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SCRUTINY REPORT

TAXI RANKS - SECOND SCRUTINY REPORT

Task Group Report –
Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee
July 2005

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BROMSGROVE DISTRICT COUNCIL

SECOND REPORT OF THE TAXI RANKS TASK GROUP

JULY 2005

MEMBERS

Councillors W. R. Newnes (Chairman), A. J. Dent, Mrs. R. L. Dent, D. Hancox, S. P. Shannon and Mrs. C. J. Spencer.

Mr. K. J. Nind (Representative of the Taxi Trade)

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

- Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles
Due to the wheelchair accessible vehicles being unable to enter and/or exit the multi-storey car park when accessing the shopmobility area, the space immediately outside Asda in Recreation Road South car park (which is currently used by taxis) also be used as a drop off point for disabled passengers in wheelchair accessible vehicles. (Cost: Nil)
- Golden Cross Public House
A taxi pick up/set down area be established where the existing daytime loading bay area is situated outside the Golden Cross Public House in the High Street with the appropriate sign and road markings. (Cost: 300)
- Worcester Road
The taxi pick up/set down area on Worcester Road be discontinued due to the problems taxi drivers and Police have due to its location. (Cost: Nil)
- New Arts Centre
Taxis be allowed to pick-up/set-down and wait for passengers at the Artrix car park located off school drive when the barrier to the car park is open and space is available, as authorised by the Board of the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust. (Cost: Nil)
- General
The taxi ranks at the Bus Station and The Strand as well as the taxi pick up/set down area outside Asda have a sign installed showing members of the public where the taxi areas are and to help stop other drivers parking on the area as well as assisting the police enforce against illegal parking. (Cost: £900)
- Financial
That the costs arising from any of the above recommendations which are approved be met from the provision for contingencies which amounts to £150,000 in 2005/06.

The total cost to implement all the recommendations listed above is approximately £1200 which is less than 1% of the available budget.

Please Note: Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 states the Council has a legal duty to consider how our actions play a part in Crime and Disorder. The above recommendations, if approved, will assist this Council in reducing alcohol related crime and disorder.

The recommendations are in line with the Community Safety Strategy, the Licensing Act 2003 as well as the Council's key priority to have healthy and safe communities and the Council's objective to provide a safe and attractive environment. If the recommendations are not approved it may increase illegal parking and potentially there could be an increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly at weekends and evenings.

TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the Meeting of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee on 29th January 2004, it was decided a Task Group would be formed to consider the location of taxi ranks within Bromsgrove town centre and the Group would include a representative of the taxi trade.

The Taxi Ranks Task Group reconvened after 6 months in March 2005 to reconsider issues surrounding taxi ranks.

See appendix I for a list of those the Taxi Ranks Task Group have consulted since March 2005.

BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Summary of Actions since September 2004

The first Taxi Ranks Task Group Scrutiny Report was submitted to the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee on the 9th September 2004 where it was agreed that, subject to amendments, it be recommended to the Executive Cabinet.

The Scrutiny Report was submitted to the next meeting of the Executive Cabinet on 13th October 2004. The Executive Cabinet agreed that “the recommendations contained in the report be considered as part of the budget preparation process, and in relation to other priorities and demands.”

The decision by the Executive Cabinet on 13th October 2005 was verbally reported back to members of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 21st October 2004. Members suggested that the report be referred back to the Executive Cabinet requesting that one particular recommendation relating to taxi rank signs be approved and implemented as quickly as possible. Members understood that all the recommendations contained within the report could not all be approved immediately due to the lack of funding; however it was hoped that certain recommendations could be implemented quickly and relatively cheaply. Members of the Committee also agreed that the Executive Cabinet be requested to consider making funding available in the future which could be used to implement Scrutiny Committee recommendations that were approved by the Executive Cabinet.

A further report was therefore submitted to the Executive Cabinet Meeting on the 10th November 2004 and the Executive Cabinet agreed that the Highways Partnership Unit should be approached regarding the possibility of funding and again it was agreed that the Scrutiny Committee’s requests “be considered as part of the budget preparation process, and in relation to other priorities and demands.”

A letter was sent to the Highways Partnership Unit Manager on the 22nd November 2004 (see Appendix II) and a response was finally received on 25th February 2005 (see appendix III) stating the Highways Partnership Unit will offer no funding.

Initially £20,000 had been included and prioritised as a “medium” pressure (to be utilised for emergency projects which arose including implementing recommendations made by Scrutiny Committees/Task Groups where they were consistent with the Council’s priorities and had been approved by the Executive Cabinet) in the proposed budget. However, only “high” and “unavoidable” pressures were approved as part of the budget for 2005/06.

23rd March 2005

The Taxi Ranks Task Group reconvened after 6 months and a meeting was held on the 23rd March 2005. The Corporate Finance Manager explained at that meeting that although the £20,000 prioritised as a medium pressure had not been approved as part of the budget for 2005/06, there was £150,000 which had been approved to be included as a contingency in the budget 2005/06, 2006/07 and 2007/08; and although there were no formal procedures in place at that time, there were templates relating to requesting funding as a bid which could be completed and submitted to the Executive Cabinet to see the funding required.

Other issues were also discussed such as legislation surrounding taxi rank signs and the impact Mill Lane alterations would have on the taxi rank at that location.

