

CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAFFIC & TRANSPORTATION

RECORD OF DECISIONS taken by the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation, Councillor Donna Jones, at his meeting held on Friday, 13 March 2015 at 2.00 pm in the The Executive Meeting Room - Third Floor, The Guildhall

Present

Councillor Donna Jones

Councillor Lynne Stagg
Councillor Ken Ferrett

(Councillor Galloway was also in attendance)

18. Apologies (AI 1)

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Ken Ellcome and Stuart Potter.

19. Declarations of Members' Interests (AI 2)

There were no declarations of members' interests.

20. M275 Changes following Traffic & Transportation Decision of 19 February 2015 (AI 3)

Deputations for the retention of the bus lane were made first, whose points included:

Jon Spencer, Chair of Portsmouth Cycle Forum - a democratic decision had already been made on this issue; congestion was not due to the bus lane but the high number of vehicles using the roads, most with single occupancy; the bus lane had been there for 20 years; he disputed the gains on journey times if it were to be removed and believed that the queues would only be moved to further along the route at a time when the Park & Ride was to be extended to Southsea; it would be contrary to the British Cycling deal to encourage women to cycle and referred to the Liverpool experience where removed bus lanes had been put back in; there was a high risk to the safety of cyclists.

Dervla McKay, General Manager, First Group Buses - the report outlined the frequency of services using the bus lane and the aims of Park & Ride scheme which was being extended to cover Southsea, with increased frequency to every 8 minutes in the school holidays; if the bus lane was removed there would be potential costs to the operators which would impact on the customers and affect the frequency of services for which they could be fined; the Park & Ride would be used by visitors for big events such as Victorious and the America's Cup and this could create a poor impression.

Charles Burns - spoke regarding the need for the bus services to run on time to prove an effective and sustainable alternative to private cars; the bus lane should be retained and further consideration given to use by private hire vehicles; the Isle of Wight ferries should go from the continental ferry port to reduce journeys into the city; The Local Transport Board was attended by Cllr Ellcome who was respected so his decision should not be overturned and this could further impact LEP funding.

Deputations were then made in support of removing the bus lane, with points including:

Dr Owen - his personal travel times had doubled every day and tripled at the weekends; he questioned the report's data for traffic times as samples had not been taken when the students were in term-time; there were also delays caused by the traffic lights at the Rudmore roundabout; car owners far exceed the bus users.

Mrs Watts - as a resident and a cyclist she was aware of the queues every day and knew of people who would no longer come into the city to shop and were going elsewhere; whilst safety is a concern there should not be a bottleneck; the cars idling were increasing emission and pollution levels in the city; the Park and Ride had limited parking so would there be a huge impact of removing the bus lane? She asked that this barrier to travel in and out of the city be removed.

Marc Griffin, Assistant Head of Transport & Environment, presented the Head of Transport & Environment's report, which had been requested by the Leader of the Council to address the issues of congestion and the impact on businesses. The report set out the increase to car journeys of 38 seconds in the mornings, the usage of the bus lanes with 19 services per hour in the peak hours and the City Development Manager's comments on the need for a modal shift towards public transport. The report also detailed an alternative proposal for the Leader, as decision maker, to consider which would improve travel times but this would have an impact on bus times. There would also be a cost for resurfacing works.

The opposition spokespersons then commented. Councillor Lynne Stagg as the previous Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation had instigated the Park & Ride scheme to address the increasing vehicle numbers and the existing site would need to be extended. Cllr Stagg felt that removing the bus lane was not the answer as the problem would be moved further along the route, where there were other pinch points where there were physical constraints to widening the road. Councillor Ken Ferrett was disappointed that the report had been brought back when a decision had been taken recently; he opposed opening the lane up to all traffic as this would jeopardise the effectiveness of the Park & Ride for which residents in Nelson ward had suffered inconvenience during its construction.

Councillor Donna Jones, as Leader, thanked all who had written, emailed and phoned her on this subject, and she had looked at all of these comments. She explained that she was acting in place of the Cabinet Member for Traffic

and Transportation whose brief was to look at traffic and transportation issues, as Leader she had a wider remit of giving consideration of the needs of the city, including regeneration and pollution levels, and was reviewing the previous decision. Councillor Ellcome had suggested the creation of a motorists' forum, as there were already similar forums for cyclists and the transport operators including taxis.

