

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF ENGINEERING AND TRANSPORTATION  
TO THE DEVELOPMENT CONTROL COMMITTEE**

**THURSDAY, 5 NOVEMBER 2009**

**TAXI RANK IN LOWER BRIDGE STREET, WALSALL**

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 To report to the Development Control Committee the outcome of advertising the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to swap the Taxi Rank with the Blue Badge Bays in Lower Bridge Street as resolved by 22 October 2008 Licensing and Safety Committee and reaffirmed by its meeting on the 15 April 2009.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

The Committee is recommended to

- Overrule the objections and agree the TRO and hence to the swapping of the Taxi Rank and Blue Badge Bays

Or

- Consider the objections as valid and reject the TRO thereby leaving the Taxi Rank and Blue Badge Bays in their respective locations.

**3.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There is a financial implication of *circa* £2,000 for legal orders and road markings.

**4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

**5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None.

## **6.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

- 6.1 There will be a reduction in the number of blue badge car park spaces, ingress and egress for disabled passengers may be affected by alighting to the middle of the road in the path of vehicles, access to the Town Centre is more difficult.

## **7.0 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

- 7.1 None.

## **8.0 WARD(S) AFFECTED**

- 8.1 St Matthews.

## **9.0 CONSULTEES**

- 9.1 Consultation was carried out by the advertising of the TRO in a local paper and on street.

## **10.0 BACKGROUND**

- 10.1 The issue of swapping the Taxi Rank with the Blue Badge Bays in Lower Bridge Street has been debated at length at the Taxi Forum Group and the Licensing and Safety Committee.
- 10.2 The reasons for the change are twofold:
- Wheelchair bound passengers to a London type hackney taxi cab have to alight the vehicle from the left-hand side as the ramps necessary for boarding are located on that side.
  - The exhaust issues on this type of cab exits on the right-hand side and causes pollution to the nearby shops.
- 10.3 After hearing the advantages and disadvantages of each argument for the change the Licensing and Safety Committee meeting of 22 October 2008 resolved the following:
- a) That approval be given to swapping the taxi rank with the blue badge parking bays in Lower Bridge Street, Walsall so that the taxi rank is located on the east side of Lower Bridge Street and the blue badge parking bays on the west side of Lower Bridge Street;
  - b) That in noting that these changes will result in the loss of three or four blue badge parking bays, officers be requested to report back to the Committee on suitable alternative blue badge parking bays that can be created in the town centre to compensate for this loss;
  - c) That officers be authorised to advertise the requisite Road Traffic Orders in respect of these changes in Lower Bridge Street and that it

be noted that if any relevant objections to the proposals are received, this will be reported to Development Control Committee.

- 10.4 After new evidence came to light a further report went to the meeting of the 15 April 2009 and the Committee resolved the following:
- a) That, notwithstanding the new information and the survey provided by the Walsall Disability Forum, the Committees resolution from a meeting held on 22 October 2008 giving approval to swapping the taxi rank with the blue badge parking bays in Lower Bridge Street, Walsall so that the taxi rank is located on the east side of Lower Bridge Street and the blue badge parking bays on the west side of Lower Bridge Street be reaffirmed; and that officers be requested to look at providing the blue badge spaces lost as a result of that decision, in Freer Street.
- 10.5 The Traffic Regulation Order, was advertised on the 3 July 2009 in the Walsall Observer and 'on street'. The period for objections was 21 days.
- 10.6 During this time a total of 33 objections were received objecting to the TRO.
- 10.7 Under the Constitution if more than one objection is received by the Head of Engineering and Transportation for a TRO, the decision as to its implementation has to be referred to this Committee.
- 10.8 There are three main objections:
- The gradient of the footway
  - Exiting the vehicle into the stream of incoming traffic.
  - Exiting onto this side of the road means access to the Town Centre is difficult without crossing the road.
- These are believed to be legitimate objections to the TRO.
- 10.9 A survey of the gradient of the footway has been carried out and it indicates that the footway gradients are less than the maximum gradient as advised in the guidance for Inclusive Mobility produced by the Department for Transport.
- 10.10 As regards exiting into the stream of traffic this may occur should the passenger be the disabled person and the only access to the vehicle is on the left-hand side of the vehicle. (Similar to the problem with a Taxi)
- 10.11 Access to the facilities of the Town Centre will entail crossing a road for disabled people when they alight from their vehicle onto this side of Lower Bridge Street.
- 10.12 Should the approval be given to the swapping of the taxi rank and blue badge bays, Engineering and Transportation will engage with any Disabled Groups to give full consideration of our duty under the Disability Equality Duty.

**AUTHOR**

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Head of Engineering & Transportation

20 October 2009