

Report to: Lead Member for Transport & Environment

Date of meeting: 21 January 2019

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: A259 Bexhill Road Bus Lanes Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

Purpose: To consider the inclusion of cyclists, along with taxis and powered two-wheelers within Phase 1 of Bexhill Road bus lanes and to extend the length of the experimental period to a maximum of 18 months.

RECOMMENDATIONS The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Agree to the implementation of a trial permitting cyclists, powered two-wheelers and taxis to use the Phase 1 bus lanes along the A259 Bexhill Road;**
 - (2) To authorise the inclusion of cycling (along with powered two-wheelers and taxis) in the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order for the Phase 1 A259 Bexhill Road bus lanes; and**
 - (3) To extend the trial period to a maximum of 18 months.**
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1. Background

1.1. Delivery of the A259 Bexhill Road bus lane between Glyne Gap and Filsham Road forms part of the planning consent for the Bexhill to Hastings Link Road (BHLR). In addition to this planning obligation, the implementation of the bus priority measures was a condition of the Department for Transport's (DfT) funding approval for the BHLR.

1.2. The bus priority proposals were developed during 2013 with a public consultation being undertaken between 31 January and 28 February 2014. The public consultation material highlighted the intention of permitting cycling in the bus lanes. The results of this consultation were presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment on 28 April 2014. The responses included requests from the public for cycling to be permitted in the bus lanes. The Lead Member resolved to approve the development of the bus lane scheme for detailed design and construction. A copy of the report with the Consultation Response Summary is included in Appendix 1.

1.3. Detailed design and construction for the bus priority measures is being carried out in three phases. The first phase, the section between Glyne Gap Service Station and Harley Shute Road, has now been constructed and a plan of this phase is included in Appendix 2. The detailed design and construction of other phases, the western section at Glyne Gap and the eastern section at West St Leonards School and the Filsham Road junction, will be completed in 2019.

1.4. The Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) necessary to implement the bus lanes in Phase 1 was advertised in early 2017. The Planning Committee considered the objections received and resolved in May 2017 to recommend to the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport that the TRO be made as advertised. Following completion of the construction of Phase 1 bus lanes between Glyne Gap and Filsham Road, the TRO was sealed on 2 November 2018 and the Phase 1 bus lanes became operational on 12 November 2018. This TRO permits use of the bus lanes by buses only. A copy of the sealed TRO is provided in Appendix 3.

1.5. On 22 January 2018 authority was sought from the Lead Member to progress with a trial to allow powered two-wheelers (PTWs) and taxis to use the bus lanes along the A259 Bexhill Road for a 12 month period and to authorise the making of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order (ETRO) on this basis. A copy of this report is provided in Appendix 4.

2. Supporting information

2.1. In order to implement an ETRO the initial TRO must be sealed and a 6 week challenge period on the validity of that Order should pass before the ETRO is introduced. The challenge period for the Phase 1 'bus only' TRO has now passed. The maximum length of an ETRO is 18 months. Objections to the ETRO being made permanent can be made within the first 6 months of the trial period and will be reported to Planning Committee who will consider the objections and make a recommendation on whether they should be upheld. Further to this recommendation the Director of Communities, Economy and Transport will make a decision on whether the ETRO should be made permanent (with or without minor amendments). If feedback or an objection is received during this period that suggests a substantial change to the experiment, then that change can be made subject to approval by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment. The experiment can then proceed for a further 6 month period; objections can then be made over that period from the day that the ETRO is changed.

2.2 It has always been the intention that cyclists would be permitted to use the bus lanes on the A259 Bexhill Road. However, since the original consultation in 2014, permission has only been sought and authorised by the Lead Member for Transport and Environment for trial use of the bus lanes by PTWs and taxis. Since their introduction we have received a number of requests from the public to permit cyclists in the bus lanes. For this reason it is proposed to introduce an ETRO which permits use by all three additional modes, namely cyclists, PTWs and taxis in the Phase 1 bus lanes.

2.3 We have undertaken a safety audit of the A259 Bexhill Road between Harley Shute Road and Glyne Gap and the design for the bus lanes. This did not identify any issues in allowing use by cyclists and taxis. This was followed by a safety review for the inclusion of PTWs which did not identify any major concerns but suggested close monitoring of bus lanes during the trial period.

2.4 Before and after surveys will be undertaken to assess the impact of the trial. Our Highways team will arrange for the installation of the necessary cameras and data recording equipment, and provide for the regular monitoring of the information available. Sussex Police will be approached on a proactive basis in relation to accident data over the duration of the trial.

2.5 In the report presented to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment in January 2018, it was resolved that the ETRO trial should run for 12 months. However this may not allow enough time to consider any objections received during the first 6 months, alter the ETRO if necessary and implement any changes that may be deemed necessary, provide a further 6 month objection period and consider new objections. It is therefore considered prudent to extend the trial period to a maximum of 18 months. Any objections received would be presented to Planning Committee for consideration and a decision on whether to make the ETRO permanent or to make minor changes would be made by the Director for Communities, Economy and Transport. A report to the Lead Member for Transport and Environment would be required if a substantial change to the ETRO was proposed.

2.6 It is also proposed that additional wording is incorporated within the ETRO to explicitly confirm that loading/unloading of goods and picking up/setting down of passengers is permitted within the bus lanes.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

3.1 Phase 1 of the A259 Bexhill Road bus lane (between Glyne Gap and Filsham Road) in Hastings is part of the BHLR complementary measures and came into effect in November 2018. At present, the TRO only allows buses to use the bus lane. Allowing cyclists, as well as PTWs and taxis, to use the bus lane would potentially reduce the exposure of riders to general traffic, improve safety and reduce journey times as well as reduce pollution levels.

3.2 Safety audits and assessments have not identified any issues with cyclists, PTWs or taxis using the A259 Bexhill Road Phase 1 bus lanes which would prevent a trial going ahead. Therefore, it is recommended that the Lead Member agrees that an ETRO is advertised permitting cyclists, PTWs and taxis to use the bus lanes along Phase 1 of the A259 Bexhill Road for a maximum of 18 months on a trial basis.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Beaver

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None