

Leicester City Council

Scrutiny Review

Examining Bus Lane Operating Hours

**A Review Report of the Economic
Development, Transportation & Climate
Emergency Scrutiny Commission**

September - November 2024

Contents

	Page
Foreword	2
Executive Summary	3
Recommendations	4
Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ <i>Review Rationale/Further Background</i>○ <i>Review Approach</i>○ <i>Summary of Current Arrangements, Evidence Gathering and Findings</i>○ <i>Summary of Task Group Conclusions</i>	5
Financial, Legal and Equalities Implications	16
Appendices list	16
Officers to contact	16
Appendices <ul style="list-style-type: none">Appendix 1 - Scoping DocumentAppendix 2 - Presentation: Overview of Bus Lanes and BenefitsAppendix 3 - Department for Transport: Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User PriorityAppendix 4 - Representation from KinchbusAppendix 5 - Representation from Climate Action Leicester and LeicestershireAppendix 6 - Presentation: Evidence Review and ConsiderationAppendix 7 - Examples of SignageAppendix 8 - Motorcycles in Bus Lanes Consultation – Note from City Transport Director	

Economic Development, Transportation and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission

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David R. Bott, First Leicester

Toby France, Arriva

Ross Hitchcock, Kinchbus (Written Representation)

Zina Zelter, Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire (Written Representation)

FOREWORD

I am happy to present this report following the work of the task group reviewing the Council's approach to bus lanes. It has been suggested that increased bus usage can help to alleviate congestion on the roads, and as such by optimising bus lane operation we can improve the travel experience for both bus users and car users alike. In turn, having less congested roads can speed up response times for emergency services. Therefore, by optimising the operation of bus lanes it is hoped that journey times for buses can be sped up, making bus travel more attractive and thus increasing bus use and reducing congestion on the roads. However, it has also been important to consider potential negative impacts of bus lanes on other road users in terms of congestion due to limiting the areas of the road that cars can use.

The review looked at the merits and potential issues caused by 24-Hour Bus Lanes. Particularly the advantages of quicker, more frequent and more reliable bus travel, but also the potential congestion issues that might be caused by 24-hour bus lanes.

Following an initial session in which the group looked at the scope and context of the review, and analysed many of the key issues involved, a second meeting was convened in which representatives from bus operators Arriva and First were able to give their insights, and a written representation from Kinchbus was submitted to give their views on the issue. Further to this, a written representation was sent in by Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire, which highlighted the potential for reducing carbon emissions. The group then considered the evidence and made recommendations based upon it as laid out in this report.

I would like to thank City Transport Director, Dan Pearman, and the Director of Planning, Development and Transportation, Andrew L Smith, for their assistance in helping to explain the issues and present information on the matter, particularly through very telling statistical analysis, and also for their help in reaching out to the bus companies. Without this information we could not have been adequately informed and therefore would not have been able to confidently make the recommendations that we have.

We hope that these recommendations will help bus lane operation to become optimised so as to reduce congestion on the roads as well as reducing carbon emissions.



Councillor Susan Waddington
Chair of Economic Development, Transportation & Climate Emergency
Scrutiny Commission

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Background to the Review

- 1.1.1 Bus lanes and other priority systems such as bus gates enable improvements to punctuality and reliability for passenger transport users and are a key part to ensuring bus services remain a viable journey choice.
- 1.1.2 21.9m bus services began within the city boundary in 22/23, and Leicester is ranked eleventh in the country for number of bus journeys. The majority of the network is commercially operated and is supported by a strong partnership between operators and the local authority – Leicester Buses.
- 1.1.3 Leicester’s bus lanes network is found mostly on 13 key transport corridors and supports the 44 main network bus services and other routes including the park and ride services, orbital, and intra-urban routes into county destinations and beyond. Many of these operate for 19 hours a day with recognisable and frequent services.
- 1.1.4 Scrutiny had previously considered a report on the city’s bus lane network on the 18 October 2023. This followed sessions undertaken in 2016 and 2013.
- 1.1.5 As part of the Commission on 18 October 2023, members of the commission requested that an opportunity be given to review the deployment of bus lanes, specifically 24/7 bus lanes, across the city.
- 1.1.6 On the 17 March 2024 the Department for Transport published LTN 1/24 Bus User Priority. This is intended to provide best practice for local authorities to ensure that bus priority systems are both effective and efficient. The document covers multiple aspects of public transport infrastructure, with bus lanes being one measure amongst many that can be deployed to improve service quality and uptake. The work undertaken by the city council with the Leicester Buses partnership covers all of these aspects - www.leicesterbuses.co.uk/completed-projects
- 1.1.7 Support for bus services remains a national policy under the Transport Decarbonisation Plan and the National Bus Strategy. Government investment in the area has included the national £2 bus fare cap (amended to £3 for 2025), the BSIP+ funding to support local services, and further rounds of the ZEBRA fund to promote electrifying vehicle fleets. The

