

Chelmsford City Council Regulatory Committee

27th March 2025

Beaulieu Park Train Station - Taxi Rank Permit Scheme

Report by:

Director of Public Places

Officer Contact:

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Purpose

To consider the consultation responses on the introduction of a Taxi Rank Permit Scheme at Beaulieu Park Station and make a recommendation to Cabinet for a decision.

Options

- 1. To endorse the details of the scheme as outlined in section 3 of this report and make such a recommendation to Cabinet for approval.
- 2. To make changes to the details of the scheme as outlined in section 3 of this report and then make recommendation to Cabinet for approval.
- 3. To not progress with a Taxi Rank Permit Scheme for Beaulieu Park Train Station.

Recommendations

To endorse the details of the taxi permit scheme as outlined in Section 3 and make recommendation to Cabinet for approval on these terms.

1. Background

- 1.1. The proposed Taxi Rank Permit Scheme was considered at Regulatory Committee on 23rd January 2025 and members agreed that a consultation should take place to obtain views and information on the proposal. The consultation took place between 24th January 2025 and 7th March 2025.
- 1.2. Chelmsford City Council own the area of land allocated for the new Station Taxi Rank at Beaulieu Park Train Station and will manage the rank. It has been proposed that the use of the taxi rank by Hackney Carriage drivers/vehicles be chargeable. Only those taxis who are 'permitted' by the Council would be allowed to use the rank. As the landowner the City Council can apply conditions (including charging a fee) for an individual to access the land.
- 1.3. Beaulieu Park Train Station is due to open to the public and become operational later this year.
- 1.4. The number of trains stopping at Beaulieu Park's London-bound platform in peak morning times will be between 3 and 4 per hour and Norwich-bound there will be 3 and 4 trains per hour in peak evening time. Off peak and weekends there will be 2 trains per hour each direction. The annual footfall is predicted at between 290,000 and 390,000 in the first year of opening and is expected to grow as the station establishes itself and levelling out at a figure around double the initial number by 2029. For information, the total annual number of passengers going through Chelmsford station in 2023-2024 was 6,538,092.
- 1.5. A suitable provision of permitted taxis is required to service the rank to ensure that (a) there are not too many taxis clogging up the rank and surrounding area and, (b) there are a sufficient number of taxis available to provide onward transport for people disembarking trains at the station.

2. Consultation and Assessment

- 2.1. In total 19 consultation responses were received, and the text of the consultation responses are attached as Appendix 1. A number of these are identical submissions. All drivers and operators of taxis in Chelmsford were consulted on this proposal. In addition, other interested parties such as Greater Anglia, Essex Highways and the South Essex Parking Partnership were consulted. The details of the consultation were placed on the City Council website.
- 2.2. The majority of the responses have been submitted by licensed taxi drivers. Most are against the principle of being charged to use the taxi rank. There are also concerns raised about the level of fee to be charged. Some indicate that if the level of fee is too high drivers will not take up the permits and then there will be no taxis to service the rank. Responses also highlighted the likely short

fares that will be requested by passengers disembarking at the station to areas such as Beaulieu, Boreham and North Springfield.

