

Hackney Carriage Ranks in Yeovil Town Centre Consultation

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Purpose of the Report

1. This report seeks approval from Full Council to carry out a formal consultation on the position of hackney ranks in Yeovil town centre. Hackney carriage ranks are provided as part of a range of transport options in the town centre. This report outlines proposals to update the position of ranks to service customers across the town centre. This forms an element of the Yeovil Refresh Transport workstream.

Public Interest

2. The report identifies the existing and proposed positions for hackney carriage ranks in Yeovil town centre. Hackney carriage ranks are places where this type of licensed vehicle can wait to pick up passengers. The position and location of these ranks is a formal and set out in legislation. The establishment of new ranks or proposals to change ranks must legally be subject to an approved formal consultation by the council. The Licensing Committee will discuss this report at their meeting on 13 December and make a proposal to Council to carry out that consultation.

Recommendations

3. That subject to Licensing Committee supporting the Yeovil town centre hackney rank consultation, they recommend that Full Council approve the approach.

Background

4. Yeovil Refresh is a holistic regeneration project seeking to transform the town centre creating a positive destination for a range of uses. There are four key workstreams which provide a focus on key themes which will support the regeneration. This report focuses on an element of the Transport workstream specifically the provision of Hackney Carriage Ranks within the town centre.
5. Hackney Carriage Ranks are appointed using section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. A number of associated sections then prescribe how these ranks can be used and operated by those holding a hackney carriage license. There are specific regulations that define the highway markings



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and signage requirements for these ranks. Ranks can be provided on the highway or on land with approval from the owner. In Yeovil ranks are provided on the highway and on council owned car parks.

6. As members are aware significant works are underway to transform the public realm in streets across the core of Yeovil town centre. These cover Westminster Street in the western end of the town travelling through the spine of the town centre via the High Street, Borough, Middle Street and into the eastern area of streets which link to Reckleford. This programme of works will create an area which is an accessible shared space, is greener, is decluttered and has reduced levels of traffic to encourage greater footfall and support movement of pedestrians.
7. To support this there has been some rationalization of overall parking provision whilst maintaining a strong mix of available on and off-street parking for all users. A review has also been carried out of bus routes into and through the town centre. Hackney carriage provision is now being considered as an element of the transport provision into the town.

Proposals for consultation

8. There are several hackney ranks across the town centre which have been established over time and are based on historic use patterns. These are outlined in the plan attached as appendix A1 - 4 which illustrates the general position of the ranks and suggested approach to each of them.
9. The largest rank which is primarily used during the day is located in Silver Street. To minimize traffic through the Borough we would propose that this is moved to Princes Street. This would be a similar location to that used during the Covid -19 Pandemic. We believe this provides a rank which continues to serve the town centre and can be accessed via High Street or from the Borough via Church Street on a relatively level route. Vehicles using the route would be able to leave the town centre by turning right into Westminster Street and exiting through Clarence Street.
10. We also propose to create a specific nighttime only rank situated along the northern edge of Stars Lane car park. This would establish a clear provision to service premises which form the core of late-night entertainment in Yeovil. In association with this we would extinguish a small 2 car rank located off Stars Lane in front of Chicago Rock. This area is the subject of emerging plans to widen paving as part of a later phase of the Refresh.
11. There are four other ranks located in the town centre. There is currently provision in Middle Street to the east of South Western Terrace. We would propose to extinguish this rank and amalgamate it with the rank in Old Station Road to rear of Premier Inn. This rank would also be updated to enable all hackney carriages to utilize it while maintaining provision for fully accessible vehicles to pick up and drop off.



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12. The remaining two ranks at Earle Street and South Street are proposed to be retained in their existing positions.

13. This pattern of ranks is intended to provide for range of scenarios serving the day and night time economy.

Summary of Proposals

- Extinguish the Silver Street rank and relocate the provision to Princes Street.
- Provide a new nighttime only rank in Stars Lane car park.
- Remove 2 car rank in Stars Lane.
- Remove rank in Middle Street northeast of South Western Terrace junction.
- Retain and amend Old Station Road rank.
- Retain Earle Street rank.
- Retain South Street rank.

Consultation requirements

14. There are clear requirements for carrying out the consultation laid down in the legislation. These are “that a district council shall give notice to the chief officer of police for the police area in which the stand is situated and shall also give public notice of the proposal by advertisement in at least one local newspaper circulating in the district and shall take into consideration any objections or representations in respect of such proposal which may be made to them in writing within twenty-eight days of the first publication of such notice”.

15. This also means direct consultation with drivers and companies using the ranks.

16. The consultation must be approved by the licensing committee and Full Council. At the conclusion of this work, it is reported back through the same mechanism. This would include recommendations emerging following consideration of all representations. This report seeks approval from licensing committee and Full Council to undertake this consultation.

Financial Implications

17. There are no additional financial implications associated with the carrying out of this consultation if approved by committee. The consultation will be carried out using the resources of the Yeovil Refresh Project Team. There will be cost implications from any changes, if agreed, which will be focused on correct marking and signing of bays. At this stage this cannot be quantified but will need to be dealt with through existing budget provision for Transport schemes.

Council Plan Implications



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18. The Consultation links to Priority 2 of the Council Plan which delivers the regeneration programme.

Carbon Emissions and Climate Change Implications

19. The movement of ranks is aimed at providing appropriate positions for hackney ranks in the town. One of the wider aims of the work is to reduce traffic through the core streets which should contribute to improvements in air quality. It's not possible to quantify potential benefits in this report but a reduction of traffic in the air quality management area and the movement of the traffic should assist in managing air quality.

Equality and Diversity Implications

20. An Equality Impact Relevance Check was carried out which established that an EIA was needed. The check and EIA is attached as Appendix B. At this stage detailed consultation is planned as part of the proposed consultation. This will inform the EIA enabling the identification of specific actions and recommendations as the proposals evolve.
21. We are clear though that at this stage we perceive that there would be some impacts on those with mobility impairments because of age or disability. The purpose of the consultation will be to clearly define those and address them.

Background Papers

Following Appendices:

- Appendix A1 – Overview of hackney rank position and proposals
 - Appendix A2 – Silver Street & Princes Street proposals
 - Appendix A3 – Stars Lane car park proposed new rank position
 - Appendix A4 – Old Station Road proposed reconfiguration
 - Appendix B1 – Equality Relevance check
 - Appendix B2 – Equality Impact assessment
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