

Report to: **General Purposes Committee Meeting – 23 June 2022**
 Director Lead: **Matthew Finch, Director – Communities & Environment**
 Lead Officer: **Alan Batty, Business Manager – Public Protection, Extn. 5467**

Report Summary	
Reason for Report	For Members to consider a proposal to remove the taxi rank on Kirkgate, Newark.
Report Title	Taxi Rank Provision on Kirkgate, Newark
Purpose of Report	For Members to consider whether to amend or remove the taxi rank on Kirkgate, prior to which the Council is required to consult on any proposal.
Recommendations	<p>That Members consider whether the taxi rank on Kirkgate, Newark should be amended/removed.</p> <p>That Members endorse a consultation exercise be undertaken to seek views on any amendments.</p> <p>That a report setting out the results of the consultation be reported back to the committee prior to any final decision.</p>

1.0 Background

1.1 There are two taxi ranks operating within Newark Town centre. These are set out in the table below.

Middlegate (junction with Stodman Street)	7 spaces	24 hours
Kirkgate (outside Violin School)	4 spaces	08:00 to 18:00
Castle Gate	3 spaces	18:00 to 06:00

1.2 The rank on Middlegate is a rank serving both day time town centre users and night time users. The Castlegate rank serves the evening economy and the Kirkgate rank designed to support town centre day time users.

- 1.3 During the early months of the pandemic a number of temporary traffic regulations were introduced. This resulted in the closure of Middlegate and as a result some parking areas were no longer available. To compensate the Kirkgate taxi rank. The taxi rank designation was amended so that the space became a temporary parking space with limited waiting.
- 1.4 Councillor Mrs Saddington has been approached by a local business who is requesting that the change to the rank be made permanent, thus removing the layby as a taxi rank and providing more town centre parking
- 1.5 Members will be aware that a survey of taxi users and the taxi trade was recently undertaken. The taxi trade were asked to list the taxi ranks that they used the most. The table below sets out the responses.

The current NSDC ranks are as below. If you sit on a rank, which do you use on a regular basis?			
Answer Choice		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Middle Gate, Newark	50.0%	28
2	Kirk Gate, Newark	5.4%	3
3	Castle Gate, Newark	39.3%	22
4	Lincoln Street (Railway Station), Newark	26.8%	15
5	Sherwood Drive, Ollerton	8.9%	5
6	I do not use ranks	39.3%	22
		answered	56
		skipped	0

- 1.6 The question of 'do we need more ranks in the district and where should these be?' was asked and out of the 56 people that answered 24 said that they did not think there was a need for more taxi ranks, 8 respondents thought there should be more ranks, for example, at Castle Station and Newark Town Centre. 18 people said that there is need for more spaces and enforcement on the existing ranks specifically Castle Gate and Middle Gate.
- 1.7 The Kirkgate rank was specifically mentioned four times in the trade responses. These are copied below.

Kirkgate needs returning to a rank now Covid restrictions have eased.

Think we need a bigger rank in the town centre somewhere as I feel kirkgate does not accommodate enough spaces

No need for ranks, but return Kirkgate rank to a taxi rank and and remove Joe Publics free parking for 30 mins +. Additionally, the continued misuse of Middlegate taxi rank by the private, delivery vehicles continues and occasionally will prevent taxis getting onto the rank. A cctv system taking number plate details floored by a fine may be a preventative measure. Additionally, set down/ pick up points around town rather than ranks would be a massive help such as the bus station and Castle Station.

Kirkgate not been a rank for months, Castle station, bus station, London road car park

1.8 The rank is used but this use is not constant as might be seen at some of the other town centre ranks in Newark. Prior to the temporary traffic controls taxis could usually gain access to the rank and therefore the issue of queuing to gain access is not a road safety concern.

1.9 The removal of the rank would reduce the taxi rank provision in the town centre.

2.0 Proposal/Options Considered and Reasons for Recommendation

2.1 It is within the powers of the Council to amend or remove the taxi rank on Kirkgate. Prior to making any decision the Council is required to consult on any proposals.

2.2 If Members are minded to amend or remove the Kirkgate taxi rank it is proposed that the following consultation be undertaken prior to a further report confirming the decision.

- Letter seeking comments on any changes is sent to all business on Kirkgate and the immediate surrounding area.
- Letter seeking comments on any changes s are sent to all taxis operating in Newark.
- A public consultation is posted on the Council's website.
- The Council's Director - Planning & Growth be asked for their views so that the impact on any Newark town centre master plan can be considered.
- Consultation with the County Council as the Highways authority.

3.0 Implications

There are considered to be no implications arising from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Taxi Provision Consultation Survey 2022 NSDC