

Title of meeting: Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation

Date of meeting: 18 March 2022

Subject: Proposed Taxi Rank on London Road, North End

Report by: Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Report Author: Hayley Chivers, interim Transport Planning Manager

Wards affected: Nelson Ward

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek approval for the trial of a 22-hour taxi rank in London Road, North End under an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) operating between 9am and 7am.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that:

2.1 **An experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) is undertaken for a 22 hour (9am to 7am), two-car, taxi rank located at the southern end of the southbound bus lane on London Road, close to the junction with Laburnum Grove.**

2.2 **An information report be taken to Licensing Committee outlining the outcome of this decision.**

2.3 **A report be brought back to the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation with the results of the trial before the end of the ETRO period.**

3. Background

3.1 A review of Hackney Carriage stands was presented at the Licensing Committee on 25th September 2020 and included a proposal for a 24-hour taxi rank on London Road at the end of the bus lane on London Road close to the junction with Laburnum Grove

- 3.2 Following this proposal from the taxi trade, work has been underway to examine the technical viability of a taxi rank in this location through:
- site observations
 - technical designs
 - safety reviews by transport officers and an independent Road Safety Audit
 - engagement with bus operators, taxi trade representatives, and elected members.
- 3.3 During engagement with bus operators, the importance of passing the junction with Derby Road before pulling out from the bus lane was highlighted, particularly during peak periods when traffic levels are higher including for this right-turn movement. Concerns were raised that if buses were required to join the carriageway before the junction with Derby Road this would lead to them joining queuing traffic and negatively impact bus reliability.
- 3.4 Following engagement and site observations it was recommended that buses should maintain use of the existing bus lane in its entirety during the 7am to 9am period when demand and congestion is at its highest.
- 3.5 To understand any potential conflict between different highway users, swept path analyses were undertaken whereby traffic movements are assessed and displayed. This also allowed understanding of the number of cars which could be accommodated safely in the proposed taxi rank to allow the buses to pass the Derby Road junction. The swept path analysis showed that the rank could only accommodate two cars, as presented at Licensing committee on 16th December 2021.
- 3.6 Further safety considerations were raised regarding the proposal which are set out below.
- 3.7 London Rd is the highest casualty route in Portsmouth and also the highest cyclist casualty route in the city. A cycle route and junction improvements were installed to address this and improve the safety of cyclists on this route.

There have been three personal injury collisions at this junction in the three year period 1 Feb 2018 to 31 Jan 2021;

- Car turning right from Laburnum Grove onto London Road collided with pedestrian crossing road
- Taxi turning left onto Laburnum Grove from London Road collided with a pedal cyclist travelling southbound on the nearside
- Car turning left into London Road from Derby Road collided with pedestrian crossing Derby Road

- 3.8 Buses exiting the bus lane past ranking vehicles would need wide turning movements and could cause northbound traffic to re-align their path, in turn risking safety of cycle lane users and also potentially pedestrians crossing Derby Road.
- 3.9 Cyclists and rental e-scooters also use the bus lanes; therefore, any changes also need to consider the actual and perceived safety of these users who would have to navigate around stationary vehicles into live traffic at a point where general traffic would not expect them to. This may also add the risk of taxi car doors opening onto them and make them vulnerable to taxis and buses pulling out.
- 3.10 The presence of stationary taxis would reduce visibility for vehicles joining London Rd from Laburnum Grove.
- 3.11 The presence of stationary vehicles would also reduce visibility for pedestrians crossing the junction of Laburnum Grove to see traffic turning into the road. This road would need to be crossed for any passengers arriving at the rank from the South.
- 3.12 At December Licensing Committee it was agreed that an independent Road Safety Audit (RSA) should be undertaken. This has now been completed, the findings of which do not outline any safety concerns with the proposal (Appendix A).
- 3.13 It is recognised that this is an important location for the taxi trade to have a taxi rank, particularly following the revocation of the Derby Road taxi rank. Alternative locations have been investigated but no feasible alternatives have been identified and engagement with the trade outlines the proposal as the preferred location.

