



17. Taxi Supporting Statement

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1. Setting the Scene

- 1.1 Hackney Carriages are distinguished by roof top signs and can be found at designated ranks or hailed in the street. They all have 'taxi' meters where the tariff is set by the Council. Private Hire Vehicles do not have a roof sign and must be pre-booked. They cannot be hailed in the street or picked up at a rank.
- 1.2 Both North Somerset Council and South Gloucestershire Councils place no limit on the number of Hackney Carriage Licences that can be granted within their areas whereas Bristol City Council has reintroduced a limitation Policy. Bath and North East Somerset Council maintain a Zoning Policy whereby the number of Hackney Carriage Licences within Zone 1 (City of Bath) are limited. There is no limit on the number of such Licences that can be granted within Zone 2 (the remainder of the Authority's area). Hackney Carriages may only use ranks and be hailed within the area where their Licence is granted.
- 1.3 Taxis (Hackney Carriages and Private Hire Vehicles) make a valuable contribution to providing access within the JLTP area. This mode of transport provides an around the clock service providing door to door access. It plays an increasingly useful part of an integrated transport system. They provide valuable service for public



transport interchange, enable those without access to a car, or who are unable or unwilling to use other forms of public transport to travel and facilitate access to places either not served by public transport or at times when public transport is not operating.

2. Vision

A system of Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles that is fully integrated within the local transport system to maximise the benefits they provide in complementing other forms of public transport, and increasing accessibility

3. Taxis and the Shared Priorities

Congestion

Taxis provide an important link with other forms of public transport. They can provide integral links in longer public transport trips and therefore improve access to alternative modes to the private car. The strategy will address the shared priority of congestion by promoting the integration of all forms of transport and land-use planning, leading to a better, more efficient transport system. In addition, where taxis and private hire vehicles are able to achieve higher occupancy rates than a private car, they assist in addressing the other shared priority of air quality.

Road Safety

Taxis have and will continue to play an important role in road safety. Continued promotion of taxi use, as an alternative to the private car, could assist with reducing casualties occurring from drink driving related accidents.

Accessibility

Taxis fill the gap when other forms of public transport are not available (for

example in rural areas or outside normal hours of operation). In this way they can provide a vital link to transport interchanges to allow access to the transport system. Through complementing other forms of demand responsive transport they can increase people's access to services, particularly for those with disabilities. Taxis can promote accessibility to everyday facilities for all, especially those without cars.

Air Quality

Working with Taxi operators to build on the relatively modern vehicle fleets is an important issue in addressing emissions. Integrating taxis into other transport infrastructure, such as using bus and HOV lanes where appropriate also has a positive impact on vehicle emissions.

Other Quality of Life Issues

Because travel by taxi is available for all and provides a door to door service this can contribute to an efficient economy and can support sustainable economic growth in appropriate locations.

Taxis are often perceived as affording greater levels of personal safety than other forms of public transport and are

therefore often the preferred mode of travel by night, especially for young women and other vulnerable groups.

4. Issues

- 4.1 There is considerable scope for increasing the role of taxi and private vehicles as part of an integrated strategy. In particular: -
- Whilst improvements have been made there is a need to ensure improved quality of information and accessible infrastructure at all taxi ranks at public transport interchanges.
 - Inconsistency in vehicles standards can be a barrier to taxi use. There is potential to work with operators to improve accessibility of vehicles, driving training and emissions through both voluntary and regulatory means.
 - Taxi sharing ranks in London have increased the attractiveness of taxis as a follow-on mode linked from rail trips. With several large railway and bus stations there is potential for investigating taxi sharing ranks at these locations.
 - There is scope for Investigating and developing innovative ways of using taxis as part of an integrated transport network, including as demand responsive services. These schemes may reduce the costs and feasibility of providing transport provision to areas not currently served and will be considered in the context of the Accessibility Strategy (Chapter 6 of Joint Local Transport Plan).

5. Delivery Programme in the Plan Period 2001/02 to 2005/06

- 5.1 Resources have been focussed in three main areas: -
- Infrastructure and information improvements.



