



Northumberland

County Council

RECORD OF DECISION TAKEN BY THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT & TRANSPORT

Paul Jones

Proposed amendments to the taxi ranks on Bridge Street, Morpeth

Cabinet Member: Councillor John Riddle

22nd September 2023

Purpose of Report

To consider the results of the public consultation exercise, regarding the proposed amendments to the taxi ranks on Bridge Street, Morpeth.

Recommendations

It is recommended that the amendments to the taxi ranks be made as proposed.

Link to Corporate Plan

This report is relevant to the following key themes in the Corporate Plan for 2023-26:

‘Thriving Places and Culture – Neighbourhoods are safe, clean and well maintained.’

Key Issues

1. Parking Services have raised concerns on behalf of the taxi companies about indiscriminate parking in the taxi ranks.
2. At present the taxi rank on the north side of Bridge Street is currently dual use, 30-minute limited time bays between 8am and 7pm then a designated taxi rank between 7pm and 8am. The taxi rank on the south side is in operation between 8am and 7pm, outside these times, double yellow lines are in force.
3. It has been reported that non taxi vehicles are parking in the designated taxi rank on the north side outside of the permitted times.
4. To alleviate these issues, it is proposed to make the north side bays 30-minute limited time parking between 8am and 6pm, with no restrictions between 6pm and 8am. Then extend the timings of the taxi rank on the south side bays, so that they are in operation 24/7.
5. Cllr Bawn is in support of the proposals.
6. The scheme will be funded by the Local Transport Plan 2023/24 programme.

Delegated Decision

Background

Bridge Street runs through the town centre of Morpeth, which mainly comprises of retail outlets, cafes, and restaurants. There are various parking restrictions in place along Bridge Street, including taxi ranks, limited time parking bays, double yellow lines, disabled bays, and loading bays.

Currently, when the taxi rank on the north side comes into force at 7pm, taxis are unable to use these spaces due to other vehicles being parked here. Which is in part due to the taxi ranks switching from one side of the road to the other at this time, confusing many motorists.

Concerns have been raised by Parking Services after numerous complaints from the taxi companies about not being able to park in the designated taxi ranks. To alleviate these issues, the county council has proposed to make the north side bays 30-minute limited time parking between 8am and 6pm, with no restrictions between 6pm and 8am. Then extend the timings of the taxi rank on the south side bays, so that they are in operation 24/7. This will simplify the restrictions and make them much clearer to motorists.



Google image of the taxi rank on the south side of Bridge Street.



Google image of the taxi rank/limited time parking bays on the north side of Bridge Street.

Delegated Decision

Consultation

The proposed parking bays were the subject of a consultation exercise which concluded on 25th of August 2023. This involved the delivery of a consultation letter to 174 taxi drivers/businesses and 27 statutory consultees, including the emergency services and disabled and transport associations and organisations. A copy of the consultation letter and plan is attached as Appendix A.

Responses were received from 3 consultees with 1 in favor and 1 against the proposals, 1 consultee did not express an opinion. A summary of the responses received is attached as Appendix B.

During the consultation additional signage/road markings were requested. On the north side, the current no waiting signs will be removed, and the limited time parking signs will be amended to state between 8am – 6pm. On the south side, the current no waiting signs will have the timings removed. There will be no additional signage incorporated in this scheme and the current road markings are sufficient for the taxi rank on the south side. We will however closely monitor the situation after implementation.

Comments were also made regarding monitoring and enforcement. There are no plans to introduce CCTV cameras at this time. Our CEOs are already working to increase patrols in this area, this will continue after the scheme is implemented.

One consultee mentioned that there would be an overall loss of taxi spaces. Currently there is only one area available for taxis at any one time, whether that be on the south side 8am – 7pm or the north side 7pm – 8am. Having a 24-hour taxi rank on the south side will increase the space for taxis after 7pm, as this is a larger area than the north side. Taxis will also be able to wait on the north side after 6pm if necessary, as there will be no restrictions in place after this time.

The timings of the limited time bays on the north side have been amended from 8am - 7pm on the consultation letter to 8am - 6pm. As the Senior Civil Enforcement Officer for Morpeth confirmed that these times would be more appropriate.

