

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Decision Maker:	Executive Member for Economy, Transport and Environment
Date:	23 July 2013
Title:	A27 Improvements and Traffic Regulation Order - Bus Lanes - Portland Street and A27 Western Way, Fareham
Reference:	5006
Report From:	Director of Economy, Transport and Environment

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. This report identifies a phased strategy for improving the A27 Western Way in central Fareham, as part of a much wider strategy to improve east to west accessibility along the A27 between Fareham and Segensworth. Improvements to the A27 Western Way will help accommodate both the needs of the Eclipse BRT services as well as reduce delays for general traffic. The strategy phases in timeline order are as follows:

- i) The existing A27 experimental, on carriageway, bus lane be made permanent (with minor modifications) as an interim measure and as detailed in Appendix 1 to this report.
- ii) A bus gate be constructed on the A27 west of Quay Street roundabout to assist Eclipse bus access onto the A27 and to help ensure journey time reliability.
- iii) A new off-carriageway, with flow, bus lane be constructed in the highway verge adjacent to the A27 westbound carriageway and that the existing on-carriageway bus lane outlined at (i) above be removed upon its completion in order to help address concerns about delays to general traffic.
- iv) The A27 station roundabout and Gudge Heath Lane junctions be re-configured in order to remove these critical bottlenecks and help keep traffic moving in central Fareham, whilst providing the opportunity to facilitate re-development, enhance multi-modal inter-connectivity between the Eclipse services and the railway and provide urban realm enhancements for all.
- v) A wider strategy for improvements along the A27 corridor between Fareham and Segensworth, including sections of dualling and junction improvements, be developed as a basis for future funding bids.

2. Contextual information

- 2.1. The A27 experiences significant congestion, particularly during peak periods, along sections of its route between Fareham and Segensworth. The congestion relates to the merge of dual carriageway sections into single carriageway sections, as well as limited junction capacity; it is also associated with the experimental bus lane on the Western Way approach to the station roundabout in central Fareham. In order to reduce congestion along this critical east to west transport artery, improvements are essential to provide the opportunity to better manage the flow of traffic, remove blockages, and to help to encourage development and redevelopment in the area.
- 2.2. Within the context of a much wider strategy of carriageway and junction improvements currently being developed for the A27 Corridor, a phased programme of measures has been developed to help address congestion on the A27 in central Fareham. The measures are set out in turn below.

3. A27 Western Way Experimental Bus Lane

- 3.1. The existing A27 Western Way and Portland Street bus lanes were introduced on an experimental basis for a maximum period of up to eighteen months from April 2012 to October 2013. During this time the scheme was monitored in order to measure its success and impact upon the local area.
- 3.2. In May 2013 initial monitoring results were reported to the BRT Board and Fareham Borough Council Members. The results identified some localised congestion at the A27 Station Roundabout. The results highlighted the fact that the congestion on the A27 has become perceivably worse since improvement works to Quay Street roundabout in late 2011, with queues previously associated with Quay Street moving along the A27 and now blocking back from the A27 station roundabout and in turn Gudge Heath Lane junction. On the whole, Strategis Data demonstrated that end to end journey times are largely unaffected. In addition Bus Patronage and Perception Surveys identified that there has been a positive shift to more sustainable transport, in particular the Eclipse. There is strong evidence of public satisfaction with the Eclipse service. There has been a 64% increase in passengers on the Eclipse E1 and E2 services compared with the previous 82 and 86 services. The number of people using all bus services to travel between Gosport and Fareham has increased by 12% overall and there has been an associated reduction in traffic on the A32 of approximately 2% southbound and 3% northbound.
- 3.3. Despite the clear success of the bus lane in relation to the Eclipse service operation, there is concern regarding the delays to general traffic which are being experienced on the A27. The main objection to the experimental bus lanes was the increase in traffic congestion. In order to help address concerns a phased improvement strategy has been developed, as follows:
A27 Western Way Permanent Bus Lane (Interim Proposal)
- 3.4. In advance of other more substantial planned works coming forward in the near future, it is proposed that the existing bus lane Order be made permanent with

some minor modifications. The minor modifications will help reduce delays for general traffic whilst not compromising the effective benefits for the Eclipse BRT services, and will address the objections received relating to congestion in the short term. The bus lanes will continue to ensure journey time reliability for the Eclipse between Fareham bus station, Market Quay Roundabout and Station Roundabout, and will help minimise the delays caused by evening peak congestion to the bus services. The bus lanes will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week to avoid confusion over hours of operation and aid compliance.

