

Economic Development, Transport and Climate
Emergency Scrutiny Commission

Date of meeting: 19th January 2022

**Consideration of Objections to the
Leicester City Council (Melton Road A607, Leicester)
(24 Hour Bus Lanes) Traffic Regulation Order 2021**

Lead Director/Officer: **Barry Pritchard**
City Centre Streets Programme Manager
Transport Strategy

Useful information

- Ward(s) affected: Rushey Mead
- Report author: Barry Pritchard
- Author contact details: 372844
- Report version number: 0.1

1. Purpose of Report

To enable the EDTCE Scrutiny Commission to consider unresolved objections to the **Leicester City Council (Melton Road A607, Leicester) (24 Hour Bus Lanes) Traffic Regulation Order 2021** 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 (TRO) and install the bus lanes.

2. Summary

Leicester City Council is proposing to introduce bus lanes on the A607 Melton Road between Lanesborough Road and Watermead Way (**see Appendix A**). The Melton Road bus lanes scheme is part of the Transforming Cities Fund Programme. The purpose of the proposed order is to improve the operation of bus services on the Melton Road corridor by providing them with priority through busy sections of the road whilst seeking to maintain the capacity of the corridor for other traffic.

Following the advertisement of the TRO six objections to the scheme were received. In accordance with council policy, objectors were offered the opportunity to attend meetings with officers to discuss their concerns, only one objector took up this offer and the meeting was held on 15th October 2021. Copies of the objections and notes from the meeting held are attached as **Appendix B** and **Appendix C** respectively. One objection was received after the closure of the objection period and, therefore, could not be considered.

Officer consideration of these objections is provided in the report and **Appendix B** and EDTCE members comments are requested before a final decision is made on whether or not to implement the bus lanes on Melton Road.

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 Leicester City Council (Melton Road A607, Leicester) (24 Hour Bus Lanes) Traffic Regulation Order 2021

4. Scrutiny / stakeholder engagement

Early public engagement and consultation on outline proposals took place between 24th May 2021 and 12th July 2021. The exercise included a letter drop to properties on Melton Road and side roads which detailed the scheme proposals. A press statement was also released with scheme outlines on the council website. 13 individual responses against the

proposals were received with the majority of them coming from residents of Oakland Avenue and Lanesborough Road. One response was also received from a business on Melton Road.

Following a request by residents of Lanesborough Road an online meeting was arranged on Wednesday 23rd June 2021 with residents and Ward Councillors providing an opportunity to discuss residents' concerns. There was a variety of objections focussed around:

- increased congestion.
- road safety.
- traffic using Lanesborough Road as a rat run.
- lack of communication.
- geometric implications to access side roads.
- why have 24-hour bus lanes.
- not been given enough time to comments.
- can residents be exempt from a PCN.

One of the items raised by residents was the potential issue of exit blocking from the U-turn on Melton Road (north of Oakland Avenue). Officers agreed with the risk of exit blocking and have subsequently amended the scheme to increase the stacking lane for traffic U-turning outbound to inbound.

The final scheme proposals were sent by e-mail to Ward Councillors for Rushey Mead, and the officers of Police, Fire and Ambulance Services and other consultees, including the lead member for Highway and Transportation, the representatives of local bus companies and officers within the City Council. The email was sent on Friday 30th July 2021. No objections were received from these stakeholders.

The TRO proposals were formally advertised on 27th August 2021; the closing date for objections was 17th September 2021.

Following the advertisement of the TRO six formal objections to the proposals were received.

This scheme was considered at a meeting of the Economic Development, Transport and Tourism Scrutiny Commission in January 2021. See **Appendix D**

5. Detailed report

Scheme Overview

The proposed bus lanes are to be provided in the outbound direction on Melton Road between north of Lanesborough Road and north of Oakland Avenue, and inbound between north of Hardy's Avenue to the existing bus lane. (A schematic of the proposals is attached as **Appendix A** (not to scale)).

To assess the highway impact of the proposals, we have undertaken a traffic modelling exercise and the operation of the traffic signals has been optimised to ensure traffic delays do not materially increase as a result of the proposed bus lanes.

Objections Summary

Details of the six objections to the proposals are shown in **Appendix B** with personal details redacted along with the officer response to each objector.

