

SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL Agenda Item 5 Individual Cabinet Member Report

| Report of: | Executive Director, Place | | | | |
|-------------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Date: | 10 th October 2013 | | | | |
| Subject: | Ecclesall Road Smart Route: – Objections to a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to: a) Remove the out-bound bus lane between Hunter's Bar and Rustlings Road; b) Shorten the out-bound bus lane by 36m on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction. | | | | |
| Author of Report: | Tony Lawery, tel. 2734192 | | | | |
| Summary: | To report the receipt of objections to a TRO to remove/shorten two lengths of out-bound bus lane on Ecclesall Road and to set out the Council's response. | | | | |

Reasons for Recommendations:

The Council has 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 Cabinet Highways Committee in February and December 2011 respectively. The latter report detailed the public's 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 Hunter's Bar and proposed that the inbound bus lane should remain but that the outbound bus lane should be removed as analysis shows that Hunters Bar could work more efficiently if both approach lanes to the junction (from City) were used more equally.

Having considered the objections to the TRO consultation it is considered that the reasons set out in this report for making the TRO outweigh any unresolved objections and therefore, the recommendation to implement the changes to the outbound bus lane, as set out in the report to Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011 should be endorsed.

In view of the concerns expressed by cyclists, it is considered that mitigating arrangements should be introduced to temporarily address the situation until an alternative route is provided. This is 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 is available.

Recommendations:

- 7.1 That the reasons set out in this report for making the TRO outweigh any unresolved objections and the Traffic Regulation Order be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as outlined below
- 7.2 That 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.
- 7.3 That the removal of the bus lane between Hunter's Bar and Rustlings Road be deferred pending the provision of a suitable alternative route for cyclists. Following such provision, that the TRO be made and the bus lane be removed to be replaced by an advisory cycle lane.
- 7.4 That the objectors be informed accordingly.

| Background Papers: | | | | |
|---------------------|------|--|--|--|
| Category of Report: | OPEN | | | |

Statutory and Council Policy Checklist

| Financial Implications | | | | |
|--|--|--|--|--|
| YES Cleared by: Matthew Bullock | | | | |
| Legal Implications | | | | |
| YES Cleared by: Deborah Eaton | | | | |
| Equality of Opportunity Implications | | | | |
| YES Cleared by: Ian Oldershaw | | | | |
| Tackling Health Inequalities Implications | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Human rights Implications | | | | |
| NO: | | | | |
| Environmental and Sustainability implications | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Economic impact | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Community safety implications | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Human resources implications | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Property implications | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Area(s) affected | | | | |
| Nether Edge, Ecclesall | | | | |
| Relevant Cabinet Portfolio Leader | | | | |
| Councillor Leigh Bramall | | | | |
| Relevant Scrutiny Committee if decision called in | | | | |
| Culture, Economy and Sustainability | | | | |
| Is the item a matter which is reserved for approval by the City Council? | | | | |
| NO | | | | |
| Press release | | | | |
| NO | | | | |

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

REPORT TO CABINET HIGHWAYS COMMITTEE

10 OCTOBER 2013

ECCLESALL ROAD SMART ROUTE – OBJECTIONS TO A TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER (TRO) RELATING TO CHANGES TO LENGTHS OF BUS LANE

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 To report the receipt of objections to a TRO to a) remove the length of outbound bus lane on Ecclesall Road between Hunter's Bar and Rustlings Road and b) shorten the out-bound bus lane by 36 metres on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction and to set out the Council's response.
- 1.2 The report also outlines 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 recommends interim arrangements to address some of the concerns expressed by objectors.
- 1.3 Having considered the responses to the TRO consultation it is recommended that the reasons set out in this report for making the TRO outweigh any unresolved objections
- 2.0 WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE PEOPLE OF SHEFFIELD
- 2.1 Previous consultation with residents, businesses and users of the Ecclesall Road corridor has taken place to develop proposals designed to improve bus and car journey times on the Ecclesall Road corridor. This stage of the project is to implement the proposals informed by the comprehensive public consultation exercises and agreed by this Committee on 8th December 2011. It is anticipated that the planned changes will help to make it easier for most users to travel along the corridor.