3.5. The Order to make the bus lane permanent covers:

- (i) the offside lane of Portland Street at its northern roundabout junction with Hartlands Road for 70 metres south to 25 metres before its junction with Market Quay roundabout for buses only; and
- (ii) the nearside lane, westbound on the A27 Western Way starting 430 metres from Market Quay roundabout for 420 metres to the Station Roundabout, for both buses and cycles.

3.6. The Order includes some minor amendments to the experimental Order which include: the deletion of the A27 The Avenue section of existing bus lane, and a 36m reduction in length of the bus lane on the A27 on the westbound approach to the Station Roundabout. This reduction will enable the approach to the roundabout to be reverted to two lane running for all traffic in order to help reduce congestion in peak periods during this interim scheme period. As a result of this, the length of bus lane on the A27 The Avenue needs to be removed for safety reasons.

3.7. The scheme for the interim bus lanes includes the required signs and lines in accordance with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002.

3.8. The proposal supports the Corporate Local Transport Policies regarding public transport, modal shift and reducing carbon emissions impacting on climate change.

3.9. Attached as Appendices are:

- (i) the traffic order;
- (ii) a location plan;
- (iii) Summary of objections; and
- (iv) First Group Letter of Support.

4. Next Steps

A27 Western Way Bus Gate

4.1. As part of before and after monitoring for the Fareham to Gosport Eclipse BRT, two critical delay points were identified as having a bearing upon journey time reliability. One of these delay points is associated with the time taken for the Eclipse services to get from the Fareham Bus Station around Quay Street roundabout and onto the A27 westbound, which can take up to 10-12 minutes in the evening peak hour. In order to help address this issue, the bus gate will

enable the Eclipse buses to bypass the roundabout and easily access the A27 westbound. It is proposed to start works on this scheme in January 2014 with completion in March 2014.

A27 Western Way Bus Lane (Westbound)

- 4.2. To help address concerns about delays to general traffic, options have been investigated to provide an off-line bus lane which will enable the existing on-carriageway bus lane to be removed. The preferred option will create a new bus lane in the highway verge adjacent to the A27 westbound carriageway and will enable the existing bus lane to be returned to general traffic running in order to address local concerns. It is anticipated that the scheme will commence in March 2014 and be completed by October 2014.

A27 Station Roundabout and Gudge Heath Lane Junctions

- 4.3. To further help address concerns regarding delays to traffic along the A27 through central Fareham, options have been investigated to improve the Station roundabout and Gudge Heath Lane junctions. Delays at the Gudge Heath Lane junction are caused principally by the merge of two lanes into one straight ahead lane, westbound prior to the junction where one of the two lanes forms a dedicated right turn lane into Gudge Heath Lane. Delays tail back from Gudge Heath Lane junction onto the Station roundabout in the evening peak period and mean that there would be no benefit in improving the Station roundabout in isolation from improvements at the Gudge Heath Lane junction; this is because the traffic movements are inherently linked. Both junctions will be re-configured in order to remove these critical bottlenecks in central Fareham, to help keep traffic moving, and to provide the opportunity to facilitate re-development, enhance multi-modal inter-connectivity between the Eclipse services and the railway, improve the provision for pedestrians and cyclists, and to provide urban realm enhancements for all.

A27 Fareham to Segensworth

- 4.4. Early feasibility work is currently underway to identify the potential for improving the single carriageway sections of the A27 between Fareham and Segensworth to remove localised congestion bottlenecks and to improve the operational effectiveness of junctions along the route.

