



Duffield Road Bus Lane

SUMMARY

- 1.1 An inbound 24 hour bus, taxi and cycle lane was introduced on Duffield Road in March 2007 on an 18 month experimental basis. This was part of wider transport improvements in the area which included prohibiting parking on Duffield Road, reducing the speed limit from 40mph to 30mph and introducing changes at Broadway roundabout to help control traffic speeds, improve safety and assist pedestrians crossing the road.
- 1.2 The traffic orders under which the bus lane was introduced will come to an end in September 2008. A decision is therefore now required to keep the bus lane in place or withdraw it.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve making permanent the experimental traffic orders under which the bus lane was introduced.
- 2.2 To inform the bus operators and objectors of the decision.
- 2.3 To approve the commitment to investigating and implementing further improvements, if appropriate, and subject to future funding approval.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Introduction

- 3.1 As part of the 2006 Local Transport Plan, the Council committed itself to increasing bus usage in Derby as one of the main means of achieving its wider transport objectives including tackling traffic congestion, delivering accessibility to key services and improving air quality. The objective of increasing bus usage is also reflected in the Local Area Agreement.

- 3.2 A primary means of achieving this is to give buses greater priority on the road network, so that bus passengers do not experience the same delays as other vehicles due to traffic congestion. Prior to March 2007, the Council had implemented a limited number of bus priority schemes, such as a bus lane on Nottingham Road, Chaddesden. This has proved to be popular with bus users and helped to increase the number of bus passengers on routes using it by 6.2% in its first year of operation compared to a citywide increase of 3.6% in the same period.

General Transport Assessment of Scheme Impacts

- 3.3 Prior to the introduction of the transport improvements on Duffield Road the following benefits were estimated:

- Time savings for bus passengers of up to 5 minutes over the length of the bus lane during the peak period
- No substantial delays to car drivers
- Improvements for pedestrians crossing Duffield Road and Broadway

- 3.4 After concerns were raised by certain residents about the introduction of the bus lane, a review was undertaken into its impact following the first 3 months of its operation. As the results of this review were generally positive it was agreed by the cabinet member that the scheme should remain in operation for another 12 months to allow more information on its impact to be gathered. It was also agreed that, after this time, a further review would take place which would inform the final decision on whether to make the scheme permanent or to remove it.

- 3.5 In July 2008, a further review on the effects of the scheme was carried out. This showed that –

- Average bus journey times in the morning peak period had improved with the trip along the bus lane now taking 2 minutes 48 seconds - a saving of 4 minutes 14 seconds, or 60%, compared to the situation before its introduction.
- Bus passenger numbers on the routes affected had increased by nearly 11% compared to the same period before the bus lane's introduction. By comparison, the bus service on an adjacent route (which does not have bus priority measures) has only seen a 0.4% increase in passengers number over the same period.
- Average citybound car journey times in the morning peak period had risen from 6 minutes 18 seconds to 7 minutes 50 seconds, an increase of 92 seconds or 24% over the previous situation.
- Overall average vehicle speeds on the road had reduced slightly. Inbound speed between 8 and 9am was 21mph before and 19mph after the scheme was introduced. The average outbound speed over the same period fell from 26mph to 22mph.

- There had been three minor injury accidents in the 15 months since the bus lane was introduced. This is a slight reduction on the annual average of between three and four injury accidents per year in the five years prior to the bus lanes introduction.
 - The amount of traffic using Church Lane and Mileash Lane in Darley Abbey village to avoid Duffield Road had reduced by 58%.
 - Analysis based on journey time benefits and disbenefits shows there was an overall economic benefit equivalent to £10,000 per year, due to the introduction of the bus lane.
 - There was little variation in average morning peak traffic volumes following the introduction of the scheme. There was however a 13% reduction in the evening peak period.
- 3.6 More detailed information about the journey time surveys, accident records and other technical information are available in the 15 month review attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.7 Immediately after the bus lane's introduction, independent research amongst bus passengers on the services involved was carried out on the Council's behalf. This showed that:
- 33% of passengers said that they were likely to use the bus more as a result of the bus lane being introduced.
 - 39% of passengers surveyed could have used a car instead
 - When asked what further improvements they would like to see, 99% suggested more priorities for buses –rating this as more important than cheaper tickets, extra buses, air conditioning etc.

