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Title of meeting:	Traffic and Transportation Cabinet Decision Meeting
Date of meeting:	23 March 2023
Subject:	Private hire vehicles in bus lanes trial update
Report by:	Tristan Samuels - Director of Regeneration
Author:	Liam Norman - Project Manager
Wards affected:	Cosham, Nelson, Charles Dickens

1. Purpose

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the current trial permitting private hire vehicles (PHVs) to utilise five bus lanes as approved at the meeting of the Traffic & Transportation Cabinet Member on 5 July 2022, and its subsequent implementation on 14 November 2022.
- 1.2. The report details the current status of this trial and the data collected.

2. Background

- 2.1. At the meeting of the Traffic and Transportation Cabinet Member on 5 July 2022, a trial was approved for a minimum of three months to allow access for Portsmouth City Council licensed Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) to use the following five bus lanes in Portsmouth (shown in Appendix A):
 - Cavell Drive (Bus Lane 1),
 - Marketway (Bus Lane 2),
 - Mile End Road (Bus Lane 3),
 - Queen Street (Bus Lane 4), and
 - Bishop Crispian Way (Bus Lane 5)
- 2.2. These locations were brought forward following officer assessment, stakeholder engagement and road safety audits.
- 2.3. This trial was introduced to support private hire vehicles as an important mode of transport for many, providing 24-hour on-demand travel across the city.

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- 2.4. The trial supports the Portsmouth Transport Strategy in trying to reduce the demand for private car ownership, providing residents confidence in the reliability and attractiveness of private hire vehicles as an alternative transport mode.
- 2.5. 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 private car.
- 2.6. Portsmouth currently has 53 bus lanes in the city, providing a combined total of 9.8km of dedicated priority.
- 2.7. The vehicle types permitted to use the 48 bus lanes not included in the trial are specified in their respective Traffic Regulation Order (TROs). These currently include buses, hackney carriages (taxis), cyclists and emergency service vehicles travelling under blue lights and rental e-scooters.
- 2.8. 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. Trial to date

3.1. Pre-trial

- 3.1.1. To clearly indicate which vehicles are permitted to enter the five bus lanes during the trial, all current bus lane signage was reviewed and updated ahead of the launch to include "authorised vehicles". This is in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2016.
- 3.1.2. An experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) has been put in place to enable the addition of PHVs in trial bus lanes. The maximum period of an ETRO is 18 months with the consultation period the first six months. This provides stakeholders the opportunity to respond to the consultation during the trial. Any consultation responses will inform the final review of the trial.

3.2. Governance

- 3.2.1. This trial was established with clear governance to ensure visibility for and feedback from key stakeholders and users. The key elements of this governance include:

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3.2.2. An external review panel (ERP)

The purpose of the external review panel is to provide key updates to relevant stakeholders at important project milestones such as pre-trial planning, pre-trial commencement, baseline data collection review and final trial review, and to collect their feedback on the trial. This group includes representatives from bus service providers, the PHV and hackney trades, Portsmouth Cycle Forum, as well as statutory consultees. These meetings are typically arranged at appropriate intervals, aligning with key programme milestones.

3.2.3. A project working group

The project working group comprises internal council officers (licensing, transport, parking and enforcement) and is held at appropriate intervals, aligning with key programme milestones, ahead of the ERP meetings to review the status of the trial, risks and issues, as well as trial safety updates and communications.

3.2.4. A project board

The project board meets in between the working group and ERP meetings to discuss the status of the trial, any issues and provide direction and decision making on the project. The project board comprises of the project sponsor (Assistant Director for Transport), the Cabinet Member and the Opposition Spokespersons for Traffic and Transportation, as well as senior managers from the council's transport and licensing departments.

3.3. Trial monitoring

3.3.1. Following approval in July 2022 the trial commenced with a period of baseline data collection April 2022 and 13 November 2022, with the trial going live on 14 November 2022. The duration of the baseline data collection periods varies by data source.

3.3.2. To ensure robust information, it was proposed that data be collected for a minimum of one month before the trial and continuously during the trial. This enables baseline data for comparison. The baseline data collection period is different for each of the metrics due to the time of installation of some of the required equipment.

3.3.3. The following monitoring methods were agreed for the trial to ensure there are measurable datasets alongside any qualitative stakeholder feedback:

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3.3.3.1. Road traffic incident data

All road traffic incidents at trial sites are being 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 for cyclists.