- 2.3. The key issue in setting up the scheme is to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of taxis available for passengers to use when disembarking trains and continuing their onward journey. There is therefore a balance to be made in terms of the fee to be charged for the permits and the appeal for drivers to take up the offer of a chargeable permit. It is recommended that a lower annual fee is introduced to make the permit scheme more appealing to drivers. It should be acknowledged there will be some risk associated with drivers signing up to the scheme as there are some unknowns about taxi demand at the new station. It is not recommended that access to the rank should be permitted for all hackney carriage drivers as this will likely lead to the clogging up of the taxi rank, the pick-up/drop off area and the surrounding road network.
- 2.4. The taxi rank will have space for approximately 10 vehicles at any one time. See Appendix 2 and 3 for plans of the taxi rank and station. Please note the plan at Appendix 3 has not yet been approved but is provided to show the layout of the rank and pick-up/drop off in more detail. It recommended that more than 10 permits are issued but the number of permits issued should not be excessively high. Initially issuing 30 permits in an initial batch seems to be a proportionate approach. This can be increased in-year if there is sufficient demand based on the flow of passengers at peak times as well as driver, passenger and station feedback.
- 2.5. The permits and access to the rank will be limited to hackney carriage vehicles licensed by Chelmsford City Council as only those hackney carriages licensed by CCC can ply for trade within the council area. The permit would be physically attached to the vehicle and linked to the registration number of the vehicle in order to avoid an unauthorised trade in the permits. There will be Chelmsford City Council representatives on site working from the new station involved in managing the Car Park and other Council-owned parts of the station. These members of staff will be able assist in providing feedback on the general operation of the rank and also to check the taxi permits of those on the station rank if required.
- 2.6. The income generated from the scheme will be used to cover the costs of administering the scheme and it does not form part of the regulatory aspect for the licensing authority in terms of hackney carriage licensing. The income is proposed to be used to fund the ongoing management and maintenance of the rank and the other areas of the City Council owned parts of the station complex.

3. Proposed Scheme

3.1. It is proposed that an initial 30 permits will be made available to drivers. A process for drivers to register their interest will be set up and then the

successful applicants selected at random, although priority given to those licensed vehicles that are disabled accessible.

- 3.2. The cost of the permits will be set at £500 for one year.
- 3.3. Physical printed permits will be issued to taxis permitted to use the rank and must be displayed in the rear of the vehicle.
- 3.4. The scheme will be under continuous review so that demand, use, and operations can be assessed. It is requested that officers be able to issue additional permits if required to ensure that the taxi rank is working effectively.
- 3.5. The fees for the permits will be reviewed after one year.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1. It is recommended that Members agree to the introduction of the scheme in terms outlined in section 3. If members are minded not to agree with the proposal as stated, it is recommended that alternative terms of the scheme are proposed and agreed.
- 4.2. The recommendation of this Committee will be referred to Cabinet for a formal decision on the scheme to be made.

List of appendices:

Appendix 1 - Consultation Responses

Appendix 2 - Plan of Taxi Rank and Station

Background papers:

None

Corporate Implications:

Legal/Constitutional: None

Financial: The introduction of the scheme will provide income to Chelmsford City Council to assist in the management of the station assets under the Council's ownership.

Potential impact on climate change and the environment: None

Contribution toward achieving a net zero carbon position by 2030: None

Personnel: None

Agenda Item 5

Risk Management: None

Equality and Diversity: Impact Assessment not required.

Health and Safety: None

Digital: None

Other: None

Consultees:
N/A

Relevant Policies and Strategies:

