

Report of	Meeting	Date
Chief Executive	Licensing and Safety Committee	19 July 2006

HIGH STREET, CHORLEY – PROPOSED RE-APPOINTMENT OF 24-HOUR HACKNEY CARRIAGE RANK AND IMPOSITION OF A PROHIBITION OF VEHICULAR WAITING

PURPOSE OF REPORT

1. To consider a proposal for the re-appointment of a 24-hour hackney carriage rank on the north side of High Street, Chorley, in conjunction with the imposition of a prohibition of vehicular waiting.

CORPORATE PRIORITIES

2. This report does not affect any corporate priorities.

RISK ISSUES

3. The report contains no risk issues for consideration by Members.

BACKGROUND

4. High street, Chorley, has long been established as the principal location for the hire of hackney carriages in Chorley. Originally, the rank was established only in New Market Street, and was extended round into the eastern half of High Street at the time (1978) the Council adopted the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976. The result was to provide a rank capable of accommodating some 10 hackney carriage vehicles at any one time.
5. Phase II of the re-development of Chorley town centre, which entailed the building of the new Booths Supermarket on the site of former Ribble bus station, and of a Wetherspoons public house on the site of the Post Office sorting office, resulted in that length of New Market Street situated between High Street and Union Street being paved over and closed to vehicular use (a prohibition of driving order was made).
6. The closing off of the northern end of New Market resulted in High Street becoming a cul-de-sac. The eastern termination of the street was re-configured into a turning-head with the construction of a roundabout. At the same time, given that New Market Street no longer offered an exit route for vehicles, there was now a need to provide some wider form of exit for traffic that required to leave the town centre. Thus traffic (1) seeking to exit the pedestrian precinct i.e. turning left out of New Market Street into High Street, or (2) that had in the first instance proceeded east along High Street to the roundabout and thence turned about and proceeded west down to the cross-roads junction with Cleveland Street, had to be accommodated. Traffic could not continue in a westerly direction back

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towards Market Street, because the configuration of the junction with Market Street had previously been so altered as to permit only one-way traffic turning in from Market Street into High Street. The only feasible option was to reverse the one-way driving system on Cleveland Street – south-bound between its junctions with Union Street and High Street – so that all traffic in High Street would exit by way of the said length of Cleveland Street.

6. While the above rearrangement of traffic flows represented the best that could be achieved in traffic management terms, some cause for concern was expressed from a public order viewpoint as regards the effect the above measure might have on the operation of the hackney carriage rank in High Street. With the eastern half of High Street turned into a cul-de-sac, the apprehension was that the street would be treated in practice as no more than a pedestrianised area during the evening and late at night by the public seeking to hire taxis. This might well involve, it was thought, groups of people milling about in the street, trying to flag down taxis, whether already under hire or not, as the latter sought to negotiate their way out of High Street and turn right into Cleveland Street. In order, therefore, to avoid any potential for conflict between pedestrians and moving vehicles it seemed reasonable to assume that if hackney carriage operations could be centred in Cleveland Street, the closest point of exit to Union Street, then this would minimise any potential for conflict whether from a road safety or a public order viewpoint.
7. Accordingly, the traffic regulation Orders governing the town centre were extensively revised in 2003. The hackney carriage rank in being along the north side of High Street between its junctions with Cleveland Street and High Street was downgraded from a 24-hour rank to a day-time rank, i.e. in operation between the hours of 7.00am and 7.00pm. In conjunction with this, a new “evening” rank was thus appointed on the west side of Cleveland Street, between its junctions with High Street and Union Street. The one-way system on this stretch of Cleveland Street was reversed so that vehicles could proceed north-bound to exit onto Union Street.

PRESENT POSITION

8. However, it is clear that a majority of the public continue to have an entrenched preference for seeking to hire taxis during the evenings in the length of High Street situate between Cleveland Street and High Street, i.e. where the taxi rank was previously sited and operated on a 24-hour basis. Taxi drivers likewise conform with this preference and continue to operate as previously, albeit now informally, from the length of road-side concerned. The apprehensions relating to a potential for conflict between taxis and members of the public roving around the “top” end of High Street late at night have not seemingly been realised.
9. In the circumstances, it therefore seems expedient that the day-time rank in operation along the north side of High Street between Cleveland Street and High should be restored to operation as a 24-hour rank, thereby formalising the practice of 24-hour hiring that continues to take place. The evening rank in Cleveland Street would, however, be retained for the time being in order to see how compatible the operation of two evening ranks in relatively close proximity proved.
10. In addition to the above, however, it is clear that there is something of a general problem relating to the occasional parking of vehicles on the hackney carriage rank. While action can be taken under the provisions of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 against such practice, action can also be taken more expediently under the provisions of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, where a hackney carriage rank is also supported by the presence of a prohibition of vehicular waiting. It is therefore proposed that a prohibition of vehicular waiting be also imposed on the north side of High Street, between its junctions with Market Street and New Market Street. The imposition of such a prohibition would allow exemptions for frontagers to service their premises, which is not technically allowed for under the provisions of the 1976 Act.

11. Accordingly, a version of this report will to be submitted to the decision-making forum that is to be put in place following the termination of the Lancashire Highway Partnership to determine the case for the introduction of vehicular waiting restrictions on the north side of High Street. The Licensing and Safety Committee's remit remains as previously, namely to consider the case for the re-appointment under Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 of a 24-hour hackney carriage rank on the north side of High Street between its junctions with Cleveland Street and New Market Street, Chorley.

COMMENTS OF THE DIRECTOR OF FINANCE

12. There are no comments from the Director of Finance

COMMENTS OF THE HEAD OF HUMAN RESOURCES

13. There are no comments from the Head of Human Resources

RECOMMENDATION

14. That subject to the formal views of the Chief Constable a 24-hour hackney carriage rank be re-appointed pursuant to the provisions of Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 on the north side of High Street, Chorley, between its junctions with Cleveland Street and New Market Street.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

15. The re-appointment of a 24-hour rank on the north side of High Street formalises the current practice being followed both by the public and the hackney carriage trade in using the stretch of road-side concerned for the hire of hackney carriages.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

9. The only alternative would be to take no action, and such a course of non-action would not address the continued use of High Street as an evening venue for the hiring of hackney carriages, nor the introduction of a more expedient means for dealing with the parking of vehicles on the hackney carriage rank in High Street.

DONNA HALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE

There are no background papers to this report.

Report Author	Ext	Date	Doc ID
G Fong	5169	7 July 2006	NEWREP