3.3.3.2. Bus/PHV journey time data

Bus service providers and PHV service providers are providing pre-trial and trial journey time data.

3.3.3.3. Journey time monitoring

General traffic journey times are measured across the city to provide a comparison to any trial data trends identified. Only routes identified near the trial sites are being monitored, the locations of these routes can be found in appendix B.

3.3.3.4. Junction performance data

A junction data analytics system was procured and is being utilised to enable the impact on the length of time it takes to pass through key junctions affected by the trial.

3.3.3.5. Bus lane contraventions

Contraventions in enforced bus lanes are being monitored.

3.3.3.6. Air quality monitoring

Air quality monitors were procured and installed for use prior to and during the trial to assess the impact, if any, on air quality along these routes. These monitors measure particulates and NOx.

4. Baseline trial data

The outputs of the baseline trial data analysis are as follows:

4.1. Manual traffic counts:

4.1.1. Manual traffic counts were undertaken during a 12-hour period over two days (one in September 2022 and one in October 2022) to identify how the bus lanes were used prior to the start of the trial. A summary of this data is as shown in Table 1:

Vehicle Type	Count of Vehicle by Site Location				
	Cavell Drive	Mile End Road	Marketway	Bishop Crispian Way	Queen Street
Bus	42	23	50	97	68
Car	11	2	8	4	4

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Cycle	11	16	9	74	19
Private E-Scooter	1	1	3	22	5
Hackney	1	15	14	19	9
Ordinary Goods Vehicle	2	6	7	4	0
PHV	2	2	5	3	3
VOI E-Scooters	0	0	3	14	3

Table 1: Pre-trial bus lane manual traffic counts

4.1.2. Table 1 shows that pre-trial the bus lane was used by authorised vehicles however, there were a number of instances of contraventions by unauthorised modes at all trial sites.

4.1.3. To understand the usage of the trial bus lanes by PHVs and any change in use by other vehicles manual traffic counts will be repeated in spring.

4.2. Air Quality:

4.2.1. Air quality data has been recorded at each of the trial sites since September 2022. These monitors are recording both particulates and NO_x.

4.2.2. Air quality data is variable in nature and more data is required from a longer duration to draw reasonable conclusions on the impacts of the trial at this point in time. We will continue to monitor this throughout the trial.

4.3. Journey times:

4.3.1. Existing Bluetooth journey time sensors in the city as shown in appendix B have been utilised to collect data on journey times of all vehicles with a Bluetooth device switched on. This data source is used for monitoring the journey times of general traffic in the city. The minimum, maximum and average journey times recorded using existing sensors in the city is summarised in Table 2.

Year	Month	Minimum Journey Time (seconds)	Maximum Journey Time (seconds)	Average Journey Time (seconds)	Range of Journey Time (seconds)
2022	April	2	321	62.22	2-321
2022	May	7	322	63.61	7-322
2022	June	1	324	62.77	1-324
2022	July	1	306	63.00	1-306
2022	August	2	310	64.02	2-310
2022	September	3	371	64.95	3-371

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2022	October	1	374	65.83	1-374
2022	November	4	287	63.92	4-287
2022	December	2	222	63.04	2-222
2023	January	1	219	63.91	1-219

Table 2 - Vehicle journey time monitoring from Bluetooth sensors

4.4. Junction times:

4.4.1. The amount of time taken to pass through key junctions at trial sites is being monitored as part of this trial. The below table shows the results of the baseline data collection period (September 2022 - November 2022), with which the trial is being measured against:

Trial Site	Minimum Travel Time (s)	Maximum Travel Time (s)	Average Travel Time (s)	Range of Travel Time (s)
Cavell Drive	13	370	36.04	13-370
Marketway	11	403	24.44	11-403
Mile End	12	520	27.73	12-520
Queen Street	13	543	25.2	13-543

Table 3 - Junction journey time pre-trial

4.4.2. Table 3 shows a summary of the minimum, maximum and average time taken to pass through key junctions affected by the trial during the baseline data collection phase. Queen Street is affected by both Queen Street bus lane and Bishop Crispian Way bus gate.

