked perfectly. BL stated that he had video evidence to support this claim. BL stated that when the system is under pressure drivers should move to the front of the rank and not stop the taxi until they are in the usual pole position, thus allowing cars to move up behind them.	BL did not say that there was video evidence. He said that he had seen CCTV footage showing that the system was working correctly when it had been reported as faulty.
70	The taxi reps were somewhat amused when KA pointed out that this would involve running people over as they stand in front of the taxis to force them to stop. AFL pointed out that he has had windscreen wipers ripped of by people trying to force him to stop. The drivers pointed out that BL's solution would increase criminal activity, criminal damage, violence on the taxi rank and violence against drivers and vehicles. As far as the drivers are aware this is not on the list of key policy objectives for WBC.	WBC's proposal to convert the feeder rank to a formal rank and to create more night time ranks at various locations in and around the town centre will mean that there will be far more customer choice and more ranked taxis within short walking distances of the bars and night clubs late at night.
71	RB pointed out that the taxi drivers are the "experts" on what happens at the ranks and an occasional visit from a licensing office, with or without a video camera does not constitute an expert opinion. AFL suggested that WBC would be wise to accept the evidence of the drivers as being correct and not fly in the face of overwhelming evidence to the contrary.	The licensing team have a regular presence. WBC cannot accept that there is clear evidence of the scale of problems being claimed.
72	After 17:00 hrs traffic will be able to drive through the Market Square thus removing the benefits (see below) that WBC claim will arise by removing taxis from the market square.	There is no change to the current situation after pedestrianisation hour's end (ie all vehicles are permitted to drive through Market Place).
73	AFL pointed out that it seems pointless and counter-productive to ban taxis from the Market square and place an extra burden on the old, the disabled and the vulnerable. If the taxi rank were any further away from the town centre these vulnerable people will be in the canal!	The current feeder rank that is proposed as a formal rank is not that distant from Market Place. The new rank in Market Street is not far away and a new rank is to be provided near the entrance to the Parkway development plus other ranks are being investigated.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Option 2	
	Timed Rank: Remove taxis from the Market Square during the daytime only. Comments from the trade included:-	
74	MC suggested that the Market Square rank be converted to a timed rank, operating between 17:00 hrs. and 06:00 hrs. BL suggested that some existing parking spaces could be easily converted into taxi rank spaces.	MC did not say this. He did say that the Council position as per the report was removal of the rank from Market Place but that this was an option that Members may be willing to consider. Timed ranks for night time use are being actively investigated at other locations. There are difficulties associated with this option however. During the day the feeder rank in Wharf Street would be used as a formal rank but at night it would be used as both a formal rank and a feeder rank to the Market Place rank. This would cause considerable confusion to customers and would make it difficult for taxi drivers trying to operate effectively.
75	RSJ mentioned that the vulnerable and the elderly use taxis during the day and removing taxis will be severely detrimental to this group. MC accepted that there will be (Quote) "Winners and losers in this" and went on to confirm that the elderly and infirm would be the losers.	MC has been misquoted again here. He accepts that he used the term "winners and losers" but he also said that the loss of the rank in Market Place would not be too detrimental to the elderly or infirm because there were other provisions available to them in the town.
76	RB mentioned that alfresco diners will be able to use a pedestrianised Market Square during the daytime only. In the evenings there will be vehicles passing through. The Market Square will not be available on market days. Sunday is usually pretty dead in town. The weather is usually not good enough for alfresco dining during autumn, winter and spring, and the summer is pretty hit and miss. It was difficult to work out what WBC are trying to achieve with this proposal, other than disadvantage the vulnerable, drive people away from Newbury and leave the town centre empty and dead. This did not support WBC plans for a vibrant town centre.	WBC is promoting Market Place for events and pavement cafes because this is part of the Vision for Newbury 2025, which has public support.
77	RSJ pointed out that the infirm and disabled will be the biggest losers from this. MC stated that the committee that represents disabled people in discussions with WBC, the Disabled Alliance, have not expressed any reservations about the proposal to remove taxis from the Market Square and seem to be comfortable with the idea.	Not quite correct. The DA has said in its written response that it would like to see the rank retained outside of the 10.00 am to 5.00 pm window.