Recommendation

Given the result of the consultation it is recommended that the proposed amendments to the taxi ranks be introduced.

Implications Arising out of the Report.

Delegated Decision

Policy	Consistent with existing policies
Finance and value for money	Scheme will be financed through the Local Transport Plan 2023/24 programme
Legal	None
Procurement	None
Human Resources	None
Property	None
Equalities (Impact Assessment attached) Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> N/A <input type="checkbox"/>	None
Risk Assessment	The proposal is designed to improve road safety in the area.
Crime & Disorder	The proposed amendments will lead to reduced altercations over indiscriminate parking.
Customer Consideration	The proposed amendments will remove any confusion regarding the alternating purposes of the bays. As well as reducing the number of vehicles parking indiscriminately. 174 taxi drivers/businesses and 27 statutory consultees were also consulted.
Carbon reduction	None
Wards	Morpeth North

Delegated Decision

Appendix Index

Appendix A – Consultation letter and plan

Appendix B – Summary of consultation responses

Appendix C – Layout of proposed taxi rank amendments

Background Papers:

None

Author and Contact Details

Report Author **Michael McMonagle, Programme Officer**

Delegated Decision

DECISION TAKEN

Title of Officer: Director of Environment & Transport

Subject: Proposed amendments to the taxi ranks on Bridge Street in Morpeth

Consultation: 3 responses received.
1 in favour
1 against
1 no opinion

Decision Taken: To introduce the amendments to the taxi ranks as proposed

Signature of Director



Date

28th December 2023

Appendix A – Consultation Letter



Northumberland County Council

Our ref: Bridge Street
Enquiries to: Highways Programme
Email: Highwaysprogramme@northumberland.gov.uk
Date: 27th July 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Proposed amendment to the timings of the Taxi Ranks on Bridge Street

Concerns have been raised regarding vehicles parking in the taxi ranks on the north side of Bridge Street outside the permitted hours.

The taxi rank on the north side of Bridge Street is currently dual use, 30-minute limited time bays between 8am and 7pm then a designated taxi rank between 7pm and 8am. The taxi rank on the south side is in operation between 8am and 7pm, outside these times, double yellow lines are in force.

In order to address ongoing concerns, the County Council is proposing to make the north side bays 30-minute limited time parking between 8am and 7pm, removing the taxi rank outside these times. Then extend the taxi rank timings on the south side bays, so that they are in operation 24/7. As shown on the plan overleaf.

With the designated taxi rank bays being on the south side only and the public parking only on the north side. This should remove any confusion and reduce incidents of indiscriminate parking.

I am therefore writing to you to ask for your views on this proposal. Please visit <https://www.northumberland.gov.uk/Highways/Roads/Traffic.aspx> or send your views via email to HighwaysProgramme@northumberland.gov.uk.

Regrettably, it is not possible to reply to individual comments, but you may wish to note that comments may be included in a Decision Report to the Director of Local Services and may be available for public inspection.

This consultation is open until **Friday the 25th of August 2023**.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Yours sincerely,