4.4.3. Table 4 shows the results of the trial data collected to date (November 2022 - January 2023):

Trial Site	Minimum Travel Time (s)	Maximum Travel Time (s)	Average Travel Time (s)	Range of Travel Time (s)
Cavell Drive	12	446	36.72	12-446
Marketway	11	501	24.45	11-501
Mile End	11	345	24.19	11-345
Queen Street	13	821	24.64	13-821

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Table 4 - Junction journey time post launch

4.4.4. Table 4 shows a summary of the minimum, maximum and average time taken to pass through key junctions affected by the trial during the trial phase.

4.5. PHV and bus journey times:

4.5.1. PHV and bus service providers are providing journey time data as a means of measuring the impacts the trial has on the public transport network in Portsmouth. A summary of the baseline data collected is as follows in the below tables:

4.5.2. PHV journey times

Table 5 summarises average journey times in the months of September 2022 and October 2022 from PHV providers during the baseline data collection period.

Average sum of trips	Average trip time (mins: secs)
441	08:11:04

Table 5 - summary of PHV journey times.

4.5.3. Bus journey times

Table 6 highlights the key findings from review of bus service provider data in the month of October 2022 during the baseline data collection period.

Average minimum travel time (mins: secs)	Average maximum time (mins: secs)
00:00:35	00:05:22

Table 6 - bus journey times.

4.6. Contraventions:

4.6.1. Bus lane contraventions are being measured to understand if the trial may lead to confusion from non-authorized users, or PHV drivers in other bus lanes.

4.6.2. Table 7 summarises contraventions recorded during the baseline data collection period (September 2022 - November 2022) and since the start of the trial:

Average Number of Contraventions (Baseline Data Collection Period)	1,022
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Average Number of Contraventions (Trial Data Collection Period)	753
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Table 7 - Bus Lane contraventions

5. Trial Safety

5.1. Road safety audits

5.1.1. During the planning phase of the trial, there were concerns raised by stakeholder groups regarding the potential safety impacts of the trial on vulnerable road users such as cyclists.

5.1.2. Safety of road users is of critical importance, and Stage 1/2 Road Safety Audits (RSAs) were undertaken prior to the trial to confirm the acceptability of the proposed bus lanes being used. All issues and comments raised in these RSAs were rectified, casualty data is continually monitored, along with near miss data reported to us. There will be future work on a sign located on Queen Street to replace an interim vinyl overlay on the sign with a completely new sign.

5.1.3. In addition to the stage 1/2 road safety audits described above, stage 3 road safety audits were conducted after trial implementation. No further issues were identified through these audits. The auditor made some minor comments on the placement of some signage. These comments have been reviewed and work is currently taking place to address these.

5.2. Casualty and near miss data

5.2.1. Since the commencement of the trial on the 14th of November 2022, there have been no serious casualties involving cyclists within trial bus lanes. However, there has been a series of near miss reports relating to PHVs in bus lanes. Following investigation, it was determined that only one of the near misses reported was at a trial site. Each near miss report was investigated by transport officers and through collaboration with the licensing team necessary process has been followed to raise awareness with offending individuals.

6. Stakeholder feedback

6.1.1. The key themes from stakeholder feedback received both before and after trial launch have centred around the safety of vulnerable road users, as well as the omission of Commercial Road bus lane from the trial.

6.1.2. As a result of the concerns raised that the omission of Commercial Road may cause confusion, we have been monitoring the number of contraventions on this bus lane. In the months before the trial (March 2022 - October 2022), there was an average of 147 contraventions per month. Since the trial commenced, there have been an average of 124 contraventions per month. With 127 being reported in the

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month after the trial and 120 being reported in January 2023. We will continue to monitor this over the next few months and will report back to the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation with a conclusion on whether the trial has led to confusion, and provide any recommendations.

- 6.1.3. In its TRO Commercial Road bus lane encompasses the whole section of Commercial Road down to Edinburgh Road. This bus lane would therefore need to be split into separate sections in any new ETRO/TRO, which could lead to difficulties in reversing the new setup in the event of cancellation of the trial. Commercial Road bus lane also allows loading and unloading, potentially hampering monitoring of this bus lane. As a result of these factors, in addition to road safety concerns, Commercial Road bus lane was discounted from the trial.
- 6.1.4. For Commercial Road bus lane to be included in the trial going forward the bus lane would need to be subject to a RSA, with any issues or comments identified being rectified in advance of inclusion in the trial. All signage would also need surveying, and possibly replacing, to meet trial requirements.
- 6.1.5. The current trial ETRO would need to be revoked and replaced with a new ETRO. This new ETRO would need to revoke the full length of Commercial Road bus lane all the way to Edinburgh Road. The ETRO would then need to split this bus lane into multiple bus lanes and could lead to additional complications, more involved highways work, and the need to undertake a formal TRO process regardless of trial success.

7. Next Steps and Timeframes

- 7.1. As outlined by the data included in section four of this report there have been no significant concerns arising from the launch of this trial. Due to the limited timeframe of data available full conclusions are not possible and monitoring and evaluation should continue.
- 7.2. The trial will continue under the existing ETRO, with a further report being brought to the Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation once enough data has been collected to draw a conclusion on the impacts of the trial and any consultation responses to the ETRO.

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Signed by (Director)

Appendices:

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Appendix A - Plan of trial bus lanes

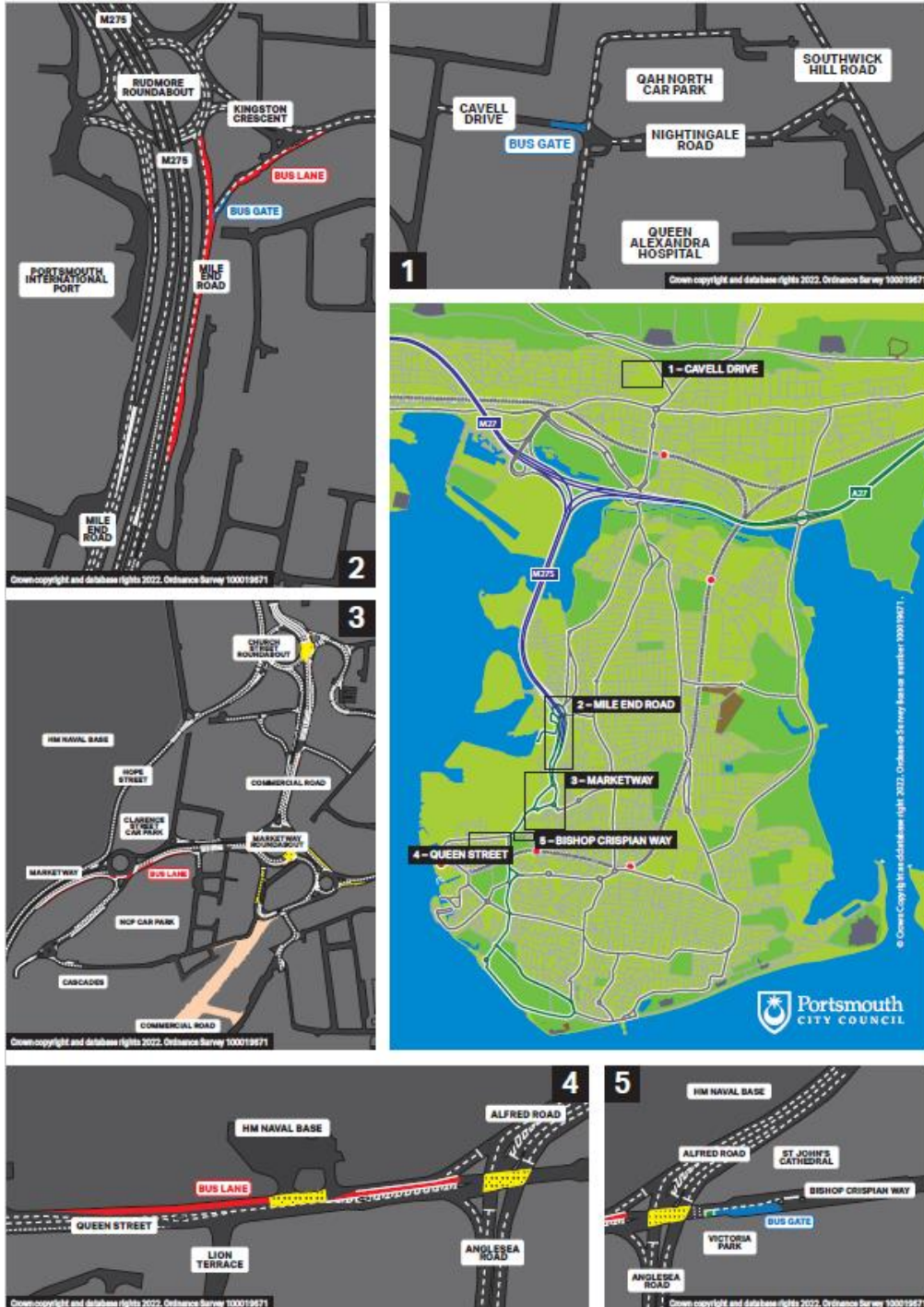
Appendix B - Plan of Bluetooth journey time sensors

