

Highway Cabinet Member Decision Session

Highway Cabinet Member Decision Session held 10 October 2013

**PRESENT:** Councillor Leigh Bramall (Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development)

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Councillor Chris Rosling-Josephs (Cabinet Adviser)  
Dick Proctor, Transport Vision and Strategy Manager and Tony Lawery, Senior Transport Planner

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**1. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

1.1 No items were identified where it was proposed to exclude the public and press.

**2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

2.1 There were no declarations of interest.

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS SESSION**

3.1 The minutes of the previous Session held on 12 September 2013 were approved as a correct record.

**4. PETITIONS**

4.1 New Petitions  
There were no new petitions to report.

Outstanding Petitions

The Cabinet Member received and noted a report of the Executive Director, Place setting out the position on outstanding petitions that were being investigated.

**5. ECCLESALL ROAD SMART ROUTE - OBJECTIONS TO A TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER RELATING TO CHANGE TO LENGTHS OF BUS LANE**

5.1 The Executive Director, Place submitted a report outlining the receipt of objections to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to a) remove the length of out-bound bus lane on Ecclesall Road between Hunters Bar and Rustlings Road and b) shorten the out-bound bus lane by 36 metres on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction and setting out the Council's response. The report also outlined the reasons to discontinue progressing proposals to provide a suggested shared pedestrian/cyclist facility on the footway adjacent to the length of bus lane proposed to be removed, but recommending interim arrangements to address some of the concerns expressed by objectors.

5.2 Matt Turner, a cyclist, attended the meeting to make representations to the Cabinet Member. He stated that he was pleased that the report recognised the impact which the proposals would have on cyclists. However, the solution was only

- a temporary one and would make the area a no go area for cyclists.
- 5.3 He further commented that the most successful cycling Cities were those with one network who treated cycling as a homogenous activity with one set of standards. The proposals would particularly negatively impact on less confident cyclists who may avoid the area in the future as a result of the scheme.
- 5.4 Main roads were often the only practical routes for most journeys but were not safer. The cycle routes were a compromise and cyclists often did not feel safe or confident using them which was why they were often not used. If the proposals were agreed it would further entrench the mindset where the car was the only choice for road users and this was against the overall vision of the Council.
- 5.5 Mick Knott, Chair of Cycle Sheffield, also attended the Session to make representations to the Cabinet Member. He stated that it was not just buses who used bus lanes. Cyclists would be particularly put at risk if the proposals were agreed. He believed that the reason buses would have faster journey times would be because less people would be using them. The solution was an Oyster/Smart Card system to be used on buses and officers should be pushing bus companies to introduce them.
- 5.6 Mr Knott was pleased with the compromise proposal of an advisory cycle lane and the retention of the lower length of bus lane on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction until an alternative solution could be found. This was already a cycling collision hotspot and Mr Knott asked what audits had been done in this area.
- 5.7 Mr Knott further commented that there should be a number of measures introduced in the area to make things safer for cyclists. These included a safe crossing introduced at the junction from Ecclesall Road to Rustlings Road, a signed route from Bents Green to Rustlings Road, and a safe route from Psalter Lane to Glenalmond Road.
- 5.8 Mr Knott believed the Council were prioritising the car over the use of sustainable transport. The people who would be advantaged most by the proposals were individual car users and not buses. If agreed it would set a precedent and show that the Council had no appetite for tackling car dependency.
- 5.9 Mr Knott was concerned about the Council's Green routes initiative and believed this shouldn't be the sole focus of Council policy in respect of cyclists as it led cyclists to off road routes where they may not wish to go. In conclusion, Mr Knott requested that a Cycle Schemes Sub Committee for the Cycle Forum be established and all future schemes impacting on cyclists be brought to that Sub-Committee for discussion.
- 5.10 In response, Dick Proctor, Transport Vision and Strategy Manager, stated that he supported many of the comments made by Mr Turner and Mr Knott and commented that he hoped they could work together in a regular monthly design forum. However, he did not accept that the proposals would make the area a no go area for cyclists as the proposals were largely maintaining the status quo.