3.0 OUTCOME AND SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 The responses to the previous public consultations were used to inform decisions about which interventions along the corridor were to be implemented, reviewed and revised or not progressed. This contributes to the 'working better together' of the Council Plan "Standing up for Sheffield", with proposals that respond to customer comments about existing travel conditions along Ecclesall Road. The overall project contributes to the "sustainable and safe transport" objective with proposals to improve access to the public

transport network, public transport journey time reliability and alternatives to the private car for some local journeys in Sheffield.

4.0 REPORT

Background

- 4.1 Ecclesall Road is home to over 240 businesses, including some of Sheffield's most popular bars, restaurants, cafes, shops and boutiques. The road also provides access to many residential communities, as well as to the city centre. Approximately 39 schools are within close proximity (1 mile), and thousands of students reside nearby. The corridor is a key arterial route into and out of the city centre, as well as the location for a number of popular destinations for shoppers, residents and visitors.
- 4.2 The popularity of Ecclesall Road means it is often heavily congested, particularly at peak times, when the corridor acts as a key commuter route into and out of the city centre. This causes delays for all road users, and pedestrians often find it difficult to cross the road safely. More than 26,000 vehicles travel along Ecclesall Road every day, with around 4,250 trips being made during the morning peak hours (7am 10am), of which approximately 3,100 (63%) are by car and 1,150 (27%) are by bus.
- 4.3 Despite there already being extensive lengths of bus lanes on the Ecclesall Road corridor, problems with congestion and delays to bus services have been identified through existing journey time monitoring surveys and discussions with local bus operators. Coupled with on-going problems with the capacity of key junctions, maintaining traffic flow will continue to be a challenge.
- 4.4 A detailed analysis of bi-annual surveys on Ecclesall Road highlights that the areas of greatest delay for all traffic are:

Inbound

- Rustlings Road/Hunters Bar (morning peak)
- Moore Street roundabout (morning and evening peak)

Outbound

- Hunters Bar (evening peak) also highlighted as a particular problem by bus operators
- 4.5 The completion of certain interventions at Moore Street roundabout (improvements to the exit onto Moore Street / Charter Row and the

introduction of an adaptive signal strategy on the Moore Street approach to the roundabout towards City) have resulted in a marked improvement in bus journey times over this section of the corridor

4.6 With regard to Hunter's Bar, it was agreed at Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011 that the inbound bus lane should remain, but that a scheme to remove / shorten sections of the outbound bus lane should be progressed. The traffic modelling and analysis undertaken indicates that this, together with the interventions previously implemented, could achieve potential timesavings for all vehicles, as follows:-

Bus: -

Average journey times in the evening peak outbound could reduce by up to 1minute 9 seconds.

The average journey time of 95% of journeys in the evening peak outbound could be reduced by up to 2 minutes 59 seconds

Car: -

Average journey times in the evening peak outbound could reduce by up to 2 minutes 7 seconds

The average journey time of 95% of journeys in the evening peak outbound could be reduced by up to 4 minutes 8 seconds.

Mitigation Proposals

- 4.7 Based on various responses to the previous public consultation referred to in paragraph 2.1, Officers were aware of the concerns of cyclists with regard to the bus lane proposals. Consequently, a scheme to provide a shared pedestrian / cyclist facility on the footway adjacent to the length of bus lane to be removed (between Hunter's Bar and Rustlings Road) was suggested to help address some of the safety concerns expressed by cyclists. This was seen purely as an interim measure to accommodate cyclists in this locale, whilst investigation / development of a partially off-carriageway route continued. That route would take cyclists along the frontage of the Almshouses, through Endcliffe Park and then link into the existing advisory cycle route at Ranby Road, thus providing an alternative to avoid the heavily trafficked A621. As this would require the acquisition of third party land, (procedures for which can be quite lengthy), the interim arrangement, whilst acknowledged as being less than ideal, was being promoted to provide a stop-gap solution.
- 4.8 Of the representations received, approximately half of those objecting to the TRO also objected to the shared use proposal, citing non-compliance with

national standards and general safety concerns relating to pedestrian / cyclist conflict. As acknowledged above, the proposal is less than ideal, but was felt to compensate to some degree for the loss of the bus lane until a more acceptable option could be provided. However, in view of the strength of the objections and general lack of support, it is suggested these proposals be discontinued. Provision of the off-carriageway /quiet street option will, however, continue to be pursued.