78	RSJ stated that this would have been a powerful argument in favour of the proposal, if it were true, but it was not. As he sits on the disability committee in question he can confirm that the committee is very concerned indeed at these proposals and will be making representations to that effect.	Not true. We have a written response from the DA that confirms what is stated in the previous officer response.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Option 3	
	Permanently remove all taxi rank space from the Market Square and have the main rank in the Wharf.	
79	This will result in a loss of earnings for the trade as fewer people will come into Newbury. The main losers will be the elderly, the sick and the infirm who need to use taxis as the only viable form of transport. The new rank will be inconvenient for them.	No evidence to support this. The Parkway development will bring changes to the town and if the proposals are adopted there would be an attractive vehicle free environment and other options for taxis elsewhere in Newbury.
80	The night-time revellers will have to congregate on Wharf Road and this is expected to cause trouble on busy nights and for big events as well as create significant traffic risks and increasing crime and fear of crime.	It is considered that the comments about use of the Wharf Street rank causing trouble on busy nights and for big events, and increasing crime and fear of crime are over stated. If a big event was being held in Market Place it is likely that the Market place rank would have been taken out of use in any case. If we are just referring to routine night time activity there is no reason to suppose that the Wharf Street rank would cause any more trouble than the existing Market Place rank. It is considered that traffic risks will be minor because with southbound traffic removed from Park Way bridge vehicles movements will be fairly low in Wharf Street.
81	Taxis will have to manoeuvre and reverse in order to access the rank and this will sometimes have to be done in a crowded area. Unless the feeder rank is re-engineered to prevent this (and this will mean losing the spaces in the car park currently allocated to disabled badge holders) this will cause SIGNIFICANT RISK OF SERIOUS INJURY to people.	It is accepted that some engineering changes will be required and some initial design work is being done on this. It is not anticipated that blue badge spaces in the car park would be lost or that it will be necessary for taxis to reverse. At night when numbers of people waiting for taxis are likely to be higher taxi drivers will have the option of exiting through Market Place as well as via Wharf Road or Park Way bridge.
	Option 4	
	IT WAS AGREED BY THE TAXI REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT THAT THIS IS THE PREFERED OPTION.	
82	The taxi reps introduced a fourth option, this being to implement "Option 1" for 12 months after the opening of the Parkway development and then review the situation at that time when the impact of the new development can be assessed. This option has a lot to commend it as it allows for future changes without the risk of getting it wrong. Decisions can be made in the light of how the development has actually progressed rather than trying to double guess the impact of the development on footfall in Newbury.	It is acknowledged that this option is the one that the taxi trade wish to put forward as their preferred one and hence it is being reported back to Members. However for the record this option was not mentioned at the meeting with MC and BL so it is not a correct minute. As indicated above Option 1 is not recommended by officers for the reasons stated. Consequently it is not considered appropriate to introduce it on a trial basis either. If Members were mindful to retain the current rank in Market Place at night, they could do this on a 12 month trial basis but the difficulties and confusion issues set out in Option 2 would still prevail.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
83	The taxi reps reminded MC that that, as at the date of this meeting, there are only two units let in the new development. One of those units is not a new let to the town. It is just a move from the Kennet Centre. KA noted that this meant that there was only one new let for the whole development.	What SLI have chosen to make public regarding lettings is not a matter for MC or BL to comment on.
	West Berkshire key Policy Objectives	
	AFL questioned MC on the way in which the removal of taxis from the market place would assist WBC in achieving some of its key policy objectives.	
84	AFL's first question was in relation to "CPP 3": "What work has been done to evaluate the impact of moving taxis out of the market place on decreasing West Berkshire's carbon footprint". MC confirmed that no work has been done to support this claim.	MC said that no specific work had been done to support CPP3 but this is a Council Plan priority that the Newbury town centre proposals would support. Removal of vehicles from the pedestrianised zone would reduce CO2 emissions.