Consideration of Objections and Comments

- 3.8 Following the introduction of the bus lane, a number of objections were received. The Duffield Road Action Group formed to oppose the proposals and they were supported by Broadway Action Group. A further 55 written comments were received, 35 of which opposed or raised concerns about the changes. However, a petition signed by 160 people was also received supporting the bus lane and asking for it to be made permanent. There was also significant support for the scheme from the bus companies operating in the city. Detailed consideration of the issues raised by the objections are contained within the 15 month Review Report included in Appendix 2.
- 3.9 The objections focussed on the following issues:
- Allegations that the scheme was unsafe because:
 - The lane widths were too narrow, making it difficult for vehicles to pass slow moving cyclists; as a result cycling, particularly north bound was said to have become more dangerous.

- There was poor visibility for vehicles turning into or out of certain private drives.
- The new layout made it difficult for vehicles turning into Mileash Lane from Duffield Road.
- Turning out of and into Ferrers Way had become more hazardous.
- Traffic conflict occurred at St Benedict School at the beginning and end of the school day.
- In addition to the safety concerns, there were also issues due to:
 - The large amounts of standing surface water following heavy rain on the western side of Duffield Road near St Benedict School.
 - Increased parking in Windley Crescent and Alstonfield Drive, following the banning of parking on Duffield Road.
 - Motorbikes not being allowed to use the bus lane.
 - Suggestions that the bus lane should be shortened or its hours of operation changed.

3.10 Whilst the number of accidents since the introduction of the bus lane does not support the view that the scheme has made the road more dangerous, the specific comments raised have been examined. In each case, it has been found that, whilst the introduction of the bus lane may have changed the situation, the new layout is no more complex or dangerous than many other locations in the city.

3.11 The bus lane on Duffield Road has been installed at or above the Department for Transport's minimum recommendation of 3.0 m, but below the preferred minimum of 4.0m. The measured lane width varies between 3.01m and 3.24m and the average width is 3.10m. The remaining road width is divided between the two other lanes. The total maximum road width is 9.59m and the minimum is 8.99m and the average 9.27m.

3.12 This scheme has also received support from the Derby Cycling Group but they felt improvements should be considered to assist with northbound cycling on Duffield Road.

3.13 Comments have also been received that cycling to St Benedict School has reduced since the introduction of the bus lane, but this is not backed by our ongoing monitoring of cycle parking at the school. Whilst there is the usual seasonal variation in levels of cycling, the levels of parking have remained consistent, showing no real growth or decline since the introduction of the bus lane.

- 3.14 Any improvements to cycling facilities need further investigation and consultation, in particular with representatives of cycling groups, and could be delivered using Local Transport Plan capital funds in future years, subject to approval by the Council Cabinet.
- 3.15 If the bus lane is retained, it has been suggested that remedial works could be carried out to tackle problems with standing water on the western side of Duffield Road near St Benedict School. This could be delivered using Local Transport Plan capital funds in future years, subject to approval by the Council Cabinet.
- 3.16 Observations of Windley Crescent and Alstonfield Drive on a number of occasions have shown that some parking occurs on these roads, mainly at school finish times, but that drivers did not park obstructively
- 3.17 The Council is currently carrying out a trial where motorcycles are allowed to use 2 bus lanes in the city. Any decision to allow motorbikes to use Duffield Road bus lane will be considered as part of a citywide review of the issue.
- 3.18 If the bus lane was shortened it is anticipated that some of the benefits of the scheme including the reduction of rat running through Darley Abbey Village would be lost. It is also felt that reducing the hours when the bus lanes operates would lead to confusion amongst motorists.

Conclusions

- 3.19 This report has considered the transport assessment of the scheme impacts and all of the objections and other comments on the experimental traffic regulation order.
- 3.20 The results and considerations have lead to the conclusion and recommendation to members that the bus lane order should be made permanent.

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Background papers:	Three Month Review
List of appendices:	Duffield Road Bus Lane Objections and Comments Appendix 1 – Implications Appendix 2 – 15 month review of Duffield Road Transport Improvements

IMPLICATIONS

Financial

- 1.1 To make the traffic order permanent will require minimal staff time. Funding of £30,000 has been set aside in the Local Transport Plan to review the experimental scheme and examine potential changes for the future. Any work could be delivered using Local Transport Plan capital funds in future years, subject to approval by the Council Cabinet.

Legal

- 2.1 None directly arising

Personnel

- 3.1 None directly arising

Equalities Impact

- 4.1 None directly arising

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

- 5.1 The proposal predominantly contributes to the Council's Objectives of:
- Creating a 21st Century city centre – by improving accessibility to the City Centre, especially for those without access to a car
 - Leading Derby towards a better environment by making bus travel more attractive, reliable and viable.