Leicester Buses partnership has taken advantage of all of these opportunities.

- 1.1.8 On the last review of bus lanes (pre-Covid), the Commission recommended that non-24 hour bus lanes be reviewed. It was noted that it was now probably the case that due to the trends shown, it should be considered as to whether non-24 hour bus lanes should become 24-hour bus lanes. It was suggested that each bus lane should be considered on an individual basis.

1.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1.2.1 At the informal meeting on 7 November 2024, the following set of proposed recommendations was made:

- a) Bus lanes remain an element to support passenger transport, benefitting city residents, businesses and visitors. They remain open to cyclists, Hackney Carriages and emergency vehicles at all times of operation. The use of motorcycles in bus lanes should be reviewed in the context of a forthcoming response by Government to consultation held in 2024.
- b) Bus lane design should be bespoke to the local context in terms of the layout and hours of operation. All bus lanes will be subject to public consultation to inform design.
- c) New bus lane design and the review of existing bus lanes should take into account the need to deliver smoother reliable journeys for buses and also aim to achieve balance and avoid impact on general traffic.
- d) Existing bus lanes should be subject to review in terms of layout and hours of operation, with potential for camera enforcement considered. Priority should be given to locations where there is a negative impact on bus service reliability, or where there is an impact due to congestion outside of peak hours.
- e) Visibility of camera enforcement should be maximised within the scope of permissible regulations to avoid unnecessary fines, with reference to best practice.

2. REPORT

2.1 Review Rationale

- 2.1.1 The scrutiny commission have previously reviewed bus lane operations in 2013 and 2016.
- 2.1.2 On both occasions, the recommendation from the commission was for bus lanes to continue operating 24 hours a day to maintain consistency of approach, outside of locations that could evidence a specific local need (for example, parking to support local businesses).
- 2.1.3 Members of the Economic Development, Transport, and Climate Emergency Scrutiny Commission requested the topic be revisited in 2023. Officers suggested this be deferred whilst awaiting promised government guidance.

2.2 Review Approach

- 2.2.1 The first session would consist of an introductory presentation (Appendix A) informing members about the background of the issue, including the government guidance, the current situation regarding bus lanes in Leicester, the benefits of bus lanes and the merits of them being designated as such for 24 hours a day. Witnesses and stakeholders were identified to be invited to the following meeting to present evidence.
- 2.2.2 At the second meeting, evidence was presented from representatives from bus operators Arriva and First Leicester. Additionally, written representations were received from Kinchbus (Appendix B) and Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire (Appendix C). The Director of Planning, Development & Transportation and the City Transport Director attended the meeting to provide further information, and the City Transport Director provided responses to questions raised at the previous meeting (Appendix D). Members took the evidence and information provided into consideration with the intention of making recommendations based on them at the following meeting.
- 2.2.3 The third meeting was convened to consider recommendations made based on the evidence provided. However, the group were unable to agree recommendations at this meeting, and therefore a fourth meeting was convened to consider recommendations.

2.3 Current Arrangements

- 2.3.1 The majority of Bus Lanes are found along the 13 key bus corridors in the city.

