

Title of meeting: Traffic and Transportation Cabinet meeting

Date of meeting: 5th July 2022

Subject: Trial to allow Portsmouth City Council Licensed Private Hire Vehicles (PHV's) in specified bus lanes in Portsmouth

Report by: Tristan Samuels, Director of Regeneration

Wards affected: All

Key decision: No

Full Council decision: No

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the changes to the Private Hire Vehicles in bus lanes trial following the decisions taken by the Traffic & Transportation Committee on the 13th December 2021. The report details the changes and the justifications for these amendments.
- 1.2 This report outlines the new recommendations being put forward following this detailed review of the scheme proposals.

2. Recommendations

It is recommended that the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation:

- 2.1 **Approves a trial to allow access for Portsmouth City Council Licensed Private Hire Vehicles to use a limited number of five bus lanes in Portsmouth for a minimum of 3 months including;**
- Cavell Drive,
 - Marketway,
 - Mile End Road,
 - Bishop Crispian Way,
 - and Queen Street.
- 2.2 **Has delegated authority to immediately cease any or all of the five trial locations if safety issues become apparent;**
- 2.3 **Delegates authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation and the Section 151 Officer to release funding to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of**

this trial as the details are developed, this will be funded from the Parking Reserve;

2.4 Notes that consultation and engagement will continue with the Licensing Committee and working group as the trial develops;

2.5 Notes that a report will be brought back to Traffic & Transportation within 6 months of the trial launch to provide an update on the trial progression and next steps.

3. Background

3.1 Taxis and private hire vehicles are an important mode of transport for many, providing 24-hour on-demand travel across the city. This trial, and amendments, would support this mode transport option, potentially enabling improved journey times through access to the priority lanes.

3.2 As outlined in the recently adopted Portsmouth Transport Strategy 2021-2038, a key part of reducing demand to own private cars will be to provide residents with the confidence that they have alternative transport modes available to make various trips. This will include access to public transport, taxis and private hire vehicles and other sustainable transport options.

3.3 Portsmouth currently has 53 bus lanes in the city, providing a combined total of 9.8 km of dedicated right of way.

3.4 Bus lanes are traffic lanes reserved for the use of buses and other authorised vehicles which are to be given priority. They provide a dedicated right of way, enabling buses to avoid queues of traffic and other sources of delay, and address the problem of bus travel times becoming substantially longer and less reliable and attractive than those possible by car.

3.5 The vehicle types permitted to use each bus lane in Portsmouth are specified in the relevant Traffic Regulation Order (TROs). These currently include buses, Hackney Carriages (taxis), cyclists and emergency service vehicles travelling under blue lights, as well as rental e-scooters through the DfT e-scooter trial operating in Portsmouth.

3.6 Under the 1985 Road Traffic Act, the Local Transport Authority is accountable to the Traffic Commissioner for any action that it has taken which negatively impacts on bus punctuality.

3.7 Following the decision taken at Traffic & Transportation on the 13th December 2021, work has progressed on the development of the trial, including the setup of a group of stakeholders that are being consulted as part of the trial, an assessment of the bus lanes to be put forward for the trial and road safety audits on those shortlisted.

3.8 As a result of concerns raised by the stakeholders in conjunction with the then recent changes to the highway code and a review of available accident data, the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation took the decision to postpone the trial until the following actions had been completed:

- A review of the monitoring methods being proposed, by which will be used to provide the necessary information to assess the impacts of the trial.
- Review of all bus lanes with existing infrastructure such as enforcement cameras, Bluetooth journey time monitoring equipment etc., to enable the monitoring of the impacts of the trial.
- An assessment of each of these bus lanes considering road speed, layout, proximity to accident hotspots and the availability of adjacent cycle infrastructure to enable a shortlist of viable bus lanes to be compiled.
- Road Safety Audits to be undertaken on the shortlisted bus lanes to confirm their suitability for the trial.

4. Trial Proposals

4.1 Following these further actions and assessment, it is proposed that a trial allowing Portsmouth City Council (PCC) private hire licensed vehicles access into five bus lanes in Portsmouth.

4.2 The five bus lanes proposed for this initial trial are listed in section 2.1 of this report. These bus lanes were identified as outlined in section 3.8 of this report.

4.3 The proposed trial comprises bus lanes of different layouts and conditions such as signalled junctions, varying road speeds, and the presence of parallel lanes catering to normal traffic. This will enable monitoring of the impacts of the trial which should be applicable for a range of different bus lane scenarios present across the city.

4.4 This closely monitored trial will provide information and data to understand the potential impacts of the trial as set out in section 5.1. This will be reported back in a report to the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation.

4.5 To clearly indicate which vehicles are permitted to enter the five bus lanes during the trial, all current bus lane signage will need to be updated to show "authorised vehicles", which is in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. An audit has been conducted to establish the exact number and location of bus lane signs that will require changing.

4.6 The trial will be undertaken under an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO), which will provide the opportunity for residents and stakeholders to be consulted throughout the duration of the trial. This consultation information will feed into the review of the trial.

5. Monitoring

5.1 As this project has developed, further monitoring and evaluation methods have been explored to help ensure that the impact of the trial is being monitored through quantitative data as opposed to feedback, reducing subjectivity. A series of suppliers have been consulted, along with representatives from the PHV and bus service providers regarding potential monitoring methods. This review has concluded that the following monitoring methods should be adopted for the trial:

- Accident data relating to cyclists is to be reviewed, where possible, on a monthly basis throughout the trial. It has been agreed with Hampshire Constabulary that this will be provided monthly throughout the trial.
- Bus service providers and PHV service providers to present pre-trial and trial journey time data for analysis. Journey time monitoring on the appropriate routes will also be monitored to assess the impact, if any, on private vehicles.
- Junction performance data is being sourced to enable the impact on junctions affected by the trial to be monitored.
- Parking and enforcement team to provide pre-trial and trial data relating to contraventions in enforced bus lanes for analysis.
- Air quality monitors are being procured for use prior to and during the trial to assess the impact, if any, on air quality along these routes.