85	AFL asked why this claim was made in the "Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues" report submitted to the "Executive" on 18 February 2010. MC stated that no such claim was made in that report. AFL asked who wrote that report. MC stated that he had written that report. AFL read an extract from that report as follows:- "The proposals contained in this report will help to achieve the following Council Plan Priority: CPP3 – Reduce West Berkshire's carbon footprint – to reduce CO2 emissions in West Berkshire and contribute to waste management, green travel, transportation and energy efficiency". MC asked where this was in the report and AFL directed him to what would appear to be page "213". MC then agreed that this was indeed in the report. When asked again how this claim could be substantiated, MC confirmed that it could not be substantiated. When asked why the claim was made in the report MC was unable to provide an explanation, but confirmed that the proposals contained in the report would not contribute to reducing West Berkshire's carbon footprint nor reduce CO2 emissions in West Berkshire nor contribute to waste management, green travel, transportation or energy efficiency.	MC did misunderstand what part of the report AFL was referring to when he raised this matter at the meeting. See previous response. MC did not confirm that the proposals in the report would not contribute to the themes in CPP3.
86	The taxi representatives expressed serious concern as to why officers should make representation in a report to the elected councillors that they knew, or ought to have known, were untrue and could not be substantiated. MC was unable to answer this question.	It was AFL that expressed this not the other representatives at the meeting. Officers stand by the general view that proposals in the report collectively contribute to the CPP3 themes.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
87	<p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 1, Better Roads and Transport”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 1, Better Roads and Transport”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square to a point further away from the point where they are needed, would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim.</p> <p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 2 Thriving Town Centres”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 2 Thriving Town Centres”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square to a point further away from the soon to be desolate town centre would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim.</p> <p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 5, Cleaner and Greener”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 5, Cleaner and Greener”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim.</p> <p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 12, Including Everyone”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 12, Including Everyone”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim.</p>	<p>Officers do not agree with these comments in relation to the Council Plan Themes CPT1, CPT2, CPT5 and CPT12. The proposals taken overall in the report will generally help to achieve these themes. The proposal to remove the taxi rank from Market Place is only one aspect of the interrelated proposals that are being considered holistically. The report does not claim that the individual proposal to remove the rank alone helps to achieve these themes but that the proposals overall do.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
88	<p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 7, Safer and Stronger Communities”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 7, Safer and stronger Communities”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim. When asked if removing taxis from the market square would actually contribute to achieving exactly the opposite effect MC was forced to agree, when reminded by KA of his admission that there would be “winners and losers”, and that the losers would be the vulnerable and infirm.</p> <p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 10, Promoting Independence”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 10, Promoting Independence”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim. When asked if removing taxis from the market square would actually contribute to achieving exactly the opposite effect MC was forced to agree, when reminded by KA of his admission that there would be “winners and losers”, and that the losers would be the vulnerable and infirm, just the sort of people who need to be supported by an easily accessible taxi service.</p> <p>AFL's next question was in relation to “CPT 11, Protecting Vulnerable People”. The report claims that removing taxis from the market will help to achieve “CPT 11, Protecting Vulnerable People”. When MC was asked how removing taxis from the Market Square would help achieve this CPT objective, MC was unable to substantiate this claim. When asked if removing taxis from the market square would actually contribute to achieving exactly the opposite effect MC was forced to agree, when reminded by KA of his admission that there would be “winners and losers”, and that the losers would be the vulnerable and infirm, just the sort of people who need to be supported by an easily accessible taxi service.</p>	<p>Again officers consider that the proposals taken overall in the report will generally help to achieve the CPT7, CPT10 and CPT11 themes. MC does not accept that he was forced to agree that the vulnerable and infirm would be losers. As stated above he used the term "winners and losers" but he said that the loss of the rank in Market Place would not be too detrimental to the elderly or infirm because there were other provisions available to them in the town.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
89	AFL asked MC and BL why WBC has made so many claims that are untrue or cannot be substantiated. BL explained that when writing reports officers need to show what policy objectives will be achieved by the implementation of certain proposals. When pressed to explain why such claims would be made when they cannot possibly be true, BL exclaimed that, "That is the way the Council works".	MC and BL refute that this is what was said. They stand by the position that the collective proposals in the report do generally help to achieve the Council Plan Themes. These themes are not just about the one aspect of the Market Place rank.
90	At this point most of the taxi reps put their head in their hands and laughed.	MC and BL have no recollection of this happening.