- 2.3.2 77 services make use of bus priority at some stage of the route.
- 2.3.3 There is an award-winning enhanced partnership underpinned by legally binding commitments to invest from both the city council and operators. 94 (of 120) completed to date.
- 2.3.4 There have been significant improvements in Leicester over the lifetime of the partnership, as laid out in the presentation (Appendix B).
- 2.3.5 In terms of the effects of bus lanes on punctuality and reliability:
- In the Groby Road corridor there has been a 6% reduction in overall journey times and 30% reduction in journey variance at peak times. Punctuality is now at 81%.
 - In the Melton Road corridor, 89% of buses now running to time.
 - Overall bus punctuality citywide is 85%.
 - Overall bus reliability citywide is 98%.
 - 76% of bus users in Leicester were happy with bus punctuality, compared with the England average of 70% (Your Bus Journey – Passenger Focus).
- 2.3.6 21 mainlines now have a frequency of 15 minutes or better Monday-Saturday.
- 2.3.7 24-hour bus lanes can still be used by authorised vehicles even when limited services are running. Emergency service vehicles benefit from access to a dedicated lane that can bypass any other traffic on the network.
- 2.3.8 Cyclists receive safety benefits from having access to a reserved lane with limited risk of vehicles.
- 2.3.9 Services may expand in future, making use of the bus priority network – there is already one 24hr service looking to improve frequency - Skylink along the A6 corridor.
- 2.3.10 Operators are beginning to identify evening and later running services as being a potential market, and are slowly expanding commercial networks. For example – new Firstbus 4E, extensions to the 17.

2.4 Evidence Gathering

- 2.4.1 The scope only includes bus lanes that went with the flow of traffic, those with contra-flow needed to be 24 hours for safety reasons.
- 2.4.2 Research by the Department for Transport (DfT) identified that priority schemes and the resultant improvements to reliability and punctuality can lead to increase in usage by up to 160% over ten years.
- 2.4.3 24-hour bus lanes use simpler, clearer signs. These are easier for drivers to understand – particularly new drivers or those unfamiliar with the area and reduces the risk of users inadvertently violating the bus lanes.
- 2.4.4 Leicester’s road network is usually quiet outside peak operating hours (7-7), with little congestion, therefore there is very little benefit to be obtained from opening the bus lanes to general traffic at these times.
- 2.4.5 Removing or altering existing 24-hour bus lanes would require a considerable investment from the authority given the need to change signage and the legal orders underpinning the bus lanes.
- 2.4.6 Whilst the new government guidance does not necessarily advocate for a 24-hour approach, other guidance and policy – such as the National Bus Strategy - continues to do so.
- 2.4.7 Evidence presented by Toby France of Arriva buses included the following:
- The strength of the partnership is due to a strong dialogue between the bus companies and the Council.
 - There has been recognition from local leaders on how congestion and air quality have been tackled.
 - Bus ridership has continued to grow, which has given the operator the confidence to invest in the fleet. £20m has been invested with over 60 buses going into service. It is hoped for citizens of Leicester to benefit from further investment, and the cooperation of the Council would help with this.
 - Increased bus usage reduces congestion on the roads.
 - Timeliness is a key priority for bus users. Bus lanes have brought significant improvements in timeliness, which have been of benefit to residents. This includes a 6% reduction in journey times on Groby Road and a reduction in traffic jams.
 - The hours when buses are not in operation is limited, as such, Arriva supports 24-Hour Bus Lanes. Additionally, the number of motorists using the roads late at night and in the early hours of the morning (when bus lanes would be open to road users) are limited, and therefore would not benefit from bus lanes being open. There

is a shared aspiration from partnership member on enhancing the service. Arriva now operates late into the evening on most corridors, and First have also extended their operating hours on their network.

- The Bus Service Improvement Plan looks at access to employment and some out-of-town areas had workplaces with late shifts, and as such the operator wished to provide transport for these workers. Therefore, more targeted evening and early morning times are being considered. The opportunity to work with individual employers and add additional journeys was being considered. Work had been conducted with Magna Park, 20 miles from the city centre, which had many late shifts. Buses are now coming from the city centre during these unsocial hours. There are big employment areas around the city, so helping to better connect these areas is a big opportunity.
- Demand is being scoped and numbers of people aggregated in the Bus service Improvement Plan. The plan goes to 2036, and over this timeframe it will be considered as to how demands can be met. City roads and bus lanes need to be considered as part of this. It is aimed to make bus travel more attractive so as to reduce congestion on the roads.
- Bus lanes that are only open for two hours (eg. London Road) at a time are a pinch-point. Travel patterns have changed since the Covid-19 pandemic, and 'rush hour' is now much more spread out over a larger part of the day, so buses being able to offer a speedier journey over these extended times would be beneficial. When bus lanes are only in operation for a certain number of hours, this can be confusing for motorists as to whether they are able to use them. 24-hour operation makes this clearer.