None

APPENDIX 1

Number	Comments
1	New beuli train station in Chelmsford is opening soon. Great news for who lives nearby. My honest opinion is upcoming new taxi rank which is own by Chelmsford city council and should be free for ply hire for Chelmsford hackney taxi. More than 200 hackney taxi in Chelmsford and limited rankings facility. Viaduct Rd rank only 3 legal taxi rank. Tesco have 4 space. Market Rd have about 10 currently the rank is dead. Further more if council own rank have to additional fees then why not other rank in city not been charged. I think will be unfair to the HAC taxi owners and one is chargeable and other free!!
2	I understand the council during these austere times is hoping to raise money from the new Beaulieu Station rank - however I do not believe in this case that charging taxi drivers for using the rank is the answer, for a number of reasons.
	Firstly, the new station will not bring new customers to the taxi trade, it will split the existing passenger numbers between two stations and reduce the fares currently earned – E.g. A Boreham resident currently pays £15 from City Station to Boreham, they will now get off at Beaulieu Station and pay £7 - same customer - smaller fare.
	If a taxi driver is to pay a fee to rank at a station why would they go to Beaulieu Station which will never be as busy as the City Station? Why would they pay to be on the City Station rank AND the Beaulieu Station rank - doubling their costs for effectively smaller fares? Why would a taxi driver rank up at the Beaulieu Station that will predominantly service local residents of Boreham, Chelmer Village and North Springfield during commuting times only, which will all be small local fares?
	The simple answer is they wont, they wont pay the fee and the Beaulieu Station rank will have no taxis.
	The council does not charge taxi drivers to use any other council owned ranks in the City Centre, why would they charge to use a quieter rank out of town where there is no other passing public footfall from shoppers or bus station users?
	I believe the council should be trying to entice taxi drivers to use the new Beaulieu Station rank to ensure the new station is seen publicly as a success - instead they are trying to make money from a trade that is already feeling the pinch from rising costs, static fares and increased unregulated competition from Uber.
	For that reason, I believe the new Beaulieu Station rank should be free to all Chelmsford Hackney Carriage taxis
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	costs, static fares and increased unregulated competition from Uber.
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5	To whom it may concern,
	First of all, I'd like to express my I'm delighted with the addition of the new Taxi rank that will be coming.
	However, I'd like to address some concerns I have. Firstly, I'd appreciate if the permits did not require a payment of any sort,
	especially a fee as high as £500-£1500. My reasoning for this is, in the case that the station is already owned by the council, I
	believe it is quite unfair to charge another fee considering we drivers are already paying for many extra fees. It would be much
6	appreciated if the taxi rank was free for drivers to wait for customers at.
О	My suggestion is to increase parking space for up to 10 taxis at least at the beaulieu park station.
	Also introducing barrier entry system for taxi drivers to access the taxi rank would be more practical, beneficial and profitable for all involved parties. Entry fee should be 50p per entry.
7	Really can't understand why we have to pay for permit to use new station rank!?!? We already paying you for loads of things
'	and you know. It's really not fair you make money out of everything
8	With regard to the proposed permit scheme at the new station please consider the following:
	1) Chelmsford council provides far fewer rank spaces than the number of Hackney Carriage licences it issues at present.
	2) The current ranks are oversubscribed and at busy periods cause problems due to excess taxis trying to find a place to work.
	3) There is no unmet demand and no further issue of licences such as the 20 electric vehicle licenses issued 2 years ago is
	required. It will further compound the current problems at the bus station and on parkway. Problems were increased by the
	council issuing 20 licenses instead or 10 which would have been more sensible in respect of the rank places provided.
	4) The new station will not provide extra work it will displace the current customer base from a central location to 2 different
	sites. Restrictions on use may prevent customers getting at taxi in either location
	5) We currently have no footfall information for the new site or any information as to the decrease in footfall at the current
	station this will depend on timetable and customer preference neither or which is common knowledge yet
	6) A trial period with a review after 3 and 6 months would be the best way to implement a new permit scheme.
	7) Nominal fees for the initial periods for successful applications would promote service on which could potentially be an initially
9	quiet location while customers adjust to new timetables and assess their best travel options Beaulieu station permit
10	Taxi Rank should be FREE at Beaulie Parkway Station for Chelmsford Hackney Carriage Vehicle. As the Driver & Vehicle
	Owner Paying a lots to Aquire the Lisence.
	owner i dying a lote to riquire the Electron.

