

## Internal Memorandum

Your reference:  
Our reference: DW/1312  
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Date: 30 December 2005

**FROM:** Traffic and Transportation

**TO:** Tony Allen, Group Manager (Trading Standards & Licensing)

### CONSULTATION ON IMPROVEMENTS TO TAXI AND PRIVATE HIRE LICENSING IN OLDHAM

Please take this as a formal response from the Highways and Engineering Division to the consultation document.

I support the move to black cabs. This will increase the availability of vehicles more suited to use by those with disabilities and remove the difficulty caused because Oldham (alone in Greater Manchester) allows badged white saloon car taxis into Bus Lanes. Bus Lane enforcement should be assisted as a result.

Your proposals in Part 7 – Dispersal Planning are inextricably linked to the proposed Yorkshire Street improvements. As you are aware, a scheme has been to public consultation. Detailed design is underway and will be brought forward in the near future for approval and construction. Our Executive Member was promised that the scheme would start on site soon after Christmas, but that date will now slip, possibly to the new financial year.

An issue left to be decided before my consultation went ahead was whether there is advantage in altering the direction of one or more of the one-way streets between Yorkshire Street. I now believe that there is an advantage to be gained by reversing Greaves Street, Retiro Street, Queen Street and Waterloo Street as explained below.

I agree with your proposal to extend the night-time closure to encompass the Retiro Street/Yorkshire Street junction and I have included this in my scheme.

I contend that during the working day there should be two streets for each direction between Union Street and Yorkshire Street, for highway capacity and resilience to interruption due to, say, breakdowns or loading. The pattern I recommend is that Greaves Street and Retiro Street run northwards while Queen Street and Waterloo Street run southwards. I believe that this gives the greatest safety by minimising conflicting movements between traffic running between St Mary's Way and Waterloo Street south of Union Street. It enables a

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better junction arrangement at Waterloo Street/Union Street and permits of a better design of the taxi facilities at Yorkshire Street near the Old Town Hall. The taxi rank head could be near the Old Town Hall steps with the queue down Greaves Street. This allows the on-highway space in front of the NatWest Bank to be better designed for pedestrians.

It might be worth saying at this point that I have ignored (as I believe that you have also) any possible alterations to the Old Town Hall. That scheme may well necessitate amendment to the highway layout but it will have to be treated on its own merits.

A major concern is the night time closure. I am aware that it was originally proposed for Thursday to Sunday but was reduced to only Friday and Saturday nights at the first stage. I understand that there is likely to be pressure to widen this to the four days because the night time economy is expanding.

I am of the opinion that 8pm is too early to prohibit ordinary members of the public from driving between St Mary's Way and Waterloo Street south of Union Street without forcing a diversion via King Street or Mumps. To do so will cause frustration, which is likely to lead to ignoring the Traffic Orders or illegal manoeuvres. Also, whilst it is possible to make a Traffic Regulation Order to permit Hackney carriages and buses only in your proposed Restricted Zone there are a number of problems. It is obviously not possible to make it self-enforcing and so there would be an ongoing enforcement requirement from the Police. Their task would be made more difficult by the need to exempt emergency vehicles and pressure could be expected to allow access for servicing as well (notwithstanding the late hour).

The Private Hire/Drop Off Zone proposals are likely to have an effect upon the normal use of the Clegg Street and Bradshaw Street car parks. Would the marshalling scheme necessitate any of the marked bays being lost? If so, this would affect income at all times. Even if not there is likely to be some discouragement to ordinary users planning to return to their cars when the scheme is in operation. I would be pleased to work with you to assess this in greater detail.

The proposal for Zone 1 would require an alteration to the Order on High Street and may encourage greater use of Church Street, neither of which would be welcome.

In all, the dispersal proposals could have such an effect upon the other users of the town that I would recommend not adopting them in the current form.

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