



<b>Subject:</b>	Taxis Ranks – Donegall Square
<b>Date:</b>	3rd February, 2016
<b>Reporting Officer:</b>	Donal Durkan, Director of Development
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Anne Doherty Planning & Transport Officer

<b>Is this report restricted?</b>	Yes <input type="checkbox"/>	No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<b>Is the decision eligible for Call-in?</b>	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No <input type="checkbox"/>

<b>1.0</b>	<b>Purpose of Report or Summary of main Issues</b>
1.1	To consider the Department of Regional Development’s proposals to increase the Belfast public hire taxi rank capacity in the Donegall Square area and provide an agreed Council response. Currently, there is an existing public hire taxi rank at Donegall Square North with additional space on Donegall Square East, however the public hire taxi organisations have requested additional capacity.
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Recommendations</b>
2.1	<p>It is recommended that Committee considers the proposed response outlined below agree the submission to DRD as the Council position. In summary:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• It is recommended that the Council supports the proposed removal of restrictions on taxi access to one lane on Donegall Square West closest to City Hall which also contains coach parking bays. However, effective management is needed by DRD to ensure that the lane is used for taxi access only as the coach parking bays are considered an important tourism asset for the city.</li><li>• It is recommended that Council supports the amendment to the taxi rank on Donegall Square North to allow increased capacity for ranking.</li></ul>

3.0	<b>Main report</b>
3.1	<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>At its meeting on 13th January, the Committee agreed to defer consideration of this report to that the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service could present to the Committee today.</p> <p>Members have previously considered a number of proposals by DRD at the September 2015 Committee to provide additional capacity for ranking of public hire taxis. They were as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retain Donegall Square North rank as existing;</li> <li>• Provide new feeder capacity in Donegal Square West, using part of the area currently allocated for coach parking (pick up and drop off), which would be in direct line of sight of the Donegall Square North rank; and</li> <li>• Use the existing taxi rank in Donegall Square East as a feeder rank to the proposed additional capacity on Donegall Square West.</li> </ul>
3.2	<p>The Council did not support a new feeder rank in Donegall Square West as this would reduce the space available for coach parking by 20 metres and requested further assessment for an alternative site.</p>
3.3	<p><u>Key Issues</u></p> <p>DRD has considered alternative arrangements in consultation with the Belfast public hire taxi drivers and is proposing the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drivers would use the existing taxi rank in Donegall Square East acting as a single feeder rank to the Donegall Square North rank;</li> <li>• Access to Donegall Square West (the lane closest to City Hall only) would be amended to remove existing restrictions allowing taxi access; and</li> <li>• Amendments to the taxi rank in Donegall Square North by removing the existing island to permit a double line of queuing taxis therefore increasing ranking capacity.</li> </ul> <p>A map of the proposal is attached in Appendix 1.</p>
3.4	<p>Donegall Square West is currently restricted access for buses and service vehicles only. The removal of the restrictions on taxi access to one lane on Donegall Square West will allow public hire taxis waiting at the feeder rank on Donegall Square East quicker access to the rank at Donegall Square North. It is suggested that the Council supports the proposed removal of restrictions on taxi access to one lane on Donegall Square West</p>

	<p>closest to City Hall which also contains coach parking bays. However, effective management is needed by DRD to ensure that the lane is used for taxi access only as the coach parking bays are considered an important tourism asset for the city.</p>
3.5	<p>It is suggested that Council supports the amendment to the taxi rank on Donegall Square North to allow increased capacity for taxi ranking.</p>
3.6	<p>Elected members should note that it was agreed at the City Growth and Regeneration committee on the 9<sup>th</sup> December to invite representatives from the Belfast Public Hire Taxi Service to a special committee meeting to discuss a number of issues and a provisional date has been set for the 3<sup>rd</sup> February. It should be noted that the Department of Regional Development proposals to increase the Belfast public hire taxi rank capacity in the Donegall Square area may be raised by the representatives at this meeting.</p>
	<p><u>Financial &amp; Resource Implications</u></p>
3.7	<p>None</p>
	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications</u></p>
3.8	<p>None</p>
<b>4.0</b>	<p><b>Appendices</b></p>
	<p><b>Appendix 1 - DRD Transport NI layout drawings</b></p>