4. Proposed taxi rank

- 4.1 Following the technical work and stakeholder engagement which has taken place, it is proposed to trial a two-car taxi rank in the bus lane on London Road to the north of the junction with Laburnum Grove operating between the hours of 09.00am and 07.00am as shown in Appendix B.
- 4.2 Limiting the taxi rank to two cars will minimise potential conflict between buses and both ranking vehicles and those in live traffic.
- 4.3 Limiting the hours of operation of the rank to 9am to 7am will minimise delays in bus journey time during the peak period alongside removing any associated safety implications during these two hours of higher traffic volume.
- 4.4 The existing 7pm to 7am evening taxi rank and associated shelter would remain in situ during the trial.

4.5 The trial will be conducted through an ETRO for a period of up to 18 months. The first six months of this trial form the consultation period. The trial will be monitored and include the following activity:

- Site observations
- Feedback from taxi trade representatives,
- Feedback from bus operators,
- Formal ETRO responses
- Road traffic incidents
- Parking enforcement incidents

4.6 Under the experimental TRO, the rank is limited to two waiting hackney taxis between the designated hours. CEOs regularly patrol the area and if there were frequent contraventions the number of patrols can be increased.

4.7 From approval of the ETRO it is estimated to take 6 weeks for the taxi rank to be installed. The work includes installation of associated lining and signage, as shown in Appendix C, and additional licensing signs for the taxi rank itself.

5 **Reasons for recommendations**

5.1 This is acknowledged as an important location to be served by a daytime taxi rank.

5.2 By implementing the rank on a trial basis, we will be able to closely monitor how the rank operates and interacts with the surrounding traffic network including:

- any safety issues which arise
- any delays to bus services
- any conflict between the rank and bus lane use (e.g. through over-ranking) through stakeholder feedback

5.3 The area close to London Road/Stubbington Avenue roundabout is known to have a casualty issue. With this trial in place for up to 18 months, we can ensure that any wider schemes brought forward for the area consider permanent changes to the taxi rank within the designs.

6 **Integrated impact assessment**

6.1 An integrated impact assessment is included in Appendix D.

7 **Legal implications**

7.1 An experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) can be made for the same purposes as normal traffic orders and can last up to 18 months. The reasons for making an order can include avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the

road or for preventing the likelihood of such danger arising, for preventing damage to the road or any building on or near the road, for facilitating the passage on the road of traffic (including pedestrians) or preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. This also includes prohibiting or restricting waiting of vehicles or the loading and unloading of vehicles.

- 7.2 Local authorities have a duty to take account of the needs of all road users, take action to minimise, prevent or deal with congestion problems, and consider the implications of decisions for both their network and those of others.
- 7.3 Although there is no obligation to consult with the general public before introducing an ETRO, statutory notice must be given if it is intended to make the order permanent and any person may object to making the order permanent within a period of six months from the date of such notice and any such objection should be taken into account when determining whether or not to make the order permanent when the ETRO expires.
- 7.4 The Director of Regeneration has the authority to modify or suspend the Order, or any provision of it if it appears to him essential:
- (a) In the interests of the expeditious, convenient and safe movement of traffic;
 - (b) In the interests of providing suitable and adequate on-street parking facilities; or
 - (c) For preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which any road affected by the Order runs.

8 Director of Finance's comments

- 8.1 The financial implications of approving the recommendations in this report are limited to approx. £1,200 and will be met from On Street Parking budget.

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Signed by: Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Road Safety Audit (RSA) on proposed taxi rank
- Appendix B - Taxi rank location map
- Appendix C - Taxi rank design
- Appendix D - Proposed Taxi Rank Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location
Licensing Committee - 16 December 2021	- (Public Pack)Supplementary Information - London Road Taxi Rank Update Agenda Supplement for Licensing Committee, 16/12/2021 16:00 (portsmouth.gov.uk)

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by: