

**SURREY COUNTY COUNCIL**

**CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT**

**DATE: 09 JUNE 2020**

**LEAD OFFICER: KATIE STEWART, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

**SUBJECT: BUS LANE OPERATION IN GUILDFORD**



**SUMMARY OF ISSUE:**

In February 2020 Cabinet approved a bus lane enforcement policy and delegated decisions regarding the operation and enforcement of bus lanes to the Cabinet Member for Highways and Director for Infrastructure & Operations.

This report seeks approval to amend the operational hours of bus lanes in Guildford and the types of vehicles that can use them to make bus journeys more reliable.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

It is recommended that:

1. Bus lanes in Guildford should operate 24 hours per day, 7 days per week with corresponding restrictions on waiting and parking in them (unless site specific circumstances prevent this) to enhance the Quality Bus Corridor Project.
2. By default, the bus Lanes are prioritised for use by local buses, pedal cycles and hackney carriages. Other vehicles such as motorcycles and HGV's should be excluded unless circumstances provide justification.
3. A statutory consultation is carried out to implement these changes, initially in Guildford (in conjunction with other proposals to improve bus routes, Guildford Quality Bus Corridor schemes) with the Cabinet member for Transport reviewing the outcome of the consultation before confirming any changes.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:**

The proposed improvements to the local bus network outlined in this report will:

- Improved bus journey time reliability and punctuality
- Increased levels of bus patronage
- Reduced bus journey times

This will help us achieve our 2030 Community Vision objectives

- Residents live in clean, safe and green communities where people and organisations embrace their environmental responsibilities.

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- Journeys across the county are easier, more predictable and safer

## **DETAILS:**

### **Background**

- 1 Buses are a vital mode of transport for Guildford carrying approximately 15,000 people per day, enabling users to access employment, commerce and other key services. With further homes proposed in the borough over the next 20 years, the bus network will become even more important, ensuring that an already congested road network is not overwhelmed by the increased number of daily journeys.
- 2 Bus routes within Guildford along the main bus corridors have been reviewed and are being prioritised for improvement work with £1,000,000 ring-fenced funding from LGF LEP (M3 Corridor). Planned improvements include shelters and waiting facilities, real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) and accessibility improvements.
- 3 A full report on the Guildford quality bus corridor project was presented to the Guildford Joint Committee on the 18 September 2019. [More information here.](#)
- 4 Detailed design has commenced for the first tranche of bus route improvements with implementation during 2020/2021. Feasibility work is also progressing to review the installation of intelligent bus priority at approximately 22 junctions along the key bus corridors.
- 5 One of the main bus corridors is Woodbridge Road where the lane has a number of pinch points that mean buses have to merge with queuing traffic, leading to delays. A proposed bus priority scheme along Woodbridge Road will greatly resolve this problem. Improvements are also planned to the existing bus stops and shelters and the project is supported by bus operators.

### **Operational Issues**

- 6 Bus lanes are obviously intended for use by buses (and cycles) but other classes of vehicle can be allowed to use them such as motorcycles, hackney carriages, mini cabs and HGV's. Most bus lanes in Surrey (primarily those in Guildford and Camberley) were introduced over 10 years ago. Since then design standards have changed and the Department for Transport (DfT) have issued new guidance and regulation governing the layout and usage of them.
- 7 The bus lane along Woodbridge Road and Onslow Street can currently be used by HGV's, and motorcycles. (in addition to cycles and hackney carriages) The changes to bus lane design standards mentioned above mean HGVs are no longer permitted to use lanes unless they are at least 4m wide. In addition any HGV usage of bus lanes requires authorisation from the DfT regardless of the width. The Woodbridge bus lane is generally 3m wide and therefore HGV use should now be prohibited.
- 8 Bus lanes can also provide a facility for cycling. In a 3m wide lane it may not be possible for another vehicle to overtake a cycle without moving into the adjacent traffic lane. Similarly cyclists should not be pushed out of the lane

when passing other vehicles so it is important to minimise the total number of vehicles using the lane.