TRO Consultation

4.9 To enable sections of the bus lane to be removed / shortened, it is necessary to make a Traffic Regulation Order. The intention to make the Order was advertised for a period of 3 weeks commencing 12th July 2013 by means of an advert in the local press and notices displayed on-street. Additionally, an explanatory letter together with a plan showing the proposals was delivered to all properties fronting the affected lengths of Ecclesall Road, (see Appendix A). The consultation also included statutory bodies and local Councillors.

Representations received

- 4.10 A total of 17 representations have been received in response to the TRO consultation, 15 of which were objections. The objectors include Paul Blomfield (MP for Sheffield Central), the Sheffield CTC Right to Ride, Sheffield Green Party and the Branch Secretary for the Unite Union. The grounds for the objections are summarised below. All representations received are available to view on request.
 - Removal of the bus lanes will make it more hazardous for cyclists (9)
 - The proposals prioritise cars over buses and cycles and discourages sustainable travel (7)
 - The proposals will result in increased car usage and reduce the capacity of Ecclesall Road (4)
 - Removing the bus lanes will result in more congestion and pollution (2)
 - The Council would be negligent in its duty of care to vulnerable road users by removing the bus lane (1)
 - The proposals will delay bus services (1)

Officer comment:-

4.11 The earlier consultation undertaken relating to the various interventions along the whole length of the Ecclesall Road Smart Route showed that there are numerous conflicting views about which road users should be given priority. The A621 is a key commuter route to and from City, is residential over certain

length and supports a busy and vibrant retail and leisure environment. Balancing the transport needs of such a diverse mix whilst embracing the policies promoted by the City Council often requires a significant level of compromise. Every effort will be made to address the concerns expressed by cyclists and all options (in addition to the Endcliffe Park proposal) will continue to be explored and discussed with cycle lobbyists at all levels with a view to identifying an appropriate facility that goes some way to satisfying their aspirations whilst seeking to minimise any disadvantages for other highway users. In terms of the safety hazard, it is considered that the main problem relates to the evening peak hours. At other times, the situation is likely to be as existing – traffic volumes out of City in the morning peak are lower than the pm peak, with fewer cyclists, thus reducing the potential for conflicts. During inter-peak hours, parked vehicles occupy the nearside lane on Ecclesall Road after the roundabout and traffic therefore tends to progress in a single lane thus providing more generous carriageway space for vehicles to overtake cyclists in safety. The greater potential for possible conflicts exists in the evening peak. However, because both lanes will be better utilised, it is likely that vehicular speeds will be lower than at other times due to the higher traffic volumes, but it is acknowledged that all but the most confident of cyclists would feel vulnerable.

- 4.12 Although the proposals to remove/shorten sections of the bus lane may appear counter-intuitive, analysis shows that Hunter's Bar could work more efficiently if both approach lanes to the junction (from City) were used more equally. A high proportion of traffic tends to favour the outside lane on the approach to the roundabout because the nearside lane on exiting the roundabout is a bus lane during peak hours and utilised for parking at other times. Traffic modelling has demonstrated that bus journey time reliability is improved by removal of the bus lane as this would encourage more efficient use of the approach lanes enabling all traffic (including buses) to get to the roundabout with less delay. In almost every case, a bus lane on the approach (enabling buses to bypass queuing traffic) is much more beneficial than one on the exit, when all vehicles tend to be moving. The shortening of the bus lane on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction will enable more vehicles to pass through the junction during each 'green' cycle of the signals, again through more efficient use of both lanes. This will maximise the benefit of the removal of the bus lane (i.e. vehicles passing through Hunter's Bar more quickly could simply end up at the back of a longer queue).
- 4.13 It is not anticipated that the proposals will result in increased car usage all modes will benefit from the more efficient use of the available carriageway, and rather than reduce, capacity will, in fact, be increased.

- 4.14 Removal / reducing the length of the bus lane will reduce congestion and lower pollution levels as a result of reducing the potential for queuing traffic.
- 4.15 As Highway Authority, the Council takes full cognisance of its duty of care with regard to of all road users and takes into account all factors when arriving at decisions which affect the highway and how it operates. The investigation and development of options to mitigate cyclists' concerns demonstrates the Council's commitment to achieving the optimum arrangement for all users of the public highway, although by necessity this often requires acceptance of compromise solutions.
- 4.16 The traffic modelling undertaken clearly demonstrates that the proposals will actually reduce delay to bus services.

