



Belfast City Council

Report to: Development Committee

Subject: Proposed new, and extension to existing Public Hire Taxi Ranks

Date: 12 May 2010

Reporting Officer: John McGrillen Director of Development ext 3459

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Relevant Background Information

The Department for Regional Development (DRD) is currently considering the potential for the provision of new or extended taxi ranks and have requested comments from the Council. The proposed ranks would be for the use of Belfast Public Hire taxis only.

The Committee may wish to note that the Licensing Committee previously raised the issue of taxi rank provision as it related to licensing matters. Following the March Special Licensing Committee the Council requested that the Minister for the Environment brought forward the necessary legislation to introduce new and extended taxi rank provision at the earliest opportunity.

It should also be noted that a separate review of Taxi Regulations covering the licensing of taxi operators, drivers and vehicles, fares and taximeters, hiring of taxi at separate fares, enforcement and penalties has been carried out by the Departments. The review resulted in the Taxi Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 which it is proposed will be enacted, following consultation, on a phased approach over the next few years.

Key Issues

The locations of the DRD Road Service proposals for new or modified ranks, for use by Belfast Public Hire Taxi's, are outlined in the maps contained in **Appendix 1**. The context map sets out the locations of the existing public hire taxi ranks which are not proposed to be modified. The specific locations maps provide details for the proposed changes in each local area.

The draft Council response to proposed new, and extension to existing Public Hire Taxi Ranks is outlined below:

- The Council welcomes the proposed extension and additional provision of ranks for public taxi hire in new locations which could enhance provision for customers in Belfast. This support recognises the important role that taxi operators perform in supporting access and contributing to the successful management of the night time economy in Belfast.
- In relation to the geographic distribution of the proposed provision the Council would highlight that there are no proposals for provision outside of the centre or the South of the city. The Council would therefore request clarification of the criteria for provision and the process for ongoing review of provision to ensure future equity and access to services for customers across the city.
- As part of the assessment for the final locations and the extent of provision consideration should be given to limiting the extension of taxi ranks which are in close proximity to residential areas such as the Chelsea Bar on the Lisburn Road. The potential for adverse impacts arising from noise and potential disruption in these more sensitive locations should be carefully assessed and future operation monitored.
- The internal Council consultation confirmed that the proposals are unlikely to adversely impact on council operations such as licensed street trading and cleansing. However, the Council would like to highlight that the current concentration of public hire taxis on Donegall Square North causes traffic disruption and should be monitored and enforced as an important element of this review of operational provision.
- This review and increase in provision should form part of a clear process to enact the provisions of the 2008 Taxi Act to address all aspects of the service operation. The Council would request that the consultation and enactment of the Taxi Act (Northern Ireland) 2008 is progressed expeditiously to ensure effective regulation and enforcement of taxi services across both the public and private hire sectors.

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to consider the content of the suggested response to the proposed revisions to the public taxi rank locations and, if appropriate, agree a response to be submitted to DRD Roads Service.

Decision Tracking

Further to agreement, that, if appropriate a response be submitted to Roads Service.

Timeline: June 2010

Reporting Officer: Shirley McCay

Key Abbreviations

Department for Regional Development - DRD

Documents Attached

Appendix 1 – Lists and Maps indicating locations of proposed new, extended and existing Public Hire Taxi ranks
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Appendix 1

The proposed new ranks, which will operate at all times, are to be located at:

- Berry Street at Castle court
- Botanic Avenue at Railway Station
- Bridge Street from Iceland to the Northern Whig bar
- Elmwood Avenue at QUB Student Union
- Linenhall Street at Ten Square Hotel
- Murray Street at Jurys Hotel
- Smithfield North at Castle Court

The proposed news ranks which will operate from 7.00pm to 7.00am are located at:

- Botanic Avenue at Madison Hotel
- Donegall Square West at the Apartment Bar
- Donegall Street at the Kremlin nightclub
- Elmwood Avenue at the Parlour Bar
- Lisburn Road at the Chelsea (Marlborough Park)
- Lower Crescent at Scratch Bar
- Ormeau Ave at Katy Dalys Bar
- Ormeau Road at the Errigle Inn
- Tomb Street at Milk nightclub
- Union Street at the Rainbow Centre

The extension of existing ranks, which will operate at all times, is proposed at:

- Amelia Street from Bains Place to Brunswick Street

The extension of existing ranks, with limited operation between 7.00pm and 7.00am, is proposed at:

- Bradbury Place at Benedicts's Hotel
- Bradbury Place at Lavery's Bar
- Brunswick Street at Irene and Nan's
- Great Victoria Street opposite Glengall Street
- Malone Road at the Botanic Inn
- Malone Road at the Olde Eglantine Inn
- Waring Street opposite the Merchant Hotel

LOCATION OF CURRENT TAXI RANKS IN BELFAST

Location	Operating Times	No of spaces
Amelia Street	At all times	7
Bedford Street	(7pm to 7am)	6
Bradbury Place (East)	(7pm to 7am)	1
Bradbury Place (East)	(7pm to 7am)	3
Bradbury Pace (West)	(7pm to 7am)	4
Brunswick Street	(7pm to 7am)	4
Chichester Street	At all times	10
Corporation Square (North) (1)	At all times	4
Corporation Square (North) (2)	At all times	3
Donegall Street	(7pm to 7am)	3
Donegall Quay (West)	At all times	1
Donegall Square East	At all times	8
Donegall Square North	At all times	6
Dublin Road (Elbow)	(7pm to 7am)	3
Dublin Road (Cinema)	(7pm to 7am)	8
Fisherwick Place	At all times	3
Glengall Street (North)	At all times	2
Glengall Street (South)	At all times	5
Great Victoria Street (West)	At all times	3
Great Victoria Street (East)	(7pm to 7am)	3
Lisburn Road - Kings Hall	At all times	3
Malone Road (West)	(7pm to 7am)	4
Malone Road (East)	(7pm to 7am)	2
May's Meadow	At all times	16
University Road	(7pm to 7am)	5
University Street	(6pm to 8am)	4
Waring Street	(7pm to 7am)	6
TOTAL		127

Maps of proposed new, extended and existing Public Hire Taxi ranks