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- Licensing controls and working with operators.
 - Demand responsive pilot scheme.
- 5.2 In terms of infrastructure the focus of activities has been on improving the quality and provision of taxi ranks in town/city centres and at public transport interchanges. Measures include improved signage, raised kerbs and new taxi ranks.
- 5.3 Through the licensing system the Councils have sought to expand the number of Licensed Hackney Carriages and private hire vehicles. We will seek to work with the industry to maximise the provision of accessible taxis and training for drivers using these vehicles.
- 5.4 The potential for expanding the role of taxis as part of an integrated transport system has been further explored, particularly through the provision of a pilot taxi bus schemes in both Bath and Bristol (see section 6). The results of these pilots will be used to inform future reviews of public transport provision as part of the Accessibility Strategy as set out in Chapter 6 of the Joint Local Transport Plan.

6. Good Practice

Taxibus/ Shared Car schemes represent something between a conventional bus service, and a full blown Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) scheme. Such schemes are particularly well suited to areas not well served by conventional public transport, for example very rural areas, and are much cheaper than most DRT services. When compared to failing conventional bus services, Taxibus/Shared Car schemes have the potential to enhance service, improve accessibility, reduce costs and sometimes even grow patronage at the same time.

Supported by the European Commission VIVALDI project a new Taxi-Sharing service has been introduced for residents in the Barton Hill, St. Philip's and St. Anne's area

of Bristol. This area was chosen as it is not well-served by conventional public transport. Car ownership levels are relatively low, which means that residents wishing to travel within their local area have limited travel options.

Taxi-Sharing is a new type of public transport service and is unique in the way that it operates. A local taxi operator runs the scheme on behalf of the Council, handles bookings and matches residents' journey requests to enable people to share their journeys. Travel costs 50p per person. This enables residents to access key local services, including health, education and leisure facilities, food providers and places of work at a low cost.

Bath and North East Somerset have introduced a Fare Car scheme for residents of the rural Lansdown, Tadwick, Langridge, Upper Langridge, Woolley, Swainswick, Upper Swainswick, Northend, St. Catherine area north of Bath, in partnership with Bath Taxis, to provide a service to and from Bath City Centre. This service replaces uneconomic bus services that have been withdrawn and operates two days per week at fixed times, providing two journeys in either direction for a fixed fare. Membership of the scheme is free and travel into the City must be booked in advance.

Bath and North East Somerset have introduced Taxi Marshalls at the Orange Grove Rank within the City of Bath between the hours of 11:00 pm and 03:00am on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays resulting in improved security, crowd control and less problems of rowdy behaviour.

7. Strategy

- 7.1 The strategy foresees taxis needing to be safe, comfortable, and available where and when required. Taxis and private hire vehicles should be seen to complement and reinforce other public transport services rather than compete with them.

- 7.2 To achieve this In the JLTP period the Councils intend to continue to focus on three main areas: -

Infrastructure and information improvements

- Improve the provision and quality of taxi ranks.
- Improve signage of and information at taxi ranks.
- Produce a joint taxi and private hire information leaflet.
- Monitor user satisfaction of taxi facilities including accessibility and safety concerns.

Licensing controls and working with operators

- Seek to establish and maintain taxi and private hire operator liaison groups with the Councils to discuss licensing, training and future measures within the JLTP area.
- In partnership with operators seek to improve standards of driver training, in particular in the area of disability awareness.
- Ensure public safety through the continued review, updating and adoption of the byelaws and local conditions applicable to vehicle and driver licences and compliance with these by licensees.
- Encourage and increase in the number of Hackney Carriages that fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act requirements.
- Make “cashing-in” of taxi tokens by licensees much easier, and thus encourage all licensed vehicles to accept them.
- Improve licensed vehicle safety.
- Review Hackney Carriage fares annually to ensure a competitive and attractive service.

New applications of taxis as part of integrated transport strategy

- Ensure that every major planning application takes account of provision for licensed vehicles.
- Investigate and promote ways to reduce exhaust emissions together with the up-take of low polluting fuels.
- Evaluate the impact of demand responsive taxi schemes in Bath and Bristol and make recommendations, where appropriate, for expansion of this concept.
- Continue to investigate the potential for further innovative transport schemes making use of taxis.

8. Targets

No specific target is set but taxi and private hire services are particularly linked to Congestion and Accessibility targets.