

Economic Development, Transport and Climate
Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 19th January 2022

**Consideration of Objections to The Leicester Traffic
Regulation (Bus Lane and Bus Gates) (Groby Road)
(Amendment) Order (No. 8) 2019**

Lead Director/Officer: **John Dowson**
Major Transport Projects

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Beaumont Leys, Fosse
- Report author: John Dowson
- Author contact details:
- Report version number: 01

1. Purpose of Report

To enable the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission to consider unresolved objections to **The Leicester Traffic Regulation (Bus Lane and Bus Gates) (Groby Road) (Amendment) Order (No. 8) 2019** and give their views to the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation, who will take them into account when reaching a decision on whether or not to implement the proposed Traffic Regulation Order and install the bus lane.

2. Summary

Leicester City Council is proposing to make a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to implement a bus lane on Groby Road (north side) between Mary Road and Medina Road.

This section of Groby Road is a two-lane dual carriageway on a 2km section of highway between New Parks Way and its junction with Blackbird Road. In the morning peak, inbound queues extend up to 600m from the junction with Blackbird Road. This hinders the movement of buses and affects their ability to be punctual and reliable.

The amendment to the TRO will seek an introduction of a nearside bus lane on Groby Road inbound. The bus lane will run from Mary Road to Medina Road inbound, enabling buses to bypass queuing traffic. It will be enforceable by an approved device (bus lane camera).

The City Council has 4 unresolved objections - see Section 5 of this report. Officer consideration of these objections is provided in the report and EDTCE member's comments are requested before a final decision is made on whether or not to implement a bus lane on Groby Rd.

3. Recommendations

It is recommended that the members of the EDTCE Commission give their views for the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation to take into account when reaching a decision on whether or not to implement the provisions of the **The Leicester Traffic Regulation (Bus Lane and Bus Gates) (Groby Road) (Amendment) Order (No. 8) 2019**.

4. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Public consultation was held to ascertain public views towards the proposal and the Order was advertised from Monday 23rd November of until 21st December 2020.

Upon consultation, Cllrs Waddington, Bhatia and Cassidy stated their objection to the scheme relating to timing of the works and design. Their objections are covered in the Objections from Ward Members section in the report below and stated in full in Appendix C.

Cllr Dempster and Cllr Westley did not raise any objections.

Leicestershire Police, Leicestershire and Rutland Fire and Rescue Service, the East Midlands Ambulance Service and bus operators did not raise any objections. No other objections were received.

5. Detailed report

Scheme Overview

Groby Road is part of the A50 and the major passenger route into the city from the north west connecting Leicester to Markfield and Coalville. The section in this order serves Groby Road from Mary Road to Medina Road inbound.

In 2017 a bid was made to the government's National Productivity Investment Fund (NPIF) to solve a number of bus pinch points where buses are delayed including this section of Groby Road.

The bus lane complements other schemes and improves access to employment and facilities, housing and development in the city centre, especially the Strategic Regeneration Area at Waterside and major employers and facilities in Leicestershire, including Glenfield Hospital. The Arriva (26,27,29) bus services on Groby Road carry 1.3M passengers per year linking people from Ratby, Groby, Markfield, Coalville and Ashby-de-la-Zouch to the employment, retail, education and leisure opportunities in Leicester. The UHL hospital hopper uses this route too. Reducing delay to bus services helps to keep them viable and improves services to passengers.

The bus lane will not have a negative effect on traffic flow as the junction at Blackbird Road will carry the same number of vehicles from Groby Road and the bus lane will allow buses to bypass the existing traffic queue. Bus lanes also improve road safety as they reduce lane changing which is often a source of accidents and can improve general traffic flow for the same reason.

A reduction in the speed limit from 40 mph to 30mph on Groby Road from Mary Road to Blackbird Road is planned to be implemented at the same time as the bus lane as complementary measures. The procedures for the speed limit reduction, as a response to road safety issues, have been completed.

