

Somerset Council
Licensing and Regulatory Committee
– 15th February 2024



Hackney carriage rank positions in Yeovil

Lead Officer: Peter Paddon

Author: Ian Timms

Contact Details: Ian.Timms@somerset.gov.uk 01935 462961

Executive Lead Member: Cllr Federica Smith-Roberts, Lead member for Communities, Housing and Culture/ Cllr Ros Wyke, Lead member for Economic Development Planning and Assets

Division / Local Member: Cllr Faye Purbrick/ Cllr Andy Soughton

1. Summary

- 1.1.** This report concludes a review of Hackney Carriage rank positions and provision with Yeovil Town centre in accordance with the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The work was carried out as an element of a review of all transport modes associated with the Yeovil Refresh.
- 1.2.** The process has become drawn out due to range of factors, but the report makes conclusions based on the consultation carried out in accordance with the legislative requirements.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** Consideration of whether the Silver Street rank should be moved despite the lack of support for this proposal from the consultation responses received. Consider adoption of the remaining rank proposals in accordance with the content of this report and the original report to relevant South Somerset DC meetings in December 2022.
- 2.2.** Recommendation: - Retain Silver Street Rank in its current position.
- 2.3.** Recommendation: Agree the provision, removal and retention of ranks as stated in section 3.5 of this report proposals B to H

3. Background

- 3.1.** South Somerset District council (SSDC) adopt the Yeovil Refresh in late 2018 following widespread consultation on what was needed to regenerate the town

centre. This contained four key themes with one of these being Transport in and around the town centre. To address this theme a range of ideas were considered and then incorporated into an access strategy for the town. The strategy looked at all aspects of transport within the town.

- 3.2.** As an element of the public transport work Hackney Carriage rank positions were to be reviewed. This was reported to SSDC in late 2022 at the latter end of work to review bus and taxi provision as an overall public transport provision. Key considerations in these proposals were accessibility for users combined with the intention of minimising traffic movements through the upper areas of the town. The aim of work has been to create a safer shared space type environment where pedestrians can move more freely through the town.
- 3.3.** The position of Hackney Carriage Ranks is governed by section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The act lays out how this may be done and the consultation process for delivering any changes. This requires formal consultation approved by the council's licensing committee and Full Council. SSDC approved this and this was carried out through 2023 as required.
- 3.4.** The process of consultation has become elongated over the past year but it is believed that the substantial points raised are unlikely to differ from those raised initially. It was also essential to address issues of equality around the proposals which took some time to arrange a response from an independent body.
- 3.5.** The proposals in summary were to:
 - A. Extinguish the Silver Street rank and relocate the provision to Princes Street.
 - B. Provide a new nighttime only rank in Stars Lane car park.
 - C. Remove 2 car rank in Stars Lane.
 - D. Remove rank in Middle Street northeast of South Western Terrace junction.
 - E. Retain and amend Old Station Road rank.
 - F. Retain Earle Street rank.
 - G. Retain South Street rank.
 - H. Retain Hendford rank.
- 3.6.** These proposals sought to move the main day time rank, establish a night time rank and rationalise or tidy up other provision across the town centre. Details of the consultation that was carried out are contained in section 4 below.
- 3.7.** On completion of this consultation the legislation requires reporting back to Licensing Committee and Council to agree any changes to Hackney rank

positions. These can then be applied subject to the decisions of these committees.

4. Consultations undertaken

- 4.1.** Consultation was carried out in spring 2023 with a range of statutory stakeholders. Key stakeholders included hackney carriage drivers and the Police. An open consultation process was also carried out. Further work occurred with the Police to develop the concept of a night time rank in Stars Lane.

There was a limited response to the consultation from members of the public and hackney carriage drivers. The only responses related to the movement of the Silver Street rank to Princes Street. Those that did respond questioned the proposal to move the Silver Street rank questioning whether passengers could legally be discharged into the highway as this represented a danger.

The police response focused on night time provision in Stars Lane which was supported. Additional suggestions were made relating to CCTV coverage and general arrangements in that area.

- 4.2.** A key element of the proposals was to understand the impacts on access for individuals with mobility issues. Due to range of factors accessibility issues were not carried out until 2nd October 2023 by WECIL who were engaged by the Council's equality leads to audit town arrangements. This audit was also in response to a number of complaints from the disability community relating to the ongoing construction works in the town centre. These were creating significant challenges for those individuals with mobility issues and visual impairments.

- 4.3.** This accessibility audit made a number of suggestions and recommendations around improvements to the existing town centre environment, parking bays and the hackney carriage rank. The work on the Hackney carriage ranks made a number of points around markings, kerbs and positions. There was also consideration of the rank positions which specifically focused on the movement of the Silver Street rank to Princes Street.

The audit concluded that "We would not recommend that the Silver Street Taxi Rank be moved to this location as it is a busier street with less kerbside access, it's also a more challenging route uphill into the main square in the High Street".

- 4.4.** In summary comments were only received on two of the rank proposals. The proposal to move the Silver Street Rank was not supported by the accessibility

group and Hackney drivers raised safety concerns. The night time rank proposals were supported by the Police.

5. Implications

- 5.1.** The review intended to create clear rank provision within Yeovil town centre. Due to the nature of Yeovil this tends to split into main daytime provision at the Western end of the town with Nighttime ranks consolidated. There is also some rationalisation of rank positions to reflect current usage of hackney vehicles as part of the wider transport systems.
- 5.2.** The consultation work was carried out in accordance with legal requirements but received very limited responses. However key points about the safety and accessibility of the proposal to move the Silver Street rank remain valid. It does appear that ranks as a general principle should not discharge passengers into the street although a review of the legislation was inconclusive . In combination with this ideally ranks are meant to be accessible to passengers with the available accessibility audit suggesting the Silver Street rank should remain in it's current location.

6. Appendices

- 6.1.** Appendix A - Taxi rank provision in Yeovil
 - Appendix B - Proposed taxi parking Princess Street
 - Appendix C - Proposed taxi parking Stars Lane Car Park
 - Appendix D - Proposed taxi parking Old Station Road Car Park
-

7. Background papers

- 7.1.** Tuesday 13th December 2022 - Item 21 SSSC Licensing Committee and associated appendices
Thursday 15th December 2022 Item 90 SSSC Council and associated appendices
WECIL Disability Access Audit 2nd October 2023

Note For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author