	West Berkshire Council Best Practice Guidelines for the Establishment of Taxi Ranks	
91	RB drew the meetings attention to the WBC guidelines on the siting of taxi ranks entitled "West Berkshire Hackney Carriage Taxi Rank (Stand) Information". RB stated that the WBC proposals will not be compliant with WBC's own guidelines which were prepared at great cost to the taxpayer, or the DfT guidelines and may therefore be subjected to judicial review. The guidelines specifically mention the following issues: -	The document entitled "West Berkshire Hackney Carriage Taxi Rank (Stand) Information" was handed to MC by AFL near the end of the meeting. This is the first time MC had seen this document and BL has never seen it either. To MC's and BL's knowledge this is not a document produced by WBC. Checks have been made in the office subsequent to the meeting and no one was aware of its existence. We believe that this document was put together by the taxi trade but can find no evidence of it having been checked, approved or agreed by WBC officers or Members. In due course we would be happy to consider the contents and comment / agree / disagree on whether or not the guidelines are appropriate if requested to do so by the Taxi Trade but at this stage we cannot recognise them as having any official status or therefore accept that the proposals for Newbury town centre fail the guideline tests as suggested by the taxi trade. That said, officer responses to the specific points raised have been made below.
92	"Passengers should be able to find ranks intuitively.....". RB stated that no-one could possibly claim that the canal side is the "intuitive" place for the public to find a taxi. The intuitive place is the Market Square. If WBC's plans for wheelchair users, the elderly and the infirm were any more "intuitive", then the good people of Newbury would be getting their feet wet in the canal. MC did not disagree. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.	Not discussed at the meeting so MC was in no position to disagree.

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
93	<p>“.....Ranks should aim to minimise pedestrian travel distances,”. RB stated that the WBC proposals would maximise pedestrian travel distances. If the rank was to be moved any further away the elderly would fall in the canal. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>The feeder rank is not too distant from Market Place and other ranks have been or are being provided or being investigated as part of the proposals for the town centre. Comments about the elderly falling in the canal are clearly nonsense.</p>
94	<p>“..... be central to the areas that they serve,” RB pointed out that the WBC proposals would make the WBC proposed main rank as far from being central to the areas they serve as it is possible to be. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>After the Parkway development opens the current ranks in Northbrook Street and the new rank to be provided in Park Way will become more important. The recently provided rank in Market Place is close to the Kennet Centre. Wharf Road feeder rank, which is proposed to be converted to a formal rank, is quite close to Market Place and not far from the Parkway development.</p>
95	<p>“... have good access and egress for vehicles.” RB pointed out that without substantial reconstruction of the feeder rank, which will necessitate the removal of all the parking spaces currently designated as disabled parking, it will not be possible for taxis to be able to leave the rank without performing a three point turn. This will be dangerous at the best of times and extremely dangerous at peak times. The risk of a member of the public being struck by a manoeuvring vehicle will be too high to be allowable. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>This is not the case. Some adjustments to the feeder rank will be required but it is not envisaged that it will be necessary to remove the blue badge parking in the adjacent Wharf car park or that it will be necessary for taxis to perform three point turns. At off peak times there will be no traffic using Wharf Street because the rising bollards will be up and at peak times the traffic flows will be much less than at present because there will be no traffic coming south over Park Way bridge.</p>
96	<p>“Pedestrian access to ranks should be favoured over vehicle access” RB pointed out that the wharf is not the easiest pedestrian access point. The Market Square is. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>The proposal to convert the feeder rank does not unduly disadvantage pedestrian access in favor of vehicle access.</p>
97	<p>“Ranks should be located closest to the point of highest passenger need.....” RB pointed out that no-one, not even the most ardent supporters of this scheme would agree that the distant wharf is closer to the point of passenger need. When an old and or disabled person collects their pension from the GPO on a windy, rainy and frozen January morning and has to struggle though the hoards of alfresco diners to the wharf to find a taxi then they might feel the guideline test should have been applied. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>The new Market Street rank is quite close to the post office. Also taxis can drop and pick up passengers from within the Kennet Centre car park without incurring any charges although it is accepted that there is a height restriction in this car park that prevents vehicles over 2.0 metres in height. It is also the case that it is not an offence to drop off or pick up passengers on roads just outside the pedestrianised zone even if there are restrictions in place. It is acknowledged that picking up would be more difficult as it would require prior arrangement because it would be a parking offence for a taxi to wait for prolonged periods for a passenger.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
