

PHVs in bus lanes - stakeholder comments

At the various Transport Liaison Groups throughout 2014, the chair (Cabinet Member for Traffic and Transportation) invited views on this proposal from members.

A number of comments were received and an additional email (sent 9.1.2015) was sent to ask all members of the TLG groups to submit formal written comments.

Email to TLG stakeholders -

Dear All

Upcoming Cabinet report - Private Hire Vehicle access to bus lanes

As discussed at recent Transport Liaison Group meetings, including the all-modes group meeting on 2nd December, a report will be taken to the Traffic and Transportation Cabinet to decide if Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) should be approved use of the city's bus lanes, initially via a trial. This is in response to a petition of 1800 signatures seeking PHV use of Portsmouth bus lanes. This meeting is due to take place on 5th February 2015.

At the recent meetings, Cllr Ellcome invited all parties to submit formal written comment outlining their views, support or objection.

For these comments to be incorporated within the report, we must have received these by **3pm on Wednesday 14th January.**

Comments already sent to Councillor Ellcome have been included but if you are yet to submit yours, please ensure you send a copy to myself as well.

The report will then be published on 28th January. As usual deputations can be requested at this point (details of the process will be on the published agenda).

We welcome your comments and look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

Transport Planning - Team Manager

Comments received:

PCC - Licencing department

There is tacit agreement from our point of view for private hire vehicles (PHV) to use bus lanes whether by way of permit permission or otherwise.

As far back as 2000 (when consideration was first given to permitting hackney carriage vehicles (HCV) to subsequently use bus lanes under the then quality partnership scheme with the City Engineer & Licencing) - the question of PHV using bus lanes was discussed. Although rejected at the time, all involved did accept that PHV were an integral part of the local public transport system and that the situation would be reviewed once "liveries" were in place for both HCV and PHV. Both HCV and PHV now have a livery as well as individual company affiliation stickers and have done so for many, many years. The previous "fear" that in allowing HCV into the bus lanes would prompt all and sundry to similarly do so - never really materialised.

The number of PHV (particularly those with 6-8 person seating capacity) installing meters has increased. Meters calculate the fare to the hirer both for distance AND TIME. If a PHV is stuck in traffic - the meter will continue to record the fare in time mode whereas a "bus lane" alternative could save passengers both time and money. We accept that this would not be the norm but is mentioned as a practical reason to justify a "more effective" journey route for PHV.

The proposal for a trial period of PHV in bus lanes seems sensible. By law, both HC and PH drivers are compelled not to "prolong" a journey for which the vehicle has been hired so anything to assist in a swifter journey would be sensible.

The main long term consideration would appear to be enforcement and management of such a scheme - particularly as in Portsmouth we have such a large PHV fleet (900 or so vehicles) and Licencing would like to make it clear that we do not have the resources or time to offer Licencing staff help in dealing with errant drivers in any future scheme.

On the basis that any trial period proceeds to a permanent future permit scheme (for buses and permitted vehicles in bus lanes) - then careful consideration would need to be given to future enforcement requirements and the subsequent liaison between the highway authority and licencing authority to identify and deal with any problem areas. The Parking Operations Manager may be best placed to consider this aspect.

On behalf of Licencing & The Licencing Manager

Private Hire Vehicle drivers

NH, Portsmouth

I am a ph driver and do two school runs In the morning and afternoon and continually lose money due to the unpredictable traffic flow in portsmouth where it can be a massive delay in the London road/ hilsea roundabout vicinity..due to this the children are sometimes late for school...if I were able to use the bus lanes it would certainly enable myself to complete my job easier and deliver the children to school on time.. and this change could possibly make people consider using our cars in preference to their own during "rush hours" and hopefully easing the growing congestion we are all now facing...thankyou

Hackney Carriage drivers

CD, Portsmouth

Further to my comments of support during the taxi trade and traffic & transport group meetings, I am happy to support the implementation of a trial, allowing private hire vehicles to use bus lanes. I would like to add that this is a forward thinking move.The real winners are the travelling public who use the Private hire companies. These companies provide a valuable door to door service within the "taxi" element of public transport sector in Portsmouth. Given the number of private hire vehicles working at any one time I would not envisage a significant inconvenience to the existing bus lane users and a monitored trial period has much merit.

