

ABERDEEN CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEE	Communities, Housing and Infrastructure
DATE	13/01/2015
DIRECTOR	Pete Leonard
TITLE OF REPORT	Proposed Revision of Bus Lane Timings on Great Northern Road
REPORT NUMBER	CHI/14/002
CHECKLIST COMPLETED	Yes/ No

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

The purpose of this report is to advise members of the Committee in relation to the proposed revision of Bus Lane Timings on Great Northern Road.

2. RECOMMENDATION(S)

It is recommended that Members:

- a) note the results of the bus lane surveys.
- b) agree to the principle of a revision of bus lane timings/loading restrictions on Great Northern Road on the approach to the Haudagain Roundabout so that lanes are operational 0730-0930 and 1500-1830; and
- c) The Committee instruct the appropriate officers to commence the necessary legal procedures of preliminary statutory consultation for the traffic regulation orders required. If no significant objections are received, then to progress with the public advertisement and report the results to a future meeting of this Committee.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Should the committee agree with officers' recommendations, there will be a requirement to implement the necessary signage on Great Northern Road. The estimated cost of all signage will be approximately £3000.00 and can be accommodated from the future signage budget.

4. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

5. BACKGROUND/MAIN ISSUES

5.1 Great Northern Road – Bus Lane Operational Timings:

- 5.1.1 Following a request from bus operators, an instruction was issued to the LABOF (Local Authority and Bus Operator Forum) Executive Group from the LABOF Steering Group to consider the benefits that might accrue to bus passengers should the hours of operation of the bus lane on Great Northern Road be extended. This was in response to anecdotal evidence that the traditional peak traffic periods are spreading and that consequently buses are being held up by congestion during those hours when the bus lanes are not in operation. The view is, therefore, that passengers are not getting the benefit of bus lanes during those extended peak periods.
- 5.1.2 The Executive Group therefore requested that evidence should be gathered in the form of queue length surveys, to look into these claims. Observations were made on the westbound bus lane on Great Northern Road, between Society Lane and the Haudagain Retail Park (please refer to Appendix A).
- 5.1.3 The bus lane on Great Northern Road is operational from Monday to Saturday 0730 to 0930 and 1600 to 1800 hours. Based on the request issued from the Steering Group, the times investigated were:
1. 1500-1600 hours, before the bus lanes become operational in the PM peak; and
 2. 1800-1900 hours, after the bus lanes have ceased to operate in the PM peak.
- 5.1.4 Surveys were undertaken on Tuesday 9th September and Wednesday 29th October, thus avoiding school holiday periods which can create atypical traffic conditions and also avoiding the recent Mugiemooss Road closure. Between 1500-1600 hours the average queue length observed was 160m in the off side lane, the equivalent of approximately 32 car lengths, with the longest noted queue at 1525 hours being around 300m, approximately 60 car lengths.
- 5.1.5 If the bus lane was in operation between 1500 to 1600 hours, buses would be able to bypass this queue. On average 32 cars would be removed from the path of the buses (and up to 60 in some periods), allowing them to travel unobstructed for the full length of bus lane. 15 buses, 2 coaches and 20 taxis were observed using the bus lane between 1500 to 1600 hours, all of which would benefit if the bus lane start time was brought forward to 1500. The evening surveys (1800-1900) reveal no obvious pattern with surveys on Tuesday and Wednesday showing no queuing and another on a Friday showing some

queuing up to 1830. Between 1830 to 1900 hours no significant queues were observed and there were no delays to the buses.

5.1.6 Consideration was given to extending the length of bus lane on Great Northern Road, however officers believe that it would not be of any benefit for public transport as the vehicle queues did not extend past the current bus lane between 1500 to 1600 and 1800 to 1900 hours.

5.1.7 Therefore, in conclusion, buses, and consequently their passengers, would benefit if bus lane timings were adjusted from 1500 to 1830 hours on the Great Northern Road approach to the Haudagain roundabout. It should be noted that extending the bus lane operation to 1500 hours at this location would have minimal impact on the general traffic flow on this corridor as non-permitted vehicles were not observed to be using the left lane when the surveys were undertaken. The proposed extension of the bus lane operating hours would be matched by associated loading restrictions that operate concurrently.

6. IMPACT

The contents of this report link to the Community Plan vision of creating a sustainable City with an integrated transport system that is accessible to all.

An Equalities and Human Rights Impact Assessment (EHRIA) has been undertaken and determined to have positive implications in relation to several of the groups with protected characteristics.

The project identified in this report will assist in the delivery of actions identified in the Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) 2013, in particular the Thematic Priority of Safer Communities (Safer Roads) and the Multi-lateral Priority – Integrated Transport (Aberdeen is easy to access and move around in).

7. MANAGEMENT OF RISK

Were the recommendations of this report not accepted there is a risk that buses will continue to be held up by congestion during those hours when the bus lanes are not in operation and that, subsequently, passengers may not get the benefit of bus lanes when they are most needed. There is a risk of loss of patronage on buses if customers are continued to be held up along with other traffic as they may feel there is no perceived benefit of using buses over private car.

Furthermore there is a risk that motorists would criticise this particular scheme, however this can be addressed by providing information to the media explain the benefits of bus lane to public transport users, as was done during the implementation of the bus lane enforcement cameras.

8. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

9. REPORT AUTHOR DETAILS

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APPENDIX A