Other Consultees

- 4.17 The PTE confirmed they fully support the scheme, which was agreed at a meeting of the Sheffield Bus Partnership where the bus operators were represented.
- 4.18 South Yorkshire Police confirmed they have no objections to the proposals.
- 4.19 No response was received from the South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service or the Yorkshire Ambulance Service

Relevant Implications

- 4.20 The cost of removing the two sections of bus lane is anticipated to be in the region of £8000. Funding for the scheme is included within the overall 2013/14 allocation for the Ecclesall Road Smart Route previously approved by Cabinet as part of the Council's Capital Approval Process. There are no legal implications associated with this report.
- 4.21 A full Equality Impact Assessment has been undertaken for this scheme. It concludes that the actions proposed are equality neutral in most cases, although there are some negative effects on cyclists. An action plan has therefore been prepared to address these impacts where possible refer to full EIA for details.
- 4.22 The Council has a statutory duty to promote road safety and to ensure that any measures it promotes and implements are reasonably safe for all users. In making decisions of this nature the Council must be satisfied that the measures are necessary to avoid danger to pedestrians and other road users or for preserving or improving the amenities of the area through which the road runs. Providing that the Council is so satisfied then it is acting lawfully and within its powers.

5.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 5.1 The proposal to which the objections relate is 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 Hunter's 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.
- 5.2 The strength of objections expressed by cyclists indicates the need to provide suitable replacement facilities over the two sections of bus lane proposed to be removed. Accordingly, it is incumbent on the Council to identify suitable measures to minimise the impact of and address the situation in the short term.
- 5.3 The suggested provision of pedestrian/cyclist shared use of the footway attracted strong opposition from objectors and consequently is not recommended. Other options considered include:-
 - (i) Retain the bus lanes this is not a satisfactory permanent solution as the time-saving benefits outlined in paragraph 4.6 above would be significantly compromised.
 - (ii) Remove the bus lanes and provide replacement advisory cycle lanes this option is felt to provide a reasonable solution on the approach to Psalter lane junction but is 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 is 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 is 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.
- 5.4 Of the various considered measures to address the safety concerns expressed by the objectors, the proposal outlined in paragraph 5.3 (iii) above is felt to be the most appropriate in the circumstances.

6.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 The Council has 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 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 Hunter's 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.

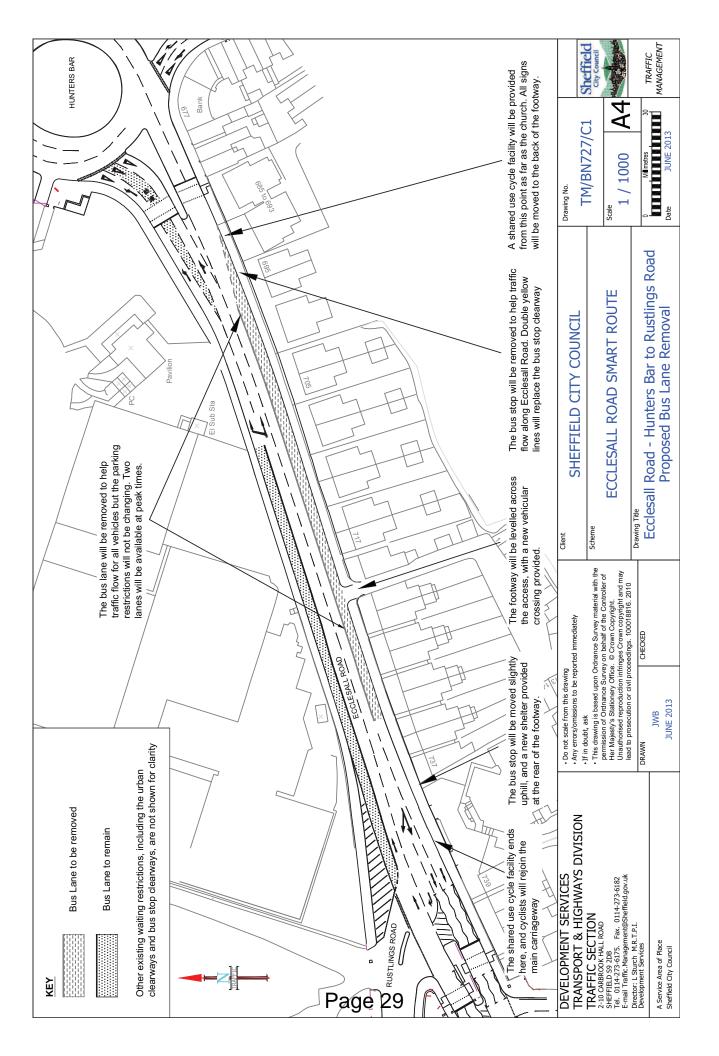
Therefore, despite the objections received to this TRO, the recommendation to implement the changes to the outbound bus lane, as set out in the report to Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011, should be endorsed and the objections over-ruled.