20th April 2005

The Head of Community Safety and Engineering, the Principal Licensing Officer and the Traffic and Development Engineer from the Highways Partnership Unit were all in attendance at the Taxi Ranks Task Group Meeting which took place on 20th April 2005.

The following issues were discussed:

- Wheelchair accessible vehicles
- Mill Lane alterations in relation to the taxi rank in that location
- Legislation surrounding taxi rank signs
- Worcester Road taxi area
- Proposed taxi set-down/pick-up area and taxi rank outside the Golden Cross Public House
- Police support and enforcing against illegal parking
- Local Licensing Forum
- Proposed taxi rank at New Arts Centre
- Bid requesting funding

9th June 2005

The third meeting took place on Thursday 9th June 2005. The Head of Community Safety and Engineering, the Principal Licensing Officer and the Traffic and Development Engineer from the Highways Partnership Unit were once again all in attendance.

The following items were discussed:

- Proposed taxi set-down/pick-up area and taxi rank outside the Golden Cross Public House
- Wheelchair accessible vehicles
- Taxi Rank signs
- Suggestion to have a Restriction Order on Worcester Road
- Council Wardens assisting the public to taxis
- Information from the Local Licensing Forum
- Mill Lane Speed Limit

30th June 2005

At the fourth meeting, which took place on Thursday 30th June 2005, the following was discussed in the presence of the Traffic and Development Engineer from the Highways Partnership Unit:

- Proposed taxi set-down/pick-up area and taxi rank outside the Golden Cross Public House

- Enforcement issues
- Letter of support from Inspector David Shaw, West Mercia Police and points raised for consideration
- Suggestion to have a Restriction Order on Worcester Road
- Proposal for a Taxi Rank at the New Arts Centre
- Draft Task Group Report
- Full Revenue Appraisal

RECOMMENDATIONS

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

Mr. Nind, the taxi trade representative who was co-opted on to the Taxi Ranks Task Group, had expressed on a couple of occasions that wheelchair accessible vehicles would not be able to enter and/or exit the multi-storey car park to set-down disabled passengers to the shopmobility area. Mr. Nind met with the Council's Assistant Engineer on the 20th April 2005 and when the Assistant Engineer saw the vehicle, he agreed with Mr. Nind.

This led to discussions on where wheelchair accessible taxis would safely set-down and pick-up disabled passengers at the Task Group Meeting which also took place on the 20th April 2005. Certain factors had to be taken into account which were:

- The large amount of space needed for the vehicle and the setting down and picking up of disabled passengers
- The length of time it takes to pick-up and set-down disabled passengers from wheelchair accessible vehicles
- The requirement of taxi drivers to park 3 metres away from other vehicles (otherwise they are liable if they was an accident)
- The need of an area for wheelchair accessible vehicles away from high volumes of traffic either on roads or car parks

Several options were discussed and it was decided that Mr. Nind, as a Taxi Trade representative and a representative from a local disabled group would discuss the issue further with the Head of Community Safety and Engineering.

What follows is a brief summary of the options the Task Group looked at as well as the advantages and disadvantages:

<u>OPTION 1</u> – Using existing taxi set-down and pick-up area	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No cost implications 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Wheelchair accessible vehicles would block any other taxis from using the set-down/pick-up taxi area for quite some time whilst loading or unloading their disabled passenger ▪ Following from the above, if a wheelchair accessible vehicle was using the area any taxis waiting would then be blocking other vehicles from exiting the car park

OPTION 2 – Extending the area outside the entrance of Asda, next to the existing taxi set-down and pick-up area, to create enough space for one wheelchair accessible vehicle	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A separate mobility drop off point means wheelchair accessible vehicles will not block the existing taxi area. ▪ It is close to the entrance of Asda and quite close to the shopmobility 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost of extending the area

OPTION 3 – Marking out a corner area in the Recreation Road South Car Park (by Asda) for wheelchair accessible vehicles	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A separate mobility drop off point means wheelchair accessible vehicles will not block other vehicles ▪ It is close to the entrance of Asda and quite close to the shopmobility ▪ Costs implications are fairly minimal 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Safety issues for drivers and disabled passengers due to traffic in that location of the car park

OPTION 4 – Marking out an area on Churchfields, outside the multi-storey car park which has a dropped curb.	
<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A separate mobility drop off point means wheelchair accessible vehicles will not block other drivers ▪ Away from busy car park ▪ Very close to shopmobility ▪ Cost implications are fairly minimal 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Location is on a road ▪ Difficulty of disabled passengers entering the multi-storey car park and accessing shopmobility

Unfortunately, Options 3 and 4 had to be ruled out due to safety. Option 2 is the ideal option, however, there are cost implications. Therefore, it is **RECOMMENDED** that Option 1 be approved and that this be reviewed 6 months after the shopmobility scheme is up and running to ensure the Council is not discriminating against the disabled by not providing a separate facility for them to use when they are being picked up/set down. If more disabled persons use the shop mobility scheme, this Council may have to consider Option 2 above and investigate the costs due to the disadvantages of Option 1 having a greater impact.

Golden Cross Public House

There have been several discussions by Taxi Ranks Task Group members relating to the area outside the Golden Cross Public House.

Taxi Drivers and the Police have reported to the Taxi Ranks Task Group the problems of using the taxi area on Worcester Road (which was believed to be a taxi rank – see “Worcester Road” section for more details). Due to the location, taxi drivers are often blocked in on Worcester Road by people leaving the nightclub and have on many occasions had to ignore the no entry sign and leave via Station Street. Many options were looked at relating to moving the location of the taxi area to another part of Worcester Road, however, none were viable, mainly due to the major cost implications.