98	<p>“Ramps and steps from the vehicle should be used only from the nearside passenger doors.” RSJ pointed out that it can take ten to fifteen minutes to load a wheelchair. Under the proposed arrangements it will not be possible to load passengers from the rank, regardless of the direction of the rank. It will not be possible to load a wheelchair in the wharf car park in the middle of moving traffic. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test and significantly increases the risk to wheelchair bound passengers.</p>	<p>The requirements for wheelchair passengers will be discussed with the Disability Alliance and with the Access Officer in order to best accommodate the needs of these passengers.</p>
99	<p>“Feeder ranks need not be located close to pedestrian access routes, although they should be within line of sight of the main rank which they are feeding” This is not currently the case, but the proposals presented by the trade will remedy this planning error. Under the plan to remove taxis from the Market Square this guideline test will no longer be relevant.</p>	<p>There is no requirement to provide feeder ranks although WBC has provided one in Newbury because of the special circumstances of there being a main rank within a zone controlled by rising bollards fed from a rank outside and because historically more taxis than the current 4 were permitted in Market Place. Line of sight is not necessary because of the traffic light system that has been provided that has been discussed earlier.</p>
100	<p>“A minimum unobstructed foot way width of 4,040mm should be provided to allow for the full extension of wheelchair ramps.....” MC advised that an engineers report has been commissioned to draw up plans for the new taxi rank. RB commented that the proposed new main rank is a parallel two lane rank which will require 8,080mm for wheelchair loading. It is unlikely that WBC will want to lose so much revenue generating parking space from the car park to provide this space. The market is ideal and well placed to meet this guideline. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square will fail this guideline test.</p>	<p>No report has been commissioned – MC did not say this. WBC engineers will design the changes to the feeder rank in house – some preliminary work on this has already been done. Clearly the dimensions quoted would not be achievable and it is not considered that they would be necessary. The feeder rank operates as a formal rank on Charter Market days at present so there is no reason to suppose that the scale of redesign being suggested would be necessary.</p>
101	<p>“Rank locations should be risk-assessed in consultation with the local crime and disorder reduction partnership/community safety partnership.” DO stated that WBC currently argues that police support the proposed changes, even though the police have yet to produce a formal policy statement. WBHPHA committee members have discussed the proposals with officers on the beat on the Market Square and have not found a single officer who believes the proposed changes are a good idea. All officers asked believe that the rank should remain in the market. The plan to remove taxis from the Market Square fails this guideline test.</p>	<p>WBC can only consider the official police view. This view takes account of the input of beat officers and senior police officers. It would not be appropriate to base any decisions on anecdotal evidence. The police position is set out in detail above.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
102	<p>As stated at the beginning of the taxi trade section of this table the submission was accompanied by a covering letter. The tone of this letter is much less confrontation than the minutes and is attached as Appendix 2 to this document.</p> <p>As part of its submission the taxi trade also attached a petition that says "We the undersigned, wish to make a formal complaint against West Berkshire District Council ("WBC") in respect of their "Newbury Vision" plan to remove taxis from the market square taxi rank. We agree with the West Berkshire Taxi and Private Hire Association and the Cabco Association that this plan is not in the interests of the elderly with mobility issues, the disabled who will have further to travel to a taxi rank, or the public generally. We believe that moving the taxi rank to the wharf will increase the possibility of public disorder and will increase crime and fear of crime. We agree that moving the rank to the other end of the market square as shown on the drawing overleaf will be of benefit to Newbury town centre. WBC are instructed to log an individual formal complaint against this policy for each petitioner who affixes their signature below. Thank you."