2.4.8 Evidence presented by David Bott of Firstbus buses included the following:

- There has been significant investment in electric buses and infrastructure, with the aim of bus operation becoming fully electric.
- If passengers are confident that buses are reliable and punctual, they will make more use of them.
- Prior to the bus lanes on Abbey Lane becoming 24-hour, the road and the 54 bus route had struggled with congestion. Since bus lanes had been installed, there is a 5-minute time saving compared to previous operation. There has also been a 3-minute saving in Belgrave circle.
- Additionally, prior to the bus lane on Abbey Lane, the empty space had been dominated by parked cars, increasing congestion. This issue was exacerbated when events were held on the park as cars were parked on both sides of the road, with buses and all other vehicles needing to use the remaining space. Now that a 24-hour bus lane is in place, this acts as a deterrent

as cars cannot park on the bus lane. Buses can now operate on the same timetable when events are taking place and bus users can be confident that buses will turn up.

- When bus lanes operate on the basis of a peak cycle, such as Saffron Lane where the inbound operating hours are 7:30-9:30 and the outbound hours are 16:00-18:00, these hours are less fit for purpose as previously due to the change in traffic-patterns caused by changes in work-habits causing an extended peak. It is now the case that peak usage continues past 18:00.
- Outside of operating hours, the bus lanes on Saffron Road are used for parking cars on match days, exacerbating congestion.
- When bus lane operating hours end, car users will often go straight into the bus lanes, slowing up the buses. Timetables can be changed to avoid this, but this is inconvenient and confusing for passengers.
- Similar congestion issues caused by parked cars had been seen prior to the installation of the bus lane on Anstey Lane. Since the bus lane, buses are saving time on the morning peak as the 74 no longer needs to queue, meaning buses can move into the city centre without hold ups.
- The bus lane on Loughborough Road would have benefitted from more enforcement when works were being undertaken on Abbey Lane, due to the increased volume of traffic on Loughborough Road that ensued as a result.
- Drivers become confused on London Road due to uncertainty over when the bus lanes are in operation. Additionally, there is evidence from our bus drivers of cars being parked in some bus lanes during the hours of operation, which meant that our drivers cannot drive in the bus lanes, which exacerbates congestion. Bus gates can act as a deterrent if enforced, but can cause confusion if only used during specific hours, so consistency is important.
- If the bus lane on Saffron Lane was in operation for 24 hours, it would help on matchdays as people would know that the services would be more consistent.

2.4.9 In terms of the effect of bus lanes on reliability, it is thought that 24-hour bus lanes would increase reliability and the decreased journey times mentioned by the bus operators is evidence of this.

2.4.10 In reference to the presentation responding to member questions (Appendix D), the graphs and statistics show that it is only in the early hours that buses are not running, this constrains when bus lane operation could be removed. It is also important to note that outside

bus running-hours, there is still bus-related traffic such as coaches, and buses travelling from their depot to their starting-point before 4am.

- 2.4.11 Also, in reference to Appendix D the graph showing traffic flow shows that whilst there remained a level of traffic volume through the evening, this was much lower than during the day. This means that during the times when buses are not in operation, there were limited vehicles using the network and little need or benefit to drivers from making bus lanes available.
- 2.4.12 A government consultation had been undertaken on the use of motorcycles in bus lanes, however the response had been delayed by the general election. It was suggested that any recommendations on this should not be made until guidance was known as it may change the guidance or make it the default to allow motorbikes in bus lanes.
- 2.4.13 One member suggested that there was little evidence of buses currently running 24 hours (other than the Skylink), and whilst it might be an ambition, it was not currently the case and as such having bus lanes running only in the peak period seemed a sensible option.
- 2.4.14 Bus patronage in Leicester has improved by 14% over the last year, against a national increase of 6%. It is difficult to attribute this solely to bus lanes as there have been other improvements and schemes such as new bus stations and capped ticketing. However, it is thought that the commitment to network improvement including bus lanes has contributed towards this.
- 2.4.15 If the existing 24-hour bus lanes were removed, there would be less reliability which could have a cumulative effect and the confidence of bus users would deteriorate. It is important to take notice of what the bus operators say on the issue, as they rely on people travelling on the buses. Further to this, it is important to note that reliability is a criteria which operators are scored on and they can lose their licence if they are found to be unreliable.
- 2.4.16 It was suggested by a member that some current signs lacked a clear, straightforward message in writing and were small signs with a camera icon, which do not clearly inform motorists about the enforcement. Examples of clear signage were sent to members of the review (Appendix G)