Creating a taxi pick-up/set-down area and/or a taxi rank outside the Golden Cross would mean a taxi area on Worcester Road would not be required. West Mercia Police and the Highways Partnership Unit support the recommendations below. (Please see the appendix V to view the letter received from Inspector Shaw, West Mercia Police.)

You will note that the letter from Inspector Shaw which is attached as appendix V to this report asks for three points to be taken into consideration. The Task Group has done this as requested and have decided that points 1 and 3 in the letter are not necessary at this time particularly taking into account the lack of funding available and therefore will be reconsidered when the Taxi Ranks Task Group reconvene in 12 months time. With regard to point 2, we have been informed that the CCTV operators do have a clear view of the area outside the Golden Cross Public House as the Police requested.

What follows is a brief summary of the options:

<u>OPTION 1</u> – An evenings-only taxi pick-up/set-down area be established where the existing daytime loading bay area is situated outside the Golden Cross Public House in the High Street with an appropriate sign and road markings	
Advantages <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Having a centralised taxi area for members of the public leaving licensed premises in the evening▪ Taxis no longer being blocked in by crowds on the Worcester Road and forced to exit via a one-way road in the opposite direction▪ Help to take members of the public away from the town centre as quickly as possible and therefore helping to reduce anti-social behaviour in line with the Council's Community Safety Policy.	Disadvantages <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Minimal cost implications for road markings and a sign (<i>Worcestershire County Council has agreed to fund amending the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) costing £1500</i>)

OPTION 2 – That the existing daytime loading bay area outside the Golden Cross Public House be extended (towards Pizza Hut) and a 24-hour taxi rank be formed with appropriate signs and road markings. The rank should accommodate two taxi spaces.

<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Having a 24-hour centralised taxi rank for members of the public 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cost implications for the minor works ▪ Possibility of statutory undertakers apparatus underneath the area may need to be moved/lowered.
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OPTION 3 – Both Options 1 and 2 above

<p>Advantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See advantages for both Options above 	<p>Disadvantages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See disadvantages for both Options above
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Due to the cost implications to implement Option 2 and therefore, Option 3, we **RECOMMEND** that Option 1 be approved which you will note is fully supported by West Mercia Constabulary as well as the Highways Partnership Unit who have agreed to pay for amending the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) costing £1500 which leaves only £300 for the District Council to pay to cover the sign and any appropriate road markings required.

The recommendation is in line with the Licensing Act 2003. Licensed establishments will soon be able to extend their opening hours and it is believed this will happen in Bromsgrove town centre so that public houses will be able to compete against Euphoria Nightclub. (The Hogs Head has already successfully acquired a late licence until 12am.)

One of the primary Licensing objectives is to reduce crime and disorder which relates to assisting members of the public away from the town centre as quickly as possible to their homes. Therefore, by creating more suitable taxi ranks and set-down/pick-up taxi areas in the town, such as outside the Golden Cross Public House, this can be seen as assisting the Council in meeting the objective of reducing crime and disorder and working in partnership with the Police.

This would also be in line with the Council’s Community Safety Strategy to reduce anti-social behaviour (including Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998) for the same reasons as stated above.

Worcester Road

At the time of writing the previous report, it was believed that there was a taxi rank located on Worcester Road. However, investigations have shown that although the District Council put a taxi rank in place with the consent from County’s Highways Partnership Unit, the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) put in place by the County was never revoked which makes the District Council’s Taxi Rank invalid. A representative from the Highways Partnership Unit (HPU) apologised for the confusion and it was further reported that their TRO on Worcester Road did not correlate with their signs. Therefore, the HPU stated that this would be amended and it was up to the Taxi Ranks Task Group whether or not an exemption for taxis should be included on the TRO to allow them to set-down and pick-up passengers.

After much deliberation, it was decided that as the taxi trade cannot use the area anyway due to the problems taxi drivers face, such as being blocked in by crowds leaving the nightclub, and therefore having no choice but to ignore the “no entry” sign and leave the area via Station Road. It was suggested by Mr. Nind, agreed by the other members of the Task Group and therefore it is **RECOMMENDED** that an exemption for taxis should not be included in the County’s TRO on Worcester Road.

Last year, we did consider options to improve the location of the taxi area on Worcester Road such as the idea of rearranging the traffic system in Worcester Road, under which traffic would flow down the right hand side of the road, leaving parking provision on the left hand side. An evening-only taxi rank (6.00pm onwards, for three vehicles) could then be provided on the left hand side outside the old C.A.B. offices at 47 Worcester Road. This would have several advantages including: (i) passengers would get into the vehicles from the nearside and would not have to cross the road to get a taxi and; (ii) there would be less likelihood of traffic flows being blocked by congregating pedestrians. Some minor physical works would be needed near Hoolahans Public House to enable the traffic to use the right hand side of the road. However, there are also disadvantages, the main one being the expense and length of time it would take to implement if approved. Another disadvantage is that shop owners and businesses on the Worcester Road would be opposed to moving the parking provision to the left hand side of the road, as most businesses are located on the right hand side. If moved, it would also mean that the drivers of cars using the parking spaces in Worcester Road would face the same safety issue which taxi passengers do now, which is stepping into the road to get in and out of a vehicle.