AA, Portsmouth

After reading an e-mail from "Mr X" I feel the need to write to you regarding private hire vehicles using bus lanes. It would appear that "Mr X" and "Mr Y" have said and I quote. (We think its a good idea). I'm not sure who he is referring to but he certainly doesn't speak for me as a Hackney driver. He has a personal interest in private hire and it would be in his interest if this was to happen. One of the reasons hackneys were given bus lanes is because they run on a meter and sitting in traffic with a fare, is not fair to the customer. This does not apply to private hire. It would be chaos in the bus lanes with the hundreds of private hire cars in the city. Buses would also be affected by this and I don't think the bus company's would be too pleased. Finally we as hackneys were forced to use silver coloured cars so as to be recognised in bus lanes. I assume this will apply to private hire!

JR, Portsmouth

I am writing this email on behalf of the Hackney taxi. There has been a email going about. Saying that the Hackney trade are happy with private hire cars using bus lanes. That is not true we are not happy neither do we want private hire to have the use of bus lanes. The Hackney trade are fuming about this. And are in the process of having a petition writing up about this... We have silver cars and livery on are cars to determine who we are and can be noticed. Apart from private cars. Hackney are public transport. If we use bus lanes it saves customers money due to the meter not ticking over In traffic. Private hire are not public transport they are a private service hence why they are called private hire. They do not run on Meters so by sitting in traffic it is not effecting the members of the public. As all the time the car is stationary the price does not increase. Another reason you are taking traffic from one lane to and moving it to another lane. It will cause accidents and put publics safety at great risk due to private hire cutting in and out of bus lanes. Members of public are not going to let multiple taxis and private hire cars out of bus lanes possibly 5 + cars in a row at a time.

The person who has been circulating the email. Does not speak on behalf of the Hackney trade. As he as an interest in private. He is out here doing part whilst the rest of us are out here 7 days a week when he comes up with these ideas no one is told until the last minute. He has no right speaking on are behalf with out consulting us.

SU, Portsmouth

Would like to state that in my opinion allowing private hire cars to use portsmouth bus lanes would cause more caos on the primary roads as they are already easily heavily congested with traffic

This will also cause confusion with public drivers as they tend to follow foward traffic and private hire cars dont have a distintive look they come in all olours

RB, Portsmouth

With ref to the Private Hire using the existing bus lanes in the city, i as a hackney driver strongly object to their application the drivers of the private hire sector will cause nothing short of chaos in doing so, they will sit & wait for so called jobs to come through on their system causing traffic flow problems, we as you are well aware are metered & as the oldest form of public transport need to get around our city without any undue traffic problems along with the local bus service. The private hire operate with a fare chart & so the cost for the customer is not affected as it would be for a hackney caught in traffic congestion, it would seem that the private hire sector are trying to get as they call it themselves ' a level playing field ' , the customer is the person who matters the most if they need to get from A to B in hackney unimpeded from traffic build up they can use an authorised taxi, if not then the choice is private hire quite simple. I attended the meeting today Tuesday 13th January at the Guildhall with ref to the licence fee increases etc & one representative from one private hire company openly admitted to the meeting they have at present over 1 thousand yes ONE THOUSAND private hire cars & drivers operating for them, can you even think for one minute the chaos they will cause if they are given the chance ! ! , they at present have blatant disregard for the highway as it is & openly abuse the bus lanes that are already in place. Bus Lanes for Bus & Hackney Only no compromise at all.

AC, Portsmouth (submitted via text message)

I would like to object to this as there are just too many ph in Portsmouth and so rounding areas that would just abuse this , by driving too fast , not understanding the rules as we see now they just park in them at night waiting to get jobs we see them abusing them now in ridiculous manner for heaven sake don't allow this it would just cause mayhem to the perfect way it works now , if it's not broken why try and fix this people know the diff rents between hackneys and ph if they see ph using them they will feel it's ok for them and that would open a whole can of work please do not let this happen.