2.5 Review Findings

- 2.5.1 Improvements to punctuality and reliability can create opportunities to increase route frequency – a key method of attracting new users.
- 2.5.2 There has been an increase in punctuality since pre-Covid.
- 2.5.3 Making buses more punctual and reliable would increase bus usage – easing congestion.
- 2.5.4 Under government guidance (LTN 1/24 7.6), where there is more than one bus lane along a particular length of road or within the same geographical area, the times of operation should be consistent, where possible, to avoid driver confusion.
- 2.5.5 Allowing cars to use bus lanes would not help with junction capacity.
- 2.5.6 Permission would be needed from the Department for Transport to disallow bikes from bus lanes.
- 2.5.7 In terms of motorcycles, separate consideration could only be made if bus lanes were 24/7 as intermittent hours could pose safety issues.
- 2.5.8 Guidance states that bus lanes should be wider than normal lanes to allow bikes to pass.
- 2.5.9 No road traffic collisions had been attributed to bus lanes, but members were asked to refer areas of concern to officers.
- 2.5.10 The government has issued guidance rather than regulation, so there is a degree of flexibility.
- 2.5.11 Even if time savings were small, they added up over the course of a day. This made bus travel more efficient in terms of fuel hours and driver hours and also meant that passengers were less likely to experience disruption.
- 2.5.12 The impact of bus lanes on motorists was examined in terms of traffic modelling and surveys and reviews of data. In the overall picture of congestion, the impact was found to be around junctions. This meant that if a car used a bus lane it would simply be going quicker to a red light.

- 2.5.13 It was recognised that junctions could only take a certain number of vehicles. This is why buses were prioritised as it encourages people use bikes and busses which alleviate congestion. The alleviation of congestion is a key aim. Therefore, congestion needs to be monitored for some time after a bus lane is installed.
- 2.5.14 With regard to Fosse Road North, there were early indications that it was now working as intended.
- 2.5.15 An average bus loading is between 9 and 11 people, so 9 times more than a car on average, and buses only take up 3 times more space than a car, so were more space efficient.
- 2.5.16 Bus lanes are designed in a way that take local circumstances into account.
- 2.5.17 It was raised that in some countries there were electric signs that showed when bus lanes were open. In response to this, officers and the bus company representatives explained that this could still lead to confusion if only open on specific times of the day, and drivers may not notice the signs during busy times. Additionally, it does not send the right message and a deterrent against using bus lanes is needed. Further to this, when driving through the city at busy times, there is a lot that drivers need to be aware of in order to be safe, and trying to work out if a bus lane is in operation adds to the many things that drivers need to be aware of. Clarity and consistency is important. Digital signage would create a large amount of visual clutter and drivers would be expected to assimilate a lot of information which would be difficult to do underneath a gantry. Additionally, the regulations in place do not permit this kind of signage and there are few places where the gantries needed could be installed as this would take a lot of space, including in gardens and properties. There are further problems regarding the enforcement of digital signage. It was reported that on smart motorways, there has been only approximately 80% compliance with digital signage, three to four years after it has been rolled out. Enforcement requires pictures of violations of restrictions, signage and a control centre. The cost of installation and operation for the whole system would run into the millions of pounds, and approval would be needed from the DfT.
- 2.5.18 Bus operators benefit by getting people on to buses and people will be drawn to buses if they are reliable and frequent. Getting people on to buses has a benefit in terms of air quality and congestion, meaning there would be fewer traffic queues as well as less congestion.