Councillor Jones would favour the alternative proposal to help speed up travel into the city to ensure visitors came to the city to support the businesses. She did not want tailbacks of traffic onto the M27. She therefore would be balancing the risk to the Park & Ride and road safety to the economic regeneration needs of the city and the creation of new jobs. The Leader welcomed the success of Park & Ride at weekends and for events it had not been well used during the weekdays by commuters, so buses could be travelling around the city empty. This had been linked to the city's previous aspirations for the development of the Northern Quarter with its associated road improvements which had not come to fruition, although a new scheme was being worked on. She appreciated the need to encourage car sharing, use of public transport and bikes and was pleased that additional cycle paths had been provided. The Council officers were working with schools to explore the potential for a pick up station at the Park & Ride. However some motorists were now using other routes through the city which would be made more dangerous for cyclists, whereas this route had a dedicated route for cyclists who did not need to use the M275. The effect on the bus timings needed to be balanced with the needs of the residents, and her request would be for an experimental order which along with the improvements to the traffic light synchronisation, should help speed the flow of traffic. Discussions were ongoing with the LEP for a city centre improvement and regeneration scheme.

The 52 responses made to the leader had been 70% in favour of taking away the bus lane at the bottom of the M275; with 3 neutral comments. The Leader agreed that Cllr Ellcome's proposal to remove the linings by 20m was sensible but she also believed that the problem went further back, where there was weaving by motorists. Therefore she would wish to see the hatched area removed by the 20m previously agreed and to take out the dedicated bus lane from Havisham Road and Church Street for approximately 100m, subject to an experimental traffic regulation order.

DECISIONS:

- (1) That the decision taken at the Traffic and Transportation meeting on 19 February 2015 (minute 14) be rescinded on the shortening of the southern end of the Mile End Road bus lane.
- (2) Any decision should be based on the impact the congestion is having holistically to the city from an economic point of view rather than a local traffic issue.
- (3) To suspend the restrictions on the Mile End Road approach bus lane between Havisham Road and Church Street for a minimum 6 month period through an experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) and to

monitor as per guidance in section 6.4 of the report and also to shorten the southern end of the bus lane in Mile End Road approach between Havisham Road and Church Road by approximately 20 metres, plus 20 metres lining from the northern end of the bus lane be removed.

- (4) Implement temporary variable message signs on the approach from Rudmore roundabout to further advise road users of the new layout ahead and use the permanent variable message signs on the M275 gantries to be utilised to advise main line traffic.
- (5) A paper be produced outlining the results of the experimental order to the Cabinet with a recommendation on how to proceed.
- (6) Local Transport Plan funding be used to fund the above proposals and the parking reserve be used to cover the staff revenue costs, total £11k.
- (7) That a further meeting with officers be held regarding the business case for the city centre road scheme as set out at 2.3 of the report.

21. Anchorage Park Weight Restriction (AI 4)

Marc Griffin, Assistant Head of Transport & Environment, presented the report which had been brought forward following further public representation on the use of HGVs in Anchorage Park. He reported that civil works for a coastal scheme would require delivery vehicles. The police did not support the weight restriction so this would be hard to enforce and the HGVs may still use a more direct access. The traffic noise levels had been monitored and would improve due to surfacing works.

Councillor Jones acknowledged whilst there may be enforcement issues, the inconvenience of the residents suffering from the noise should be considered and felt that communication with the freight operators would be key to making these improvements, to recommend alternative routes. She also hoped that the city council's enforcement officers could make spot checks.

DECISIONS:

- (1) Confirm LTP funding can be to be allocated to provide weight restriction signage.**
- (2) Monitor the full time weight restriction on Anchorage Road between the roundabout of Anchorage Road / Robinson Way / Sywell Crescent and the roundabout of Anchorage Road / Norway Road / Williams Road to check its effectiveness;**
- (3) Monitor the usage before and after the weight restriction is in place and review the performance of HGVS using the alternative routes as a result of installing the full time weight restriction on Anchorage Road between the roundabout of Anchorage Road / Robinson Way /**

Sywell Crescent and the roundabout of Anchorage Road / Norway Road / Williams Road to determine if further improvements need to be made to these roads / junctions.

The meeting concluded at 3.05 pm.

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Councillor Donna Jones
Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation