



**SCC LOCAL COMMITTEE IN
SPELTHORNE**

**TAXI STAND SITES -
CONSULTATION PROCESS &
STAINES BUS STATION**

19 JUNE 2006

KEY ISSUE & SUMMARY:

To note future working partnership arrangements between Spelthorne Borough Council and Surrey County Council when deciding suitable locations for Hackney Carriage Taxi Stands within the Borough and the reasons that a taxi stand should not be provided in Staines Bus Station.

OFFICER RECOMMENDATIONS:

To note the content of this report.

1 INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

- 1.1 Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 empowers Spelthorne Borough Council to appoint taxi stands within its area, following consultation with Surrey Police, and twenty eight days after a public notice, stating their intention, has appeared in a local newspaper. This public notice invites other interested persons, or organisations to make written representations/objections concerning the proposed taxi stand(s).
- 1.2 Officers for Spelthorne Borough Council had carried out a detailed risk assessment for the proposed stand sites, and were satisfied that no significant impact on health and safety would occur, subject to control measures outlined in their assessment.
- 1.3 The Borough Council followed the legislative procedures set out in 1.1 relating to a proposed taxi stand in Staines Bus Station, however Surrey County Council, Surrey Police and three bus operators did object to this proposed taxi stand.
- 1.4 The objections relate to health & safety issues, lack of enforcement of traffic management in the bus station and to losing the present “layover space” for buses, which would be the location of the proposed Hackney Carriage stand.
- 1.5 Surrey County Council objected because the “layover space” is essential for the effective operation of the bus station and the reliability of the bus services. Quite often a bus arriving at the station cannot immediately move to its departure stand because it is occupied by the previous service. The loss of the “layover space” could result in buses having to double park in the bus station, causing an obstruction and a risk to customers, or to find “layovers” on-street elsewhere. The Borough believe the loss of the “layover space” could be resolved by relocating it within the station, however the external works to facilitate the redevelopment of the Elmsleigh Centre would be likely to prevent this.
- 1.6 Surrey Police and Surrey County Council objected to the proposed lack of stacking space for taxis, but the Borough Council believed that that objection had been overcome by the provision of a taxi stand outside Communications House.
- 1.7 The Police and County Council were further concerned that the provision of the taxi stand would attract private vehicles to drive into the Bus Station because the taxis were not obviously marked. The Borough’s risk assessment recommended that in order to overcome this problem that clear “no entry” signs should be positioned at the entrance to the station. The existing Traffic Regulation Order prohibits entry to Bus Station for vehicles except buses. This would need to be amended to allow Hackney Carriage taxi drivers to enter the Bus Station.

- 1.8 The Bus Operators highlighted concerns of increased traffic and pedestrian movements, bus drivers' "blindspots" on their mid off-side to smaller taxi vehicles, and the enforcement of measures suggested in the risk assessment. The risk assessment states that a significant part of the responsibility in these areas lay with the bus and taxi drivers driving with due care and attention. Furthermore, taxi drivers who were discovered not to be complying with their licence conditions by the Borough's Taxi Enforcement Officer may be in danger of having their licence suspended or revoked.
- 1.9 The Executive Committee of the Borough Council, after due consideration of all the objections, approved the proposed taxi stand in the Bus Station, on 7 March 2006.
- 1.10 After subsequent negotiations between officers of the County and Borough Councils, it was decided not to go ahead with this taxi stand. This was based on two factors: Firstly, current information indicates that the external works involved in Phase 2 of the Elmsleigh Shopping Centre development are due to commence in September 2006. This work will lead to a reduction in the size of the Bus Station in the area at the rear of British Home Stores. It is likely that this development will also require the contractors to install a temporary compound in the bus station area during construction works and may involve some preliminary works involving installation or rerouting of services, e.g. gas and water pipes, in preparation for Phase 3 of the development. Current indications are that Phase 3 of the development could commence in January 2007. It may be necessary to relocate the entire Bus Station during the Phase 3 works. There are no plans to provide a taxi stand in the Phase 3 proposals and it is unlikely that this would be possible due to the significant reduction in the size of the bus station which will result from the Phase 3 work.
- 1.11 Secondly, the timescales for amending the existing Traffic Regulation Order as outlined in 1.7 of this report would mean that this could not be completed prior to the likely commencement of the Phase 2 external works affecting the bus station.

2 ANALYSIS and COMMENTARY

- 2.1 The process described above illustrates the process that was undertaken to introduce taxi stands and in particular to Staines Bus Station. The County and Borough Councils had communicated with each other but there had been some misunderstandings and the lines of communications have been improved for the future.
- 2.2 It would take a minimum of three months to alter the Traffic Regulation Order, subject to no objection to the proposal being received. By the time objections to the proposed taxi stand could be overcome, the redevelopment affecting the bus station is likely to be in progress and it

is probable that this will leave insufficient space for a taxi stand.

- 2.3 Officers of both councils consider that to pursue further the provision of a taxi stand within the Bus Station would be impractical due to the redevelopment of the Elmsleigh Centre. However, officers will seek to identify further taxi stand sites in the area.

3 CONSULTATIONS

- 3.1 It was decided that in future the following consultation process would be followed where further taxi stand(s) were considered by relevant officers of the Borough Council:

- (i) Where proposed taxi stand(s) are considered by the Borough Council, the Local Transportation Manager and Principal Transport Officer (with responsibility for bus services) will be consulted. This consultation will occur prior to the Borough Council reporting to its Executive Committee.
- (ii) The Local Transportation Manager and Principal Transport Officer will, within twenty working days, respond to the proposed taxi stand location(s), stating whether or not they have any objections to the proposal(s). There will be an expectation that a “positive” response will be given to the Borough Council, as opposed to assuming that no response means no objection.
- (iii) Relevant officers of the Borough Council will give due consideration to the views expressed by the Local Transportation Manager and Principal Transport Officer.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The cost to introduce taxi ranks to Staines is met by the Borough Council.

5 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The provision of taxi ranks in the borough complements public transport, particularly at times that the buses do not operate.

6 CRIME & DISORDER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no implications

7 EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no implications.

8 CONCLUSION AND REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 Members are asked to note the content of this report

Reported by: Annette Williamson, Local Transportation Manager

LEAD/CONTACT OFFICERS Jonathan Bramley, Environmental Health Manager (Commercial), Spelthorne Borough Council; and

Annette Williamson, LTM, Surrey County Council.

TELEPHONE NUMBERS: 01784 446280
020 8541 7328

BACKGROUND PAPERS: Objection letters from SCC, Surrey Police and Bus Operators