- 2.5.19 There is an enforcement mechanism for both parking and moving violations. The problem becomes compounded as when people park in bus lanes, others think they can do the same and the wardens cannot be everywhere all of the time. Some drivers may even be happy to pay the fine. It is also observed that whilst enforcement is carried out, where the restrictions are clearly set out, and where cameras were installed, drivers tended to follow the rules, so clarity is important. Parking fines are at a fixed level nationally, with a set fee for London and another for all authorities outside of London so may not act as a complete deterrent.
- 2.5.20 A factor in reduced bus reliability in the past three years has been due to the lack of driver availability as drivers had left the industry to work as HGV drivers and supermarket delivery drivers as the pay had been better. However, driver availability levels were recovering. Research shows that a bus lane improves punctuality and reliability and those two intertwined, then lead to an increase in patronage.
- 2.5.21 If signage is inaccurate, this can be used as a defence if a motorist uses a bus lane during its operating hours.
- 2.5.22 A member suggested that it is necessary to look at the impact on the city in terms of economic viability, particularly with regard to car users who wished to access retail and work. Concern was raised that people were being deterred from driving into Leicester for these purposes due to congestion, and were instead using out-of-town retail such as Fosse Park.
- 2.5.23 A member suggested that the issues surrounding congestion and air pollution should be considered in terms of all constituents and not just bus users.
- 2.5.24 A member suggested that bus lanes can contribute to unnecessary congestion by limiting highway capacity during off-peak hours when buses aren't even running, which inadvertently increases travel time, emissions and frustration for the majority of road users who rely on cars and vans etc. Given that most journeys in Leicester are made by car, this should be a key consideration in Leicester's bus lane policy.
- 2.5.25 A member suggested that adjusting to a peak-time bus lane system would provide a balanced approach, enhancing access for all road users while still prioritising public transport during busier hours.
- 2.5.26 Consideration was given to allowing private hire taxis to use bus lanes.

2.6 Benchmarking

- 2.6.1 The DfT were approached to collect data for benchmarking as they could access it more readily, however, the DfT have chosen to benchmark all authorities nationally, meaning that the DfT are still reviewing at the time of writing.
- 2.6.2 Brighton and Hove City Council were approached to gain insight into how their bus lane policy operated. They gave the following information:
- They do not have a blanket policy on bus lane times of operation. In the City Centre (North St) they operate bus lanes from 8am – 6pm to enable loading and servicing of businesses. Other bus lanes on the city’s main bus corridors are in operation 24/7.
 - 24 Hour bus lanes are run and are subject to camera enforcement. Additionally, camera enforcement is used on the busiest bus corridors where bus lanes are not possible because of space constraints they have recently installed red lines – allowing them to use camera enforcement to deter parking that could delay buses.
 - Their policy is pragmatic but the guiding principle is that they want to see improved bus journey times.
- 2.6.3 Nottingham City Council’s (NCC) bus lane policy includes some that operate 24h hrs (at any time) where justification allows, i.e. a service is in operation/outside a hospital. The majority of NCC are peak hours. This is based on DfT guidance and the need to improve the punctuality of buses.
- 2.6.4 Derby City Council do not have a policy that covers timings as such, beyond the legislation requiring us to make certain that any restrictions on the public highway are necessary, appropriate and proportionate. The majority of Derby’s bus lanes/bus gates are 24/7, with very few locations that the buses only restriction operates outside of this. The majority of the city’s bus lanes and bus gates are enforced by cameras. Camera enforcement has been based on complaints from bus companies. Lack of compliance when the locations were surveyed and the need to reduce traffic to make an area safer and more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists.

2.7 Summary of Task Group Conclusions

- 2.7.1 Bus operators run the vast majority of services – they are clear about the need for bus lanes to have clarity in terms of hours of operation to avoid confusion for general traffic.
- 2.7.2 They were also strongly of the opinion that existing non 24/7 bus lanes create issues, delaying bus services, both during bus lane operating hours and outside of these hours – examples were given of traffic parked in bus lanes at Saffron Lane, Loughborough Road, Abbey Park Road and London Road.
- 2.7.3 Operators and officers noted that peak traffic levels have moved from morning and afternoon to throughout the day largely. Also, out of core bus

operating hours additional capacity from an extra lane is not required due to low traffic levels.

