

## READING BOROUGH COUNCIL

### REPORT BY DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

TO:	TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT SUB-COMMITTEE		
DATE:	2 NOVEMBER 2017	AGENDA ITEM:	6
TITLE:	PETITION UPDATE - NEW ENTRY RESTRICTION ON MINSTER STREET AND LACK OF ACCESS THROUGH BUS LANES FOR PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES		
LEAD COUNCILLOR:	TONY PAGE	PORTFOLIO:	STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT, PLANNING AND TRANSPORT
SERVICE:	TRANSPORTATION & STREETCARE	WARDS:	ABBNEY/BOROUGHWIDE
LEAD OFFICER:	JAMES PENMAN	TEL:	0118 937 2202
JOB TITLE:	ASSISTANT NETWORK MANAGER	E-MAIL:	<a href="mailto:JAMES.PENMAN@READING.GOV.UK">JAMES.PENMAN@READING.GOV.UK</a>

#### 1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides the Officer recommendations following the receipt of a petition at the September 2017 meeting of the Sub-Committee.

#### 2. RECOMMENDED ACTION

- 2.1 That the Sub-Committee notes the report.
- 2.2 That the part-time access restrictions on Minster Street remain as agreed at the November 2016 meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.3 That Officers review the current vehicle-type exclusions to bus lanes across the borough and report their recommendations to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.
- 2.4 That the lead petitioner be informed of the decisions of the Sub-Committee, following publication of the meeting minutes.

#### 3. POLICY CONTEXT

- 3.1 Under the 1988 Road Traffic Act, the Highway Authority has a duty to take steps to both reduce and prevent collisions on the road network.

It is therefore imperative that the authority continues to strive to ensure the network is safe for all users as so far as reasonably practicable.

- 3.2 Under the Traffic Management Act 2004 the authority has a duty to maintain and manage the road network and secure the safe and expeditious movement of traffic. (Traffic is defined to include pedestrians).

#### 4. BACKGROUND AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1 A petition was submitted to the Traffic Management Sub-Committee at their September 2017 meeting. The petition represented a number of private-hire vehicle drivers demonstrating opposition to the revised timings of the Minster Street access restriction and the lack of permitted access onto Reading's bus lanes.

##### Minster Street Part-Time Access Restriction

- 4.2 The recommendation to consult on changes to the timings of the Minster Street access restriction was reported to the Sub-Committee in September 2016. At this time, the restrictions were in place from 7am - 11am and again from 4pm - 7pm, during which times a prohibition of motor vehicles came into force. The only legal exceptions to these restrictions were buses, wheelchair accessible taxis and permit holders (e.g. those with vehicular accesses/car parks from Minster Street and Gun Street).
- 4.3 The report raised safety concerns relating to the night-time economy on Gun Street and proposed that the access restrictions should include the period between 7pm and 7am also, creating a restriction that would be in force between 4pm and 11am daily. There was no proposal to amend the restriction itself, just the timings that it applied.
- 4.4 Following statutory consultation it was reported, at the November 2016 meeting of the Sub-Committee, that no objections had been received. It was agreed that Officers should implement the changes. These changes, which included the addition of further advance warning signs and road markings, were completed in August 2017.
- 4.5 There have been no material changes to the night-time economy, nor to Gun Street and Minster Street, since Officers made their original recommendations to increase the period for which the access restrictions are in force.

- 4.6 Officers would not recommend reverting the restricted timings back to their previous periods of enforcement, a process that would require the commencement of a new statutory consultation.

#### Vehicle-Type Exclusions From Bus Lanes

- 4.7 Officers have received requests from motorcyclists, as well as private hire vehicle drivers, to consider allowing them greater access to bus lanes in Reading.
- 4.8 To encourage people to consider alternative modes of transport, and ultimately help to manage congestion levels, it is important to create the infrastructure that facilitates a reliable public transport service offering with consistent journey times. Many of Reading's bus lanes also provide a less-trafficked lane for cyclists. Increasing the numbers of vehicles permitted to use this infrastructure will begin to compromise its efficiency, so careful consideration needs to be made before proposing such changes.
- 4.9 Officers recommend undertaking a review of the vehicle-type exclusions from bus lanes. Considerations will be made regarding rationale behind each restriction and the potential impact of any alterations to the vehicle-type exclusions.
- 4.10 Officers will report their findings and recommendations to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee.

### **5. CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC AIMS**

- 5.1 This proposal supports the aims and objectives of the Local Transport Plan and contributes to the Council's strategic aims, as set out below:

- Keeping the town clean, safe, green and active.
- Providing the infrastructure to support the economy.
- Remaining financially sustainable to deliver these service priorities.

### **6. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND INFORMATION**

- 6.1 None as a result of this report.
- 6.2 Any proposed changes to vehicle movement restrictions will require advertisement of the legal Notice as part of the statutory consultation process and advertisement of the sealed Traffic Regulation Order, prior to implementation.

## **7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

7.1 None arising from this report.

7.2 Changes to Traffic Regulation Orders will require advertisement and consultation, under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and in accordance with the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

## **8. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

8.1 In addition to the Human Rights Act 1998 the Council is required to comply with the Equalities Act 2010. Section 149 of the Equalities Act 2010 requires the Council to have due regard to the need to:-

- eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
- advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
- foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

8.2 An Equality Impact scoping exercise will be conducted prior to recommending the implementation of any alterations to existing movement restrictions.

## **9. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 Funding will need to be identified before any potential statutory consultation process can commence.

9.2 Funding will need to be identified before potential alterations to the restrictions can be implemented.

## **10. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

10.1 Petition Against the New Entry Restrictions on the Minster Street Bus Lane and Lack of Access Through Bus Lanes for Private Hire Vehicles (Traffic Management Sub-Committee - September 2017).