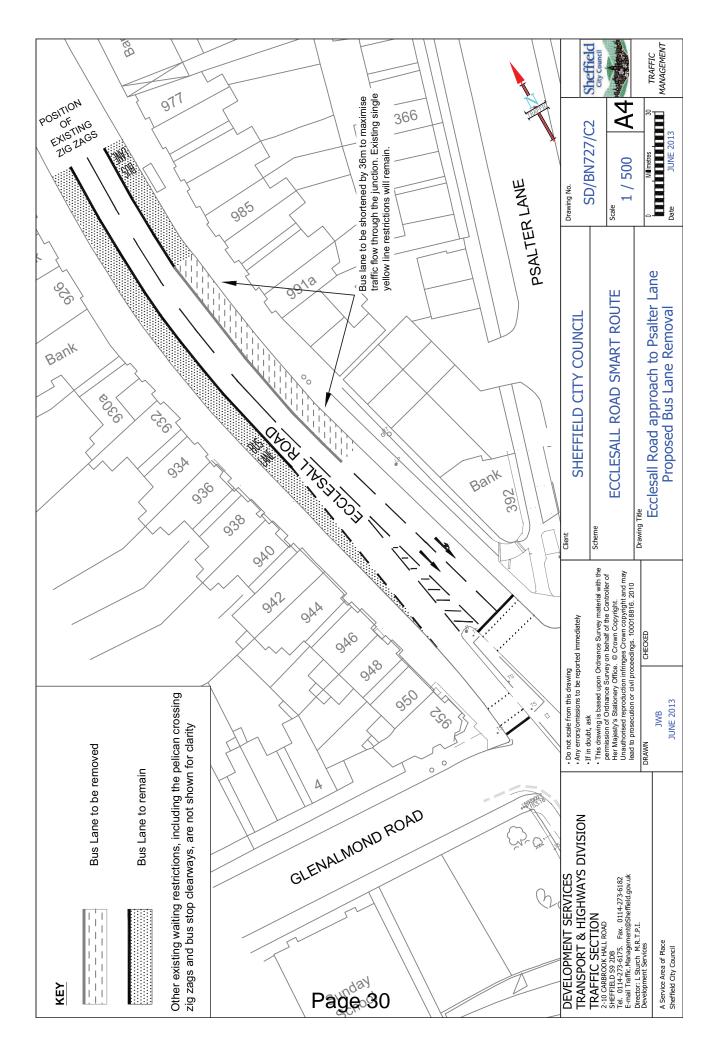
6.2 In view of the concerns expressed by cyclists, it is considered that mitigating arrangements should be introduced to temporarily address the situation until an alternative route is provided. This is proposed to be achieved by means of an advisory cycle lane on the approach to the Psalter Lane junction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

7.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the reasons set out in this report for making the TRO outweigh any unresolved objections and the Traffic Regulation Order be made in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, as outlined below
- 7.2 That 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.
- 7.3 That the removal of the bus lane between Hunter's Bar and Rustlings Road be deferred pending the provision of a suitable alternative route for cyclists. Following such provision, that the bus lane be removed to be replaced by an advisory cycle lane.
- 7.4 That the objectors be informed accordingly.

Simon Green Executive Director, Place 10 October 2013





Dear Sir/Madam,

<u>Ecclesall Road Bus Key Route – Removal of a section of the outbound bus lane on</u> the approach to the Psalter Lane Junction

You may recall the public consultation undertaken in March/April 2011 in connection with a number of proposals along the length of the Ecclesall Road corridor between Moore Street Roundabout and the Ecclesall Road/Bents Road junction. This initiative was known as the Ecclesall Road Smart Route, the objectives being to introduce a series of integrated improvements along the corridor, protect against increased congestion and improve transport options.