- 5.11 Mr Proctor further commented that he would look to incorporate all the suggestions on specific work as part of the broader integrated transport programme. He would be concerned if there were two cycle networks and sought to have a single network with direct and safer routes. The intention was to have the routes as direct as possible which were available to all users and used a consistent style.
- 5.12 Mr Proctor believed that it was important to find a happy balance for all users and the report suggested a sensible way forward whilst recognising the challenges to manage the network for all users. He did not accept that the proposals benefited car users as consultation had taken place with the South Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive (SYLTE) who would clearly not support any proposals in favour of car users to their detriment.
- 5.13 Councillor Leigh Bramall, Cabinet Member for Business, Skills and Development, commented that the primary aim of the scheme was to enhance bus travel. He agreed that there should be an Oyster Card scheme introduced on buses and proposals for this were being worked on at the moment. A number of other measures were being introduced to improve bus patronage such as improving the quality of buses, improving the quality of junctions, enforcing the misuse of bus lanes and the use of relocatable bus cameras and mobile CCTV.
- 5.14 Councillor Bramall acknowledged that there were different conflicts of use in the area and officers were trying to work with cyclists so that they were not adversely impacted by the proposals. The Council were looking to develop a green network as part of a wider network proposal. The Council had looked at an on pavement solution but this had received a number of objections. He was not sure whether there was an ideal solution for all but would work closely with cyclists to try and achieve this.
- 5.15 The Council had committed to rolling out 20mph schemes across the City which would be a benefit to cyclists. Councillor Bramall wanted to move away from the idea that cyclists were awkward objectors and had employed a Cycle auditor and introduced a 6 month scrutiny process to show that. He supported the recommendations but believed it was key not to do anything on the lower side of the road at the junction to Psalter Lane at this stage until discussions had been held with all groups.
- 5.16 **RESOLVED:** That:-
- (a) the reasons set out in the report for making the TRO outweighed any unresolved objections and the TRO be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984;
  - (b) the TRO be made in respect of the bus lane on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction and an advisory cycle lane be introduced to provide an alternative for cyclists to off-set the loss of the bus lane;
  - (c) the removal of the bus lane between Hunters Bar and Rustlings Road be deferred pending the provision of a suitable alternative route for cyclists. Following such provision, the bus lane be removed to be replaced by an

advisory cycle lane;

(d) the objectors be informed accordingly.

#### **5.17 Reasons for Decision**

5.17. The Council had previously undertaken extensive survey work and two comprehensive public consultation exercises with regard to the Ecclesall Road Smart Route. The outcomes of the first and second stages of consultation were reported to the Cabinet Highways Committee in February and December 2011 respectively. The latter report detailed the public responses to the various interventions proposed along the route. It also set out a table summarising the consultation results and suggesting a proposed way forward with regard to each intervention. Intervention 9a related to removal of the bus lanes at Hunters Bar and proposed that the inbound bus lane should remain but that the outbound bus lane should be removed as analysis showed that Hunters Bar could work more efficiently if both approach lanes to the junction (from City) were used more equally.

5.17. Therefore, despite the objections received to this TRO, the recommendation to implement the changes to the outbound bus lane, as set out in the report to the Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011, should be endorsed and the objections over-ruled.

5.17. In view of the concerns expressed by the cyclists, it was considered that mitigating arrangements should be introduced to temporarily address the situation until an alternative route was provided. This was proposed to be achieved by means of an advisory cycle lane on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction and retention of the lower length of bus lane until the alternative route was available.

#### **5.18 Alternatives Considered and Rejected**

5.18. The proposal to which the objections relate was one intervention of many along the length of the Ecclesall Road Smart Route. A number of interventions were outlined during the consultation period and the responses analysed to inform which proposals should be progressed, revised or dropped. For example, the option to slightly re-shape Hunters Bar roundabout to enable a better traffic lane arrangement received a strongly negative response from respondents. The traffic modelling and analysis of the interventions to be promoted and developed demonstrated that the proposals to remove sections of the bus lane at this location added to the overall benefits identified.

5.18. The strength of objections expressed by cyclists indicated the need to provide suitable replacement facilities over the two bus sections of bus lane proposed to be removed. Accordingly, it was incumbent on the Council to identify suitable measures to minimise the impact of and address the situation in the short term.

5.18. The suggested provision of pedestrian/cyclist shared use of the footway attracted strong opposition from objectors and was consequently not recommended. Other options considered included:-

(i) Retain the bus lanes – this was not a satisfactory permanent solution as the time-saving benefits outlined in paragraph 4.6 of the report would be significantly compromised.

(ii) Remove the bus lanes and provide replacement advisory cycle lanes – this option was felt to provide a reasonable solution on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction but was less satisfactory over the lower length. Less confident cyclists would still feel vulnerable during the evening peak in particular as the two adjacent traffic lanes would be fully utilised following removal of the bus lane and the overall width of available carriageway was not generous.

(iii) As (ii) above but with the lower bus lane temporarily retained – the bus lane would be removed and replaced by an advisory cycle lane only when the alternative cycle route was completed. The potential drawbacks relating to provision of the cycle lane would still be present, but its use would probably be limited to confident, utility cyclists with others choosing to use the Endcliffe Park/Ranby Road route.

5.18. 4 Of the various considered measures to address the safety concerns expressed by the objectors, the proposal outlined in paragraph 5.3 (iii) of the report was felt to be the most appropriate in the circumstances.

**5.19 Any Interest Declared or Dispensation Granted**

None

**5.20 Reason for Exemption if Public/Press Excluded During Consideration**

None

**5.21 Respective Director Responsible for Implementation**

Simon Green, Executive Director, Place

**5.22 Relevant Scrutiny and Policy Development Committee If Decision Called In**

Economic and Environmental Wellbeing

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