

Individual Decision

Title of Report:	Proposed Taxi Rank – High Street, Hungerford		
Report to be considered by:	Councillor Sally Hannon	on:	31st March 2005
Forward Plan Ref:	ID0899		

Purpose of Report:

To inform the Portfolio Member for Highways and Transportation of the objections received following the statutory advertisement and consultation on a proposed taxi rank at High Street, Hungerford.

Recommended Action:

That the Portfolio Member resolves to approve the recommendations as set out in Section 5 of this report.

Reason for decision to be taken:

On 4 July 2003, an Individual Decision made by the Portfolio Member for Highways and Transportation authorised the statutory advertisement of and consultation on a proposed Traffic Regulation Order with any objections to be reported back for a further decision. The advertisement and consultation has now been carried out and three objections have been received.

List of other options considered:

A number of alternative sites for taxi rank provision were considered within the town centre following suggestions from local stakeholders. All the sites were found to have disadvantages over and above any that this proposal may present.

Key background documentation:

- Plan number TMS/02-03/80/02
- Report to the Transportation Sub-Committee, dated 9th December 1999
- ID0577 Individual Decision record
- Letters of objection

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Supporting Information

1. Background

- 1.1 As part of the planning agreement for the Somerfield store it was agreed to convert the existing 'Pay and Display' parking bay adjacent to the stores access road, for the provision of public transport. At its meeting of 9th December 1999 the Transportation Sub-Committee approved the conversion of the 'Pay & Display' parking bay to a bus bay.
- 1.2 It was subsequently decided that this location would be more suitable for the introduction of a taxi rank. As part of an informal consultation exercise, Hungerford Town Council and establishments within the town centre agreed that a taxi rank was required but expressed reservations in respect of this site. Although a number of alternative sites were suggested, this location was considered by officers to be the most suitable.
- 1.3 The results of the informal consultation were considered by Individual Decision (ref ID0577) on 4th July 2003 when it was agreed to proceed with the statutory advertisement and consultation on a Prohibition of Stopping (except taxis) Order in the existing parking bay.

2. Responses to statutory consultation

- 2.1 During the statutory consultation process objections were received from Hungerford Town Council, The Hungerford Town Plan 2010+ Project and The West Berkshire Taxi and Private Hire Association.
- 2.2 Hungerford Town Council objected to the proposed location for the taxi rank and suggested that it should be located on Everland Road, which is the approach road to the Somerfield superstore. The West Berkshire Taxi and Private Hire Association suggested alternative locations that included Everland Road, in the Somerfield car park, the Church Street car park, under the railway bridge on High Street and outside the Town Hall. The Hungerford Town Plan 2010+ Project objected but did not suggest an alternative location.

3. Officers Response to Statutory Consultation objections.

- 3.1 It would not be appropriate to locate the taxi rank on Everland Road, as it is not part of the public highway. Similarly, the Somerfield car park is on private property, which could lead to difficulties and is therefore not suitable for a formal taxi rank.
- 3.2 The car park on Church Street is located approximately 100 metres from the High Street and is not a prominent and suitable location for a taxi rank.
- 3.3 There are a number of road safety issues with locating a taxi rank outside the Town Hall. It is accessed via a physically restricted area, would lead to potential conflict with the market and its exit would be located close to a mini roundabout. Given that there is an existing 'Bus Lane' at this location a significant investment in accommodation works would be required to safely provide the taxi rank.
- 3.4 Locating a taxi rank beneath the railway bridge would be technically feasible but this area is currently used as a parking area for disabled badge holders. Any loss of disabled parking would not be acceptable and should the taxi rank be located in this position, a new disabled parking area would

need to be created in a suitable location. This would involve legal costs to modify existing traffic regulation orders and engineering costs to upgrade the road surface where the disabled bays would be located. It is estimated that these costs would be in the region of £2,500.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 Taxi ranks should be located at sites where they are clearly visible and easily accessible from all amenities.
- 4.2 To address the objections raised it is possible to convert the existing disabled parking bay located underneath the railway bridge on the eastern side of the High Street to a taxi rank. However the disabled bays would need to be relocated and the most suitable location would be to convert a section of the parking area on the western side of the High Street underneath the railway bridge. Measures would be required to upgrade the road surface so that it is suitable for use by the disabled.
- 4.3 Hungerford Town Council has been consulted on this proposal and is supportive of the recommendation. The Town Council has also indicated that they are willing to jointly fund the works to upgrade the parking area for the disabled bays.
- 4.4 A legal order will be required to provide a taxi rank and disabled bays in the revised locations. This can be incorporated within any measures proposed as a result of the Hungerford Parking Review that was recently undertaken.

5. Recommendation

- 5.1 That the location of the taxi rank and disabled bays be relocated as described in paragraph 4.2 and included as part of any proposed measures from the Hungerford Parking Review. The implementation be jointly funded by West Berkshire Council and Hungerford Town Council.
- 5.2 That the objectors be informed accordingly.

Appendices

None

Implications

Policy:	This proposal is in keeping with the Council's objectives as laid out in the Local Transport Plan 2001/2 – 2005/6 which seeks to promote Public Transport use wherever possible.
Financial:	The traffic regulation order will be incorporated within any orders proposed as a result of the Hungerford Parking Review. The implementation of the taxi rank and disabled bays at the recommended locations will be jointly funded by West Berkshire Council and Hungerford Town Council.
Personnel:	None arising from this report.
Legal:	A Traffic Regulation Order will be required to implement the taxi rank and disabled bays at the locations recommended in the report.
Environmental:	None arising from this report.
Equalities:	None arising from this report.
Partnering:	None arising from this report.

Consultation Responses

Members:	
Leader of Council:	Councillor Royce Longton supports the recommendation provided that it has the support of the ward members.
Select Committee Chairmen:	Councillor Brian Bedwell supports the recommendation provided that it has the support from the ward members and Hungerford Town Council.
P&L Committee Chairman (where appropriate):	N/A
Ward Members:	Councillor James Mole supports the recommendation and Councillor Denise Gaines could not be contacted as she was on holiday.
Opposition Spokesperson:	Councillor Brian Bedwell supports the recommendation provided that it has the support from the ward members and Hungerford Town Council.
Advisory Members:	N/A
Local Stakeholders:	Have been consulted as part of the statutory consultation process.
Officers Consulted:	Mark Cole, Mark Edwards and Neil Stacey
Trade Union:	No Trade Union implications.