One of the interventions outlined in the consultation document relates to the removal of the last 36 metres length of the outbound bus lane on the approach to Psalter Lane, as shown on the attached plan. A high level of support was received with regard to the proposal, but a number of respondents felt that the proposal was unnecessary.

The outcome of the consultation was reported to the Council's Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011 where it was agreed that a scheme to remove the specified length of outbound bus lane should be progressed to enable more vehicles (including buses) to pass through the junction on each green cycle of the traffic signals. The increase is needed to maximise the benefits from the proposed changes at Hunters Bar. Otherwise, although vehicles may pass through Hunters Bar more quickly, they would simply join the end of a longer queue approaching Psalter Lane. Local parking availability will not be affected by the change. Any changes to signal timings in the area as part of signal co-ordination along the whole route will aim to enable buses leaving the bus stop to travel through the next green light. Removal of the bus lane has been discussed and agreed with the bus Operators.

The proposals can only be introduced following the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This is a legal process which requires the Council to advertise the proposals, allowing the public to comment on the details. As part of this process you will also see notices displayed on-street and published in the Sheffield Star. If you wish to comment, either in support or otherwise, you will need to do so in writing to the above address by **5 August 2013**. If any objections are received, they will be reported to the Cabinet Member for Transport who will make a decision on whether or not to progress the scheme. We will then notify all those who commented.

If you have any queries relating to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Tony Lawery on 0114 2734192 or e-mail tony.lawery@sheffield.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely,

A.Lawery

Senior Transport Planner

Dear Sir/Madam,

<u>Ecclesall Road Bus Key Route – Removal of a section of the outbound bus lane</u> between Hunters Bar and Rustlings Road

You may recall the public consultation undertaken in March/April 2011 in connection with a number of proposals along the length of the Ecclesall Road corridor between Moore Street Roundabout and the Ecclesall Road/Bents Road junction. This initiative was known as the Ecclesall Road Smart Route, the objectives being to introduce a series of integrated improvements along the corridor, protect against increased congestion and improve transport options.

One of the interventions outlined in the consultation document relates to the removal of the outbound bus lane between Hunters Bar and the right turn into Rustlings Road, as shown on the attached plan. A significant number of responses were received with regard to this particular proposal. The feedback registered a higher level of concern than support for the scheme, the key issues being concern about the impact on cyclists, cycle safety and the effect on bus journey times

The outcome of the consultation was reported to the Council's Cabinet Highways Committee in December 2011 where it was agreed that a scheme to remove this section of the outbound bus lane should be progressed as analysis shows that Hunters Bar could work more efficiently if both approach lanes to the junction (from City) were used more equally. A high proportion of traffic tends to favour the outside lane on the approach to the roundabout because the nearside lane on exiting the roundabout is a bus lane during peak hours and utilised for parking at other times. Traffic modelling has demonstrated that bus journey time reliability is improved by removal of the bus lane as this would encourage more efficient use of the approach lanes enabling all traffic (including buses) to get to the roundabout with less delay. In almost every case, a bus lane on the approach (enabling buses to bypass queuing traffic) is much more beneficial than one on the exit, when all vehicles tend to make better headway. Removal of the bus lane has been discussed and agreed with the bus Operators.

The proposals can only be introduced following the making of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This is a legal process which requires the Council to advertise the proposals, allowing the public to comment on the details. As part of this process you will also see notices displayed on-street and published in the Sheffield Star. If you wish to comment, either in support or otherwise, you will need to do so in writing to the above address by **5 August 2013.** If any objections are received, they will be

reported to the Cabinet Member for Transport who will make a decision on whether or not to progress the scheme. We will then notify all those who commented.

In conjunction with these works, it is proposed to allow shared use by pedestrians and cyclists over the length of footway adjacent to the removed bus lane to alleviate concerns expressed regarding cyclists safety. This will require minor works in the footway as shown on the attached plan. If you have any queries relating to this matter, please do not hesitate to contact Tony Lawery on 0114 2734192 or e-mail tony.lawery@sheffield.gov.uk.

Yours Sincerely,

A.Lawery

Senior Transport Planner.