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Title of meeting:	Licensing Committee
Subject:	Trial to allow Portsmouth City Council Licensed Private Hire Vehicles (PHV's) in bus lanes in Portsmouth
Date of meeting:	25 th July 2022
Report by:	Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration
Wards affected:	All

1. Requested by

1.1 Report requested by the Licensing Committee.

2. Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the recently approved changes to the Private Hire Vehicles in bus lanes trial following the decisions taken by the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation on 5th July 2022. The report details these changes and the justifications for these amendments.

2.2 The following recommendations were taken by the Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation on 5th July 2022:

- A trial was approved 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.
- Delegated authority to immediately cease any or all of the five trial locations if safety issues become apparent.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Regeneration in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation and the Section 151 Officer to

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release funding to undertake the monitoring and evaluation of this trial as the details are developed, this will be funded from the Parking Reserve.

- Noted that consultation will continue with the working group and licensing committee will continue as the project develops.
- Noted 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 to postpone and redevelop the trial, work has progressed on the development of the

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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.
- All bus lanes with existing infrastructure such as enforcement cameras, Bluetooth journey time monitoring equipment etc., that would enable us to improve the monitoring of the impacts of the trial were subject to additional reviews.
- An assessment of each of these bus lanes considering road speed, layout, proximity to accident hotspots and the availability of adjacent cycle infrastructure was then carried out and a shortlist of viable lanes was compiled.
- Road Safety Audits were then undertaken on the five shortlisted bus lanes, following the above assessment, to confirm their suitability for the trial.

4. Trial Proposals

4.1 Following these further actions and assessment, it was approved at Traffic and Transportation Cabinet meeting that a trial allowing Portsmouth City Council (PCC) private hire licensed vehicles access into five bus lanes in Portsmouth will be established.

4.2 The five bus lanes approved for this initial trial are as follows:

- Cavell Drive
- Marketway
- Mile End Road
- Bishop Crispian Way
- Queen Street

These bus lanes were identified as outlined in section 3.8 and a map showing the bus lanes is outlined in appendix A of this report.

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- 4.3 The confirmed trial lanes comprise different layouts and conditions such as signalled junctions, varying road speeds, and the presence of parallel lanes catering to normal traffic, enabling us to monitor the impacts of the trial for a range of different 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.

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- 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 Initial 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 service providers have agreed to provide bus journey time data to aid in the review of the impacts of the trial.

6.3 Following approval of the recommendations in the report taken to the Traffic and Transportation cabinet meeting on the 5th July, additional engagement and consultation is now being planned to 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

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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 their approval.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

Appendix A - Bus lanes in Portsmouth

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:

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Appendix A - bus lanes in Portsmouth