5. Finance

- 5.1. The cost of implementing the permanent bus lane Order will be met from the BRT Phase 1 Bus Passenger Information scheme costs. Works along the wider A27 corridor will require significant capital investment, and bids for funding will be submitted to appropriate sources in due course.

6. Consultation

- 6.1. The existing A27 experimental bus lane scheme had the support of the Fareham Borough Council Executive as a six month trial.
- 6.2. The bus operators have been consulted and a letter of support for the revised interim scheme is in the attachments at the end of this report.
- 6.3. Under the original April 2012 experimental Traffic Regulation Order, the public had the opportunity to make any formal objections within the first six months of the making of the Order. Thirty two formal objections and one of support were received. These objections are summarised in the appendix at the back of this report. A number of other calls were logged in the PEM enquiry system, mostly during the initial implementation period. Where these enquiries were made within the 6 months consultation period, the authors were invited to formally object via the normal process. Although the existing bus lanes still generate some public correspondence, it should be noted that this has reduced to less than one enquiry a month. During the experimental period, additional representation was made via the local taxi association about the use of the bus lanes by taxis. In line with current Traffic Management policy, the use by Taxis will not be permitted following bus operators' concerns about the inclusion of taxis affecting the operation of the bus lane.
- 6.4. In light of the objections received, some amendments to the experimental scheme are proposed as detailed in 3.6.

7. Local Members' View

- 7.1. The County Members, Councillors Bryant and Ellis, were originally consulted on the proposals for the A27 bus lane and supported the proposals. Following the recent County Council elections on 2 May 2013, Councillors Latham and Ringrow have been elected to the Fareham Town seat. Cllr Latham has been briefed and is broadly supportive of the scheme and briefed Cllr Ringrow. Discussions have taken place with local Fareham Borough Councillors regarding the principals of the A27 improvement strategy, and further discussions will be undertaken as work progresses.

8. Conclusion

- 8.1. As part of a wider strategy for improvements to the A27 between Fareham and Segensworth, which are aimed at reducing congestion and improving the flow of traffic, a programme of phased measures is currently being developed. The strategy will provide: a bus gate on the A27 to the west of Quay Street roundabout; a new off-carriageway bus lane which will replace the existing on-carriageway bus lane and enable two lanes to be reverted to general traffic running; improvements to the A27 station roundabout and Gudge Heath Lane junctions; and further carriageway and junction improvements on the A27 corridor between Fareham and Segensworth.

8.2. As an interim measure prior to the above works being delivered, it is necessary for the experimental bus lane to be made permanent in order to continue to provide reliable journey times for the Eclipse buses. This will enable the bus operator to fulfil the requirements of the quality bus partnership and will mean that the congestion constraints on the highway network do not preclude the operator from meeting these requirements.

9. Recommendations

- 9.1. That the proposed strategy for improving the A27 as set out in the report be approved as a basis for detailed scheme development work and the submission of future funding bids.
- 9.2. That the existing experimental bus lanes on the A27 Western Way and at Portland Street in Fareham be made permanent (with some minor modifications) as an interim measure, prior to the implementation of a strategy of more significant phased improvements.
- 9.3. That a Traffic Order be made under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, to formalise a bus lane (with flow bus lane) at the specified sections of Portland Street, and the A27 Western Way in Fareham.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

DocumentLocation

None

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equalities Impact Assessment:

- 1.1 The proposals in this report have been developed with due regard to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, including the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Council's equality objectives. The website contains a summary [assessment of the impacts](#) on Safe and Efficient Transport systems in Hampshire.
- 1.2 It is considered that the issues covered by this report will not have impacts requiring further specific actions by the Council above those already established in its existing policies and working procedures.

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

- 2.1. It is not considered that there will be any impact on crime or disorder as a result of this scheme proposal.

3. Climate Change:

- 3.1. How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?
- 3.2. How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

Implementation of high quality buses and initiatives to persuade modal shift to public transport from the private car can have positive effects on carbon emissions that contribute to climate change.