15 Month Review of the Duffield Road Bus Lane

by

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Regeneration and Community

The following paragraph numbers refer to the corresponding paragraphs in the Review

1.0 As an essential part of the introduction of the bus lane on 5 March 2007, the speed limit was reduced from 40mph to 30mph and 24 hour no waiting restrictions were applied to both the bus and northbound lane.
*Comment: **DCC have failed** to analyse the effects of the reduced speed limited and parking restrictions by themselves; would the bus lane be superfluous with these two restrictions in place?*

The observation in the fourth paragraph that
"At this stage it is not possible to change the existing scheme under the powers covering experimental traffic orders and a decision is needed to make the scheme permanent or withdraw it" confuses the issue of possible amendment of the present bus lane.
What is meant by *"At this stage"*? Does this mean that at some time in the future a change could be made or not? Are the words superfluous, misleading or misguided?

There is no indication of a deadline for the assessment of the experimental bus lane. There is therefore the possibility of setting up an amended bus lane configuration that could be implemented immediately on withdrawal of the experimental bus lane.
This removes the threat implied by the use of the words "...make the scheme permanent or withdraw it".

Conclusion on 1.0 Background *- As written the background is confusing and of no assistance in allowing the reader to form judgements on the following sections. Why state that there are only two options when in 5.0 a third option is discussed?*

2.0 On reading 3.0 it is apparent that more information has been recorded than is set out in the listing in 2.0 e.g. road widths, lane widths, junction configurations and road drainage.

2.1 Paragraph 1 says 2 sets of data have been *recorded* (is not *analysed* a better description - data by definition has already been recorded?). In assessing traffic data a prime consideration is the time periods when the data was recorded e.g. holiday traffic is very different from normal working/school day traffic. *Neither set is dated.*
The saving in time between Church Lane and Broadway is as expected (the running time between these two points can be calculated on a speed of 30mph and 30 seconds per pick up/set down stop). But is 4 minutes relevant in a 15 minute service? It does not allow passengers to catch a later bus and still make a set time deadline. The possible delays before Church Lane and after the Broadway are more significant in keeping to timetable.
The data for the times between Ford Lane and Broadway in some way demonstrates this point. For example Before Bus Lane (BBL) the time from Ford Lane to Broadway was 15 minutes and from Church Lane to Broadway 7 minutes giving 8 minutes from Ford Lane to Church Lane. There is no reason to believe that the run from Ford Lane to Church Lane should be significantly different BBL to After Bus Lane (ABL) so it would be reasonable to anticipate ABL Ford Lane to Broadway to be 8 + 3 (say) Church Lane to Broadway = 11 minutes. Yet it is claimed to be 5 minutes 35 seconds i.e. the actual time is half the predicted.
The fare stage data needs reappraisal.

2.2 no comment

2.3 The passenger journeys on the bus lane start anywhere on essentially the Sixes routes before Broadway. The 10.9% increase is to be welcomed but little attempt has been made to analyse the reason for this other than by inference to assign it to the bus lane. As a frequent passenger on the Sixes it has been noticeable that the service has improved over the last two years - this helps. The other significant contribution is from the Gold Card (over 60s free travel). It should be simple to break the latter contribution down as the tickets are identifiable.
The second paragraph states that the Red Arrow and 6X now use Duffield Road. I have not seen either service on Duffield Road and the Trent Barton web page does not show them on Duffield Road.

2.4 The BBL and ABL accident figures are of little value unless identified by date and location. For example did the BBL accidents occur at a regular rate per annum (3 to 4) or were there high rate years?

2.5 Presumably the time savings are calculated for the 24 hour period using the peak period saving? This of course is not correct as there is virtually no saving in the running time between Church Lane and Broadway off peak. Benefit analysis of this sort has no relationship to what the layman understands by benefit. The numbers are a not very accurate approximate comparison and this should be clearly stated.

2.6 no comment.

2.7 What are the figures in 2008? April and June 2007 were 1 and 3 months into the bus lane. The significance of the 8 and 9a.m. figures is not understood. Over what time span was the 59% reduction measured?

