

Agenda Item

REPORT OF LEAD LICENSING OFFICER

To: LICENSING COMMITTEE

Subject: TAXI RANK ISSUES

Date: 24 JULY 2019

Reference:

PURPOSE OF REPORT:

To provide the Licensing Committee with a summary of the issues relating to the Taxi Rank than have previously been discussed.

1. INTRODUCTION

In September 2016 Community and Resources Committee agreed to remove the taxi feeder rank provisions and prohibit taxis approaching the taxi rank from behind the harbour office.

Issues relating to the taxi rank have been discussed frequently at subsequent Licensing Committee Meetings. However no suitable alternative provisions have been identified.

2. REPORT

The taxi rank has been frequently discussed at Committee. The main issue is that the taxi rank is not large enough, at times, to fully accommodate demand. Taxis, therefore, have to find alternative places to wait for space to become available. Previous attempts to find additional rank space have been unsuccessful as this would result in loss of income to either Torridge District Council (off street parking) or Devon County Council (on street parking).

Councillors have previously reported taxis driving on to the rank by exiting the quay car park through the entrance against the flow of traffic. A "No Exit" sign was placed at the entrance. However, it was still reported that some drivers ignored this sign and gained access to the rank from the car park.

In order to take action against any offenders the Licensing team need sufficient evidence such as date, time, plate number and registration number. If there is sufficient evidence to take action the Licensing Team are able to utilise the penalty points scheme. However under the scheme a maximum of 4 points can be used per offence so individuals would have to accrue 3 offences before the offender can be taken to a Sub-Committee hearing.

The Licensing team has insufficient resources to monitor the rank on a frequent basis.

Various options were provided to members, such as the installation of CCTV, additional enforcement, reversing the flow of traffic in the quay car park, but none were identified as viable and/or cost effective.

The only identified viable solution would be to make the current part time rank outside the café and solicitors into a full time rank. However, there was opposition from Devon County Council as they would lose pay and display income and they argued that the rank was not used after 4pm. The taxi trade were requested to survey the usage of the rank and report issues of public cars using the rank after 4pm. A very limited response was received and insufficient evidence was provided to build a suitable case to present to Devon County Council.

The Committee resolved to write to the taxi trade and give them one month to provide supporting information and if insufficient information was provided to write to Devon County Council and advise that the part time rank was not longer required.

The Lead Licensing Officer was due to report back to the Licensing Committee in April and was proposing to suggest that due to the fact a new demand study was due to be undertaken this year that the decision to request the removal of the part time rank be suspended until the results of the study were available as this might help to determine demand for taxi provision and the requirement for additional rank space. Unfortunately the meeting was not quorate so this was not discussed. It was therefore decided to suspend any further action until the new Committee was formed and the issues can be reassessed.

3. IMPLICATIONS

Legal Implications

None

Financial Implications

None

Human Resources Implications

None

Sustainability Implications

None.

Equality/Diversity

None.

Risk Management

Any decision will need to balance public safety, public finance, compliance with legislation and potential damage to reputation.

Compliance with Policies and Strategies

All regulatory activity will be carried out in accordance with current policy and procedures.

Data Protection (GDPR) Implications

None

Lead Member Views

Councillor James, Lead Member, has been consulted.

4. CONCLUSIONS

There are limited cost effective options available to provide a satisfactory solution.

There is no provision in the current budget for additional expenditure so any costs will need to be approved by Community and Resources Committee.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

Members determine what action to take in respect of the issues identified in this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Consultations:	Taxi liaison committee
Contact Officer:	Chris Parkhouse
Background Papers:	Licensing data area/files