M. McMonagle

Michael McMonagle
Programme Officer



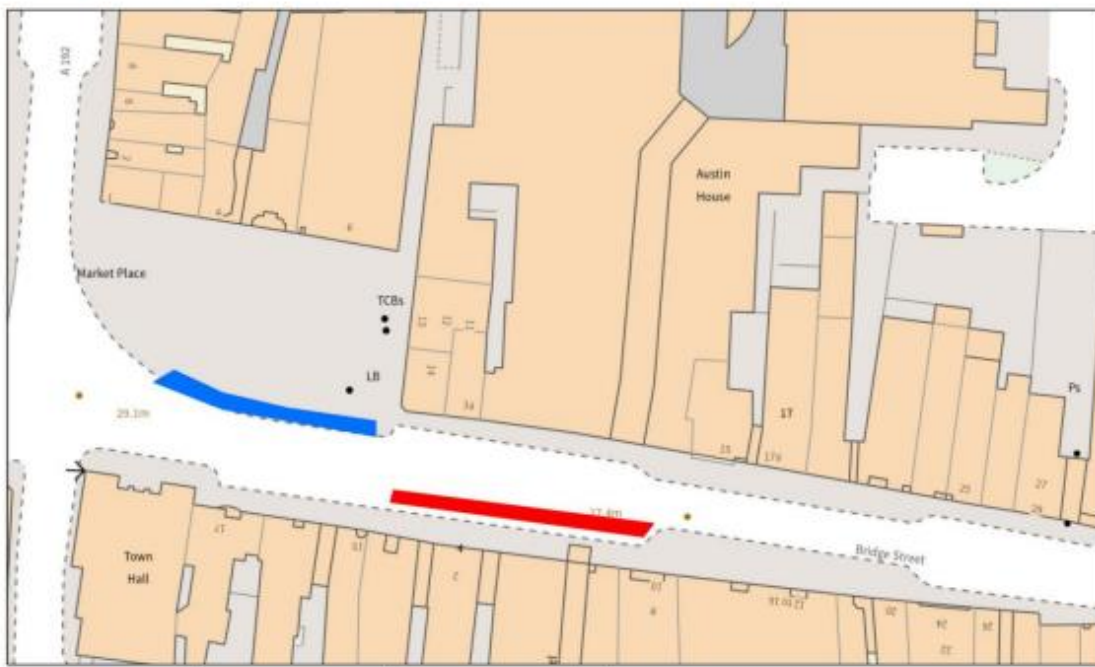
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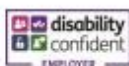


Northumberland County Council

Proposed amendments to taxi ranks



<p>Northumberland County Council County Hall Morpeth Northumberland NE61 2EP Tel: 01670 220000</p>	<p>Network Management Information System</p> <p><small>This map is produced from digital data supplied with the permission of the relevant authorities. It is not to be used for any purpose other than that for which it is intended. The Council does not accept any liability for any loss or damage arising from the use of this map.</small></p>	<p>Site: Proposed Parking Bay Changes Bridge Street, Morpeth</p> <p>Date: CE July 23</p> <p>Scale: NTS</p>	<p>KEY</p> <p>Proposed 30 minute time limited Bay 08:00 - 19:00 —</p> <p>Proposed Taxi Rank Bay 24/7 —</p>
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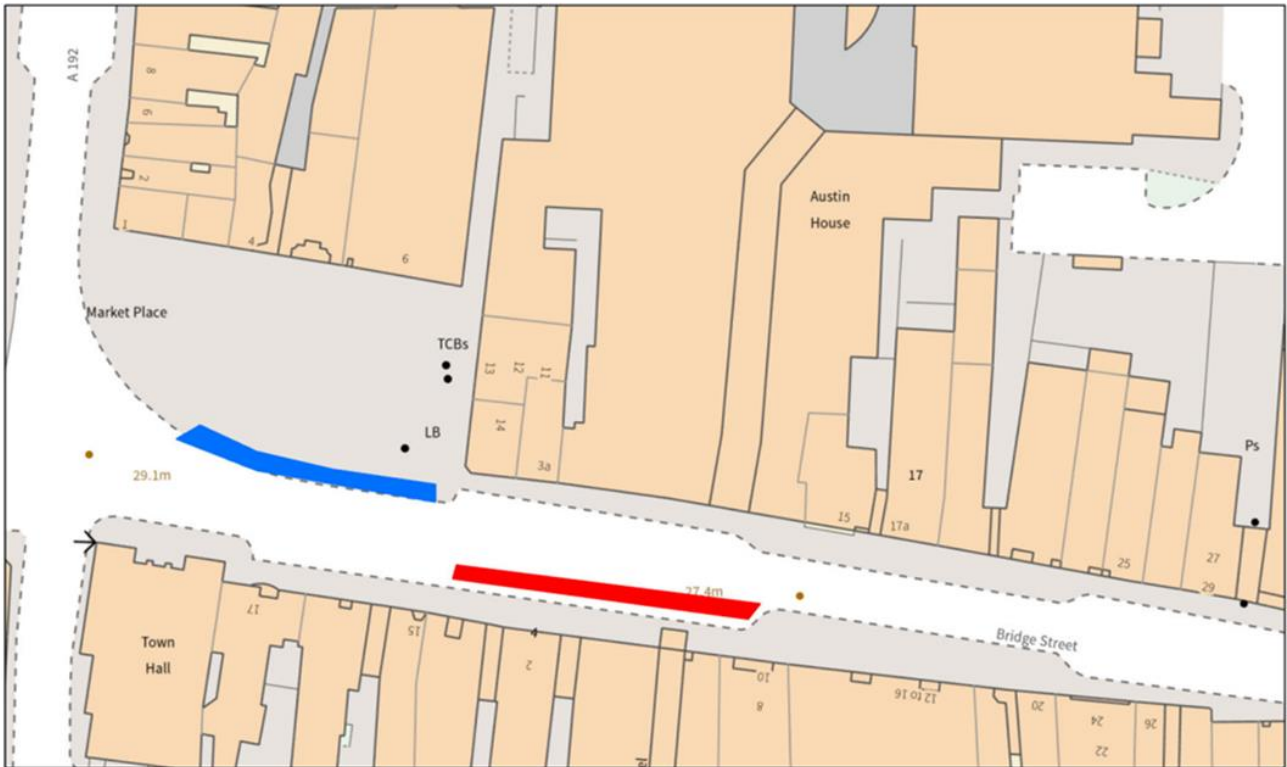