In light of the above it is proposed to introduce an inbound bus lane between Mary Road and Medina Road. Bus lane lining and signage will be undertaken. The proposal is shown in the attached plan (Appendix A) and the schedule (Appendix B).

Objections Summary

There are 4 unresolved objections to the proposed bus lane (please refer to Appendix C – unresolved objections (with personal details removed)).

The objectors raised various concerns some of which were common to more than one objector. Where different objectors raised a common issue, the same response was used.

The objectors either responded to say that they wished to continue with their objection or we replied to say that if they did not reply then we would consider that they wished to continue with their objection.

Unresolved Objections

Each objection is summarised below and is presented in full in Appendix C. Officers have engaged with the objectors to explain the purpose of the proposed bus lane and to resolve their concerns.

Objections from the Public:

Objector A (a resident) is concerned about access to their property if the bus lane was implemented. In an email to Objector A, they were advised about the rules related to accessing a property via a bus lane. This objector was offered a meeting but did not respond.

Objections from Ward Members:

Cllr Bhatia is concerned about the need for the bus lane and, if it needs to be implemented, is concerned that the length of lane proposed would have negative effects on traffic movements at Brading Road, Medina Road and on residents. Cllr Bhatia is also concerned about the nature of the “Five-Ways” scheme.

Cllr Waddington and Cllr Cassidy are both concerned about the timing of the scheme and prefer the work to be done after other schemes in the area have been constructed.

In relation to timescales and the implementation of the bus lane ahead of other schemes, officers have explained the need for implementing the bus lane promptly to alleviate delay to buses. This is expected to worsen over time allowing conditions for passengers to deteriorate. Officers have explained the timescales for the “five-ways” scheme with construction planned to start in Autumn of 2022 and completed in Summer 2023. Officers have explained that there is no negative interaction between the two schemes and that a delay in implementing the bus lane would be unnecessarily detrimental to bus services and passengers.

Officers have explained how turning movements are safely managed through road marking and signing. Officers also explained how the length of the bus lane will not affect the network capacity, as the journey time for vehicles is controlled by the signal controlled junctions along the route where the required vehicle queue capacity on the immediate approaches to junctions is being maintained.

A Microsoft Teams meeting was held with Cllr Waddington where the concerns she voiced were addressed and although she has not formally withdrawn her objection, she said that she had no objections to the scheme in principle, but to the timing of it.

Other supporting information

Following careful consideration of the objections to the scheme being made permanent and all other additional information detailed above, Officers recommend that the provisions of **The Leicester Traffic Regulation (Bus Lane and Bus Gates) (Groby Road) (Amendment) Order (No. 8) 2019** should be implemented.

6. Financial, legal, equalities, climate emergency and other implications

6.1 Financial implications

The estimated cost of the Traffic Regulation Order is £35,000. This is to be funded by the Transport Improvement Works budget within the Council's capital programme.

Marc Clawson, Capital Accountant.

6.2 Legal implications

Traffic Regulation Orders are introduced under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedures) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996. All aspects of that legislation will be compiled with in the making of the Order.

The legislation requires that all objections made and not withdrawn are taken into consideration before an Order is made. All objections received have been taken into consideration in preparation of this report. If the objection has not been withdrawn or fully acceded to then the objector should be notified in writing of the making of the order within 14 days of making the order and the reasons for the decision.

The legal implications are written and confirmed by John McIvor, Solicitor, Legal Services.

6.3 Equalities implications

Bus services benefit older people and people from poorer backgrounds, women and children. This proposal will provide benefits to those groups. These groups are protected categories in the Equality Act. An Equality Impact Assessment was carried out on this proposal

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Bus services are essentially to a low carbon transport system, eliminating harmful emission. Electrification of buses is underway and priorities for buses are set out in the Councils Bus Services improvement plan.

6.5 Other implications (You will need to have considered other implications in preparing this report. Please indicate which ones apply?)

N/A

7. Background information and other papers:

None.

8. Summary of appendices:

Appendix A – Plan

Appendix B – TRO Schedule

Appendix C – Unresolved Objections