
DARLINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL
(STONEBRIDGE AND ST CUTHBERT'S WAY) (BUS LANES) ORDER 2005

Responsible Cabinet Member(s) - Councillor Nick Wallis,
Highways and Transport Portfolio

Responsible Director(s) - John Buxton, Director of Development and Environment

Purpose of Report

1. To seek Members approval to set aside the objection to the above mentioned Traffic Regulation Order (TRO).

Information and Analysis

2. As part of the 'Pedestrian Heart Project' bus services in the town centre have been reviewed and changes to bus routes are proposed. In order to help maintain effective bus operations various measures are being incorporated and in the Stonebridge/St Cuthbert's Way area a bus lane is proposed. This bus lane will run from east of the junction of Stonebridge and Crown Street to terminate at a 'bus gate' in St Cuthbert's Way approximately at the existing pelican crossing. The dedicated bus lane will allow buses to travel along Stonebridge and then turn left onto St Cuthbert's Way without having to give way to other traffic at the roundabout. (**See plan attached.**)

A bus gate is a traffic signal layout that allows buses to have their own dedicated lane, traffic signal heads and traffic phase. This allows the opportunity for the signals to take better account of the needs of buses within the overall traffic arrangements.

3. The TRO was advertised on the 9 November 2004 and the objection period closed on the 10 December 2004. One objection was received from the Freight Transport Association (FTA), which is summarised below:

'The Freight Transport Association is a strong advocate for all modes of transport to fully utilise road space capacity. Thus we feel that commercial/heavy goods vehicles should not be excluded from this equation.

I must inform you that the Freight Transport Association, on behalf of its members, objects to the said order.'

This is a general response from the FTA and whilst this may be appropriate at certain locations, the use of bus lanes by HGVs needs to be considered on a location-by-location basis. In this case the use of the proposed bus lane by other vehicle types would adversely affect the operation of the bus gate. This would reduce the effective operation of the bus services using this piece of road and would be contrary to the objectives of the bus lane.

For this reason the objection should be set aside.

4. The Chief Constable has also responded to the advertising of the proposed traffic regulation order. Whilst no formal written comment has been made regarding the bus lane, we have been made aware of support for the bus lane. However, the Police have lodged an objection to the proposed bus gate *'on the grounds of adverse impact on emergency vehicle response times and on the issue of road safety.'* Further consideration is therefore being given to the operation of the bus gate with a view to achieving a mutually acceptable layout that will secure the support of the Chief Constable. I would reiterate that this is NOT an objection to the bus lane or the associated TRO.

Outcome of Consultation

5. Consultation took place with the usual statutory consultees including Freight Transport Association; Road Haulage Association; the emergency services of Police, Fire and Ambulance; Bus Operators and Motoring Organisations. Apart from the FTA and Police, the only other response was made by Arriva who supported the proposed Bus Lane TRO.

Legal Implications

6. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998

7. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

Council Policy Framework

8. The issues contained within this report do not represent change to Council policy or the Council's policy framework

Decision Deadline

9. For the purpose of the 'call-in' procedure this represents an urgent matter since the TRO needs to be actioned as soon as possible to help meet the projected timetable and spending profile for the project.

Recommendation

10. It is recommended that:
 - (a) The objection by the Freight Transport Association to the proposed Darlington Borough Council (Stonebridge and St Cuthbert's Way) (Bus Lanes) Order 2005 be set aside and approval be given to the making of the Traffic Regulation Order.

- (b) The Borough Solicitor be authorised to carry out the necessary procedures to make the Traffic Regulation Order.

Reasons

11. The recommendations are supported by the following reasons:

- (a) To allow the making of the Traffic Regulation Order.
- (b) To expedite the implementation of this part of the Pedestrian Heart Project.

John Buxton
Director of Development and Environment

Background Papers

- (i) Plan showing proposed bus lane.
- (ii) Consultation letter and responses.

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cc