

Item 10

18th March 2015



Glasgow City Council

Sustainability and the Environment PD Committee

Report by Executive Director of Land and Environmental Services

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BUS LANE EARLY CONSULTATION AND OPERATIONAL REVIEW

Purpose of Report:

To advise Committee of the outcome of the Bus Lane Operational Review.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Committee notes the Bus Lane Review and Process and the intention to commence the statutory process to amend the timings of the bus lanes within the city to start at 0700hrs and end at 1900hrs.

Ward No(s):

Citywide: ✓

Local member(s) advised: Yes No ✓

consulted: Yes No ✓

1 Background

Transport Scotland sets the national policy framework on bus travel which is delivered by bus operators, local authorities, Regional Transport Partnerships and the regulatory authorities. Glasgow City Council (the Council) supports the Scottish Government's bus policy aims and has complementary policies within the Local Transport Strategy.

Bus lanes are now a common feature in many of the UK's city's and are an integral part of the public transport network which encourages modal shift. The Council has an ongoing commitment to manage the road network in support of the strategic objectives set out in national and local transport strategy.

Key policies that underpin the Council's Local Transport Strategy are in place to improve travel choice within the City, a number of which encourage the use of public transport. The agreed priority hierarchy for travel and allocating road space within the city is pedestrian; bus; cycle and car.

2 Introduction

A positive action to satisfy these policies has been the strategic allocation of road space to create bus lanes which have been identified through cohesive partnership working with SPT and branded the Streamline Routes. The Council and its partners have invested in excess of £30m in these Streamline Routes, upgrading not only the road infrastructure by introducing high access kerbs and bus shelters but also through the introduction of intelligent transport systems that support their operation e.g. real time passenger information and bus priority measures at many of the City's signal controlled junctions.

To further complement the infrastructure provided by the above programmes, the Council has now entered into a Statutory Quality Partnership Scheme (SQPS) with SPT and Bus Operators.

The SQPS sets the operating standards for maintenance and use of the routes. The Council is responsible for maintaining the infrastructure whilst the bus operators must use modern high quality environmentally friendly fleet of buses.

The SQPS became effective on the 1st April 2012 for 7 years.

The Glasgow Streamline programme was reviewed in 2008 by an independent consultant and received positive support. The "Streamline Evaluation Report" confirmed that almost three quarters of people questioned were satisfied or very satisfied with bus priority measures on the streamline routes and the transport benefits they bring.

There are currently 4 different sets of operating hours over a total of 33km of bus lanes/gates

- 24 hour/7days a week (24/7)
- Outside city centre peak only Monday to Saturday
- City centre peak only Monday to Saturday
- 7am-7pm / 7days a week (Nelson Mandela Place)

These lanes are also accessible to both taxis and cyclists and are an important part of the council's growing cycle provision and commitment to a cycle friendly city.

Police Scotland is responsible for the enforcement of any moving contraventions into or within a bus lane. However, a Bus Lane Camera Enforcement (BLCE) programme was supported by the Scottish Government as part of the decriminalisation of certain road traffic offences.

The BLCE programme was approved by the Executive Committee in 16 February 2012 and implemented in Glasgow. Aberdeen and Edinburgh also implemented a similar scheme in 2012.

The Council in partnership with the SPT installed 11 cameras in phase 1 and 5 in phase 2. A further camera was installed in Nelson Mandela Square in 2014.

The number of charge notices issued using the cameras has reduced considerably since phase 1 with the reductions highlighted in the table below.

	First month of issue	Nov 2014	% Decrease
Phase 1: 23 April 2012 (11 cameras)	18,035	6,009	66.69%
Phase 2: 13 Dec 2013 (5 cameras)	1,982	965	51.32%
Phase 3: 30 June 2014 (1 camera) (Nelson Mandela)	16,849	4,383	73.99%

Since the implementation of the BLCE programme, the bus lanes have attracted some negative publicity locally and some UK Local Authorities have decided to review their effectiveness.

The opportunity has therefore been taken to review Glasgow's bus lanes within the context of the Council's current policies and strategies.

3 BUS LANE REVIEW

A review of the current bus lane principles has now been undertaken.

The scope of the review looked at the following:

- Policy Overview;
- Legislation;
- Glasgow's current situation
- Other Cities; and
- Stakeholders views.

