

## Highways Committee

12 March 2014



### Standardisation of existing bus lane TRO's to allow use by buses, taxis, motorcycles and cycles

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#### Report of Ian Thompson Corporate Director Regeneration and Economic Development

#### Councillor Neil Foster, Cabinet Portfolio Holder Regeneration and Economic Development

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##### 1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 To advise Members of the objections received to the formal consultation on the proposed standardisation of all existing bus lane Traffic Regulation Orders in the county to permit use by buses, taxis, motorcycles and cycles.
- 1.2 To request members consider the objections made during the consultation exercise.

##### 2.0 Background

- 2.1 Transport Act 2000 states that an area of road is or forms part of a bus lane if the Traffic Regulation Order provides that it may be used:

Only by buses (or a particular description of a bus), or

Only by buses (or a particular description of a bus) and some other class or classes of vehicle

- 2.2 High quality, road based public transport systems are vital in order to achieve maximum effectiveness from the road network. The majority of public transport in the County is provided by buses, which can transport relatively large numbers of people, whilst occupying limited road space.
- 2.3 There are currently 12 bus lanes throughout the county that are a combination of Bus only, bus and cycle only and bus, cycle and motorcycle only (Location Plans can be found in Appendix 2)
- 2.4 Currently neighbouring Authorities Newcastle, Sunderland and North Tyneside have a combination of bus, cycle, motor cycle, taxi and no car lanes, however, Newcastle City Council are currently in the process of changing their no car lanes back to bus, taxi, motorcycle and cycle only lanes in line with our own proposals.

- 2.5 It is hoped the proposals will encourage the use of more sustainable modes of transport and reduce congestion and pollution by reducing journey times for taxis, cycles and motorcycles as well as buses.
- 2.6 Taxis play an important part in local public transport as they provide a flexible form of public transport and can play an increasingly important role in improving accessibility. They provide a door to door service available on the street that is not provided in any other way and therefore can be considered complimentary to the timetabled services operated by the bus companies.
- 2.7 For a number of years requests have been received from the taxi trade to allow taxis to also use bus lanes. This request has been made on the basis that it will allow them to provide a cheaper quicker and more efficient service for their customers.
- 2.8 Taxi is the generic term for vehicles that can be hired by the public for personal travel. They are licensed by the local authority and fall into two categories, which are Hackney Carriages and Private hire vehicles.
- 2.9 A hackney carriage is a public transport vehicle that can “ply for hire”. This means that it may stand at taxis ranks or be hailed in the street by a member of the public.
- 2.10 Private hire vehicles are similar vehicles to Hackney Carriages. A Private Hire Vehicle is constructed or adapted to seat fewer than 9 passengers and is provided for hire with the services of a driver for the purpose of carrying passengers. All journeys made via a Private Hire Vehicle must be pre-booked through a licensed private hire operator.
- 2.11 For the purpose of this report and the proposals contained in it, the word taxi as defined in Statutory Instrument 2002 No.3113: Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002 refers only to Hackney Carriages and not private hire vehicles.
- 2.12 There are currently 1077 hackney vehicles and 331 private hire vehicles licensed with Durham County Council.

### **3.0 Proposals**

- 3.1 It is proposed that 11 of the bus lanes in the County are amended to allow use by Buses, taxis, motorcycles and cycles and extended to include Sundays as detailed below.
- 3.2 A167 Foster Terrace, Croxdale – TRO to change from Bus and Cycle only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).

- 3.3 A167 North of Sniperley Roundabout, Durham City – TRO to change from Buses only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.4 A167 Pity Me, Durham – TRO to change from Buses only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.5 A181 Gilesgate Bank – TRO to change from Bus, motorcycle and cycle only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.6 A690 Stonebridge – TRO to change from Bus, Cycle & Motorcycle only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.7 A690 Belmont Interchange to Gilesgate Roundabout, Durham City – TRO to change from Buses only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.8 A690/C13 Interchange, Durham District – TRO to change from Bus and cycle only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.9 A690/A691 Millburngate junction, and Unclassified Millburngate, Durham City – TRO to change from Buses only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) and no entry to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday) and no entry.
- 3.10 B6532 Dryburn Road, Durham City – TRO to change from Buses and Cycles only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.11 C12 High Carr Road (Southbound), Durham – TRO to change from Buses and Cycles only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).
- 3.12 C184 Newcastle Road, Chester Le Street – TRO to change from Buses and cycles only (7am-7pm Monday to Saturday) to Bus, Cycle, Taxi & Motorcycle only, (7am-7pm Monday to Sunday).