2.8 When were these studies undertaken - date, month, year?

3.1.1 The significant lane width is the northbound lane which in places is under 3.0m. This has to take buses, cyclists, cars, vans and HGV. *Why are lane widths not given for the central and northbound lane?* If the bus lane is considered adequate at 3.0m why is there not a similar limitation on the northbound lane?

3.1.2 BBL northbound vehicles in particular could travel at least 1.0m off the kerb an even more if required so poor visibility on exiting from certain properties whilst a problem, could be accommodated. This is not the case ABL where vehicles are pushed tight up to the kerb. ***The statement that visibility situation has not change IS INCORRECT.***

3.1.3 The second sentence of the first paragraph is incomprehensible. The issue is that on entering or leaving properties on the east side of Duffield Road it is necessary to cross the bus lane. On turning right from either the centre or north bound lane there is no legal possibility of manoeuvring as BBL and moving to the centre of the road with other vehicles passing on the left (the use of the bus lane to by pass right turning vehicles in the centre lane is an every day occurrence).

3.1.4 see 3.1.3

3.1.5 The situation ABL on the northbound lane is NOT similar to "many locations in the City" if only because of the length of road involved. If the present road layout is considered acceptable why are improvements being considered? What are these improvements and what would they cost?

3.1.6 BBL traffic southbound did form two lanes at Ferrers Way as is normal on any 3 lane road where a right turn occurs. One lane turned right and the other allowed Derby bound traffic to filter past. So why in the last sentence of the first paragraph is the specious statement that there are still two lanes into Derby, a bus lane and a traffic lane?

3.1.7 Ponding on Duffield Road in the vicinity of St Benedict's School was a problem BBL and remains so now. Foresight would have remedied the situation in March 2007 if not before.

3.1.8 & 3.1.9 Putting parking restrictions on Duffield Road is bound to move parking elsewhere.

3.1.10 no comment

3.1.11 Second paragraph - the time lost in shortening the bus lane is a matter of seconds which in relation to the economic case means nothing. What evidence is there that this shortening of the bus lane will cause motorists to revert to rat running through Darley Abbey village? Is it the bus lane in total or the length of bus lane from Mile Ash Lane to the Broadway that has limited rat running?
There are any number of time limited bus lanes in other towns and cities. Did they rely on DfT advice?
If motorists can cope with signed morning and evening contra flow situations then a time limited bus lane is no problem. Derby could be a first with an illuminated sign "bus lane in operation"!

4.0 It is not proven that the bus lane by itself has benefited bus passengers. Some benefit is achieved in the morning peak period but ouside this time there is no evidence submitted to show that benefit accrues to buses.
The use in accident analysis of the phrase "compares favourably" is hardly appropriate. The data on accidents BBL is vague and incomplete.
The Derby Cycling Group do not necessarily represent the views of cyclists who use and have used (but now avoid) the northbound lane. This lane is a hazard to even the most experienced cyclists and they tell me so!!!

5.0 The second option - to retain the bus lane - is based on unproven evidence. The possible increase in patronage for reasons other than the bus lane have not been identified or quantified and the improvement in bus journey reliability can only be justified in the morning peak period and then to the extent of no more than 5 minutes on average over the length of the bus lane. The effects of possible traffic conditions before Church Lane and after Broadway will have far more influence on running times.

The third option quoted does not consider the possibility of a morning peak time bus lane - surely one of the more influential improvements. Please do not hide behind the DfT **advice**.

CONCLUSIONS

a) No analysis of this bus lane is valid without a properly formulated and presented risk assessment. This has not been done. This could put DCC in a very difficult legal position with regard to liability if a fatal accident occurred that could be attributed to a failure in the risk assessment.

b) The Report is in many areas incomplete (e.g. where are the surveys of bus passengers reported) and fails to answer fundamental questions (as identified in the foregoing comments on the Report).

c) The content of the previous paragraphs a) & b) brings into question the thoroughness and competence of the scrutiny of this Report before publication.
One possible conclusion that can be drawn is that the intention of the Report was from the beginning to support the retention of the bus lane.

d) Before this subject is presented to Cabinet for consideration the Report needs to be rewritten and a proper risk assessment carried out.>

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