

REPORT: Regulatory Committee

DATE: 12th March 2025

REPORTING OFFICER: Director – Legal and Democratic Services

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Taxi Licensing Matter

WARDS: Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1. To update and provide information to members on the outcome of the consultation for taxi rank provision within the geographical boundaries of Halton, and to seek approval for the suggested amendments to the Council's existing hackney carriage stands (referred to as taxi ranks throughout this report)

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. That the Committee considers the contents of this report and the information detailed in the attached appendices;
- 2.2. That the proposals detailed in **Appendix A** (showing proposed amendments in red, in respect of Stands 11, 13, 17 and 19) be referred to the Executive Board with a recommendation for approval, taking into consideration any representations which may be made by the Regulatory Committee in respect thereof;
- 2.3. That the Executive Board authorise the Director, Legal and Democratic Services to fulfil all procedural requirements and relating to the proposals detailed in Appendix A in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1. The Council's current taxi rank provision is attached to this report at **Appendix B**
- 3.2. Details of the proposed amendments to the taxi ranks, alongside the Council's current taxi rank provision, have been provided to Cheshire Police (including Local Policing Units in Runcorn and Widnes), to allow for comments or objections. No objections to the amendments have been received.

- 3.3 A consultation exercise has been undertaken which included representatives of the Halton Borough Council taxi trade on the provision of taxi ranks throughout the borough, and the amendment to said ranks. Details of the consultation together with the responses received are attached to this report at **Appendix C**
- 3.4 A notice was published in the 'Public Notice Portal' of Runcorn and Widnes Weekly News dated 20th January 2025 and published 23rd January 2025, stating that the Council intends to amend the existing hackney carriage stands order. The notice advised that full details of the proposed changes could be found at HDL offices in both Runcorn and Widnes sites, and an email address was provided to allow objections to be received by the Licensing Manager. The same notice was also displayed on the Councils Website. No objections were received. A copy of the notice is attached to this report at **Appendix D**
- 3.5 The proposed amendments to the Taxi Rank Orders are set out below;

Runcorn

Stand Number	Location	Current Times	Amended proposal
17	High Street (in front of Chambers)	22.00 – 06.00	Rescind
19	High Street (outside Bargain Booze and Mersey Road)	20.00 – 06.00	Anytime

Widnes

Stand Number	Location	Current Times	Amended proposal
11	Albert Road (outside Wetherspoons)	18.00 to 06.00	Anytime
13	Albert Road (outside Imperial)	18.00 to 06.00	Anytime

- 3.6 Stand 17 has been suspended as a taxi rank since building works commenced in May 2024. During this time, the licensed premises that provided the rank with the majority of customers has closed, reducing the demand for hackney carriages on High Street (East). There will continue to be a designated rank for 5 vehicles opposite where this one is proposed to be rescinded, with operational hours of 22:00 – 06:00.

- 3.7 The increase in operation times for stands 19, 11 and 13 will improve service to customers due to their central and busy locations.
- 3.8 Increasing the operation times for stands 19,11 and 13 will not affect the parking provision for local businesses. A loading bay is already incorporated into stand 19 on High Street for deliveries, with parking bays and car parks for customers available within close proximity of all stands.

4. JURISDICTION OF THE COMMITTEE

- 4.1. The Committee is responsible for determining the Council's policies in connection with the grant, variation, suspension or revocation of licences relating to taxi and private matters (see Terms of Reference of the Regulatory Committee part 17B Council Constitution).
- 4.2. The Constitution must now be interpreted in accordance with the case of R (on the application of 007 Stratford Taxis Limited v Stratford on Avon District Council 2011. This Court of Appeal decision interpreted the meaning of the Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities)(England) Regulations 2000 in respect of matters which must be dealt with by a Council's Executive or by a Committee of its Council. Essentially, the Court held that; (1) It was clear that individual applications relating to taxi matters must be dealt with by the equivalent of this Council's Regulatory Committee and (2) matters calculated to facilitate, or be conducive or incidental to such applications must also be dealt with in the same way but (3) any 'plan or strategy' associated with such a function would be an executive function and therefore have to be determined by a Council's Executive. The Stratford case concerned the introduction of a wheelchair access policy. The decision was taken by the Council's Cabinet rather than its Licensing Committee. The challenge from the taxi trade was that the Licensing Committee should have adopted the policy. This element of the challenge was rejected by the court.
- 4.3. Consequently, any decision of the Regulatory Committee on matters contained in this agenda will be by the recommendation to the Executive Board.

5. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. If approved by the Executive Board, the Council's Taxi Ranks Sealed Order will be superseded by a new Taxi Ranks Order, which would be sealed and adopted by the Council.

6. FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 6.1 The cost of implementing the recommended changes, by way of providing new signage to be displayed at the site of each amended hackney carriage rank, must be met through the Taxi Licensing budget.

7. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

7.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

None

7.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

None

7.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

None

7.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

None

7.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

None

7.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

None

8. RISK ANALYSIS

- 8.1. None

9. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 9.1. There are no equality or diversity issues related to the review.

10. CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1. There are no climate change implications since the decision will have no effect on the environment.

11. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Application Documents	Legal Services	Wendy Pringle