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:

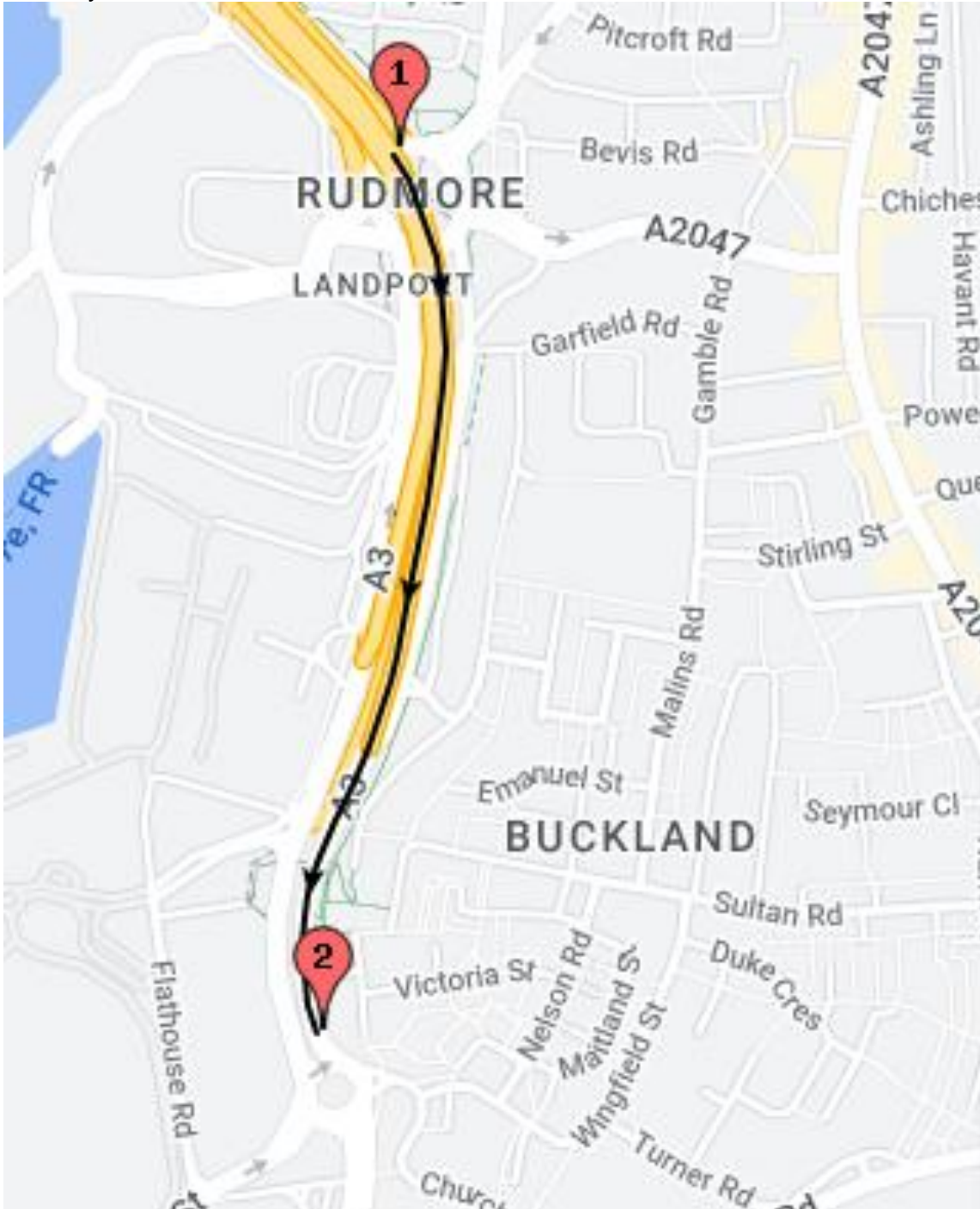
Title of document	Location
Private Hire Vehicle in Bus Lane Trial Report to Cabinet Member of Traffic and Transportation 5 July 2022	Agenda for Cabinet Member for Traffic & Transportation on Tuesday, 5th July, 2022, 4.00 pm Portsmouth City Council