5.2 To ensure robust information, it is proposed that data is collected for a minimum of one month before the trial and continuously during the trial. This will provide a baseline of evidence for comparison and will be reported back to the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation along with the results of the trial.

6. Stakeholder Engagement

6.1 Consultation has taken place with the Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) trade representative, and Aquacars on the trial proposals. Aquacars have agreed to contribute journey time data to aid in the review of the impacts of the trial.

6.2 Consultation has taken place with Stagecoach and First Bus on the revised trial proposals. Both operators highlighted the importance of monitoring the impacts of the trial in a fair and non-subjective way. Both bus operators have agreed to provide bus journey time data to aid in the review of the impacts of the trial.

6.3 If the recommendations in this report are agreed and the trial is authorised to proceed, additional engagement and consultation will take place with all stakeholders on the details of the trial.

7. Next Steps and timeframes

- 7.1 Following the trial, a report will be brought back to the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation with the analysis and findings.
- 7.2 Time is required ahead of the trial to manufacture and install replacement signs at the five proposed bus lane locations and develop the ETRO.
- 7.3 The procurement and installation of the monitoring systems and equipment will take place in July and August. During September, a one-month period of baseline data collection will be undertaken. It is anticipated that the trial of PHVs using the five bus lanes will commence in early October 2022. This timeframe will be refined in liaison with the working group and Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation.
- 7.4 Continued liaison with the Licensing Committee will take place prior to the commencement of the trial during the baseline data collection phase.
- 7.5 As and when meaningful results from the data collection during the trial are captured, these will be reported back to the working group and the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation. Based on these results, consideration will be given to extending the trial to additional bus lane locations in a phased approach, subject to safety audits being completed and acceptable.
- 7.6 The monitoring and evaluation methodology of any further phases will be developed with the working group. Any extension to the trial will be recommended in a report to the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation for approval.

8. Reasons for recommendations

- 8.1 Taxis and private hire vehicles are an important mode of transport for many, providing 24-hour on-demand travel across the city. This trial would support this mode transport option, potentially enabling improved journey times through access to the priority lanes.
- 8.2 As outlined in the recently adopted Portsmouth Transport Strategy 2021-2038, a key part of reducing demand to own private cars will be to provide residents with the confidence that they have alternative transport modes available to make various trips. This will include access to public transport, taxis and private hire vehicles and other sustainable transport options.
- 8.3 A closely monitored trial will provide information and data to understand the impact of the trial. This will be reported back in an interim report to Traffic and Transportation.
- 8.4 The trial will be undertaken under an ETRO, which will provide the opportunity for residents and stakeholders to be consulted throughout the duration of the trial. This consultation information will feed into the review of the trial.

8.5 Undertaking the trial on the reduced number of bus lanes being proposed, as opposed to city-wide bus lanes, will enable a thorough assessment of the impacts of the trial to take place through increased monitoring that would not be financially viable with a city-wide trial.

9. Integrated impact assessment

9.1 An Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) has been undertaken as part of the development of a trial and is attached in appendix B of this report. As the trial is developed a further IIA will be undertaken once the detail is understood.

9.2 Within the IIA, the concept of this trial impacts positively on the following sections:

Section B - Environment and climate change

B1 - Carbon emissions

B5 - Air Quality

10. Legal implications

10.1 It is the duty of a local authority to manage its road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to its other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives:
securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network;
and (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority.

10.2 Local authorities have a duty to take account of the needs of all road users, take action to minimise, prevent or deal with congestion problems, and consider the implications of decisions for both their network and those of others.

10.3 An experimental traffic order (ETRO) may be made for the same reasons as a standard traffic regulation order, including avoiding danger to persons or other traffic using the road or for preventing the likelihood of such danger arising or facilitating the passage on the road of traffic. ETROs may last for up to a maximum of 18 months.

10.4 An order may specifically include provisions prohibiting, restricting or regulating the use of a road or any part of the width of a road by any specified class of traffic. The existing traffic regulation orders will need amending to permit the use of private hire vehicles.

10.5 There is no statutory requirement to consult before making an ETRO but notice of the order must be given in the prescribed form. Specified documents must also be placed on deposit. The order cannot come into force until the expiry of 7 days from the date that notice was given.

- 10.6 If it is intended to make the ETRO permanent after the trial period has passed the notice should contain the prescribed statement set out in Schedule 5 of the Local Authorities Traffic Orders Procedure Regulations 1996. A statement of the reasons for making the order will also have to be placed on deposit.
- 10.7 Any person or body may object to the ETRO being made permanent by no later than 6 months from the order coming into force.

11. Director of Finance's comments

- 11.1 The cost to implement the scheme is estimated to be around £56,000, this cost will be met from the Council's Parking reserve.
- 11.2 The costs are broken down as £28,000 for project management, signage and works related to the Traffic regulation orders. A further £28,000 is for monitoring costs, including the Air Quality Monitoring apparatus.

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Signed by:

Appendices:

- Appendix A - Portsmouth Bus Lane locations
Appendix B - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA)

Background list of documents: Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972

The following documents disclose facts or matters, which have been relied upon to a material extent by the author in preparing this report:

Title of document	Location

The recommendation(s) set out above were approved/ approved as amended/ deferred/ rejected by on

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Signed by:

Appendix A - Portsmouth bus lane locations

