

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL****LOCAL COMMITTEE (GUILDFORD)****DATE: 23 March 2016**

**LEAD OFFICER:** Mike Smith  
Licensing Team Leader  
Guildford Borough Council

**SUBJECT:** Adoption of Additional Hackney Carriage Stands (Taxi Rank Space) in Guildford

**DIVISION: Guildford SE, Guildford SW****SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

The purpose of this report is to outline Guildford Borough Council's proposals for taxi rank locations in Guildford and to seek the consent of the Highways Authority to adopt the proposed locations in this report as taxi ranks, subject to public consultation.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The Local Committee (Guildford) is asked to agree to adopt the following locations as taxi ranks, subject to public consultation as required by law.

- 1. Bedford Road** – 7 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)  
Parking bays adjacent to Bedford Road Surface Car Park for a distance of 36 meters
- 2. North Street** – 11 spaces (24 hour operation)  
Length of single yellow line outside Vinyl Night Club and TGI Friday for a distance of 50 meters
- 3. North Street** – 6 spaces (24 hour operation)  
Outside Marks and Spencer and Paperchase for a distance of 30 meters
- 4. High Street** (Lower end) – 4 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)  
Parking Bays, outside Vision Express Opticians for a distance of 19 meters
- 5. Upper High Street** – 5 spaces (18.00 to 08.30 daily)  
Parking bays outside Pizza Express and Oxfam for a distance of 26 meters
- 6. Millbrook** (A281) – 4 spaces (22:30 to 04:30 daily)  
Bus Stop on north-bound carriageway outside the Legion nightclub for a distance of 19 meters

**REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Improving Taxi Rank provision in Guildford will improve public safety through allowing residents and visitors to easily obtain a licensed taxi service.

Having well defined rank locations in key areas, particularly late at night, will reduce the burden on partner agencies such as the Police.

**1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND:**

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1.1 Taxi ranks are a vital part of the Nation's transport network. Ranks are a common feature in many towns and cities and provide a location where licensed taxis can legally park to wait for a customer who wishes to use a taxi, rather than drive around town centre streets waiting to be hailed.

1.2 Similarly having well defined and managed rank locations improves public safety through allowing customers to easily obtain a licensed taxi service and reduces the risks associated with touting and inconvenience to customers searching the streets for a service.

1.3 A local authority can adopt areas on streets or private land as taxi ranks for either continual or part-time use under section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The creation of a taxi rank is not a straightforward process; the local authority must obtain the permission of the Highways Authority, give notice to the Police, publish a public advertisement in a local paper and consult for a period of 28 days, considering any objections before a rank is appointed.

### **2. ANALYSIS:**

2.1 Currently, Guildford Borough Council provides rank space for its 180 Licensed Taxis in the following locations:

- North Street, off Onslow Street, outside the Friary Centre (approx. 12 spaces)
- North Street, outside Marks and Spencer (3 spaces)
- Guildford Park Road, outside the railway station (2 spaces)

There are also ranks provided by the railway company, for which an additional fee is payable for the use of the rank, at:

- Guildford Railway Station (approx. 10 spaces)
- Guildford London Road Station (3 spaces)

Rank provision has not been reviewed by Guildford Borough Council for a number of years and it is acknowledged that provision could be improved, which is a frequent cause for complaint from the taxi trade.

2.2 The two main larger ranks at the Station and outside the Friary have their own issues:

A permit for the station rank costs approximately an additional £800 a year with a number of vehicles using the facility during the day when the station is busy with commuters. The number of vehicles using the area is frequently greater than the number of spaces, causing taxis to queue in the station car park to wait for a rank space to become available, restricting access to other car park users.

The rank at the Friary is the main location which customers head to looking for a taxi service in the night. This often causes the rank to become congested, with vehicles wishing to wait on the rank backing up onto the main A322/Onslow Street interfering with traffic flow. Customers also have to make their way to this location after a night out. This can either be through town where there is potential for them to cause noise and disturbance, or across the busy A322 road from the main nightclub.

Similarly, there are frequent public disorder issues caused by customers congregating in one location competing for a taxi after a night out which places an

additional strain on the Police who wish for customers heading home after a night out to disperse quickly.

2.3 The current limited arrangements also subsequently create unmanaged, informal arrangements at popular locations, which cause congestion and disorder placing an additional burden on the emergency services, and increases the risk of touting.

2.4 Improving access to a taxi service through increasing rank provision throughout the town would negate some of the above safety issues associated with customers and taxis waiting in one location during the night-time economy. The last Purple Flag review identified dispersal of night-time patrons as an area for potential improvement. Additionally increasing provision in areas close to the premises popular with the night-time economy would reduce some disorder issues associated with customers heading towards the main rank after a night out from other areas of the town, and reduce the problem of vehicles waiting in a disorderly manner in other popular locations causing disruption.

### **3. OPTIONS:**

Guildford Borough Council is seeking consent from Surrey County Council to adopt all of the six options below as taxi ranks.

#### 3.1 Bedford Road

Location	Bedford Road Parking bays adjacent to Bedford Road Surface Car Park
Length	36 meters
Number of spaces	7
Hours of operation	18.00 to 08.30 daily

Currently there are is a long on street parking bay located along the length of the Bedford Road Surface Car Park which are provided for public on street parking between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours there are no parking restrictions.

The advantages of this location are:

- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultantly taxis will not queue on the main road and obstruct traffic.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The bays are located close to Casino nightclub and Odeon cinema and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- This area is already a popular waiting area for the trade wishing to pick up pre-booked customers, with vehicles often parking in restricted areas causing congestion.
- Providing a dedicated rank facility in this area would improve safety through reducing competition from pre-booked vehicles waiting for pick ups in the area, and reduce the number of customers crossing the main A322 from the nightclub to the taxi rank after a night out.

The disadvantages of this location are:

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- The spaces are currently available to resident permit holders, as well as being available to the public. Designating these spaces as a taxi rank would reduce the availability to residents.

### 3.2 North Street

Location	North Street, length of single yellow line Outside Vinyl Night Club and TGI Friday
Length	50 meters
Number of spaces	11
Hours of operation	24 hour operation

Currently there is a single yellow line running for a length of about 50 meters adjacent to the Vinyl nightclub and TGI Friday.

The advantages of this location are:

- The site is currently a single yellow line. After 6pm there are no parking restrictions hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The site is located in a busy shopping area and is well situated to serve the town during the day. It is also close to Vinyl nightclub and a number of other bars/restaurants and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy, particularly customers dispersing from establishments nearby.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain two way traffic flow.

### 3.3 North Street

Location	North Street Taxi Rank Outside Marks and Spencer and Paperchase
Length	Additional 15 meters, making a total rank length of 30 meters
Number of spaces	Additional 3 spaces, making a total of number of 6 spaces
Hours of operation	24 hour operation

There is currently a dedicated taxi rank on North Street, outside Marks and Spencer with space for 2 to 3 taxis to rank. The location is not well used by the trade and is often taken advantage of by both the trade and public as a convenient area to wait. This is compounded by the double yellow lines which run the remaining length of North Street also used as convenient parking/waiting spaces.

It is anticipated that extending the rank would encourage its use and reduce the associated problem with other motorists parking and waiting in this location.

The advantages of this location are:

- The site is currently a double yellow line hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The site is located in a busy shopping area and is well situated to serve the town during the day.
- The site is situated close to popular bars and take away premises and well situated in the middle of town to serve the night time economy.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain traffic flow.

The disadvantages of this location are:

- There is a pick up point for Marks and Spencer close to this location. Marks and Spencer are concerned about the impact of extending the rank on this pick up point, to such an extent that they have threatened to move out of Guildford when this location has been proposed historically.
- The current double yellow line is a popular parking location for blue badge holders.

### 3.4 High Street

Location	High Street (Lower end) Parking Bays, outside Vision Express Opticians
Length	19 meters
Number of spaces	4
Hours of operation	18:00 to 08:30 daily

The site is currently on-street parking bays provided for the public between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours there are no parking restrictions. Behind the pay and display bays are two spaces reserved for disabled parking.

The advantages of this location are:

- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultantly taxis will not queue and obstruct traffic in the road.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- The bays are located close to the restaurants on Friary Street and are ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- The area is currently being used as an un-official taxi rank at night by the taxi trade.

### 3.5 Upper High Street

Location	Upper High Street Parking bays outside Pizza Express and Oxfam
Length	26 meters
Number of spaces	5
Hours of operation	18:00 to 08:30 daily

The site is currently on-street parking bays provided for the public between the hours of 8.30 and 18.00 for a charge of 80p per half hour. Outside of these hours there are no parking restrictions.

The advantages of this location are:

- The bays are located off the main carriageway and resultantly taxis will not queue and obstruct traffic in the road.
- After 6pm there are no current restrictions hence no group is disadvantaged by converting the bays into ranks.
- There are other, larger parking bays and the York Road car park close by enabling residents and visitors to park in the area.
- The bays are located close to the restaurants at the top of the High Street and G-Live Venue and are ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.

### 3.6 Millbrook

Location	Millbrook (A281) Bus Stop on north-bound carriageway outside the Legion nightclub
Length	19 meters
Number of spaces	4
Hours of operation	22:30 to 04:30 daily

There is a bus stop located on the northbound carriageway of Millbrook outside the Legion nightclub and Yvonne Arnaud Theatre. The bus service is finished by 10pm in the evening.

The advantages of this location are:

- After 10pm, there is no bus service operating at this stop and hence allowing use as a taxi rank would not impact any bus service.
- The location is close to the Legion nightclub and Yvonne Arnaud Theatre and ideally situated to serve the night-time economy.
- The carriageway is sufficiently wide at this point to allow taxis to queue at this location and maintain traffic flow.

#### **4. CONSULTATIONS:**

4.1 The above sites have been identified in consultation with:

- The taxi trade
- Surrey County Highways – Roy Varley, Senior Transport Officer, Travel & Transport Group, E&I
- Surrey County Highways – Bahram Assadi, Traffic Engineer, Guildford Area
- Surrey Police – Road Safety Team
- Surrey Police – Borough Inspector
- Guildford Borough Council – Parking Service
- Guildford Borough Council – Major Projects Team
- Guildford Borough Council – Lead Member for Licensing and Community Safety
- Guildford Borough Council – Lead Member for Transport and Infrastructure

4.2 Before ranks are adopted, legislation requires that the locations are subject to a period of consultation with the Police and the public. This is achieved by serving a notice on the Chief of Police and by publishing an advertisement in a locally distributed newspaper, allowing for a period of 28 days from the date of first publication inviting comments or objections to the proposals. The Licensing Committee of Guildford Borough Council will then consider any comments or objections to the locations before deciding to adopt a stand.

4.3 In addition to the consultation required by law, we intend to undertake publicity of our proposals through the media, on our website, with other key stakeholders and through displaying site notices.

#### **5. FINANCIAL AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS:**

5.1 The cost of adopting an area as a taxi rank includes legal advertisement costs associated with the statutory process, together with the costs of design and implementation.

5.2 The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 allows Guildford Borough Council to recover the costs of providing taxi ranks through licence fees charged to taxis. The budget for 2016/17 includes an allocation for providing taxi ranks.

5.3 There are plans to redevelop Guildford Town Centre which may impact the long term operation of these sites. However it is anticipated that these sites would be operational for a minimum of 3 years before any redevelopment takes place.

5.4 Even the short term operation of these sites would be value for money by improving public safety and reducing the burden on the emergency services resulting from the current limited arrangements.

## **6. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 Guildford Borough Council is mindful of its duty within this area and attempts to treat all users of the public highway with equality and understanding.

6.2 The proposed locations do not reduce the number of accessible spaces provided for the use of disabled members of the public.

## **7. LOCALISM:**

7.1 Improving taxi rank provision will benefit, residents, visitors, the business and taxi community of Guildford through creating well managed arrangements.

## **8. OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Crime and Disorder	Set out below.
Sustainability (including Climate Change and Carbon Emissions)	No significant implications arising from this report.
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report.
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	Set out below.
Public Health	Set out below.

### 8.1 Crime and Disorder implications

Improving taxi rank arrangements would serve to assist in reducing crime and disorder and would be welcomed by colleagues in the Police.

Currently, the demand for spaces the Station and outside the Friary at peak times exceeds the number of spaces provided. This results in congestion, disruption and increases risk to other road users.

Additionally, the lack of space at other key locations creates unmanaged, informal arrangements at popular locations, which cause congestion and disorder which places an additional burden on the emergency services.

The rank at the Friary is the main location which customers head to looking for a taxi service in the night. This often causes frequent public disorder issues caused by customers congregating in one location competing for a taxi after a night out which places an additional strain on the Police who wish for customers heading home after a night out to disperse quickly.

Customers also have to make their way to this location after a night out. This can either be through town where there is potential for them to cause noise and disturbance as they make their way from their last venue to the rank. Customers wishing to access this location from the Casino nightclub or bars on Bridge in the town have to cross the busy A322 road which increases the risk to safety of the public and motorists due to the time of night, volume of traffic, volume of people and frequent state of intoxication.

Improving access to a taxi service through increasing rank provision throughout the town would negate some of the above safety issues associated with customers and taxis waiting in one location during the night-time economy. Additionally increasing provision in areas close to the premises popular with the night-time economy would reduce some disorder issues associated with customers heading towards the main rank after a night out from other areas of the town, and reduce the problem of vehicles waiting in a disorderly manner in other popular locations causing disruption. This congregation of vehicles at popular locations also increases the opportunity for vehicles to "tout", potentially increasing the risk to the public through getting into an unlicensed or uninsured vehicle.

The last Purple Flag review identified dispersal of night-time patrons as an area for potential improvement.

### 8.2 Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults implications

Increasing access to a safe, well regulated form of transport will promote the safeguarding of vulnerable young persons and adults, particularly those impaired through drink after a night out.

### 8.3 Public Health implications

Improving taxi rank provision in key locations should help to reduce the instances of collisions in the town at night through customers crossing the busy A322 from popular venues to get to the main taxi rank.

## **9. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:**

9.1 Improving taxi rank provision in Guildford would have a positive impact on the town and would receive support from Surrey Police.

9.2 The Area Committee (Guildford) are asked to approve the proposals in this report which would allow Guildford Borough Council to begin public consultation.

## **10. WHAT HAPPENS NEXT:**

10.1 Should the Area Committee decide to approve Guildford Borough Council's proposals for new taxi ranks, the Council is then required to consult with the Police and the Public, and consider any objections before a rank is adopted.

The Council will carry out this consultation by serving a notice on the Chief of Police and by publishing an advertisement in a locally distributed newspaper, allowing for a period of 28 days from the date of first publication inviting comments or objections to the proposals. It is anticipated that this consultation would run from the 1 to 29 April 2016.

The Licensing Committee of Guildford Borough Council will then consider any comments or objections to the locations at their meeting on the 25 May 2016 before deciding to adopt a location as a taxi rank.

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**Consulted:**

Details of parties consulted to date are shown in section 4 of this report.

**Annexes:**

The GIS map locations are enclosed as annexes to this report.

**Sources/background papers:**

None

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