

## Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 5 September 2019

### Report of the Head of Service - Highways

#### Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:  
Lancaster East; Skerton;

### Lancashire County Council (Parliament Street, Greyhound Bridge Road and Morecambe Road, Lancaster, Lancaster City) (Bus Lane) Experimental Order 2018

(Appendices 'A' to 'C' refer)

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#### Executive Summary

Following the completion of the Bay Gateway an experimental traffic regulation order was introduced to provide a bus priority measure on Greyhound Bridge Road in the form of a dedicated bus lane for bus services whilst still retaining two lanes for all other traffic. The dedicated bus lane has been implemented to improve bus journey times and reliability of Bus Services travelling on Greyhound Bridge and therefore supporting sustainable travel.

#### Recommendation

The Cabinet is asked to consider and determine the measures outlined in the Experimental Order at Appendix 'A' and the plans attached at Appendices 'B' and 'C' along with the alterations detailed within this report for approval to make the experimental order into a permanent Traffic Regulation Order.

#### Background and Advice

Following the completion of the Bay Gateway link road, it was anticipated that there would be a reduction in the volume of traffic using Greyhound Bridge. As a result of the predicted reduction in traffic flow it was considered that there was an opportunity to provide bus priority measures in the form of a dedicated bus lane whilst still retaining two lanes for all other traffic. An experimental bus lane was introduced to improve journey times and reliability of Bus Services travelling on Greyhound Bridge. As an experimental order the bus lane could be fully assessed over the 6 month consultation period.

The consultation period has now ended and it is being proposed to make the order permanent along with making a few amendments to the road markings and the use of the bus stops as detailed within this report.

## **Consultations**

The Experimental Traffic Regulation Order was introduced on an experimental basis on the 12<sup>th</sup> September 2018, coming into force on the 21<sup>st</sup> September 2018 for a period of up to eighteen months.

As part of this introduction divisional county councillors were consulted along with the council's usual consultees. The consultation documents were posted on the council's website and notices were displayed on site and published in the local newspaper. The consultation period lasted for 6 months throughout which objections and comments were recorded.

During the consultation period a number of objections and comments were received from Lancashire Police, Lancaster City Council, Lancaster City Hackney Proprietor Association and taxi drivers along with members of the public. A number of objections and points were raised, some by more than one correspondent. All the points raised have been collated and are as set out below.

### **Objections to the Proposal**

- The bus lane is not necessary as there are insufficient buses and routes across Greyhound Bridge and that this work is a waste of money.
- The bus lane is reducing the number of lanes of general traffic leading on to Greyhound Bridge from Cable Street. This is negating the advantage to bus travel times by causing traffic to be congested on Cable Street, which is also resulting in reducing air quality.
- The change in road layout, reducing the number of lanes for general traffic turning on to Greyhound Bridge, is causing a safety issue with drivers when making last minute lane changes.
- The bus lane on Greyhound Bridge does not permit use by taxis that are part of the public transport system.
- Buses are stopping at the bus stop on Parliament Street that is within the bus lane and then pulling out of the bus lane across the solid white line when heading towards the M6 and Caton. This is also the case for buses once on Greyhound Bridge that are routed to head north along the A6 towards Carnforth. Vehicles including buses are not permitted to cross a solid white line as this could cause a danger.
- There is no exception in the Experimental Order for unmarked police vehicles that may need to use the lane whilst reacting to an emergency situation.
- Presently there are no pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction of Parliament Street with Greyhound Bridge. The introduction of the bus lane makes crossing this road more difficult.

## Engineers Response

Presently there are 22 buses per hour using Greyhound Bridge at peak times during term time and a total of 13 different bus routes across the bridge, the establishment of the bus lane offers minor improvements to bus journey times but it also highlights the priority given to the use of public transport so promoting sustainable travel.

With regards to the concerns that the reduction in the number of lanes of general traffic leading onto Greyhound Bridge from Cable Street is negating the advantage of bus travel times due to congested traffic on Cable Street, the changes in traffic flows as a result of the opening of the new by-pass have not yet been fully realised due to the closures on the Greyhound Bridge. These were required to undertake necessary maintenance work on the bridge and this closed this route for periods in 2018 and 2019.

As with any change in road layout there are always initial bedding-in problems when these are implemented due to drivers continuing to follow the same practices as they have over a period of time without seeing the changes in road markings, new signs and the temporary signs that have been in place as at this junction. In relation to the reports of concerns of safety issues with drivers when making last minute lane changes, there have been some reports of problems with drivers not adhering to the new layout and that these have resulted in some damage-only minor collisions. However, Lancashire Police have confirmed that there have been no incidents reported to them at this junction since the changes.

Objections included the fact that the bus lane on Greyhound Bridge does not permit taxi use. The general principal for the introduction of all bus lanes in the county is that we will always look to include cycles but we would only allow taxis to use the bus lane when the bus lane is also a one way street or where the bus lane is part of a contraflow system. Where there is a live traffic lane alongside and in the same direction as the bus lane then we do not include taxis in the bus lane. To include taxis on such a lane would encourage drivers of prohibited vehicles to use the lane in contravention of the regulation.

The concerns raised that the present configuration of the bus lane requires bus drivers to cross the solid white line border are noted. It has been noted that this manoeuvre is both dangerous and illegal. As this is the case the buses that are routed to travel north on Parliament Street towards the M6 or Caton and further northeast will be prevented from using the bus stop that forms the first part of the bus lane at the junction of Parliament Street and Greyhound Bridge. Passengers wishing to travel in this direction will be directed to use either the bus station or the bus stop on Parliament Street close to the junction with Bulk Road, as set out in Appendix 'B'.

There is a further point along the bus lane where buses have to pull out of the bus lane to turn right on Greyhound Bridge so as to travel east bound on Morecambe Road and then on to the A6 towards Carnforth. It has been decided that changes will be made to the bus lane markings so that a length will be marked by a broken white border and an arrow indicating buses leaving the bus lane, as illustrated in Appendix 'C'. This solution has been consulted on with the Police and the Bus Operator both of which are content that the revision will be a suitable solution to the problem.

The Police expressed concerns that the draft order could cause operational difficulties as the permissions for emergency use only included liveried vehicles. It was accepted that though some vehicles engaged in pursuit or attending an emergency would be showing blue lights and this would be sufficient for the vehicles to be exempt from a penalty charge notice. Should other violations by drivers of unmarked police vehicles be recorded then these will be considered on an individual basis.

The introduction of the bus lane will not increase the number of vehicles making the turn from Parliament Street to Greyhound Bridge and therefore this should not change the situation when pedestrians need to walk along the north side of Parliament Street. It should also be noted that there is a pedestrian facility that passes underneath the road across Greyhound Bridge if they wish to use this.

### **Implications:**

This item has the following implications, as indicated:

#### **Financial**

The costs of the Traffic Regulation Order will be funded from the 2019/20 highways budget for new signs and lines at an estimated cost of £3,000.

#### **Risk management**

The Bus Lane across Greyhound Bridge is considered a major contribution to the Lancaster District Highways and Transport Masterplan (Oct 2016) providing a bus rapid transit system. This promotes use of public transport and therefore sustainable travel. Should the provision not be provided these aims will not be fully attained.

#### **List of Background Papers**

| Paper   | Date | Contact/Tel |
|---|------|-------------|
| None  |      |             |
| Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate |      |             |
| N/A   |      |             |