

LONDON BOROUGH OF RICHMOND UPON THAMES

CABINET

Agenda Item No.

26

DATE: 25 FEBRUARY 2003

**REPORT OF: CABINET MEMBER FOR TRAFFIC,
TRANSPORT AND PARKING**

SUBJECT: REVIEW OF BUS LANES AND RELATED POLICIES

WARDS: ALL

KEY DECISION? YES

1. Summary

This report reviews the use of bus lanes to determine whether they optimise the use of available road space for all road users and proposes changes to the current provision and arrangements. In formulating the recommendations, surveys have been undertaken of existing bus lanes, taking into account the number and types of road users, the passenger numbers, typical queues and congestion alongside bus lanes. In addition, the views of ward Councillors and other key stakeholders have been sought.

2. Recommendations

2.1 That the results of the review of Bus Lanes within the borough be noted.

2.2 That consultation, as detailed in section 4 be carried out upon:

- **The removal of the Upper Teddington Road bus lane.**
- **A reduction in the hours of operation of the Hospital Bridge Road bus lane to peak hours only, 7am –10am and 4pm to 7pm.**
- **A pilot study to permit motorcycles to use the bus lanes along Eton Street / Paradise Road, Richmond and London Road, Twickenham with a view to extending this to all bus lanes if the pilot is a success.**
- **A pilot study to permit heavy goods vehicles, over 7.5 tons, to use the bus lanes along Hampton Court Road, Hampton Wick and Cross Deep, Twickenham with a view to extending this to other specific bus lanes if the pilot is a success.**

- 2.3 That the operation of the London Road bus lane be surveyed following the completion of the road works, bearing in mind the result of the bridge strength testing as detailed in the report. An assessment then be made as to whether the bus lane should be removed.
- 2.4 That Transport for London (TfL) be formally requested to remove the bus lane across Kew Bridge.
- 2.5 That CCTV enforcement is extended to the other bus lanes in the borough, with funding to be sought from London Buses.

3. Details

Introduction

- 3.1 This report has been prepared in conjunction with other reports aimed at examining the road network to ensure it works efficiently as possible in its primary role of moving people and goods. Bus lanes take up valuable carriageway space, often on approaches to or within town centres. This report seeks to look at the usefulness of bus lanes and proposes changes to make the use of carriageway space more efficient and useful to the local community.
- 3.2 A report was made to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 11 February 2003. The report contained information on Councillors' views and other details and is available in the Members' Room, together with a technical background report containing schedules of the bus lanes and the surveys undertaken.

Details of Borough Bus Lanes

- 3.3 There are seventeen bus lanes along borough roads plus one experimental bus lane along the A205 over Kew Bridge for which Transport for London is the highway authority. Details of these bus lanes are shown in **Table 1, Appendix A.**

Surveys

- 3.4 In order to ascertain the operation of the bus lanes and the traffic at those locations, surveys were undertaken, mostly in early summer 2002. Four of the bus lanes were not assessed either because they were very short or because current or future schemes affected them.
- 3.5 Queues in traffic lanes adjacent to the bus lanes were measured in terms of the maximum length observed and the average length of queue. It should be noted that the summer surveys along **Upper Teddington Road**, repeated in the autumn, **showed** that at no time did the queue extend alongside the bus lane.

Car and Bus occupancy

- 3.6 Classified vehicle counts were undertaken as part of each survey for two reasons, firstly to enable a comparison of person throughput along the road by mode and secondly to assess the possible effect of allowing other vehicles to use the bus lane.
- 3.7 These counts enabled an assessment to be made of the likely effects of permitting other vehicle types to use bus lanes. Cyclists and taxis already use bus lanes, however a case could be made, in some locations, for allowing motorcycles and heavy goods vehicles (7.5 tons and above) to use bus lanes. Some thought was also given to multi-occupancy lanes as in Leeds. It is considered that this type of lane is appropriate in dual carriageway locations on approaches to town centres, where the opportunities for diverting through residential areas would not be easily found. These types of location do not exist in this borough.

Views of Councillors, Bus Operators and the Citizens Panel.

- 3.8 The views of the above were taken into account in deciding the recommendations of this report. Their comments are fully reported in the Overview and Scrutiny Committee report available in the Members' Room.

Enforcement

- 3.9 To enable bus lanes to be fully effective it is suggested that enforcement by the Town Centre CCTV system is extended to the remaining routes in the Twickenham Town Centre and other areas. Initially, priority should be given to the bus lanes in Twickenham, Cross Deep and Richmond Road, which are not on the 281 bus route and therefore not subject to the current funding from TfL. In addition, proposals will be put to TfL to install cameras on the A306, Castelnau in Barnes as this is a LBI route, and the remaining bus lanes in the borough.