Many of the objections are not directly related to the proposed TRO, e.g. the need for more safety cameras and provision of bus lanes elsewhere. The valid objections can be summarised as follows:

- a. The bus lanes do not need to operate 24hrs
- b. The congestion is at the junctions
- c. The bus lanes will affect access to/from Oakland Avenue
- d. The bus lanes will cause congestion
- e. The bus lanes will reduce air quality
- f. Vehicles making turning manoeuvres, especially U-turns will need to enter the bus lanes
- g. The TRO proposals were poorly communicated

This scheme is part of the Transforming Cities Programme, the aim of which is to improve infrastructure for sustainable modes across key parts of the city. Melton Road is a key bus route into the city centre from the north and north east of the city and the adjacent areas in the County. These bus lanes will make the operation and use of buses on this corridor more attractive and reduce reliance on private cars. The provision of these bus lanes and the objections to them need to be viewed in this context.

The response to the objections can, therefore, be summarised as follows:

- a. The Council's policy is to make bus lanes operate 24hrs in order to make it easier for motorists to understand and reduce the likelihood of them entering bus lanes and being penalised
- b. The bus lanes are designed to advantage buses where queuing occurs, usually at junctions
- c. The turning lane providing access into Oakland Avenue will be extended as part of the scheme to reduce the impact of the bus lanes at this location
- d. The scheme is designed to be capacity neutral i.e. will not cause additional congestion as the capacity of the junctions will be unaffected
- e. As no additional queuing or delay is anticipated then there should be no adverse effect on air quality
- f. Vehicles needing to enter the bus lane to make these manoeuvres will not be penalised, so long as they do not drive along the bus lane unnecessarily
- g. The TRO proposals were communicated in accordance with agreed City Council procedures including posting and maintaining notices on street and placing an advert in the Leicester Mercury.

Recommendation

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 Leicester City Council (Melton Road A607, Leicester) (24 Hour Bus Lanes) Traffic Regulation Order 2021 should be implemented.

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

6.1 Financial implications

The scheme total cost estimate is £700k. Funding for this scheme is available from the Transforming Cities programme which was added to the Council's Capital Programme in May 2020. The advertising cost to make the Traffic Order permanent is estimated to be £1,500 to be funded from the Transforming Cities budget within the capital programme. If the scheme becomes permanent, income in the region of £16k is forecast from fines to finance the administration of the scheme.

Marc Clawson – Capital Accountant

6.2 Legal implications

The Council has the power to implement the proposed Traffic Regulation Order on roads within the city. The procedure to be used by the Council in making such an order is contained in The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

Officers have taken due regard to the requirements under Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 Act to ensure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic, whilst considering the requirements for parking facilities on and off the highway, to have regard to the results of consultations undertaken with the appropriate statutory bodies and in carrying out necessary public consultation under the Act and 1996 Regulations. The Council is required to consider the objections in accordance with its duty to have regard to these and to take into account any relevant issues raised by these in the context of the proposed order. Based on the information contained in this Report, it appears that having considered the objections the Council has considered and complied with this obligation.

John McIvor, Principal Lawyer, ext. 37 1409

6.3 Equalities implications

An Equalities Impact Assessment for the scheme has been undertaken. No significant detrimental impacts have been identified.

6.4 Climate Emergency implications

Transport is a major source of carbon emissions in Leicester, and a key area to tackle following the council's declaration of a climate emergency, The proposed bus lanes on Melton Road, as part of the wider Transforming Cities Fund programme, will have a positive impact on carbon emissions as they will help improve bus journey times and the reliability of services on this important route. Improved, reliable bus journeys can encourage modal shift away from cars, and deliver the added benefit of alleviating traffic congestion. One double decker bus can typically have 74 passengers which could take the equivalent number cars off the road. The introduction of new bus lanes on busy routes can have a positive impact on bus patronage, with increases of up to 13 per cent.

Aidan Davis, Sustainability Officer, Ext 37 2284

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 – Schematic of proposals.
- Appendix B – Unresolved objections 1 – 6.
- Appendix C – Notes from objector meeting.
- Appendix D – EDTT report 14th Jan 2020