- 9 Therefore, in order to promote more freely flowing bus lanes (and make them more attractive to cyclists) it is proposed to prohibit HGV's and motorcycles from their use. Hackney carriages will continue to be able to use the bus lanes. (this does not include private hire/mini cabs)
- 10 All bus lanes in Surrey (except Woking High Street which was installed two years ago after a long consultation process) have operational hours of 7am-10am and 4pm-7pm, Mon-Sat. Traffic levels have increased in the decade since the bus lanes were introduced and they tend to be situated on some of the busiest roads in the county. It is therefore proposed to extend the operational hours of bus lanes in Guildford to 24 hours per day, every day, to increase bus journey consistency and create a safer cycling facility for longer periods of the day.
- 11 The proposals described above will not alter existing arrangements whereby vehicles can cross over the bus lane to access adjacent premises or parking on private land.
- 12 The operation of other bus lanes around the county will be reviewed in a similar manner and further recommendations made during 2020/21.

#### **CONSULTATION:**

- 13 Initial consultation with bus operators indicates they are supportive of the proposals identified above. In order to implement changes we will need to amend the traffic orders governing the bus lanes. This will require a 28 day statutory consultation and we plan to include all the changes described above in the consultation.
- 14 As well as a notice in the local paper when the consultation starts we will put up street notices and letter drop properties that could be impacted by the proposals.
- 15 The Guildford Joint Committee have approved measures associated with the Quality Bus Corridor project. Guildford Borough Council have been involved in the discussion about proposals identified.

#### **RISK MANAGEMENT AND IMPLICATIONS:**

- 16 There is a risk that some of the proposed changes will not be supported by all highway users. The statutory consultation will identify potential objectors to the proposals and these views can be taken into account when deciding how to proceed.

#### **Financial and Value for Money Implications**

- 17 The changes described in this report to amend bus lane operating times and the usage in Woodbridge Road will be funded by the LEP quality bus corridor

scheme because many of the signs and road markings are being replaced as part of the improvement programme.

- 18 The changes to signing and road markings at other bus lanes will be carried out this financial year when the traffic order changes are completed. The cost is likely to be £10,000 and will be funded from the parking maintenance revenue budget.

#### **Section 151 Officer Commentary**

- 19 Although significant progress has been made over the last twelve months to improve the Council's financial position, the medium term financial outlook is uncertain as it is heavily dependent on decisions made by Central Government. With no clarity on these beyond 2020/21, our working assumption is that financial resources will continue to be constrained, as they have been for the majority of the past decade. This places an onus on the Council to continue to consider issues of financial sustainability as a priority in order to ensure stable provision of services in the medium term.
- 20 The costs of implementing these changes will be met from existing budgets and do not materially change any future costs.

#### **Legal Implications – Monitoring Officer**

- 21 It will be necessary to carry out a statutory consultation in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in order to amend the extent, operating times and classes of vehicles that are permitted to use bus lanes identified.
- 22 Surrey County Council has the power to enforce bus lane contraventions under section 144(3)(b) of the Transport Act 2000 and Schedule 8 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 and to delegate, if we so choose to Borough and District Councils. The delegation to Borough and District Councils is under powers in the Local Government Act 2000, together with associated regulations. The geographical area of Surrey has been designated as a Civil Enforcement Area for bus lane contraventions.

#### **Equalities and Diversity**

- 23 The recommendations in this report have no material impact on existing equality policy and therefore a full equalities assessment was not deemed necessary.
- 24 Before any changes are made on the highway, relevant and proportionate consultation will be carried out with users and interested parties.

#### **Other Implications:**

- 25 The potential implications for the following council priorities and policy areas have been considered. Where the impact is potentially significant a summary of the issues is set out in detail below.

Area assessed:	Direct Implications:
Corporate Parenting/Looked After Children	No significant implications arising from this report
Safeguarding responsibilities for vulnerable children and adults	No significant implications arising from this report
Environmental sustainability	No significant implications arising from this report
Public Health	No significant implications arising from this report

### **WHAT HAPPENS NEXT?**

- 26 If approved, a statutory consultation will be carried out to amend the bus lane operational hours in Guildford. This will also include LEP funded amendments to the bus lanes as part of the quality bus corridor project.
- 27 The LEP funded changes to the bus lanes in Woodbridge Road are planned to be implemented in Q3/Q4 2020/21.
- 28 Bus lane enforcement will be evaluated in combination with the changes described in this report.

**Contact Officer:**

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**Consulted:**

Passenger Transport Team  
 Transport Policy and Major Projects  
 Guildford Borough Council.

**Annexes:** None

**Sources/background papers:**

- Bus Lanes and Bus Lane Enforcement, Cabinet, 25 February 2020
- LEP Funded Schemes in Guildford, Guildford Joint Committee, 18 September 2019.

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