A new suggestion was made recently to place a Restriction Order on Worcester Road on Fridays and Saturdays between 12pm and 6am so that only emergency vehicles and taxis would be allowed in Worcester Road at those times. However, whilst this is legally possible, the Highways Partnership Unit is against this proposal as it would be denying access to Worcester Road for the majority of drivers and in doing so discriminate against them without just cause. The Police are opposed to this suggestion too as it would be unenforceable. We also believe that certain businesses on that section of Worcester Road (such as takeaways) are likely to object strongly to this proposal and therefore it was agreed that this would not be recommended.

Due to all the options suggested regarding the taxi area on Worcester Road having various disadvantages it is therefore hoped that the recommendations under “Golden Cross Public House” section of this report will be approved.

New Arts Centre

There is no taxi rank near the new Arts Centre at present and it was hoped that the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust would agree to creating a taxi rank in the Artrix car park which is located off School Drive. However, due to recent vandalism problems the Board are against this idea as they are planning to install a barrier at the car park. However, the Bromsgrove Arts Centre Operating Trust has given full authority to taxi drivers to use the Artrix car park to set-down/pick-up and wait for passengers when the barrier is open. It was agreed that taxi drivers could also use the area just outside the Artrix car park on School Drive beside the lighted path leading to the Arts Centre. As there is no kerb, this would be ideal for setting down and picking up disabled passengers.

General

It is very important for both taxi drivers and members of the public to be aware of exactly where taxi ranks and taxi pick-up/set down areas are located in the town centre and therefore we strongly **RECOMMEND** that all taxi ranks/areas should have signs installed which comply with the 2002 Traffic Signs Regulations and that the Executive Cabinet be requested to approve the relatively small amount of funding required so that this important improvement, for both taxi drivers and members of the public, can be carried out as quickly as possible.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Please refer to the table below for all estimated costs of implementing recommendations:

<u>RECOMMENDATION</u> (Please refer to the summary of the recommendations on page 1 of this report for further details)	<u>ESTIMATED COST</u>	<u>COMMENT</u>
Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles	N/A	No funding is required.
Golden Cross Public House	Max £300 approx	This is the cost for the sign (and any possible road markings required). The amendment to the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) costing £1500 will be funded by the Highways Partnership Unit
Worcester Road	N/A	The cost of amending the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) and changing the road markings costing £1500 will be funded by the Highways Partnership Unit.
New Arts Centre	N/A	No funding is required.
General	Max £900 approx	To cover costs of making and installing taxi signs at the taxi ranks at the Bus Station and The Strand as well as the taxi area outside Asda.
<u>TOTAL COST</u>	Max £1200 approx	This is the total cost to implement all the recommendations.

The recommendations are in line with the Council's key priority to have healthy and safe communities and the Council's objective to provide a safe and attractive district. If the recommendations are not approved it may increase illegal parking by other road users and potentially there could be an increase in anti-social behaviour, particularly at weekends and evenings.

As already stated, the recommendations contained within this report are in line with the Community Safety Strategy, the Licensing Act 2003 and Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

It is important to note that the cost of dealing with the effect of crime and disorder is likely to be more than the cost of preventing it.

BID FOR FUNDING FROM THE REVENUE BUDGET 2005/06

The costs arising from the recommendations contained within this report which are approved could be met from the provision for contingencies which amounts to £150,000 in 2005/06. You will note that the amount required is less than 1% of the total funding available. Please see appendix VI which is the Bid for funding to implement the recommendations from the Revenue Budget 2005/06.

REVIEW

We have agreed that in another 12 months time members of the Task Group will meet again to review the effectiveness of decisions made by the Executive Cabinet relating to this Report.

Signed on Behalf of the Taxi Ranks Task Group

Councillor W. R. Newnes
Chairman of the Taxi Ranks Task Group

Contact Officer

Name: Della McCarthy, Administrative Officer

E Mail: d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk

Tel.: 01527 881407

A List of Individuals the Task Group Consulted since March 2005

1. Mr. K. Nind, Taxi Trade Representative
Mr. Nind was made a co-opted member of the Taxi Ranks Task Group at the Meeting of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee Meeting on the 29th January 2004. Mr. Nind attended all the Task Group Meetings and represented the Taxi Trade.

2. Mr. J. Moody, Head of Community Safety and Engineering
Mr. Moody attended the meetings of the Task Group which took place between April 2005 and June 2005.

3. Highways Partnership Unit (Worcestershire County Council)
Mr. M. Walton, Traffic and Development Engineer attended all the meetings since March 2005.

4. Ms. J. Pickering, Corporate Finance Manager
Ms. Pickering attended the Meeting on 23rd March 2005 and explained to members how to make a bid for funding and informed them of the current situation of the Capital and Revenue Budgets.

5. Mrs. S. Smith, Principal Licensing Officer
Mrs. Smith attended the meetings of the Task Group which took place between April 2005 and June 2005.

6. Inspector D. Shaw, West Mercia Police
Inspector Shaw was contacted and he wrote a letter supporting the recommendations made by the Taxi Ranks Task Group.

7. Mr. G. Rocke, Partnerships Officer, Community Safety Partnership
Mr. Rocke assisted with the Bid for funding and signed the Bid (see page 4 of appendix VI) to confirm that the recommendations made by the Taxi Ranks Task Group will assist with reducing alcohol related crime and disorder within the town centre.

