

Subject:	Trial scheme to allow powered two wheelers to use bus lanes		
Date of Meeting:	27 November 2012		
Report of:	Strategic Director, Place		
Contact Officer:	Name:	Matthew Thompson	Tel: 29-0235
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Ward(s) affected:	Patcham, Withdean and Rottingdean Coastal		

FOR GENERAL RELEASE**1. SUMMARY AND POLICY CONTEXT:**

- 1.1 The Government Motorcycling Strategy published in February 2005, seeks to facilitate motorcycling as a choice of travel within a safe and sustainable transport framework. This sets out policy issues to consider and recommends care should be taken to mitigate foreseeable and avoidable risks.
- 1.2 Many UK towns and cities have run monitored experimental schemes which subsequently became permanent. Transport for London (TfL) introduced a London wide trial scheme in January 2009. Following two consecutive monitoring studies the scheme was made permanent on the majority of London's red routes on 23 January 2012.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That the Transport Committee agrees to the proposal to allow a 12 month trial scheme to allow powered two wheelers (PTW) to access bus lanes on the A23 from Carden Avenue to Preston Drove and the A259 from the authority boundary at Saltdean to the Ovingdean roundabout together with monitoring sites and a public information campaign.

3. RELEVANT BACKGROUND INFORMATION/CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS:

- 3.1 UK cities and London boroughs began experimenting with allowing PTW to access bus lanes in the mid 1990s with the aim of improving safety & reducing journey times, encouraging modal shift away from car use and reducing emissions.
- 3.2 The Department for Transport's (DfT) Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/07 sets out the factors to consider, such as the impact on other vulnerable road users, and emphasises the need for careful monitoring and site analysis using experimental traffic orders. It recommends that bus lanes should have a minimum preferred width of at least 4m.

- 3.3 Prior to the TfL reports of 2010 and 2011 into the London experimental scheme, studies of earlier UK schemes had produced no statistically robust conclusions. No major concerns had emerged, although motorcyclist behaviour (e.g. lane discipline) and certain site characteristics (high flows and a large number of side roads) were identified as potential problems. Roads with high numbers of junctions and high numbers of bus and taxi movements to the kerb were identified as potential issues.
- 3.4 TfL began an experimental scheme in January 2009. The first study of this scheme by TRL after 10 months was extremely detailed, with the primary objective of assessing changes on trial and control routes, but also on the wider bus lane network. It raised doubts over modal shift claims, confirmed that bus and general traffic had been largely unimpeded, and raised significant concerns over PTW speed increases, collision rate increases and the severity of collisions involving PTW. However, as the study was based on just 10 months of collision data, the minimum required to accurately assess any reasonably large effects, its conclusions were therefore called into question. The scheme continued and TfL responded to this study with an enforcement and publicity campaign and continued to monitor its sites.
- 3.5 Following the study, the London borough of Ealing took the decision not to continue their part of the scheme on the basis of the motorcyclist collision findings, and a numerically small but statistically large rise in cyclist casualties (173%). Officers suggested that the most likely reason for the increase is that cyclists were riding closer to the kerb (because of motorcycles passing fast and close) making them less visible to other road users.
- 3.6 The second TfL study in 2011 took great care to be comparable to the first study, using a further 10 months of data to compare with the original study's findings. It confirmed collision rates had increased and that more PTW were exceeding the speed limit, suggested there may have been a small and statistically insignificant effect on overall cyclist collisions and that the majority of PTW collisions were with cars resulting in slight injuries. TfL took the decision to make the scheme permanent in January 2012.
- 3.7 Subsequent studies in other UK cities have not reached robust conclusions. Bristol did not review its scheme until 2006, when a study looking at the previous 12 months of accident data compared to the three years worth of collision data prior to the introduction of the scheme in June 1995. The study showed casualty decreases at some sites and increases elsewhere, and was complicated by the fact that Bristol had part time bus lanes, which were found to be much less safe for cyclists and motorcyclists than 24 hour lanes. The study's most significant finding was that data showed motorcyclists and cyclists are vulnerable to left turns across their paths from general traffic lanes. It recommended a publicity campaign to clarify the terms of the scheme with all road users, and specific monitoring techniques.
- 3.8 Bristol City Council officers have recently compiled a further 36 months worth of accident data to December 2011 on three arterial bus lanes. The three sections of road chosen are major routes into the city and highly trafficked with a significant number of side roads. This data suggests increases in motorcycle

casualties of between 13 and 38% compared to the three years immediately after the changes to allow motorcycles in bus lanes. However, Avon & Somerset police do not share these concerns and are supportive of the scheme's continuation.

- 3.9 Comparable unitary authorities such as Derby and Reading have conducted studies into schemes which have not revealed significant concerns. Reading have used a contrasting coloured surface that seems to have mitigated the risk of collisions caused by vehicles turning left from the general traffic lane across the bus lane into side roads. In the last year, the central area has been restricted to bus, cycle and taxi only with limited goods vehicle access due to the high number of pedestrian casualties. However, the A & B arterial routes remain open to PTW.
- 3.10 East Sussex County Council have previously stated they would like a joint review with BHCC on this issue. ESCC's Transport Planning team believe that any scheme on the A259 would prompt them to consider the situation over the boundary, as to do otherwise would result in confusion for all. Officers have requested senior managers give BHCC a detailed response on the subject of allowing PTWs to use the A259 bus lane between Telscombe Cliffs and the authority boundary at Saltdean.
- 3.11 Ownership of PTW in Brighton & Hove remains low, accounting for less than 1% of traffic on selected sites. There is no evidence that the use of PTW for commuting has increased during the economic downturn. The policy seems unlikely to result in significant modal shift if studies elsewhere are anything to go by, and even if it did, the emissions and fuel savings are also unlikely to be significant.
- 3.12 Motorcycle groups assert that a large number of PTW using the city's arterial routes come from outside the city for specific festivals and events as well as commuting purposes. However, the available traffic count data from sites on key arterial routes (A23, A270 and A259) suggests that, even when weekend leisure figures are included, PTW account for less than half of 1% of total traffic.
- 3.13 Emissions savings from the policy could be calculated, but Environment Protection team officers point out that many of the city's air quality problem sites are adjacent to streets where bus lanes don't feature, or there is not enough space for one. They say such a scheme would be a welcome idea for air quality, but is not likely to make a significant difference.
- 3.14 PTW casualties have increased in Brighton and Hove with 125 casualties including 2 fatalities and 41 seriously injured in 2011. The 2011 figures are significantly higher than the three year average of 114, with serious casualties up 33%. Fatalities have not significantly increased over the last 3 years. In 2011, casualties on A or B roads or near their junctions represented 56% of all PTW casualties.
- 3.15 Conclusions
Bearing in mind current DfT guidance and the concerns raised by key stakeholders (see below), any trial should exclude the central area where bus lanes are below the minimum recommended width of 4m. Bus/ Taxi/ Cyclist only

corridors should not be included because of the risk to pedestrians and other vulnerable RU's. This leaves two arterial routes which currently have bus lanes to consider – the A259 (Saltdean to Ovingdean Roundabout) and the A23 (north of Preston Drove). Any trial on these routes is unlikely to have a significant effect on emissions or modal shift, and the impact on bus services is likely to be minimal. Safety needs to remain the primary focus of any monitoring scheme given the current situation with PTW casualties. The opportunity to work with motorcycling groups on a public safety campaign publicising the trial could have wider benefits in terms of PTW casualty reduction.

- 3.16 If it is clear during the trial that road safety has been significantly adversely affected there must be an option to end the trial immediately and rescind the TRO allowing PTWs to use the bus lanes in that particular area.

4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION

- 4.1 For the purposes of the preliminary study, key stakeholders were consulted with the assurance that while the decision to draw up any further proposal would be made on the basis of this report's conclusion, the decision on a specific scheme to allow PTW to use bus lanes would be made through the Council's democratic processes including a formal public and stakeholder consultation.
- 4.2 The majority of Brighton and Hove stakeholders have not expressed opposition to limited trial schemes on the A23 and the A259 outside the central area, but do not want to see central areas with narrower bus lanes and substantial pedestrian traffic, or bus/ taxi/ cycle corridors included.
- 4.3 Sussex Police echo these concerns, and have voiced some concerns about other vehicles being encouraged to use bus lanes if PTW are allowed to, creating enforcement issues.
- 4.4 Bricycles are opposed to a trial on the grounds of cyclist safety, the possible negative impact on walking and cycling rates, and health and environmental impacts from PTW emissions and noise. They are concerned about encroachment of PTW's onto advanced stop lines (ASLs) at junctions, and express scepticism that this will encourage all vehicles to stick to the new 20mph limits when they come into force. They echo criticism by the CTC and the London Cycling campaign of TFL's "over optimistic interpretation" of their own studies which led to the decision to make the London wide scheme permanent.

5. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:

Financial Implications:

- 5.1 Capital: There is a budget of £45,000 for monitoring costs within the LTP capital budget for 2012-13 which will be used to fund the costs of the trial this year.
- 5.2 Indicative implementation costs are £15,000, and this could be funded from the LTP capital budget in 2013-14.

Finance Officer Consulted: Name Karen Brookshaw Date: 02/11/12

Legal Implications:

- 5.3 An Experimental Traffic Regulation Order will be required to introduce these changes and advertised in accordance with the relevant legislation. Experimental orders can continue in force for up to 18 months. Objections can be made to an experimental order for six months from the date that it is made. Any objections to the experimental order must be considered before any order giving permanent effect to the changes is made. There are no adverse human rights implications arising from this report

Lawyer Consulted: Carl Hearsom Date: 02/11/12

Equalities Implications:

- 5.3 None

Sustainability Implications:

- 5.4 The potential for modal shift away from car use and emissions reductions are likely to be minimal, although

Crime & Disorder Implications:

- 5.5 See Comments from Sussex Police under section 4.3

Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:

- 5.6 Any risks will be monitored as part of the overall project management. A full risk register is being developed as part of the evaluation of the scheme.

Public Health Implications:

- 5.7 The risks and impact on road traffic casualties is a key indicator as to the success of the project. These will be assessed at the midway point of the monitoring period and again at the end of the 12 month period

Corporate / Citywide Implications:

- 5.8 The A259 and the A23 are key routes into the city and therefore any implications of the scheme will be monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation.

6. EVALUATION OF ANY ALTERNATIVE OPTION(S):

- 6.1 As stated within the report, the A23 bus lanes south of Preston Drive are too narrow and vulnerable road users such as pedestrians and other vulnerable road users in this area are already a concern. The bus lanes north of Preston Drive and on the A259 from the authority boundary at Saltdean to Ovingdean

roundabout are wider and are deemed the most appropriate for the 12 month trial.

7. REASONS FOR REPORT RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The A259 (Saltdean/ Rottingdean/ Ovingdean) bus lanes are currently used by many PTWs, especially at peak times to avoid the congestion. There is no evidence that this has resulted in any increase in road user conflict, although it is currently unlawful. Evidence from other studies suggests legalising usage would increase PTWs in the bus lanes by around 10%.
- 7.2 The A259 bus lanes have very few left turn opportunities to create the risk of conflict that the studies undertaken have identified as a potential hazard. However, the lack of junctions to the left mean it is not typical and therefore not a good guide to how a typical layout might operate, but it would enable PTW riders to avoid the congestion on the A259 lawfully.
- 7.3 Allowing PTWs to use the A23 bus lanes between Patcham and Preston Drove for a period of 12 months would provide a more representative sample for the trial. There are numerous junctions and entrances along this stretch of road, so it could prove a more reliable data on PTW use than the A259.
- 7.4 The new bus lanes on the A270 have only recently been consulted on and will not be completed for another year subject to TRO considerations. The Lewes Road Corridor proposals did not include a proposal to allow PTW to use these lanes, and therefore any trial on this route would be inappropriate.
- 7.5 Based on the experience and recommendations of studies of similar schemes in other local authorities, there are some caveats to any trial period:
- The trial should be implemented by way of a structured project with identified funding and project lead officer.
 - The trial area must be monitored with sites in areas with at least 4m width bus lanes and significant stretches of continuous bus lane. This is particularly important to assess any impact on casualties.
 - Monitoring should include traffic counts, video surveys and speed surveys.
 - Six junctions along the A23 bus route will require treatment with coloured surfaces to mark the path of the bus lane clearly across them. (No through roads will not be treated).
 - Temporary TROs and changes to signage will be needed to conform to legislation.
 - A comprehensive promotion and publicity campaign is required to make the parameters of the trial clear to all road users across the City.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

Appendices:

1. Report into the proposal to allow PTW to use bus lanes in Brighton and Hove

Background Documents

1. Traffic Advisory leaflet 2/07 – The use of Bus lanes by Motorcycles (DfT:2007).
2. Assessment of TfL's experimental scheme to allow motorcycles onto with-flow bus lanes on the TLRN (TRL: 2010)
3. Motorcycles in bus lanes – monitoring of the second TfL trial (TRL: 2011)
4. Bristol bus lane safety study (Capita Symonds:2006).