Appendix B – Summary of consultation responses

	FOR	AGAINST	NEITHER	Other Relevant Comments
Thoroughfare				<p>This proposal is a huge step forward in simplifying the current situation with two ranks and hopefully make it easier for the public and less problematic for taxi drivers but I would like to make the following observations and suggestions</p> <p>Currently the south side rank has the basic highways signage stating 'no parking during the stated hours except taxis' or words to that effect which probably meets minimum legal requirements but isn't actually that clear highlighting it is a taxi rank only and the signage is quite small</p> <p>As new signage will have to be created I would recommend if possible enlarging the signs as per the size used currently on the north side and possibly add a pole and/or a sign marking the front of the rank to make it further visible to the public</p> <p>As it will be 24hrs and only Castle Morpeth Hackneys that can use this area there shouldn't be any conflict of interests</p> <p>I would also recommend refreshing the road markings and perhaps adding another 2 'taxi' markings on the road</p> <p>Finally the continued support of enforcement would be appreciated (this has been very good to date) as unfortunately the south side is abused to some extent also by cars stopping to use cash machines and as a drop off point</p> <p>Unfortunately I have witnessed letting drivers off with warnings has little effect and they often return so zero tolerance with a consistent approach is required with enforcement or the public will just continue to abuse it without a financial deterrent</p> <p>Being able to access the rank without unauthorised parking is essential for taxis to be able to carry out their role and earn a living and to make the service as seamless, visible and as easy as possible for the general public</p>
Rothbury Drive	1			
Taxi Company		1		<p>If only the south side taxi rank is available and there will be more taxis working than there is spaces to park where will the other taxis be allowed to form a queue.</p>
			1	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Amend the South side daytime rank to a 24/7 Taxi Rank. 2. Change the current pole to a bigger 4m one with a "Taxi Cube" on top and additional signage to reflect its change to 24 hour Rank. I would prefer the Cube to be illuminated. The reason for the extra height is to stop vandalism of the sign. 3. Additional road markings with "24 hour Taxi Rank" in four places on the road and additional posts with similar signage. 4. Move the Disabled Bay outside Santander to other side and Extend Existing Loading Bay to cover this space. And after 7pm to 8am Allow this Loading Bay to be additional Taxi Rank Spaces. 5. Active Enforcement of All Taxi Rank Spaces with no exceptions. <p>I would like to see CCTV camera's covering the rank for enforcement and Public safety especially when customers have been attacked by people pushing in to the que.</p>

Delegated Decision

Appendix C – Layout of proposed taxi ranks amendments.



Northumberland
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Network Management Information System

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Title: Proposed Parking Bay Changes Bridge Street, Morpeth		
Drawn: CE	Date: July 23	Scale: NTS

KEY

Proposed 30 minute time limited Bay 08:00 - 18:00 —

Proposed Taxi Rank Bay 24/7 —

