

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 9 May 2024

Report of the Director of Highways and Transport

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Preston City; Preston
Southeast;

Corporate Priorities:
Protecting our environment;

Proposed Bus Lane, New Hall Lane, Preston

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

The introduction of a dedicated bus lane is proposed to improve journey times and reliability of bus services travelling southwest bound on New Hall Lane, as part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan. The proposal, in co-ordination with other schemes in the Bus Service Improvement Plan, aims to encourage a greater proportion of sustainable travel. The two lanes available for other traffic will remain, but less wide.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve the proposed creation of a 406m long bus only lane, with exception for cycles, as set out in this report and in Appendix 'A'.

Detail

Lancashire County Council and Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council have worked in partnership with all of Lancashire's local bus operators to jointly develop a Bus Service Improvement Plan for their areas. The Department for Transport granted funding of £34.1 million to support the Plan, which includes a range of measures to make buses better and help create a bus network which more people use for regular journeys.



As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, the western end of New Hall Lane was identified as a location where the carriageway was wide enough so that a bus lane could be constructed, whilst maintaining a two-way carriageway for general vehicles. The proposed inbound bus lane would allow buses to bypass congestion and cut journey times, particularly during peak travel periods.

Consultation

Consultation and formal advertising of the proposals have been undertaken between 19 January and 16 February. Objections to the proposals were received.

Objection 1

I would like to say that this idea of a bus lane on new lane would be a ridiculous idea. You have already narrowed New Hall Lane down how could you put a bus lane.

This is a very busy road used by commuters to and from work and is the main road into Preston from the motorway. Going ahead with this would significantly affect all road users and local residents that of like.

There are 2 schools on this road and parents drop them off using cars can you imagine how much traffic this would cause.

Have you even considered how this would affect all the businesses on new hall lane? heavily impact our business! There are close to hundred shops on new hall which would all be affected.

Objection 2

I would like to say I am completely against this idea of a bus lane on new hall lane. This would cause significant traffic on a road that is already so busy and narrow.

My children go to school just off New [Hall] Lane and I live on Fishwick parade this would cause us so much more time to drop and pick kids also create a lot more traffic on Fishwick parade.

I would urge the council to reconsider this proposal.

Objection 3

I have objections to this proposal. This will cause disruption to local business and congestion on an already busy road due to previous work on New Hall Lane. The previous work carried out on New Hall Lane has already left long term inconvenience & congestion.

As there is no lay by for buses at bus stops to pull into, this causes tailbacks of traffic. There is nowhere for traffic to move to when there are emergency vehicles trying to get through. The roads are flooded with water especially at pedestrian crossings due to poor drainage. Pedestrians and people on mobility scooters are risking their lives and walking into roads to avoid the large pools of water. Pedestrians crossing are useless in wet conditions.



Motorists will resort to taking short cuts to beat the traffic onto Skeffington Rd and Ribbleton lane. These roads are very narrow with parked vehicles on both sides and very busy due to nearby schools. These roads are already poorly maintained and have potholes.

Please don't fix something that's not broken. Please for goodness' sake use the money to repair New Hall Lane road surfaces. There are potholes and roads in and around Fishwick are in dire conditions. I wish one of you planners would just walk down New Hall Lane on a wet/rainy day and see the congestion and flooding caused my previous bad decisions. I have lived in this area all my life and unfortunately the conditions have worsened due to very expensive bad decisions using taxpayers' money. The roads are awful and unsafe to drive on. Fly-tipping and streets are filthy. It seems the council has too much money to waste on such useless money wasting projects. This money can be better spent especially in this difficult economic climate.

In Response to Objections 1, 2 and 3

The objectors make reference to the road being narrow and the scheme unworkable, however the measured carriageway width over the proposed bus lane length is between 11.2 and 13.4 metres.

The proposals would involve reallocating the existing carriageway width to accommodate the 406m long southwest bound bus lane, whilst maintaining a two-way carriageway for general vehicles. Traffic flow would not be impeded in any way (see Appendix 'A' for location and extents). The two lanes for general traffic at present would remain, just less wide.

A section of carriageway on New Hall Lane to the east of these proposals was narrowed several years ago to create a wide footway being a more pedestrian friendly public space, however this would not be affected by the proposals. It is further east than the proposed changes to the lanes within carriageway width for this proposal.

This scheme is funded by central government through the 'Bus Service Improvement Programme initiative. Funding cannot be redirected to any unrelated function.

Objection 4

We feel that this proposal needs testing, that it should be put in place using temporary barriers for a period to see if it has a positive effect on traffic. Failing that, we believe it should be paused while deeper consultation is considered, we could help with this.

Please advise if this is agreeable?

In Response to Objection 4

The scheme has been safety audited and legal orders created against the fully implemented design, including regulatory signs, road markings and enforcement cameras. The scheme is not suitable for any experimental order but is part of a programme of measures in the Bus Services Improvement Plan. It is designed to be lawful, safe and enforceable.



Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

| Appendix | Title |
|--------------|--------------|
| Appendix 'A' | General Plan |

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

Legal

The Highway Authority has the power to provide lanes and footways within highway width.

The statutory framework for delivery of the National Bus Strategy for England through partnership is provided by the Bus Services Act 2017 and the key document setting out the vision, objectives and delivery plans of local transport authorities and their partners at the local level is the Bus Service Improvement Plan.

The proposals in this report would be implemented under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

Financial

The total cost of the proposed scheme is estimated at £100,000. The cost will be fully met from the £5.24 million within the Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme for 2022/23 and 2023/24 Bus Priority Infrastructure Schemes, which is financed through the Department for Transport Bus Service Improvement Plan funding. As this is grant funding there are no revenue implications for financing, any increases to the above cost estimate will also have to be met from the grant funds which may impact the levels of future delivery. The proposals and costs have been approved by the Enhanced Partnership Board.

Risk management

Failure to implement this scheme would result in Lancashire County Council not introducing a dedicated bus lane, journey times not being shortened, and reliability not being improved. This would adversely affect the overall Bus Service Improvement Plan's aim to encourage increased sustainable travel.



List of Background Papers

Paper

Date

Contact/Tel

None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