</p> <p>The petition has 194 signatories.</p>	<p>In summary the taxi trade is saying that in the long term their Option 2 is likely to be the most sensible outcome. However they are advocating Option 1 for an initial period of one year. The Officer responses above set out why Option 1 cannot be recommended even on a trial basis for one year. Members could opt for the alternative of retaining the rank in Market Place at night only but there are problems associated with this solution as set out above. The police have indicated that they would have no objection to removal of the Market Place rank but would like to see an alternative night time rank in the bus lay-by outside the main post office. The officer recommendation is that Option 3, complete removal of the Market Place rank, and introduction of this police suggestion is the one that we should proceed with.</p> <p>The petition covers the same issues that have been discussed above but will have to be formally responded to in due course. It is premature because the Council is in the feedback stage at present and has not yet finalised its proposals or published traffic regulation orders that would be necessary in order to effect the changes. It is not appropriate for the Council to log an individual formal complaint for each petitioner that signs. The formal complaints process is not the correct process to object to a proposal. Consequently this will be treated as a normal petition.</p>
103	<p>E-mail from AFL received dated 17 June 2010 asking us to add the following ideas from AV to the list for consideration:</p> <p>(1) The main Market Place rank to be moved back for a line of sight to the feeder rank and also go for 5 spaces with proper signage to be agreed.</p> <p>(2) Taxi Marshals both day time and night time for the first 2 weeks to inform and educate public.</p> <p>(3) Additional timed ranks:</p> <p>(a) 6 spaces opposite Dolphin PH (in loading bays);</p> <p>(b) Outside Iceland (the bus stop will be made redundant and has a shelter and high raised kerb);</p> <p>(c) 4 spaces at the top of Northbrook Street near Mcdonalds, from 8.00 pm to 6.00 am.</p> <p>(4) Better signage for Market Street rank and seating for disabled and elderly.</p>	<p>Point (1) - Covered above and is not recommended by officers.</p> <p>Point (2) - There may be merit in this when the town centre changes first come in but there are currently no plans or finance in place to employ Marshals either on a temporary or permanent basis.</p> <p>Point (3)(a) - We can accommodate 5 spaces on west side or 4 spaces on the east side (same side as PH) but the officer view is that it would not be appropriate to do this on both sides of the road.</p> <p>Point (3)(b) - Covered above and is an officer recommendation.</p> <p>Point (3)(c) - Officers do not recommend outside McDonalds because these are blue badge spaces but are happy to provide 2 or 3 additional spaces in the redundant bus stop a short distance north of this point.</p> <p>Point (4) - Signage has been provided (see above). If we go ahead with removal of the Market Place rank locations for additional seating will be explored.</p>

Response Number	Issue / Comment	Officer Response
	Royal Mail – Newbury Delivery Office	
	E-mail received dated 21 June 2010.	
104	No objection to the removal of our vehicle access through Northbrook Street and we will look at alternative collection arrangements or removal / re-locating post boxes to enable safe, secure collection.	Noted.
105	The bridge at Park Way is currently an important main route for our collection vehicles. Denial of access to this will undoubtedly have a significant impact on the collection service we can offer our many business customers in Newbury. For these reasons we would like to oppose this part of the proposal and would like our opposition / concerns to be registered.	Under our proposals Park Way bridge would be converted to a two-way public transport corridor. This corridor would allow buses, taxis and cycles to use the route via a bus/taxi/cycle lane. The regulations that would come into place with the necessary traffic regulation order do not allow use by any other vehicles except emergency service vehicles when responding to an emergency call.
	Fire and Rescue Service	
106	An e-mail was sent to the Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service on 24 May 2010 together with a copy of the Newbury Town Centre Traffic Management Issues report offering a meeting with Mark Cole to discuss any difficulties that the proposals might cause and to seek to resolve these if possible. No response has been received.	Use of Park Way Bridge will be permitted when responding to an emergency call.
	Cycle Forum	
107	An e-mail was sent to the Cycle Forum members on 11 June 2010 by Jenny Graham - Transport Policy Team Leader offering a meeting with Mark Cole to discuss any difficulties that the town centre proposals might cause and to seek to resolve these if possible. She advised that there may not be a need for a meeting and that comments could be sent straight to Mark or her. No comments have been received.	The proposals do not take away from cyclists any current routes that they can use and offers them Park Way bridge along with buses and taxis. This may be why there has been no response.

Mark Cole
Traffic Services Manager