

DEPUTATIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A period of not more than fifteen minutes shall be allowed at each ordinary meeting of the Council for the hearing of deputations from members of the public. Each deputation may be heard for a maximum of five minutes following which one Member of the Council, nominated by the Mayor, may speak in response. It shall then be moved by the Mayor and voted on without discussion that the spokesperson for the deputation be thanked for attending and its subject matter noted.

Notification of one Deputation has been received. The spokesperson is entitled to speak for 5 minutes.

Deputation: Tackling congestion on the A259 which is limiting the access of buses to the bus lane with journeys now taking up to 65% longer than in 2010**(1) Spokesperson – Nigel Smith**

Supported by:
Rob Shepherd
Lynne Moss,
Sean Flanagan,
John Bryant,

Ward affected: All

Councillor Heley, Chair of the Environment, Transport & Sustainability Committee will reply.

Deputation: Tackling congestion on the A259 which is limiting the access of buses to the bus lane with journeys now taking up to 65% longer than in 2010**Spokesperson – Nigel Smith**

I am part of the A259 action group which is endorsed by Lewes District Council and East Sussex County Council, having attracted 17,000 signatures to the Big Petition from local residents in favour of tackling congestion on the A259 East of Brighton Marina. We look for ways to address the growing delays to our vital bus services and reverse the recent significant year on year fall in bus patronage.

This stretch of road is part of the UK's Major Road Network (MRN).

The 9 minute bus journey time improvement achieved in 2008 by introducing the A259 bus lane from Peacehaven to Rottingdean has eroded over time, with 6-11 minute delays now experienced. The problem is that queues on the adjacent general traffic lane have become so long they block buses from entering the bus lane sections (despite there being less traffic).

A simple way to improve bus journey time would be to reduce the congestion on the adjacent lane by allowing some of its traffic to use the lightly loaded bus lane, so its queues no longer block buses. In other cities, allowing multi-occupant vehicles (variously called HoVs, T2 or T3 or simply 2+) to use bus lanes has had positive results in tackling congestion.

So a 6 month trial is proposed.

To be clear:-

- Only the bus lane from Longridge Avenue to Rottingdean is affected by this change. No change is proposed to the West to East bus lane from Greenways to Rottingdean, as that would adversely affect bus journey times.
- This will contribute to the City Plan target of increasing bus use by 800,000 passengers per annum to relieve pressure on the main roads, a target currently being missed very badly.
- It will not reduce the much increased delays from the Aquarium Roundabout to Brighton Station, or the West-bound delays, except in so far as increasing bus patronage will reduce congestion (delays).

I hope you agree that we need to tackle congestion, delays, pollution and the high carbon footprint along the A259 corridor and make our bus services the travel mode of choice.

Potential Objections:-

Will relieving A259 congestion just attract more traffic?

There is evidence traffic is using residential streets to avoid the A259 congestion, so hopefully this experiment will bring some traffic back to more suitable roads. However this effect will be limited until the West-East flow is improved and Steyning Road will continue to be a major rat run.

Could this improvement be achieved by improving the bus lane in other ways?

Banning Right-Turns and improving the placement of bus stops and pedestrian crossings might make significant gains, though it is hard to predict the impact that would have on junctions and on the Rottingdean Air Quality Management Area or how long and costly the studies and highways engineering would be.

Will we need to invest in cameras and other monitoring for this experiment?

No. A successful experiment will reduce congestion on the general traffic lane so few would need to cheat. A few “cheating” vehicles may use the bus lane to pass right turning vehicles that are blocking their lane ... but this already happens today and is generally not monitored or enforced. Some existing monitoring may well become redundant.

In terms of measuring the success of the experiment, the permanent traffic counters (ATC97 and ATC614) collect the data needed and the bus operator monitors journey times.

B&HCC estimated that 800,000 more bus passengers are needed each year to reduce traffic and keep the City's congestion at bay and meet its carbon reduction targets, but recent monitoring shows 360,000 passengers leaving the buses each year and CPP2 proposes no transport interventions to address this major shortfall.