- 2.7.4 Bus services currently run as late as midnight, and Skylink is 24/7 along with some existing and planned coach services, with the prospect of future additional later running services as noted by the bus operators.
- 2.7.5 DfT guidance indicates bus lane design and their operation need to take into account the local context of the route, and allow for regulating bus service operations without hindrance to general traffic flow.
- 2.7.6 DfT policy indicates transport authorities should do everything to support and grow bus services, including bus lanes, alongside other measures.
- 2.7.7 Benchmarking shows a range of different practices with transport authorities generally operating 24/7 unless local suggest otherwise.
- 2.7.8 Altering existing signs on 24/7 bus lanes would have a significant cost attached.
- 2.7.9 With regard to proposals to allow private hire taxis in bus lanes, this could cause issues as at first glance they appear to be normal vehicles, which could lead to non-compliance as drivers may think that cars are allowed in bus lanes when they are not, this would lead to unnecessary fines. Additionally, private hire taxis (including Ubers) can be licenced by any authority. This would mean that taxis licenced outside LCC would not be on the database and therefore cameras could pick them up as normal cars and impose a fine, this could in turn be contested, which would be a drain on staff resource.
- 2.7.10 Pedal cycles are permitted in bus lanes and cannot be restricted without government authorisation.
- 2.7.11 One member suggested that if there was evidence of congestion, then the need for a bus lane would be apparent, however, bus lanes should only operate when there was congestion for buses.
- 2.7.12 When new bus lanes were considered, it should be taken into account as to delays in buses caused by other traffic that would not be present if there was a bus lane, but should also take into account the aim to reduce the impact on traffic. Where there was no congestion, the need for change was less evident.
- 2.7.13 There is a need for visible signage that follows regulations to avoid unnecessary fines for drivers. It was clarified that if signs were not visible that do not follow regulations, they could be challenged by adjudicators, therefore LCC tried to make them as visible as possible.

3 Financial, Legal and Other Implications

1.3 Financial Implications

This report recommends that existing bus lanes be reviewed in terms of layout and hours of operation. Any changes to the existing arrangements will have a cost implication, particularly in relation to road markings and signage and this would need to be considered if any specific proposals were to progress.

Stuart McAvoy – Head of Finance (ext. 37 4004)

2nd December 2024

1.4 Legal Implications

As the report appears to be an update rather than proposing any changes or requesting decisions, there do not appear to be any legal implications.

Zoe Iliffe – Principal Lawyer (ext. 37 2180)

9th December 2024

1.1 Equality Implications

Public Transport plays a valuable role in the city, and nationally, in providing greater mobility and accessibility to all members of the community. Bus lanes and other priority systems such as bus gates enable improvements to punctuality and reliability for passenger transport users from across many protected characteristics and are a key part to ensuring bus services remain a viable journey choice. There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. An improved bus network with greater priority for buses is likely to be of particular benefit to people in low income groups, who are less likely to have access to private vehicles.

It is important to ensure that equality considerations are taken into account when looking at future schemes.

Surinder Singh - Equalities Officer (ext. 37 4418)

3rd December 2024

1.2 Climate Change and Carbon Reduction Implications

Transport is responsible for around 25% of carbon emissions in Leicester. Following the city council's declaration of a Climate Emergency

in 2019, and its aim to achieve net zero carbon emissions, addressing transport-related emissions is a vital part of the council's work. This is particularly important in those areas where the council has the greatest level of influence, including the provision of public transport infrastructure.

Work that enables and encourages increased usage of buses over private vehicles will have positive impacts in terms of reducing transport-related carbon emissions in the city, as well as delivering benefits in terms of air quality, congestion and connectivity. This report sets out the evidence for the positive impact of 24-hour bus lanes for the city's bus system, including increased punctuality and reliability and impact on ridership numbers and easing of congestion. Therefore, it is expected that the continued operation of these lanes would contribute to reducing carbon emissions in the city, in line with the council's net zero ambition.

Aidan Davis - Sustainability Officer, (ext. 37 2284)

28th November 2024

2 Summary of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Scoping Document

Appendix 2 – Presentation: Overview of Bus Lanes and Benefits

Appendix 3 – Department for Transport: Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority

Appendix 4 - Representation from Kinchbus

Appendix 5 - Representation from Climate Action Leicester and Leicestershire

Appendix 6 - Presentation in response to member questions.

Appendix 7 – Examples of Signage

Appendix 8 - Motorcycles in Bus Lanes Consultation – Note from City Transport Director

3 Officers to Contact

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