Your Ref.

Appendix II

Our Ref. DMM/TR.TG

If telephoning please ask for
Miss Della McCarthy – (01527) 881407

Or email
d.mccarthy@bromsgrove.gov.uk

22nd November 2004

Dear Mr. Twaite

Taxi Ranks Scrutiny Report

You may be aware that the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on the 29th January 2004 decided to form the Taxi Ranks Task Group to consider the location of taxi ranks within Bromsgrove town centre. The Task Group comprised of six Councillors from the Committee and a representative of the taxi trade. In total the Task Group met on seven occasions including two site visits and several people were consulted including Mr. M. Walton representing the Highways Partnership Unit.

The Task Group compiled a report which was approved by the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee on the 9th September 2004. The report, along with details of all the financial implications, was then submitted to the Meeting of the Executive Cabinet held on the 13th October 2004 where it was decided that all the recommendations within the Taxi Ranks Scrutiny Report should be considered as part of the budget preparation process.

Members of the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee agreed that one of the recommendations relating to improving taxi rank signs and road markings needed to be implemented as a matter of urgency and its meeting on the 21st October 2004, it was decided that the Taxi Ranks Scrutiny Report should be referred back to the Executive Cabinet asking members to consider this along with another issue. I have enclosed this report for your information. The recommendations referred to are stated on page 2 of the enclosed Taxi Ranks Scrutiny Report under the subtitle "General". These are the recommendations which the Housing and Planning Policy Scrutiny Committee believe should be implemented as a matter of urgency.

On the 10th November, the Executive Cabinet agreed that the Highways Partnership Unit should be approached regarding providing funding. Could you please inform me whether the Highways Partnership Unit could provide any funding for the improvement of the taxi rank signs (by erecting larger signs) and repainting taxi bay road markings for taxi ranks located at Bromsgrove Bus Station, The Strand and Worcester Road. I believe the total cost would be approximately £1200.00 - £1350.00.

Please let me have your comments by Tuesday 30th November 2004 if at all possible.

Yours sincerely

Miss Della McCarthy
Administrative Services Division

Encs

Copy to: Mr. K. Dicks, Corporate Director of Resources
Mr. V. Harrison, Head of Administrative Services
Ms. K. Firth, Committee Group Lead (Executive)

Mr. N. Twaite
Highways Partnership Unit Manager
Worcestershire County Council
The Council House
Bucot Lane
Bromsgrove
Worcs. B60 1AA

Miss Della McCarthy.
Administrative Services Section.
Bromsgrove District Council.
The Council House,
Burcot Lane,
Bromsgrove.

25 February 2005

Our ref: WCC(B)/NST

Dear Della,

Re: Taxi Ranks

I refer to your letter regarding the above and apologise for the delay in replying.

I think it would be fair to say that in principal I would be willing to allocate funding for the "maintenance" of existing signs and markings if they were in need of renewal due to fair wear and tear.

The HPU's budget for Traffic Management is fully committed for the current financial year and early indications are that there will be no increase in funds next financial year. This means I would find it very hard to justify funding to simply enlarge existing signage that is serviceable and complies with current legislation.

To sum up, I would be willing to contribute funding for maintenance of existing lining and to replace damaged or defaced signs. Any maintenance works would have to be implemented as a package with other similar lining or signing works to ensure best value, therefore I could not offer to carry out the same by a certain date.

Unfortunately, I could not justify funding for improvement or new works.