The stakeholder views included responses from:

- Strathclyde Partnership for Transport
- Bus Operators
- Cycle Forum
- Taxi Operators
- Chamber of Commerce
- Institute of Advanced motorists

4. Summary of Stakeholder Responses

There was positive endorsement of the bus lane network through the review process and it indicated that reducing the operating hours during the day would not be seen as a positive outcome.

The initial position for most user groups was for 24/7 bus lane operation.

Bus operators, by far the most significant of users, recognised that the diminishing demand for overnight provision would make 24/7 operation difficult to justify. SPT supported this position concurring that 7am to 7pm operation was generally appreciated as being a reasonable compromise.

Feedback from cycle user groups confirmed that their most desirable operation was 24/7: however, they did recognise the benefits of operating hours between 0700 – 1900hrs.

No consensus was reached by Taxi operators and opinions varied between a call for unilateral 24/7 operation to the removal of all bus lanes.

The Chamber of Commerce recognised that specific locations are affected by bus lanes and local variations will be required. The principle of standardised bus lane hours can still be achieved. At a strategic level, the option adopted should support and not disadvantage the outlying business areas.

The Institute of Advanced Motorists acknowledged the benefits that bus lanes bring to the city, however they recognised that motorist's understanding of

operating times and regulations would be made easier by consistent operating times (0700hrs to 1900hrs) and standardised signing. However, peak hour and business needs must be considered.

5 Review Conclusion

The review has confirmed that the Councils policy aligns with both national and local transport strategy and that the bus lanes are accepted by our stakeholders as an important part of our transport network.

In view of the above, the Council is reluctant to open up the bus lanes to a wide range of road users since they were created to give priority to public transport and make it more efficient and therefore attractive. Use by more vehicles would dilute the substantial benefits that have been realised particularly the efficient flow of buses and the safety of cyclists.

It recognises the commitment to develop the bus network to provide a quality travel choice. Whilst it is clear that motorists are unhappy concerning enforcement cameras the reduction in offences being committed reflects the success of this policy.

There is anecdotal evidence that some drivers believe that the signs can be misleading and that standardised operating hours would assist. Drivers also complain that the lanes are not used at night by bus operators and that access to the lanes should be allowed at these times.

Following the consultation the 0700 to 1900hrs option has emerged as the option that will satisfy the current National and Council Policies to promote modal shift, whilst ensuring consistency of message for other road users who have found the varying times and regulations difficult to comprehend.

However, it has been confirmed that there may be a need to adjust the operating regime on a local basis in particular where peak hour lanes already exist.

6 Process for Change

The Council is required to follow a statutory process to amend the existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the bus lanes. Additionally, agreement for the changes needs to be sought from the Statutory Quality Partnership partners.

The original TROs for the bus lanes attracted a considerable number of objections which lengthened the process. An amendment TRO is unlikely to attract the same number of objections; however there is still a strong possibility that the TRO will be challenged.

The anticipated workplan to consult, amend, undertake the statutory process and implement the change is estimated at 12 to 15 months dependent on the number and type of objections.

7 Policy and Resource Implications

Resource Implications:

<i>Financial:</i>	Full implementation of the review may have an impact on revenue. However, this will not be known until the outcome of the statutory process and will be considered accordingly with a potential minimum impact on 2015/16. Thereafter, it will be considered as appropriate within the 2016-17 budget process.
<i>Legal:</i>	Implementation will require the current Orders to be amended in accordance with Roads (Scotland) Act 1984; Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984.
<i>Personnel:</i>	Additional temporary staff of 3.0 FTEs will be required to implement the review.
<i>Procurement:</i>	Works will be procured using existing contracts and Framework agreements.

Council Strategic Plan: The review supports the following themes :

Economic growth
A world class city
A sustainable city
A city that looks after its vulnerable people

Equality Impacts:

<i>EQIA carried out:</i>	Will be undertaken as part of the amendment to the current Orders.
<i>Outcome:</i>	(no significant impact, positive impact or negative impact)

Sustainability Impacts:

<i>Environmental:</i>	N/A
<i>Social:</i>	N/A
<i>Economic:</i>	N/A

8 Recommendations

It is recommended that the Committee notes the Bus Lane Review and Process and the intention to commence the statutory process to amend the timings of the bus lanes within the city to start at 0700hrs and end at 1900hrs.