



LEIGHTON-LINSLADE TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCIL

Date: 28 January 2019

Title: Taxi Rank

Purpose of the Report: To seek Member endorsement in respects of the carrying out of a feasibility study and thereafter delivery of a new taxi rank within the town centre.

Contact Officer: Mark Saccoccio, Town Clerk

Corporate Objective/s	LLTC Three Year Plan – Aim 2. Objective 19	
Implications:		
Financial	√	Utilising ringfenced reserves
Human Resources		
Operational/Service delivery	√	
Procedural/Legal	√	
Risk/Health and Safety		

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

Should members be minded, the proposals are:

- 1.1 That the Town Council agrees that in partnership with Central Bedfordshire Council a review and feasibility study be carried out into the merits of relocating the taxi rank;
- 1.2 That a maximum of £20,000 be drawn down from ear marked reserves (budget code 970/9026 - £39,700) for the purposes of:-
 - i) Appointing a consultant to carry out a feasibility study into the merits of relocating the taxi rank and thereafter creating an implementation strategy that would facilitate any likely move.
- 1.3 That Central Bedfordshire Council as highways and licensing authority project manage on behalf of the Town Council.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 As Members are minded, the future of the taxi rank has been the subject of considerable discussion for many years. Whilst the Town Council recognises the value and importance taxis provide to our community, the issue is whether

the present location of the taxi rank is the most appropriate from both an operational and user perspective.

The Challenges

- 2.2 Situated at the north eastern end of the High Street, the taxi rank is licensed to provide 4 taxi spaces only. As Members are minded, on market days (Tuesday and Saturday), the taxi rank is temporarily moved to the opposite side of the road in order to allow the market operation to expand as and when needed.
- 2.3 For many years, there has been concern that the taxi rank has outgrown its present location. Part of the reasoning for this is to do with the way taxis are operated and licensed. The license which is issued by Central Bedfordshire Council allows the said holder to ply their trade anywhere they choose within the authority area. Whilst freedom of movement is beneficial to the holder, it can lead to concerns. Naturally, license holders will gravitate toward those locations where business is perceived to be most buoyant and it is not unusual on a typical day to see in excess of a dozen taxis concentrated in and around the taxi rank within the High Street. By virtue of its size, taxis are forced to park legally or illegally and herein lies the challenge. Despite best endeavours, the solution does not rest with traffic enforcement who can only react to any parking infringement.
- 2.4 In terms of the way the town centre now operates, an argument can be made that the taxi rank is no longer situated in the most appropriate location. The held view is that in order to encourage more visitors to the town centre, the town centre experience needs to adapt in order to meet consumer demands and expectations. As a town, we have largely embraced this with outdoor seating provided in several of our eateries, cafes and bars. The ability to sit and relax outdoors is a positive experience which visitors yearn for. Disappointingly, the ability to provide a positive consumer experience is sadly compromised for the former fire station building which shares an uncomfortable relationship with the adjoining taxi rank. The ability to enjoy al fresco dining is severely compromised by the juxtaposition of the taxi rank. Despite their best endeavours, it is an inevitable consequence that taxis create exhaust fumes which do little to add to the positive experience of those using the outside seating area. Consequently, the area outside seating area is seldomly used to the detriment of the restaurant as well as visitors to the town centre.

The Opportunities

- 2.5 Whilst the Town Council recognises the value and importance of taxis to the community, there remains concern that more could be done to address the present issues. Although statutory responsibility rests with the Principal Authority for the managing and licensing of taxis, there is no reason why the Town Council could not support the bringing forward of any scoping work needed to help inform the future of the taxi rank. The Town Council recognises that at times, its priorities may not necessarily align with those of the Principal

Authority. Therefore, should Members agree that the taxi rank is a town priority (and needs to be addressed in accordance with town council timescales), support could be offered to the Principal Authority in bringing this work forward. Partnership working could come in the form of the Town Council funding the work of the consultant and the Principal Authority project managing the scheme. This way at least, the project would benefit from having the funding (provided by the Town Council) and the expertise provided by the Principal Authority. By doing so, the Town Council would as stakeholder be able to influence when this work takes place.

End

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