

Regulatory and Other Committee

Open Report on behalf of Paul Coathup, Assistant Director, Highways & Transportation

Report to:	Planning & Regulation Committee
Date:	02 December 2013
Subject:	Proposed Taxi Ranks - Gladstone Street & Parnell Street, Gainsborough

Summary:

As the meeting of this Committee on 28 November 2011, objections were considered to proposals for the introduction of permanent taxi ranks in Parnell Street and Gladstone Street, Gainsborough. This report seeks to reach a resolution on these objections following a period of monitoring.

Recommendation(s):

1) That the objections to the temporary taxi ranks being made permanent be received.

2) That, in response to the objections and in the light of monitoring, the proposed full-time taxi rank on Gladstone Street be amended to night-time only, no waiting 6.00pm to 8.00am except taxis, and the proposed taxi rank on Parnell Street be not proceeded with.

3) That, in addition to the proposals at 2) above, proposals be concurrently advertised and consulted on to introduce permanent taxi facilities on the north side of Lord Street and the west side of Church Street, as follows:-

Lord Street, north side -

No waiting at any time except taxis, between points 12m and 30m east of the centreline of Bright Street.

Church Street, west side -

No waiting at any time except taxis, between points 80m and 95m south of the centreline of Gladstone Street,

Loading by goods vehicles only, between points 68m and 80m south of the centreline of Gladstone Street.

Background

1. At the meeting of this committee on 28 November 2011, objections were considered to proposals to introduce two permanent taxi ranks in Gainsborough to replace similar temporary ranks (see Appendix A). The main grounds for objection were that the taxi ranks are under-used, and that they adversely affected the operation of the nearby church on Gladstone Street with regard to weddings, funerals, blood donation, etc...
2. Members will recall that the taxi ranks were originally introduced on a temporary basis in 2010 to support the local taxi trade during works within the highway which were expected to temporarily remove from use and existing rank on Market Street. However, the works on Market Street were postponed and didn't actually take place until early in 2013.
3. In November 2011, the Committee agreed to make a further temporary Order for 12 months (with an option to extend it by a maximum of 6 months) to cover the rescheduled proposed work on Market Street and to give an opportunity to monitor the performance and usage of the temporary taxi ranks before reaching a decision on whether or not they should be made permanent. This temporary Order was eventually made in September 2012 and had the advantage of coming into operation at the same time as Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) was introduced, giving an indication of how the taxi ranks would be used under the CPE regime once the works were completed. The temporary taxi ranks were therefore monitored before, during and after the works in Market Street.
4. It was evident that, even when no other rank was available, the facility on Gladstone Street was unpopular with taxi operators, apparently due to its remoteness from the central shopping area, to the point where it would remain unoccupied for long periods of time. Similarly, the rank of Parnell Street was unpopular and under-used, although experience suggested that this was because customers were more likely to approach a waiting taxi from behind, which has potential implications for the personal security of the driver. It was noted, however, that Lord Street, which is adjacent to Parnell Street, became an informal taxi rank, often with a number of vehicles waiting to pick up customers. This observation has led to alternative proposals for permanent taxi ranks in Gainsborough, which are discussed below and illustrated on Plan B.
5. Since the introduction of the temporary taxi rank on Gladstone Street, a nearby night club has closed down, arguably reducing the demand for a local taxi facility. However, a fast food restaurant, part of a national chain, is being constructed nearby and this, together with the possibility of the night club reopening at some point, may well lead to increased demand for taxis associated with the night-time economy of the area. For this reason it is proposed to retain the taxi rank on Gladstone Street but reduce its hours of operation to overnight, that is, 1800hrs to 0800hrs (see Plan B). In this way, potential future demand is addressed while at the same time reintroducing a number of on-street parking places during the day in the town centre.

6. There is undoubtedly an over-subscription of taxis in Gainsborough compared with available spaces on ranks. At the request of West Lindsey District Council (the licencing authority) alternative locations for taxi ranks have been sought to provide for vehicles displaced by increased enforcement due to CPE. Two alternative locations have been identified for full-time taxi ranks, namely Lord Street and Church Street.
7. As discussed in Paragraph 4 above, during the period when street works in Market Street prevented the existing taxi rank from being used, Lord Street became an informal taxi rank. Lord Street is only of local importance, forming part of a matrix of streets around the town centre which are a mix of residential, commercial and community buildings (library, Old Hall), where most traffic is circulating looking for an on-street parking place. At around 7.5m wide, it would be able to accommodate a taxi rank in an area where there is frequent indiscriminate parking in contravention of the waiting restrictions (see Plan C).
8. Church Street is a one-way shopping street, contiguous with Market Street. On its eastern side there is limited waiting , while on its western side there is a loading bay for goods vehicles and a bus stop. The loading bay is an over-provision at this location, being designed for an articulated vehicle. It could be reduced in length, and the released kerb space given over to a short taxi rank (see Plan D).

Conclusion

It is evident that the temporary taxi ranks are under-used, and members might be minded to agree that it would be inappropriate for them to remain in an area of the town centre where on-street parking is at a premium. Bearing this in mind, and with regard to the over-subscription of taxi rank places generally in Gainsborough, the revised proposals for the provision of new taxi ranks are commended to the Committee.

Consultation

a) Policy Proofing Actions Required

N/A

Appendices

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Taxi Plan A 2013
Appendix B	Taxis Gladstone Street Plan B
Appendix C	Taxis Lord Street Plan C
Appendix D	Taxis Chruch Street Plan D

Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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