Yours sincerely,

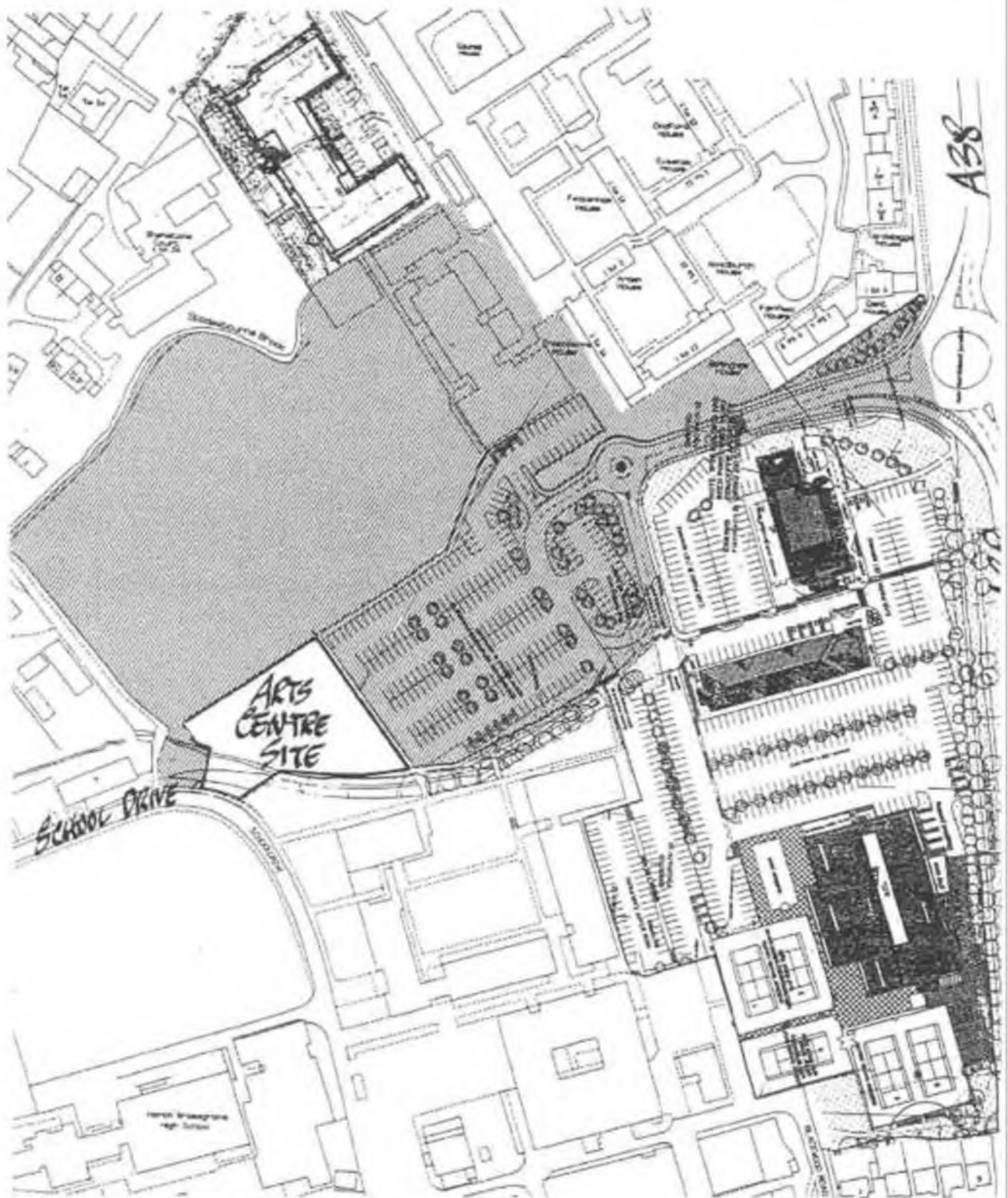
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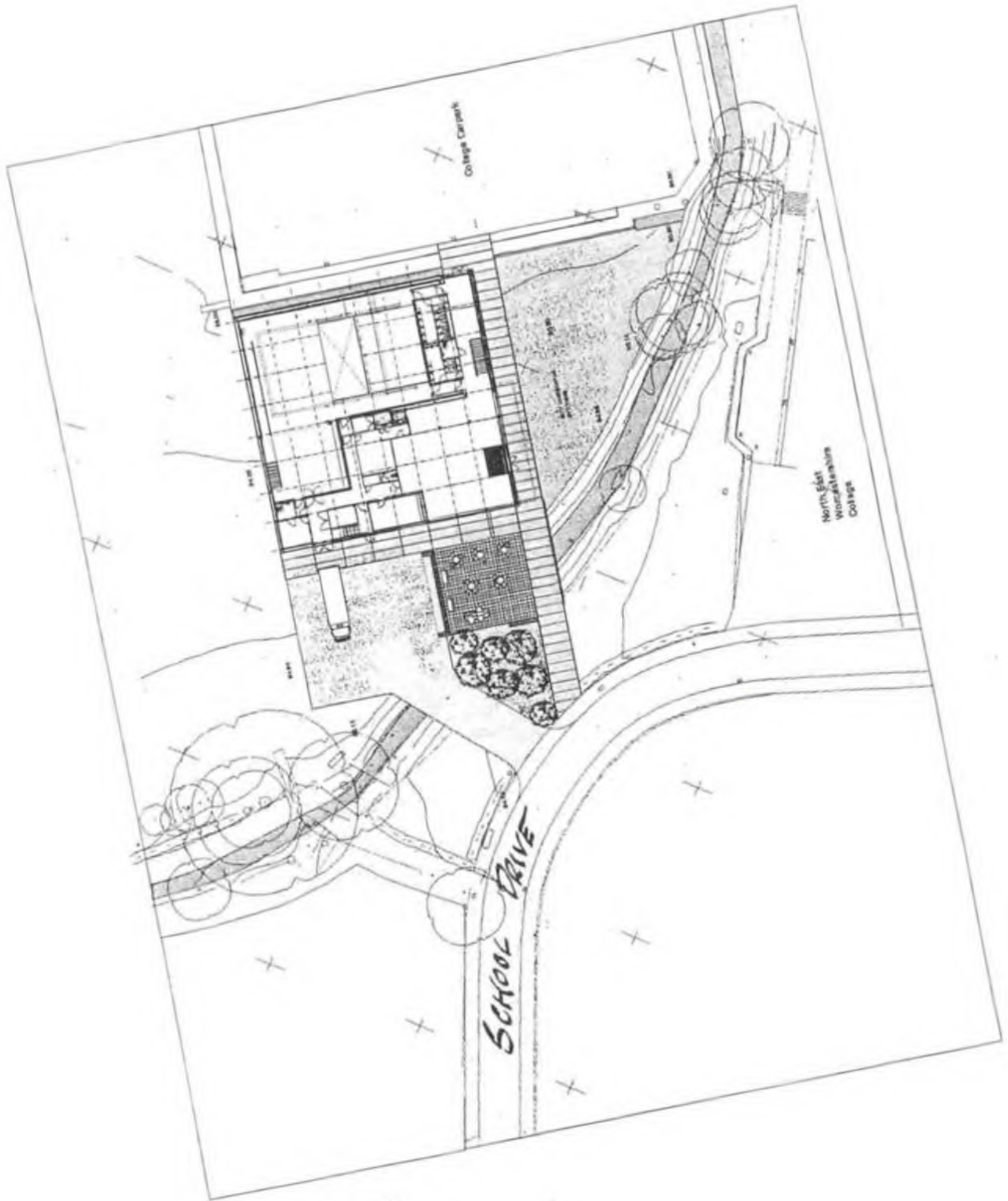