Options for consideration - Removal of Bus Lanes

- 3.10 The queue length survey results and the Councillors' views both indicate that the bus lane along **Upper Teddington Road** could be removed. This bus lane was introduced before the extensive improvements to Kingston Bridge were carried out. Although it is understood from the bus operators that the bus lane is needed, especially in the lead up to Christmas when shopping in Kingston becomes very popular, surveys in the autumn have not shown any queuing at all. The carriageway at present occupied by the bus lane would be converted to parking bays, both resident and pay and display spaces.
- 3.11 The effectiveness of the bus lane in **London Road, Twickenham** has been questioned although surveys have not been carried out yet as road works are still in progress. The bus lane northbound across the bridge has yet to be installed. There is an issue concerning a strength assessment that has been carried out for this bridge, which means that it cannot currently take four lanes of traffic. If the bus lane were to be removed, a 7.5T weight limit would need to be imposed unless Network Rail carry out strengthening works. It is, therefore, recommended that a survey of the bus lane is carried out after the current works have been completed and traffic levels have settled down in the

area. Prior to making a final recommendation about the future of this bus lane, the issue concerning bridge strengthening will be further investigated.

- 3.12 Concerns were expressed at the outset at the introduction of the bus lane along **Kew Bridge**, which is located upon the A205 South Circular Road, upon the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN). A petition from local residents requesting the removal of the bus lane was reported to the January 2003 meeting of the Transport Consultative Group meeting and, following that meeting, the Cabinet Member for Traffic, Transport and Parking agreed that Transport for London be requested to remove the bus lane.

Options for Consideration - Hours of Operation

- 3.13 Certain bus lanes, which have less frequent bus services, should be operative for peak hours only rather than 7am to 7pm. The bus lane along **Hospital Bridge Road** is an example, where the need for the bus lane is demonstrated in the peak hours when the traffic queues were monitored as up to the same length as the bus lane. However, the need for the lane to operate off peak is less strong and would not create reliability problems for the operator.

Options for Consideration - Use by Motorcycles

- 3.14 The inclusion of motorcycles in bus lanes has been experimented with elsewhere without any apparent deterioration in the accident rate, however the data is not robust. With the likely increase in the use of motorcycles and the fact that the accident rate for this class of vehicle is already a source of concern, a pilot study to include motorcycles in two bus lanes could be considered. If they are successful, all bus lanes could be altered to allow motorcycle use. The two suggested bus lanes for the pilot are **Paradise Road/Eton Street, Richmond** and **London Road, Twickenham** as these bus lanes can be monitored by CCTV to observe motorcycle behaviour.

Options for Consideration - Use by Heavy Goods Vehicles over 7.5 Tons

- 3.15 Some authorities already allow heavy goods vehicles in bus lanes. The concern of allowing HGVs to use bus lanes is linked to the pedestrian safety risk. It should be noted that drivers of HGVs are professional drivers but it is suggested in the first instance, that a pilot study is considered for an experimental period in two bus lanes, not directly in the town centres but leading to them, **Cross Deep, Twickenham** and **Hampton Court Road, Hampton Wick**. Neither have a large amount of pedestrian activity, nor do they have a significant amount of their space occupied by bus stops.
- 3.16 Further suggested bus lanes are Castelnau which would attract a limited number of HGVs due to the weight limit on Hammersmith Bridge, The Green Twickenham and all Hampton Court Road bus lanes. The proposal relates to HGV's over 7.5T for ease of enforcement and to ensure that the lane maintains its effectiveness.

4. Consultation

The views of Ward Councillors and bus operators on the operation of existing bus lanes and suggestions for improvement have been sought. In addition, residents' views have been sought through the Citizens Panel. The proposals

were considered at Environment Overview and Scrutiny on 11 February 2003, and the majority of the Committee were in support of them.

In order to progress the options detailed in paragraphs 3.10 to 3.16, it is suggested that a two-stage consultation process is carried out:

- An informal consultation with the Emergency Services, London Buses, the Bus Operators, Richmond Cycle Campaign and Cycle Groups, Pedestrian Interests, Motor Cycle and Transport Groups. This consultation would enable confidence to be gained with the proposals and any sensible changes to be made.
- A formal consultation carried out in conjunction with the advertisement of the changes to the traffic regulation orders, which covers the appropriate bus lanes.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of the engineering works for the removal of the Upper Teddington Road bus lane involving resurfacing of the carriageway and removal of signs is estimated to be £25,000, which will be funded from existing budgets.
- 5.2 The cost of advertising the changes to the traffic orders and carrying out the necessary consultation for all the options is estimated to be £9,000. This will be funded from the revenue budget for traffic and safety measures.
- 5.3 The cost of funding additional CCTV cameras will be sought from London Buses, TfL.

6. Policy and Equality Implications

UDP Policy TRN 13 (as agreed by Council on 19 December as interim planning policy) states: The Council will support and promote proposals to make public transport services more efficient, safe, convenient, comfortable, reliable, frequent and more accessible, particularly for those with disability or mobility problems. (The policy statement continues on other matters).

7. Background Papers

The report to Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 11 February 2003 and a technical report containing full details of the bus lanes, the surveys and analysis is available in the Members' Room.

8. Contacts

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