RS, Portsmouth

I am writing to you to object very strongly about allowing private hire vehicles to use bus lanes , as you must know we fought long and hard to qualify to use them for hackneys and at great expense to us as in having to buy metallic silver cars and buy livery for them .I hope if you give permission for private hire cars to use bus lanes they will have to conform to a one colour car restriction different to us other wise there will be chaos in the bus lanes because everyone will start using them because the general public will see all sorts of different colour cars in the bus lanes and start using them as well

Taxi and private hire companies

General Manager, Aqua Cars Limited

In regard to the possible trial of Private Hire Vehicles being able to use Bus Lanes Aqua Cars, for numerous years has been campaigning Portsmouth City Council to undertake a trial having heard most of the arguments during many PTLG meetings, involving bus companies, cyclist forum's and of course the Hackney Carriage Trade, some for and against bus lane usage for Private Hire.

I am glad to see that Portsmouth City Council Licensing Committee are prepared to consider an new approach to help promote sustainable travel initiatives and I commend you for that.

Aqua cars undertake over 80,000 journey's every week that equates to 4,010.000 a year, put into prospective means that over 50% of the population of Portsmouth uses Aqua Cars every week.

Aqua Cars welcomes the proposed trial. It may well help the congestion around the city and prove doubters wrong or well even let those who didn't want Private Hire to use bus lanes crow "told you so".

Bus Operators

First Bus

See over



First Hampshire & Dorset
Hilsea West Bus Depot
London Road
Hilsea, Portsmouth
Hampshire PO2 9RP
Tel: 023 9265 0413

12 January 2015

Ms Nicola Waight
Transport Planning Team Manager
Portsmouth City Council
Floor 4, Core 1-2
Civic Offices
Guildhall Square
Portsmouth
PO1 2NE

Dear Nicola

I write following your recent correspondence regarding the cabinet report into giving private hire vehicles access to bus lanes. On behalf of First I wish to formally object to the proposal and detail my concerns below:

1. Concerns for the safety of cyclists and for that of the driver and passengers on our vehicles due to private hire vehicles switching lanes frequently and haphazardly. We are also concerned about vehicles dropping off and picking up passengers in the lane.
2. Letting private hire vehicles use bus lanes is likely to encourage other road users to follow suit regardless of whether or not they are permitted to use the lane.
3. Increasing the number of vehicles allowed to use the bus lane will slow our services down. As a bus operator, we are regulated by the DVSA and one of our legal requirements is to run bus services reliability and punctually. Slowing down our services can cause our business some serious issues:
 - Having to put more resources into the service potentially making it financially unviable. In this circumstance we would either remove the service, reduce its frequency or seek funding from the City Council to support its continued operation.
 - Fines and penalties from the Traffic Commissioner for failing to operate our timetable to the required standard.

If in the event that the scheme does go ahead, we would insist that enforcement cameras are in place before 'go live' and that they are fully utilised.

At the meeting on 5 February we wish to make a deposition and I look forward to hearing from you in regard to this.

Yours sincerely



First Hampshire & Dorset Limited
Registered in England number 1999120
Empress Road, Southampton SO14 0JW



First Hampshire & Dorset
Hilsea West Bus Depot
London Road
Hilsea, Portsmouth
Hampshire PO2 9RP
Tel: 023 9265 0413

Dervla Mc Kay
General Manager Solent



ATOC



**THE
OUTWARD
BOUND TRUST**

First Hampshire & Dorset Limited
Registered in England number 1136121
Empress Road, Southampton SO2 0LH

Private Hire Vehicles in Bus Lanes

A response from Portsmouth Cycle Forum

Portsmouth Cycle Forum (PCF) are concerned to learn that consideration is being given to the use of Bus Lanes by Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs). We wish to register our strong objection to this idea.

The primary aim of allowing and encouraging cyclists to use these lanes is to make cyclists safer than they would be in general traffic. This is achieved:

- by reducing the number of vehicles they interact with, and where interaction *is* necessary,
- by ensuring the drivers they do encounter behave professionally, focusing on safety first.