**Plan Referred To:-
Land off School Drive, Bromsgrove**

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100023519. 2005





The Police Office
The Crescent
Bromsgrove
B60 2DF

Cllr W Newnes
Chairman
Taxi Ranks Task Group
Bromsgrove District Council

21st June 2005

Dear Mr Newnes

Proposed Taxi Area outside the Golden Cross, High St, Bromsgrove

I have been contacted and ask to relay my comments, on behalf of the local police, relating to a proposal to install an evening only 6pm to 6am taxi set-down/pick-up area outside the Golden Cross, High Street, Bromsgrove.

I can say that you have the total support of the police. The benefits will be enabling members of the public to be able to disperse from a central location within the town, particularly at weekends.

I would, however, wish to ask 3 things to be taken into consideration.

1. That the existing railings, on the opposite side of the road, be extended to the pedestrian crossing, at the end of the pedestrianised area. In doing so this will help to prevent accidents by members of the public crossing the road at that point and making them use the statutory crossing.
2. That the CCTV system be examined to ensure that there is a clear vision of the whole of the taxi set-down/pick-up area. There is evidence to say that disorder is often found at taxi ranks/areas late at night and early warning from your CCTV operators would be extremely useful.
3. Consideration be given to employing a marshal(s) on the taxi area when the public houses close. I know this may be a difficult decision to take but at least I would like to think that you have considered the possibility. It has been seen to be successful in Broad Street, Birmingham but I do realise that we would not have the same numbers involved.

Should you wish any further comments please do not hesitate to contact me

Yours sincerely,

D Shaw
Inspector

FULL REVENUE APPRAISAL

SCHEME: making and installation of signs for taxi ranks/areas and road markings and creating a taxi pick-up/set-down area in the centre of the town (outside the Golden Cross Public House)	START YEAR: 2005/06
KEY SERVICE OBJECTIVE: To ensure a safe and attractive district.	
BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT	PRIORITISATION CATEGORY - 3(medium)
To install the signs and road markings identifying the taxi ranks/taxi areas in the town Centre and creating a taxi pick-up/set-down area in the centre of the town (outside the Golden Cross Public House).	
PROJECT LEADER:	John Moody

Element	Cash Flow £'000			
	Year 1 2005/06	Year 2 2006/07	Year 3 2007/8	Year 4 2008/09
Contract Payments	0	0	0	0
Equipment	0	0	0	0
Consultants Fees	0	0	0	0
In-house fees	0	0	0	0
Other costs (specify)				
Total Capital Cost	0	0	0	0
Income (describe) This should include the possibility for matched funding (e.g. SRB, ERDF, Co-Financing etc.)				
Total Capital Income	0	0	0	0
Net Capital Cost	0	0	0	0

REVENUE IMPACT

Element	Cost £'000			
	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Ongoing
Employee Costs (describe purpose) (Do not include Internal Design / Supervision Costs)	0	0	0	0
Maintenance Costs	0	0	0	0
Other Costs – cost of signs, road markings and creating a taxi pick-up/set-down area.	1.2	0	0	0
Total Revenue Cost	1.2	0	0	0
Income / Savings (describe)	0	0	0	0
Total Revenue Income / Savings	0	0	0	0
Net Revenue Impact	1.2	0	0	0

HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (of preferred option)	F.T.E. (+/-)
<i>None</i>	

ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED include do nothing. If appropriate attach appraisal (including discounted cashflow and net present value calculations)

Alternative	Net Cost		Reasons for Rejection
	Capital	Revenue	
Do nothing	0	0	Impact on use of the taxi ranks by general public. Less visible signs – may increase illegal parking by other road users and potentially anti-social behaviour could increase, particularly at weekends in the evenings
Request Worcestershire County Council to fund signs	0	0	Has already been investigated and County will not fund signs. (However, County has agreed to fund the amending of the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to create taxi pick-up/set-down area.)

INTERNAL CONSULTATION (With other service heads/unions/Health & Safety Officer) It is vital that all appropriate managers are consulted (incl. HRM) All IT schemes to be submitted via Head of IT Services		
NAME / JOB TITLE	COMMENTS	SIGNATURE
Corporate Finance Manager	To be contacted to validate costs of signs and ensure financial regulations are adhered to.	
Community Safety Officer	Agree that proposals will assist with reducing alcohol related crime and disorder within the town centre	

METHOD OF EVALUATION

Success/Evaluation Factor(s)	Target	Target Date	Source of Information
Increased use of taxi ranks and taxi pick-up/set-down areas – potential reduction in illegal parking.	NA	NA	Discussions with taxi trade representative and West Mercia Police who fully support the proposals.
Decrease in anti-social behaviour (alcohol related crime and disorder has been highlighted as a major concern within the town centre) due to members of the public being able to easily return home from the town centre with a taxi area in the centre of town and therefore dispersing crowds. The cost of dealing with the effect of crime and disorder is likely to be more than the cost of preventing it.	N/A	N/A	Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 – Legal duty on the Council to consider how our actions play a part in crime and disorder.