	Let them Make a living. On other hands if the Owner of Hackney Carriage Vehicle doesn't obtain a Permit, Chelmsford Council force the Public life in Danger. Public who will be using Beaulie Parkway Station won't get Access to get a Cab home. I hope Chelmsford Council Think Twice before Put a Permit Scheme for Hackney Carriage Vehicle
11	It is noted that the proposal is to issue just 50 permits. However, this station is going to serve a very wide catchment with rail users needing to hire a taxi to destinations further away from the station meaning that taxis will be away from the rank for longer periods than say the city centre where journeys are short and within a limited area. Thus to prevent a situation where no taxis are on rank, Chelmsford Garden Community Council contends that more than 50 licences should be issued. It is also noted that the licences will be issued in phased batches, however to avoid a shortage of taxis as the busy Christmas period, it is considered that phasing will not be necessary. It is also considered that the operation of the licencing should be reviewed after 6 months, not 12 months.
12	Dear Regulatory Committee Member I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding the proposed restrictions and charges for the use of the Taxi rank at Beaulieu Station. It is disappointing to see a focus on revenue collection over the delivery of an efficient and accessible transport service for both local residents and visitors to our city. Limiting the number of Taxis and imposing fees will ultimately fail to meet passenger demand, particularly during operating hours of the station. A key concern is public safety, especially late at night, when passengers arriving at Beaulieu Station may find no Taxis available to take them home. This could leave vulnerable individuals with no choice but to walk alone in the early hours, increasing personal safety risks. It is essential that this committee considers the working realities of Taxi drivers. Drivers have the right to operate freely within the borough, naturally gravitating to areas where they are most likely to secure fares. City-based ranks potentially offer more frequency of work, including higher-value longer journeys.
	In contrast, the anticipated demand at Beaulieu Station will likely consist of local trips serving Beaulieu, Channels, and parts of North Springfield, making it a less attractive rank for many drivers. As a result, there is a significant risk of limited service at Beaulieu Station, particularly between 11:00 PM and the early hours of the morning. During this time, many taxis will be stationed at higher-demand ranks such as City Station, Viaduct Road, Baddow Road, and Bond Street. Restricting access at Beaulieu Station means that only a limited number of designated taxis (e.g., 30 vehicles) will be able to respond to demand, reducing overall service availability. If regular rail users experience ongoing difficulties in securing onward transport, they may opt to disembark at City Station instead of Beaulieu, undermining the very purpose of the new station. I have engaged with local businesses and institutions, including New Hall School, Beaulieu School, Royal Mail, Aldi, Tesco, McDonald's, and DPD, all of whom have expressed concerns that their students, staff, and visitors could face delays in travel, impacting attendance and business operations. Allowing open access for all taxis would help mitigate these concerns and ensure a reliable service for those who need it.

	This submission is made from a professional standpoint, advocating for the rights of the public to access the transport services they require and deserve. The taxi industry has the capacity to meet this demand effectively, but only if access is not restricted. I urge the committee to reject the current proposal and instead support open, unrestricted access for taxis at Beaulieu Station, ensuring a fair and effective transport service for all. I understand that the Council may have sought legal advice on this matter. However, the trade firmly believes that any acceptance of this proposal—profiting from taxi proprietors—could be legally challenged in court. I trust this committee will agree that this is not an appropriate use of council taxpayers' money. Thank you for your time and consideration.
13	I think there should be no charge for taxis to use a council property owned rank Bearing in mind the safety aspect of people waiting for a taxi should no one apply for a permit, who will be responsible for any mishap to vulnerable, elderly or people who have had a drink after work, finishing late and cannot drive home? The licence fee of approx £400 should cover the expenditure if any for a rank at the new station
14	It is not fair with taxi drivers to charge them more for permit as meter rates are already high. If you put more financial burden on taxi driver that mean you'll have to increase taxi rates and it's not good idea when you have uber knocking on door. We already don't have enough rank space in or around chelmsford compare to number of hackney carriage. I believe beaulieu park rank should be free to use as it comes under chelmsford city council so we have more rank space to park and potentially earn money.
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16 Afternoon Sir/ madam

I'm a Hackney Carriage Taxi driver for Chelmsford City Council.

I would like request, please don't charge for use Taxi rank in new station because we can't pay thats money anymore. Taxi business and run is so expensive nowadays so we will use this rank if you start paid Taxi rank for us.

Please consider this point and we'll service for all public.

Kind regards

Thank you

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19 I am the GMB Union branch secretary for Professional Drivers (London Region)

We are concerned about the proposed restriction and charges for the use of taxi rank at BEAULIEU Station which will have adverse effects on our members carrying out their legitimate business in the area.

This will create safety issues for commuters using the station because of the likely shortage of drivers at late in the night when drivers will opt not to ply the route on the basis of the charges.

Commuters will be stranded especially vulnerable people such as elderlies and women.

The public have right to be able to access transport services at all time without any hindrance.

The purpose of trying to drive users to the new station will be defeated if it turns out that they will be stranded with limited access to secured transportation.

The committee should reconsider the proposal and look away from profiteering as there are so many other ways of raising fund than putting residents at risk.

We hope common sense will prevail.