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3.13 Following the consultation process, objections to the proposals were received from both of the major bus operators in the area, Go NE and Arriva.

**4.0 Objection 1 – Taxis operating in the wrong direction against the flow of traffic.**

**5.0 Response**

5.1 This will not be an issue within the County as all of the bus lanes are with traffic and not contraflows.

**6.0 Objection 2 – Taxis parking in bus lanes and causing delays whilst buses have to re-join the normal traffic lanes**

**7.0 Response**

7.1 This is unlikely to be an issue within Durham as the majority of the bus lanes are not within residential areas or areas likely to generate fares that would require taxis to stop.

**8.0 Objection 3 - Taxis changing lanes when overtaking a slower moving bus irrespective of other traffic in normal running lanes.**

**9.0 Response**

9.1 Whilst a taxi is in the bus lane it would be expected to behave as a bus would, therefore if a bus was to be stopped in front or indeed if the bus was moving more slowly, the taxi would be expected to remain behind the bus until it moved away or turns off the road.

**10.0 Objection 4 - Taxis performing u-turns in front of traffic after picking up a fare in a bus lane**

**11.0 Response**

11.1 This is unlikely to be an issue within Durham as the majority of the bus lanes are not within residential areas or areas likely to generate fares that would require taxis to stop.

**12.0 Objection 5 – Delays to buses when taxis block bus lanes, which could occur in Milburngate**

**13.0 Response**

13.1 Surveys have shown the existing number of taxis using Milburngate is less than 1 every 2 minutes at peak times therefore it is unlikely delays to buses will occur as a result.

**14.0 Objection 6 – Delays to buses leaving the bus lane when merging due to the number of extra vehicles in the bus lane**

**15.0 Response**

15.1 Surveys at the sites of the two busiest bus lanes has shown that there is not a significant number of taxis using these roads during peak times, therefore it is unlikely that delays will occur as a result.

15.2 **Objection 7 – The speed of taxis in bus lanes regularly exceed normal traffic speeds and causes conflicts where merging**

16.0 **Response**

16.1 The speed of all vehicles is governed by existing speed limits and taxis would be expected to adhere to these limits.

16.2 **Objection 8 – Increased congestion at Millburngate will make it difficult for buses to turn left at the lights**

17.0 **Response**

17.1 It is not expected that the proposed changes will generate any additional vehicles on the existing network and a surveys have shown the existing number of taxis using Millburngate is less than 1 every 2 minutes at peak times therefore it is unlikely delays will occur as a result.

18.0 **Local member consultation**

18.1 The Local members Cllrs Blakey/Williams/Plews, Hopgood/Simmons/Wilkes, Moir/Corrigan/Conway/Ormerod, Turnbull/Taylor, Holland/Martin and May/Smith have been consulted and offer no objection to the proposals.

19.0 **Recommendation**

19.1 It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee endorse the proposal having considered the objections and proceed with the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Orders;

**Background Papers**

Correspondence and documentation on Traffic Office File and in member's library.

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance** – DCC Capital

**Staffing** – Carried out by Strategic Traffic

**Risk** – Not Applicable

**Equality and Diversity** – It is considered that there are no Equality and Diversity issues to be addressed.

**Accommodation** - No impact on staffing

**Crime and Disorder** - This TRO will allow effective management of traffic to improve economic activity, reduce congestion and improve road safety

**Human Rights** - No impact on human rights

**Consultation** – Is in accordance with SI:2489

**Procurement** – Operations, DCC.

**Disability Issues** - None

**Legal Implications:** All orders have been advertised by the County Council as highway authority and will be made in accordance with legislative requirements.

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## **Appendix 2: Bus Lane Locations**

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