

CABINET – 16TH NOVEMBER 2010**PROPOSED BUS AND CYCLE SCHEME
A6 LEICESTER ROAD, OADBY****REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND TRANSPORT****PART A****Purpose of Report**

1. To seek authority to confirm as a permanent Order the experimental Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) for the bus lane on the A6 Leicester Road, Oadby. The extent of the experimental Order is shown on the plan at Appendix A.

Recommendations

2. It is RECOMMENDED that approval be given to the confirmation of the experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the bus lane on the A6 Leicester Road, Oadby as a permanent Order.

Reason for Recommendation

3. To enable the experimental TRO to be confirmed as permanent, and the associated coloured road surfacing applied, within the required 18 months from implementation, i.e. the end of May 2011. Schemes of this type are normally approved by the Director under delegated powers, in consultation with the Lead Member and the local Member. In this case, the two local Members affected have not supported the confirmation of the TRO, and a decision by Cabinet is requested.

Timetable for Decisions (including Scrutiny)

4. An immediate decision will allow the experimental TRO to be confirmed as permanent, and outstanding surfacing works to be carried out, by the end of March 2011, in accordance with the approved programme.
5. This report is being considered by the Scrutiny Commission at its meeting on 10 November 2010. The comments of the Commission will be reported to the Cabinet on 16 November.

Policy Framework and Previous Decisions

6. The Local Transport Plan (LTP) contains commitments to assist buses in tackling congestion through the improvement of Leicester quality bus corridors, one of which is the A6 through Oadby. As well as tackling congestion, development of the Leicester bus corridors will help meet the LTP objectives for access to facilities and air quality, and reduce CO₂ emissions.
7. At its meeting on 28th July 2009 the Cabinet approved the implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for up to 18 months from advertisement to provide a bus/cycle lane on the south west side of the A6 Leicester Road, Oadby; this extends from a short distance north west of the Brabazon Road junction as far as the Leicester city boundary. The Order also includes a peak hour loading restriction over the same length.
8. The matter was originally referred to Cabinet because the two local Members affected did not support the scheme or its advertisement.

Resources Implications

9. The estimated total scheme cost is £308,300, of which £60,000 is a contribution to the cycle scheme from Sustrans, and £41,000 is outstanding work in 2010/11. Provision for these costs is included in the transportation capital programme.
10. The Director of Corporate Resources has been consulted on the resource implications of this report.

Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure

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PART B

Background

11. At its meeting on 28th July 2009 the Cabinet approved the implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for up to 18 months from advertisement to provide a bus/cycle lane on the south west side of the A6 Leicester Road, Oadby; this extends from a short distance north west of the Brabazon Road junction as far as the Leicester city boundary. The Order also includes a peak hour loading restriction over the same length.
12. Following the Cabinet's decision, the bus/cycle lane proposal was shortened to accommodate a wider lane, in line with the latest advice. The change was not considered sufficiently major to require re-consultation or a further approach to Members, and the experimental Order was framed on the basis of the shortened lane.
13. The Order provided for a six-month period commencing 30th November 2009, when the Order was made, for comments to be submitted, after which the County Council could consider a future course of action.
14. The bus lane road markings and signage were put in place in accordance with the Experimental TRO, and the evaluation period has now expired; a decision is now required, based on traffic evidence and comments received, on whether to confirm the Experimental Order and bring it into force on a permanent basis.
15. In parallel with the bus/cycle lane, and constructed at the same time, was a scheme to extend the existing cycle route from the Leicester city boundary south-eastwards as far as the Brabazon Road junction, comprising the improvement and signing of off-road facilities, and appropriate links to the new bus/cycle lane and the main carriageway. This part of the scheme did not require the making of any Traffic Regulation Orders for construction, and is not the focus of this report.
16. The same Cabinet meeting referred to above considered traffic behaviour on the Oadby Hill Drive service road running between Brabazon Road and Lyndon Drive. Although video and speed monitoring has been carried out on this stretch of road to help provide evidence on which to make a decision on the way forward, this also is not the subject of this report.

Results of monitoring

17. Bus journey times and occupancies have been measured over the stages of the bus route that would be affected by the permanent implementation of the bus lane, and the results compared with baseline readings in 2007. The data is set out in Appendix A, and show an average 44% drop in bus journey time between 0700 and 0930 of 392 person seconds per bus (see Appendix B).
18. Comments received since the advertisement of the experimental Order, and officer responses, are attached as Appendix C. Some comments are similar to those reported to the July 2009 Cabinet meeting, and in those cases, officer responses have also been carried forward from that report.

19. The specific reasons for the ongoing objection by the two local Members to the 24-hour bus lane in the experimental TRO were aired at a meeting with officers on 12th October 2010. The file note of the meeting records the reasons for the objections as:
 - (a) the 24-hour operation of the bus lane was not consistent with the peak hour operation of the bus lane on the A6 within the city;
 - (b) the extent of the bus lane was shorter than had been shown in the initial 2008 consultation and approved by Cabinet, and did not work because buses now needed to pull out into main traffic from the bus lay-by, instead of having the protection of the bus lane, resulting in under-use of the bus lane.
20. A statement on the operation of the bus lane over the monitoring period has been received from the bus operator, and is attached as Appendix D. This indicates that the operator has found the bus lane to be of benefit, and considered to be of help in improving the operation of the service.
21. Individuals have been given an opportunity to express their views on how this proposal would affect them and the County Solicitor has considered these views when assessing the merits of the scheme. In this case, although some individuals may incur some inconvenience in travel or parking, this will not have a significant impact on the quality of their lives.

Conclusions

22. In view of the considerable morning peak hour bus journey time savings demonstrated by the monitoring, and having considered the feedback from the local Members and the public, and the supporting statement from the bus operator, on balance it is considered that the experimental Traffic Regulation Order should be confirmed as a permanent Order.

Equal Opportunities Implications

23. The cycle element of the scheme has been specifically designed to give greater priority to vulnerable road users and so will be of particular benefit to pedestrians and cyclists. The scheme will also incorporate facilities for disabled users including dropped kerbs and tactile paving, audible and tactile signals.

Background Papers

Report to Cabinet, 28th July 2009: Proposed Bus and Cycle Scheme - A6 Leicester Road, Oadby

List of Appendices

- Appendix A - Drawing Number 3121.00/Z1/1/5A showing the extent of the Experimental TRO
- Appendix B – Outcome of the bus journey time monitoring
- Appendix C – Schedule of objections and issues raised during the Experimental TRO comment period, and the officer responses
- Appendix D - Supporting statement from Arriva plc.