In Portsmouth, there are incidents *daily* where this aim is not achieved. The nature of our objection to the use of Bus Lanes by PHVs reflects this as follows:

1. Increased cycle/vehicle interaction reduces safety.

The November 2014 report by PCC licensing manager Nickii Humphreys [1] highlights that the number of collisions between taxis/private hire vehicles and cycles is already shockingly high, as illustrated in this excerpt:

Cycle collisions

- It is clear that cyclists are over represented in this data.
- Cyclists make up only 4.7% of traffic but 21% of Taxi related casualties.
- Taxis/Private Hire represents 0.9% of registered vehicles in Portsmouth (1000 out of a total of 110,000) but represent 8% of total cycle collisions.
- Most common contributory factor is driver failing to look properly.
- Most common manoeuvre is pulling out on cyclists at junctions and roundabouts and opening of doors into their path.

Allowing private hire vehicles to use bus lanes will increase instances of cycle/vehicle proximity and when considered with the evidence above, the conclusion that cyclist-casualties will increase significantly is inescapable.

For the last three years Portsmouth has had the worst or second worst rate of cycle casualties in the country, outside of London. PCC's own data indicates that the biggest contributors to these figures are Taxis/PHVs. It therefore seems extremely unwise to allow PHVs to enter one of the few spaces where cyclists are currently isolated from them.

2. Pressure to compete makes PHVs more dangerous.

Unlike Hackney Carriages which are metered, PHV driver-income is based on mileage: they make more money if they complete each fare as quickly as possible, and travelling to the next waiting customer as quickly as possible, so that they can fit the more jobs into a shift. Private hire drivers are thus incentivised to drive fast, and are under constant pressure to finish each job quickly and beat other cars to accepting the next job.

An increasing body of scientific evidence links stress and fatigue to altered cognitive function in drivers, this includes increased risk-taking, inattention and driver error (e.g. Rowden 2011 [2], Lin 2014 [5]). Increased risk-taking may take many forms, but the road users most *at risk* from it are the most vulnerable - i.e. cyclists and pedestrians. Whilst risk-taking can increase the likelihood of an accident; inattention and driver error decrease the possibility of accidents being avoided.

Allowing PHVs to use bus lanes therefore represents a significant increase in the danger to cyclists and pedestrians. For a pressured PHV driver, a cyclist in a bus lane may (at best) be considered an inconvenience that must be passed as quickly as possible, if they are noticed at all.

3. PHV drivers are distracted by the tools of their trade.

It is incumbent on hackney carriage drivers to be looking *out* of their vehicle for pedestrians when touting for work. Conversely, private hire drivers receive their jobs through a communications device which can distract them from the road (computer or radio). Such devices require physical interaction for use and remove attention from the road. For a private hire driver to maximise their income it is common for them to use these device to begin looking for the next job before they have dropped off a fare - i.e. whilst the vehicle is in motion.

Encouraging distracted drivers to use a lane that is more likely than any other to be populated with cyclists is of grave concern to us.

4. The DfT advise against PHV use of bus lanes.

"In some areas where taxis are permitted to use bus lanes there has been pressure from operators of cars available for private hire, most of which are indistinguishable from private cars, to be provided with the same priority; use of bus lanes by these vehicles is not recommended." - DfT LTN 1/97 Keeping Buses Moving [3]

5. People are frightened.

Portsmouth's record of vulnerable road user casualties is unenviably poor, with government data showing the city at the foot of the cycling-safety table for several consecutive years (e.g. [4]).

Portsmouth is a congested city but residents are reluctant to make the switch from

private cars to sustainable transport (such as cycling). Most cite the fear of traffic as the primary reason for this [6]. Given the disproportionately high number of incidents involving Taxis and PHVs, we can only conclude that allowing PHVs into these lanes would not only increase cyclist casualties, but would also increase fear of cycling.

The impact of this increased fear on city transportation would be felt in many ways, for example, it would lead to an increase in private vehicle use, increase vehicle pollution, and increase the likelihood of gridlock such as that seen in early 2014.