Appendix A

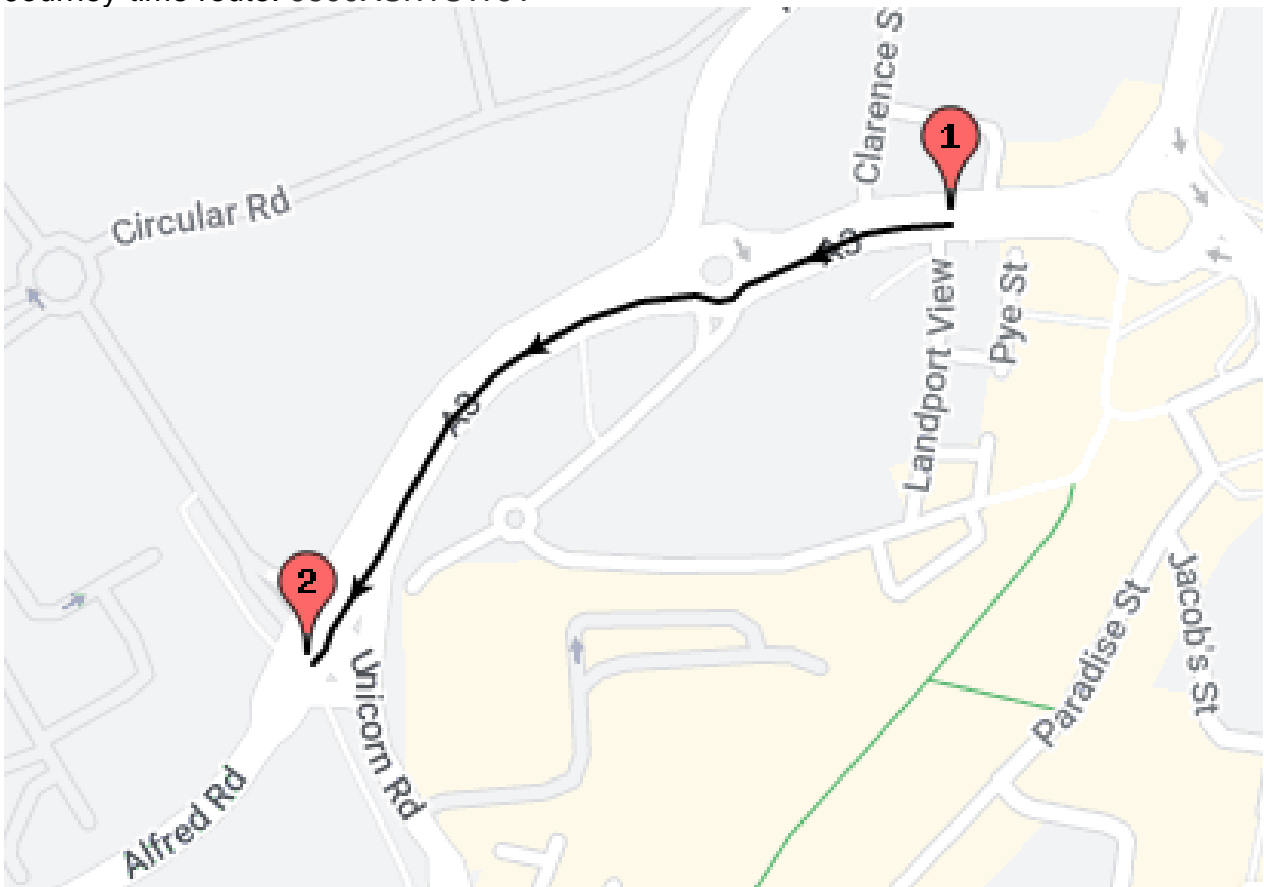


Appendix B

Journey-time route: 9800ZGROCHKO



Journey-time route: 9800XSIWUW6V



Journey-time route: 9800XTE0VC76

