

GUILDFORD JOINT COMMITTEE**Report to Cabinet**

Subject: Concerns of the Guildford Joint Committee (GJC) regarding the proposed changes to the previous SCC Policy on the use of cameras to enforce Bus Lanes

Committee considered the item: 11 December 2019

Topic/Request:

Guildford Joint Committee (GJC) would like to implement bus lane enforcement in two roads in Guildford as soon as possible but subject to at least the majority of any surpluses from this being used for measures to reduce congestion in Guildford.

Summary:

The published main agenda for the GJC meeting on December 11th included an item (13) on the use of cameras for the enforcement of bus lanes in Guildford. A supplementary agenda included a statement from the SCC Cabinet Member for Highways on changes that being proposed to the previously published SCC Policy on this. As a result, there was a lengthy debate on this item.

At the end of the debate, the GJC members

- (i) **AGREED** that it is supportive in principle of the introduction of bus-lane enforcement at Onslow Street and Woking Road and would like to see it introduced by the beginning of the 2020/21 financial year, subject to the approval by this committee of the final financial arrangements relating to schemes within the borough.
- (ii) **RECOMMENDED** further discussion on both the delivery mechanism and the financial mechanism for the distribution of any surpluses.

* Of the 16 Members present, 14 voted in favour of this motion, 2 abstained.

Background:

1. Guildford has more heavily used bus lanes than any other part of Surrey. In particular, there are two existing bus lanes (Onslow Street and Woking Road) where most local Members and Officers understand that there was a disappointingly high level of non-compliance. One of the Guildford schemes for which EM3/LEP funding had been obtained was for the creation of "Quality Bus Corridors". This scheme was due to be implemented in 2020/21 and would involve extensions to 2 other existing bus lanes and the creation of another new one. The GJC wished to install cameras in these 3 bus lanes at the same time in 2020/21.
2. In October 2018, SCC Cabinet agreed a Bus Lane Enforcement Policy which authorised the then Head of Highways and Transportation, in consultation with the Cabinet Lead Member for Place, to enter into any new bus lane agreements, subject to support from the Local or Joint Committee and to review and agree any future financial arrangements for each Borough or District. Following this decision, the Chairmen investigated funding for this approach and was informed that there was no central budget for the installation of cameras or officer investigation into the viability of cameras on these routes, so this funding would be need to be found from the joint

committee funding. When considering financial viability of the scheme it was presumed that the surpluses would be distributed using the same formula used for the distribution of any surpluses from on-street parking enforcement i.e. 20% to the Central Highways Budget, 20% to the Borough or District Council and 60% to the Local or Joint Committee as per the pilot scheme in Woking.

3. In March 2019, as a result of strong partnership between the two authorities, the GJC allocated £35k SCC highways funding to pump prime the installation of the cameras and Guildford Borough Council Parking team agreed to provide the officer resource. Guildford had a long list of requests for road safety measures that are awaiting funding. The fact that it was approved unanimously again indicates the support for getting on with the installation of the first 2 cameras in 2019/20.
4. The GJC working group that considers highways matters (including this project) concluded the investigation work in November 2019 and agreed that it should be included on the formal GJC agenda for consideration in that December. The new Cabinet Member for Highways has been involved in these discussions as a member of this group but did not give an indication that there was a likelihood of a countywide scheme in the near future.
5. Only after the publication of the agenda for this GJC meeting did the Cabinet Member for Highways tell the Chairman that he intended to make two proposals relating to the Policy agreed by the Cabinet in October 2018. The first of these was that there should now be a single enforcement agency for the whole County. The second was that the Woking precedent was not being carried forward and that 100% of any surplus from bus lane enforcement in Guildford would now go to Central Highways for use throughout the County. A written statement regarding these changes was subsequently received and included in a supplementary agenda circulated the day before the meeting.
6. At the meeting, the Committee were very disappointed by this last minute change in approach. They felt that most of any County wide surplus was likely to be raised in Guildford and that at least a majority of this should therefore be spent on measures to reduce congestion in Guildford. There was also general disappointment that this project would be delayed as it had previously been prioritised.
7. In addition, the media reports about this since the committee have focussed almost entirely on the possibility of funding being spent outside of the borough rather than the positives that could be delivered as a result of the enforcement being implemented. Local respondents to these media reports have been overwhelmingly in favour of money generated in Guildford being spent locally.
8. The Committee is concerned that the cameras will not be ready to be installed by the end of 2019/2020 nor on the same timescale as the Quality Bus Corridor schemes in 2020/21, which would lead to a reduced surplus and benefits of increased bus usage and less congestion that would arise from the enforcement.

The Cabinet is asked to

- a) Reconsider the proposal to centrally hold and allocate surplus funding raised in Guildford to highways projects throughout the County but rather ensure that at least the majority of this is spent on measures to reduce congestion in Guildford and
- b) Ensure that the new enforcement scheme will be implemented in time for cameras to be installed along the Woking Road and Onslow Street bus lanes and active by April 2020.

Reply from Mr Matt Furniss, Cabinet Member for Highways

The content of the report is noted and, as advised to the Guildford Joint Committee Chairman, a report on bus lane enforcement is being considered at the February Cabinet meeting. It is positive that Members of the Joint Committee support the principle of bus lane enforcement in their area.

The County Council is committed to the green agenda and supporting more sustainable transport modes such as walking, cycling and bus provision across the entire County. If any surplus is generated from efficient and well managed bus lane enforcement, it will be used to contribute to supporting this agenda.

This page is intentionally left blank