

# Executive

## Integrated Vehicle Parking Strategy Taxi Ranks

6 July 2009

### Report of Head of Urban and Rural Services

#### PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise Members on progress with the initial options appraisal for additional rank space for Hackney Carriage Vehicles in Banbury, Bicester and Kidlington.

This report is public
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#### Recommendations

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The Executive is recommended to:

- (1) Note the review and options appraisal.
- (2) Approve further detailed design/investigation into additional rank space on the preferred options of:
  - Banbury: Bridge Street
  - Banbury: Horsefair
  - Banbury: North Bar
  - Bicester: Bell Lane
  - Kidlington: Oxford Road
- (3) Delegate responsibility to the Head of Urban and Rural Services in consultation with the Leader of the Council to:
  - Seek agreement with Oxfordshire County Council on funding and implementation of the final scheme's
  - Undertake formal consultation on the selected options, and
  - Secure any approvals from Department for Transport

## **Executive Summary**

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### **Introduction**

- 1.1 The Executive received a report at its 2 March 2009 meeting and resolved that options for additional taxi rank spaces should be investigated further.

### **Proposals**

- 1.2 A number of sites for possible ranks to be considered have been suggested to the Council by both Cherwell Valley Hackney Association (CVHA) and North Oxfordshire Hackney Association (NOHA).
- 1.3 These have been reviewed by the Council's Licensing Team and Engineers and by the Highways Department of Oxfordshire County Council (OCC). Sites that are likely to be more feasible have been considered further.
- 1.4 Feasibility and initial design has been undertaken into:
  - Banbury: Bridge Street
  - Banbury: Horsefair
  - Banbury: North Bar
  - Bicester: Bell Lane
  - Kidlington: Oxford Road

These locations are proposed for more detailed assessment and formal consultation. Some are proposed as dual use: daytime for disabled parking and after 6pm for taxi ranks. This maximises the use of available town centre parking (dual use on the Highway requires Department for Transport approval (DfT)).

### **Conclusion**

- 1.5 Following the delimitation on Hackney Carriage Vehicle licenses in Cherwell, there has been increased demand for rank space in the urban centres; particularly Banbury and Bicester.  
The sites identified as preferred options in this report would provide this additional capacity and improve the service to the public in urban centres.

## **Background Information**

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- 2.1 The delimiting of Hackney Carriage Vehicle (HCV) licensing in October 2007 has seen the number of HCV's in the Cherwell district rise by 40%. At the time of delimiting the Council licensed 84 Hackney Carriage Vehicles (HCV's) and 6 taxi-buses. There are currently 122 HCV's and 6 taxi-buses. This has led to pressure on the ranks that are provided in Banbury and Bicester and to this review of rank space.
- 2.2 There are ranks at Bicester and Banbury rail stations and whilst this review takes account of these they are not controlled by the Council. Contact has been made with Chilterns Railways on several occasions over recent months to discuss driver's issues but the company has not responded.
- 2.3 A petition was received from CVHA in February 2009, signed by 65 HCV license holders requesting the Council to provide additional rank space.
- 2.4 Informal consultation then took place with the two taxi associations (CVHA and NOHA) and invited the submission of proposals for possible taxi rank sites. Consultation also took place with Banbury and Bicester town councils, Kidlington Parish Council, OCC and DfT to secure views on the scale of any problem with rank space, and views as to possible locations for additional ranks.
- 2.5 The feedback secured from these consultations has been set out in the Schedule at Appendix 1, together with brief officer comments as to the feasibility on the sites suggested.
- 2.6 Following site visits to the various locations, a short list of potential options was drawn up by the Head of Urban and Rural Services and initial feasibility and engineering design undertaken.
- 2.7 **Preferred Options- Banbury**

### **Bridge Street:**

The existing rank has nine spaces and is the rank that is most used in the daytime. It would be possible to provide four additional spaces on this rank if the three existing disabled parking bays were re-designated, and some engineering works undertaken to alter the current rank configuration. A new egress onto the Bridge Street mini roundabout would be required.

As some of the works is on highway land this would require OCC approval.

A plan showing this outline proposal is attached at Appendix 2.

This option should only be considered if the parking bays for disabled drivers are provided in new areas close to the existing provision. There are disabled bays immediately in front of the Town hall which will not be affected and there are plans, as part of the Parson Street improvements, for five additional disabled parking spaces alongside the Nat West building; an additional three to the existing three in Market Place; and a further three in addition to the existing three spaces at the top of Parson Street in the North Bar car park. These schemes would increase disabled parking provision in this town centre area from ten spaces to eighteen spaces.

The estimated cost of extending the rank at Bridge Street is £40,000

### **Horsefair:**

The existing rank has seven spaces and is also the location of the coach drop off/pick up with maximum waiting time of 15 minutes and spaces for two coaches. The land is not designated as highway.

This tends to be the rank that is most used in the evening.

By redesigning the traffic flows and layout of the rank and coach bays it would be possible to increase the capacity of the rank by five spaces. There are different potential options for this site, including removing coach drop off parking down to the bus station and developing a public space in this area. Informal soundings have however raised concerns that removing coach drop offs will have adverse impact on the High Street and this end of the Town and is not therefore recommended.

Appendix 3 shows outline proposals.