6. There are many more PHVs than Hackney Carriages.

There are currently around 300 licensed Hackney Carriages in Portsmouth but about 1000 registered PHVs [7]. Allowing PHVs into bus lanes would therefore quadruple the number of motor vehicles competing to use the bus lanes. This is likely to squeeze out cyclists, making bus lanes a no-go area.

In summary: Portsmouth has more cycling accidents per head than other cities, and Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles are responsible for a disproportionately large number of these accidents. There are scientifically demonstrable reasons why this correlation may occur. Increasing the incidence of proximity between cyclists and PHVs by **allowing PHVs to use bus lanes will increase cycling casualties** and increase residents' fear of cycling.

This will reinforce residents use of less sustainable modes of transport, leading to an overall negative impact on the city.

Portsmouth Cycle Forum
January 2015

1. N. Humphreys, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy Review, Consideration of options for review of current policy guidelines, Portsmouth City Council, 2014/11/21 <http://goo.gl/c641vw>
2. Rowden, P., Matthews, G., Watson, B., Biggs, H. (2011) The relative impact of work-related stress, life stress and driving environment stress on driving outcomes. *Accident Analysis and Prevention*, 43 (4), pp. 1332-1340. doi: 10.1016/j.aap.2011.02.004
3. Keeping Busses Moving, A GUIDE TO TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT TO ASSIST BUSES IN URBAN AREAS., 1997, ISBN 0 11 551914 9., <http://goo.gl/KzM670>
4. Reported road casualties Great Britain: annual report 2012 <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-annual-report-2012>
5. Na Lin, Changfu Zong, Masayoshi Tomizuka, Pan Song, Zexing Zhang, and Gang Li, "An Overview on Study of Identification of Driver Behavior Characteristics for Automotive Control," *Mathematical Problems in Engineering*, vol. 2014, Article ID 569109, 15 pages, 2014. doi:10.1155/2014/569109

6. Thornton et al, Climate Change and Transport Choices, December 2010.
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/40971/climate-change-transport-choices-full.pdf
7. Licensing - online applications & public register.
<https://www.portsmouth.gov.uk/ext/business/licensing/licensing-public-register---view--apply-online.aspx>

British Cycling - Recreation Manager South

In addition to the Cycle Forum's response to the above proposal I would also like to add the following points on behalf of British Cycling.

- As you are aware PCC & BC are in the process of formalising a Partnership Agreement for the next 2 years. Through this Partnership and joint investment, a commitment is being made to try and increase participation across the city by mobilising a range of events and behaviour change programmes.
- Car dominance in the city is the primary cause of congestion, air and noise pollution, slow and stressful commuter journey's and generally creates an atmosphere that's unpleasant to spend time in.
- One aim of our work is to make cycling an attractive and viable option for people of all ages and abilities, enabling them to cycle for short everyday trips rather than use a car or taxi.
- Many taxi rides are of a distance that would be a reasonable cycling distance. Keeping taxi numbers low in bus lanes will support the commitment to encourage and promote cycling in the City.
- By encouraging people to use bikes instead taxi's we are not only allowing them to save money and get the exercise they need, but also reducing congestion and creating a more pleasant and liveable city.
- If through our Partnership we are signalling to local people that cycling is a normal, safe, faster way to travel it seems rather counterintuitive to allow more vehicles into a space that is currently reasonably well protected for cyclists.
- It is important that the right messages help improve the perception of cycling so it's not seen as a marginal and minority mode which is off-putting to many people.

Sustrans - Group co-ordinator, Sustrans Southeast Hampshire

I write on behalf of Sustrans in response to the proposal to allow private hire vehicles (PHVs) to use bus lanes in Portsmouth.

As the charity behind the national cycle network, we are committed to increasing levels of cycling for utility as well as leisure. We consider this to be a retrograde step which would discourage cycling, especially on the most direct routes. Where they are available, cyclists are encouraged to make use of bus lanes to keep them away from the general flow of traffic.

If there is an increase to the number of vehicles using bus lanes, this will add to the real, as well as perceived, dangers of cycling. In addition, PHVs are not marked as taxis are, so the impression to other motorists will be that there are now fewer or no restrictions to use of bus lanes.

We request this proposal to be rejected.