PROJECT PLAN

Project Stage	Expected Timescale From Budget Approval (eg +1 month)
<p>Key stages required.</p> <p>Must include:</p> <p>Identification of position of signs</p> <p>Ordering of signs / purchase of signs</p> <p>Erection of new signs & road markings – in agreement with the Highways Authority</p> <p>Creating Taxi Rank at New Arts Centre</p> <p>Amending TRO to create a taxi pick-up/set-down area outside the Golden Cross Public House</p>	<p>+1 month</p> <p>+ 2 months</p> <p>+ 2 months</p> <p>+ 3 months</p> <p>+ 6 months</p>

ALL RISK FACTORS THAT COULD DELAY DELIVERY OF THE PROJECT.

None

RISKS OF PROJECT NOT BEING APPROVED

There will be a continuation of illegal parking on the Taxi Rank, the public may not be able to identify the taxi rank facility and thus reduces the accessibility to the general community.

Potentially, anti-social behaviour could rise due to taxis being unable to use the safe area outside the Golden Cross Public House, particularly with the introduction of the new licensing laws and premises being able to apply to remain open longer.

Justification

In order for funds to be released the business case must demonstrate a measurable return on investment. This must be demonstrated in the following areas. Please complete the appropriate section(s) below in support of your bid. All sections are to be completed.

1. Links to / impact on strategic objectives and council priorities

How will the funds requested be used to help the Council achieve its corporate objectives?

(the following objectives are not in any priority order)

1. A nice clean safe attractive District

The improvements to the signage would ensure that the public were aware of the taxi rank facility and would know that the vehicles and drivers were legally working.

The improvements would also help to reduce the amount of illegal parking. It is in line with the Council's Community Safety Strategy and West Mercia Police fully support proposals including creating a central taxi pick-up/set-down area outside the Golden Cross Public House.

The Council needs to take into account Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1995 in decreasing the fear of crime in the town centre.

2. An effective Local Development Framework

NA

3. A caring socially aware society

The improvements would help to ensure that the facility is accessible to taxi customers including the disabled to assist the Council in showing it does not discriminate.

4. A strong and expanding economy

The improvements would help the development of the taxi trade and a thriving, safe, night time economy, which is important for investment and employment and is attractive to all consumers.

5. Good sustainable leisure opportunities

Not Applicable

6. To be an efficient and effective Council

The improvements would demonstrate that the Council is making good use of its resources by implementing a project that could improve use of the town which West Mercia Police and the local taxi trade fully support.

2. Impact on customer satisfaction

What impact will this investment have on customer satisfaction? (e.g. an investment at a leisure centre could improve the facilities or increase the range of services available for customers and thereby increase the level of satisfaction) Please provide both narrative and an estimation of percentage increase.

The public would be able to identify the taxi ranks more easily and would lead to improved customer satisfaction of both the general community and the taxi traders.

Having a centralised taxi pick-up/set-down area in the town centre will assist the Police in dispersing crowds and the taxi trade take members of the public away from the town centre the weekend (evenings) and therefore assist with reducing anti-social behaviour including alcohol related crime and disorder as well as meeting the objectives laid down in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.

3. Productivity benefits

How will the funds invested increase the volumes generated? E.g. by investing these funds the volume produced for each £ invested should increase.

Not Applicable.

4. Opportunity costs

What is the potential cost to the authority of not investing these funds?

NA

5. Asset savings

How will this investment generate asset savings e.g. being able to dispose of an asset as a result of this investment?

NA

6. Performance improvement

How will this investment help to improve performance? Please list the PI's that will be affected and the expected change.

NA

Assumptions

Please detail the assumptions that have been made that will affect whether a measurable return on investment is achieved.

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BUDGET HOLDER (S)	PORTFOLIO HOLDER (S)
John Moody	Councillor P. J. Whittaker
John Moody	

Date of completion: 14/4/2005

Assessment of scheme by Capital Asset Projects Group

Please detail the assumptions that have been made that will affect whether a measurable return on investment is achieved.

NA



CAPITAL SCHEMES PRIORITISATION CRITERIA

Category 1:

Projects for which the council has no option because the work derives from a statutory requirement. The statutory nature must be rigorously tested and confirmed by reference to the specific legislation involved. Where there are options as to the delivery of the project these must be investigated and the results published. This category will include schemes financed by matched funding and also schemes of a health and safety nature.

In this category it does not matter whether the project fits in with the corporate objectives. It is the statutory nature that is critical.

Category 2:

Projects which clearly relate to the achievement of the corporate objectives. This must be evidenced with reference to the specific objective(s). In order to assist in prioritisation within this category, the following information must be provided per project:

- A clear and concise statement of the objectives of the project
- A clear and concise evaluation of the options for delivering the project
- Objective statement of potential outcomes: (e.g.) number of people who benefit
 - how they benefit
 - additional finance generated
 - partnership benefits
 - relevance to national issues
 - cross-cutting issues addressed
 - environmental impact

The supporting data will be used to determine relative priorities within this category.

Category 3:

Projects which do not clearly relate to the achievement of the corporate objectives, but which nevertheless have an impact.

Category 4:

All other projects.