The estimated cost of redesigning and extending rank spaces at Horsefair is £3,000.

### **North Bar:**

No existing rank provision.

In view of the Parson Street improvements and focal point in this area of the town of restaurants and pubs, a new rank at the top of Parson Street would be a good site offering improved public access to taxi services in the evening. This would also take pressure away from the Horsefair rank.

Options are in North Bar vehicle park, in either the existing disabled bays (note- additional bays to be included as part of the Parson Street improvements) and operating as dual use with evening rank, or on the internal car park access road with amended traffic circulation. The land is not designated as highway.

Outline proposals are set out at Appendix 4.

The estimated cost of these proposals are; Options 1 £3,000; Option 2 £3,000

## **2.8 Preferred Options- Bicester**

### **Bell Lane:**

No existing rank provision.

The current rank provision is in Market Hill. A new rank at the other end of the High Street would be a good location and offer improved public access to taxi services.

The existing disabled parking bays on Bell Lane have been identified as a preferred option. The lay-by has capacity for five vehicles. Surveys in April 2009 indicate average daytime occupancy of these bays by 2.7 disabled drivers.

With new signage and lining this lay-by could operate on a dual use basis after 6pm as a taxi rank. This would require approval of OCC and DfT. Informal soundings indicate that this would be supported.

This land is designated as highway. Negotiations with OCC have secured in principle support for their funding up to £5,000.

Costs are estimated to be £1,500 to £9,000 depending on the extent of any re-kerbing works.

#### **Market Hill:**

Existing rank is located here. In view of the Market Square redevelopment proposals, any work on rank location/spaces needs to be progressed through the Project Team responsible.

### **2.9 Preferred Options- Kidlington**

#### **Oxford Road:**

There are no ranks in Kidlington. The Parish Council has indicated that they do not perceive any significant demand, but have expressed support for a trial of an evening rank in the lay by outside the Nat West bank on Oxford Road.

This is a lower priority.

This land is designated as highway. Costs are estimated at £1,500.

### **Key Issues for Consideration/Reasons for Decision and Options**

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- 3.1 Key issues for consideration are: the number of licensed HCV's and the increased demand for rank space since de-limiting; that rank locations need to be agreed with consultees, particularly OCC, Thames Valley Police and DfT; that the Traffic Regulation Order making process can take between 4 and 9 months to implement. Funding for implementing new ranks would need to be secured.
- 3.2 Additional rank space is required in view of the 40% increase in licensed vehicles since de-limiting. It is not suggested that HCV license fees be increased to recoup costs in view of the increased fee income secured from increase in license applications and in view of the difficult economic climate that is having an affect on the trade.

The following options have been identified. The approach in the recommendations is believed to be the best way forward

## Options

The Council can:

- Progress with all options or
- Progress some of the options or
- Retain the current provision with no increase

## Consultations

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### Town and Parish Councils

As set out in this report.

### Oxfordshire County Council

Support in principle. Discussions will need to resolve Traffic Regulation Orders timing and process.

### Taxi Associations

As set out in this report.

### Department for Transport- Bell Lane

DfT comment: The bay will need to be marked in white (diag 1028.3) with a yellow bar (diag. 1017) at the back. Signs to Diagram 650.2 and 661a will need to be erected. Authorisation from the DfT to be able to use the yellow plate with a white marking is required.

## Implications

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### Financial:

The estimated costs for implementing the report recommendations are:

- Banbury: Bridge Street £40,000
- Banbury: Horsefair £3,000
- Banbury: North Bar £3,000
- Bicester: Bell Lane £1,500-£9,000
- Kidlington: Oxford Road £1,500

Negotiations with OCC have secured agreement in principle to OCC funding up to £5,000 for the Bicester Bell Lane proposal.

The other proposals will be subject to funding negotiations with OCC and form part of the budget preparations for 2010/11.

Comments checked by Karen Muir, Service Accountant 01295 221545

### Legal:

Traffic Regulation Orders for ranks on the highway and Car Park Orders for ranks in Council Vehicle Parks will need to be formally advertised and consulted. DfT authorisation is required for dual use of disabled parking bays.

Comments checked by Paul Manning, Solicitor 01295 221691

**Risk Management:** Additional rank space will assist in delivering an accessible taxi service to the public. Locations in convenient places in the towns helps to move people out of town centres, particularly in the evening, and helps to reduce crime and disorder. It would also help diffuse tensions on the ranks at times when there is insufficient space to accommodate all the vehicles.

Comments checked by Rosemary Watts, Risk Management and Insurance Officer 01295 221566

#### **Wards Affected**

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All

#### **Corporate Plan Themes**

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**An Accessible Value for Money Council  
A Safe and Healthy Cherwell**

#### **Executive Portfolio**

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**Councillor Nigel Morris  
Portfolio Holder for Community Safety, Street Scene and Rural**

#### **Document Information**

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<b>Appendix No</b>	<b>Title</b>
Appendix 1	Schedule of options
Appendix 2	Outline proposals for Banbury, Bridge Street
Appendix 3	Outline proposals for Banbury, Horsefair
Appendix 4	Outline proposals for Banbury, North Bar-Option 1 and 2
<b>Background Papers</b>	
Executive Report 2 March 2009	
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