

MINUTES OF THE
REGULATORY COMMITTEE

held on 23 January 2025 at 7pm

Present:

Councillor D. Clark (Chair)

Councillors H. Clark, A. Davidson, S. Davis, J. Frasca, J. Hawkins, L. Mascot, V. Pappa and P. Wilson

1. [Apologies for Absence](#)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chambers, John, Lee, and Scott.

2. [Minutes](#)

The minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2024 were agreed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3. [Declaration of Interests](#)

All Members were reminded to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary interests or other registerable interests where appropriate in any items of business on the meeting's agenda. None were made.

4. [Public Question Time](#)

[One public question had been submitted in advance of the meeting, which can be viewed via this link.](#)

The question had been submitted on behalf of the Chelmsford Taxi Drivers Association and related to Item 5. The Committee heard the association were disappointed about the proposals and felt they were unjust and that it would be unlawful for a Council to make profit from the licensed trade. The Committee also heard that the trade would essentially be double permitted and that the Council were not supposed to make a profit out of the taxi trade. The Committee were also informed that the associations advisers felt a legal challenge would be possible if the proposal went ahead and therefore should be ceased immediately. The Committee also heard that taxi drivers would be discouraged from using the new rank, leading to not enough taxis being available, compromising public safety and convenience and that sufficient taxis should remain a key priority for the Council.

In response the Committee's legal advisor, confirmed that they viewed the proposals as legally sound and the Council would effectively be operating with two hats, one as landowner and one as the Licensing Authority. The two functions would be kept separate. They noted that the Council would be operating as the landowner in terms of issuing the permits and it was viewed as comparable to where parking licences

were granted on commercial properties, in effect a permit to use the Council's land if they wished to do so.

5. Beaulieu Park Train Station – Taxi Rank Permit Scheme

The Committee were asked to consider the introduction of a Taxi Rank Permit Scheme at Beaulieu Park Station and to agree for a consultation to be carried out, to obtain views and feedback on the proposals. The Committee heard that the Council owned an area of land allocated for the new Station Taxi Rank at Beaulieu Park Station and could manage it accordingly and it had been proposed that the use of the rank by Hackney Carriage drivers/vehicles should be chargeable. The Committee were informed that there appeared to be very few situations nationally with a similar example and officers had instead looked at how taxi services are provided at out-of-town railway stations, but that these tended to be on entirely railway-owned land. The Committee also noted an expected annual footfall at the new station of between 290,000 and 390,000 in the first year of opening, levelling out at around double that number by 2029, in comparison to 6.5m passengers at Chelmsford station in 2023-24.

The Committee were provided with further details on the specific proposals, including the need to find a balance for the right number of permits which would be regularly reviewed, with up to 50 in the first year thought as a proportional approach. The Committee also heard that permits and access would be limited to hackney vehicles licensed by the Council and would be physically attached to the vehicle and linked to the registration plate. The Committee also noted that it might be an option to not allow permits for those vehicles who already had one for Chelmsford Station. Officers informed the Committee that they were not aware of the specific price for the Chelmsford station permit, which was managed by Greater Anglia, but it was felt this could be well over £1000 annually. Therefore, it was felt that a price between £500 and £1500 could be appropriate, given the specific unknown quantity of passengers and taxi use at the new station.

The Committee noted that it was important for taxis to actually use the rank and that permit holders could be encouraged to use the rank at peak times and permit conditions could reflect this. The Committee heard that the scheme would be reviewed after a year or earlier if required. The Committee also noted that access to the land fell outside the statutory regulation of taxi and driver licences and instead the Council would be acting in its role as landowner. Therefore, the scheme would be managed outside of the Licensing team, apart from the verification of the vehicle and drivers licensed status. The income would be kept separate and the charge for permits would cover the cost of its introduction and management. The Committee also noted that applications could be reviewed, with possible priority given to vehicles with disabled access and to electric vehicles.

The Committee noted that the outline of the proposal would be included in the consultation and comments would be requested from stakeholders. It was noted that the consultees would include all taxi operators and drivers in Chelmsford, as well as Greater Anglia, Essex Highways and SEPP and would run for 6 weeks. The Committee heard that the responses would come back to a future Regulatory Committee, to consider and the report and recommendations of the Committee, would then be referred to Cabinet for a formal decision.

In response to questions from the Committee, officers stated that;

- There would not be CCTV or ANPR cameras at the rank, but that permits would be displayed in the back of vehicles, so they would be self-regulating as other taxi drivers would be able to see the permits.
- Any vehicle including private-hire vehicles, would be able to use the pickup/drop-off area instead of the taxi rank.
- According to the designs, the rank would be suitable for approximately ten vehicles.
- It was an option that any income from the scheme could be used for ongoing maintenance of areas of the station owned by the Council, such as the car park, bike storage area and bus interchange.
- They were not aware of any other train stations in the country that had a Local Authority operating a similar system, so it was hoped that the consultation would provide useful information for officers, to develop the scheme and price it sensibly.
- Due to the rank being on the Council's land, it had been viewed as an income generating opportunity.
- They were expecting to issue between 15-35 permits to begin with, which would then be kept under close review, as it would be important to strike the right balance, in terms of enough taxis being available, but not too many waiting for a space on the rank.
- There may be a preference towards disabled access vehicles and electric, but this was to be decided and the consultation responses would assist with the development of the scheme.

Members of the Committee agreed that a consultation should be carried out, to assist officers with developing a suitable scheme.

RESOLVED that a consultation be carried out on the proposed Taxi Rank Permit Scheme to obtain views and feedback on the proposals.

(7.02pm to 7.31pm)

6. Urgent Business

There were no matters of urgent business.

The meeting closed at 7.31pm

Chair