PRESENT:

Councillors Buckley, Butlin, Mrs Garcia, Mrs Roodhouse and Sandison
Sean Lawson (Head of Environmental Services), Paul Ansell (Scrutiny Officer) and Linn Ashmore (Democratic and Scrutiny Services Officer)

Note – These minutes are a record of the task group’s discussion. Comments recorded do not necessarily represent the views of the task group or of the council.

5. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12 August were approved and signed by the Chairman.

6. CONSULTATION

The task group considered the following draft documents, attached as appendices to the agenda, which are designed to gather evidence of public opinion on which solutions may be worth investigating further:

- Calls for evidence for users, businesses, drivers and operators
- Media release
- Questionnaire

During discussion the following points were made:

The questionnaire will be published via the Council website, on posters and through the use of Quick Response (QR) codes.

The Communication and Information Services Manager will be consulted on the final wording of the documents prior to publication and for guidance on publicity.

It was noted that users of taxis come from across the borough so the consultation needs to be wide ranging.

Paper versions of the questionnaire could be circulated more widely through Age UK and their contacts with other agencies.

Members agreed some specific groups of people or organisations should be targeted for a response including Rugby Disability Forum, older people living in sheltered housing and town centre residents’ associations. They should be invited to make their responses as a group or attend a future meeting of the task group.

It was suggested that questionnaires could also be made available at Community Forum meetings, if any take place before the deadline. It was noted that the Joint Community Forum on 6 November would cover all of the forums.

The police, street pastors and Rugby First will be consulted. The response from the police will be based on disorder information.
Members asked whether Stagecoach should be added to the list of consultees. If there was likely to be any dual use of bus stops as taxi ranks then Stagecoach would be formally consulted. Similarly local business owners would be consulted if there was any possible impact on their business.

At least two months should be allowed to prepare the consultation material, conduct the consultation and begin analysis of the data received.

It may be difficult to track if numerous forms were completed by the same person. It would be possible to discourage this by asking for addresses or post codes.

*Media Release*

During consideration of the draft media release, attached at appendix 5 to the report, it was agreed that the wording “The service provided from the clock tower taxi rank” should be removed and replaced with a general statement about the contribution that hackney carriages make to the town centre.

Members discussed whether information on the consultation should be published in a local newspaper. There might be more cost effective means such as producing labels with the QR code on for taxi drivers to display in their vehicles. Taxi users could then scan them straight onto their mobile phones.

Local newspapers were more likely to publish the media release on their websites. They may also print letters on the topic on their letters page.

*Questionnaire*

Members reviewed the questionnaire, attached at appendix 4 to the report, and agreed the following changes:

Add “How often do you use a taxi?”

Change the third question to read “How convenient do you find getting a taxi?”

Change the fourth question to read “Do you think there is a need for additional taxi rank provision?”

With regard to the final question the list of suggested town centre areas should be removed and consultees should be asked to propose up to three areas defined by themselves as their preferred locations for a taxi rank.

It may also help to ask about whether this would be for day or night time use.

It was suggested that a further question could be added to ask why the respondents use taxis. This might highlight areas of need.

*Calls for Evidence*

Members agreed the content of the calls for evidence.
7. BUSINESS OF NEXT MEETING

The task group agreed that the business of the next two meetings will be:

Meeting three -

- Analysis of responses
- Decide whether additional provision is necessary; if so preliminary discussion of possible location(s).

Meeting four –

- Identification of location(s) in conjunction with county council officer
- Improving information for the customer

A provisional date of Wednesday 3 December was agreed for the next meeting subject to the timing and collation of the responses.

CHAIRMAN