**NON-KEY DECISION TAKEN BY A CABINET MEMBER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE:</th>
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<td>Introduction of Hartfield Road Bus Lane</td>
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<th>DECISION:</th>
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<tr>
<td>To undertake a statutory consultation to re-introduce the bus lane in Hartfield Road between its junctions with Sir Cyril Black Way and Beulah Road with hours of operation Monday – Saturday 7am – 10am and 4pm – 7pm.</td>
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<th>REASON FOR DECISION:</th>
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<tr>
<td>To improve the safety and efficiency of bus journeys, improve the safety and efficiency of cycle movement through the town centre and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes in line with the Council’s transport policy.</td>
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<th>ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND WHY REJECTED:</th>
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<tr>
<td>1. Do nothing. However, this option would not support future bus priority in the borough.</td>
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<td>2. Introduce a bus lane as ‘advisory’ only. This option was previously investigated and it was concluded because enforcement would not be possible, it would not provide the potential benefits in terms of bus journey improvements and cycle facility and would create unnecessary confusion and ambiguity for road users with possible risk to road safety. Additionally, it would not be legally possible to mark/sign this facility within the frame work of current regulations.</td>
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<th>DOCUMENTS RELIED ON:</th>
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<tr>
<td>Report dated 27th May</td>
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<th>DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:</th>
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<td>Signed ………….</td>
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<td>Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability and Regeneration</td>
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Date……………31st May 2011………………………………
1. **Purpose of the Report**

1.1 Following discussions with the Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability & Regeneration authorisation is sought to proceed to a statutory consultation to re-introduce a bus lane on the section of Hartfield Road between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Beulah Road.

2. **Instructions**

2.1 The Cabinet Member for Environmental Sustainability & Regeneration has instructed council officers to investigate the reintroduction of a section of bus lane on Hartfield Road between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Beulah Road with a view to reintroduce the bus lane subject to a statutory consultation.

3. **Background**

3.1 The decision was originally taken by the Planning Services Committee on 15th June 1995 to install a new bus lane on Hartfield Road, Wimbledon, to improve bus priority for eight bus services. The required Traffic Regulation Order to affect this decision was made on 28th February 1996. The Order stated that the bus lane would be operational from Monday – Saturday 7am – 10am on the section of Hartfield Road between the junction with Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent, and Monday – Sunday 7am – midnight on the section of Hartfield Road between the junction of Hartfield Crescent and Wimbledon Bridge. The Traffic Regulation Order was later amended in 2002 to include a restriction that “No person shall cause a vehicle to be in a bus lane in a length of road specified” to enable the provision of camera enforcement. This Traffic Regulation Order was approved and signed by the Council’s Head of Street Management on 17th April 2002.
3.2 Following the introduction of camera enforcement the council received a number of representations relating to the safety of certain elements of the bus lane, notably the left turn for general traffic from Hartfield Road into Beulah Road. It was reported that penalty charge notices were unfairly issued to drivers who had pulled into the bus lane in advance of the junction when turning left. However, the borough’s parking enforcement section maintained that penalty fines were only ever issued to drivers who had entered the bus lane well in advance of this junction, rather than the 10 – 15 metres leading lane required to safely make the left turn movement.

3.3 During 2005, the Council commissioned an independent consultant, Peter Brett Associates, to undertake a study to examine the general operation of the bus lane between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent and forwarded recommendations to improve its layout. It was also recommended that the hours of operation be changed from Monday – Saturday 7am – 10am to Monday – Saturday 7am – 7pm on the section between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent. This was forwarded to the then Cabinet Member who then instructed officers to investigate the removal of the bus lane.

3.4 This led to a second report that was produced by JMP Consulting, which assessed the impact of completely removing the bus lane between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent. The assessment was carried out by comparing the existing traffic conditions with a new set of conditions developed using micro simulation and signal optimisation packages. Broadly, the report indicated that the proposed removal of the bus lane would significantly improve general vehicle access to Herbert Road and Beulah Road. The results also demonstrated that, during the AM peak, bus journey times would be reduced as a result of removing the bus lane, whilst during the PM peak, the impact on bus movements would be negligible. This, however, was also subject to a full package of measures that included the removal of the bus lane on Wimbledon Bridge and re-optimising of the traffic signals. Following the report, the Cabinet Member instructed officers to remove the bus lane on Hartfield Road between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent, against the officer recommendation to improve the facility.

4. **Statutory Consultation**

4.1 During March / April 2008 officers carried out a statutory consultation to remove the bus lane. This resulted in a number of objections from TfL and bus operators.
4.2 Transport for London Response to consultation

Transport for London made some criticism of JMP Consulting’s report relating to the removal of the bus lane. In particular, the methodology of the assessment and the impact of the removal upon the long-term objective of encouraging sustainable travel behaviour. In summary, Transport for London and London General (the bus operator) objected to the removal of the bus lane and advocated improvements to address perceived safety / enforcement issues.

Officers’ Response to consultation

Following analysis of the two independent reports produced by JMP Consulting and Peter Brett Associates, borough officers also objected to the removal of the bus lane and recommended an amended bus lane to overcome previous safety / enforcement concerns relating to left turn movements from Hartfield Road.

5. Outcome

5.1 Despite the objections received to the statutory consultation to remove the bus lane, and the support for its retention and improvement, the Cabinet Member for Environment & Traffic Management made a decision on 10th December 2008 to remove the section of bus lane between Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent.

5.2 In line with the decision, the Traffic Management Order was revoked and the bus lane between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Hartfield Crescent was removed in April 2009. It should be noted that the signal timings were not reoptimised and the section of bus lane on Wimbledon Bridge was not removed, as per the recommendation by JMP Consulting.

5.3 Following its removal, officers received complaints from cyclists as they felt an important link in the London cycle network had been removed, and their safety put at risk, in a town centre location with narrow lane widths.

6. Proposal

6.1 It is considered that the long established bus lane on Hartfield Road was removed without the appropriate consideration to all road users. The removal was against the officer recommendation and objections raised by TfL and bus operators. A new consultation will provide the opportunity to reconsider this action, and determine if it is in the interests of stakeholders and the general public to reintroduce this important public transport facility.
6.2 Officers remain supportive of the principle of bus lanes to improve bus priority in key locations. Previous officer comments based on the analysis of the reports produced by Peter Brett Associates and JMP Consulting remain relevant. In addition, since the removal of the bus lane in 2009, new transport policy documents have been produced including The Mayor’s Transport Strategy (2010), the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (due for formal adoption in June 2011) and Merton's Draft Local Implementation Plan (due for formal adoption is summer / autumn 2011). A key objective of each of the documents is to encourage public transport use and improve public transport facilities and reliability. In addition, the documents acknowledge that there must be a long-term commitment to sustainable transport. Bus lanes also provide a safer lane for alternative modes of travel, including cyclists.

6.3 The specific details of officer recommendation relating to the reintroduction of a section of bus lane between the junctions of Sir Cyril Black Way and Beulah Road remain broadly consistent with previous advice i.e. a modified bus lane arrangement. This will ensure that bus priority is retained, safety of cyclists is improved and the issues with the left turn movements addressed. Following further consideration it is considered feasible to introduce the bus lane with the hours of operation to also include the afternoon peak period i.e. Monday – Saturday 7am – 10am and 4pm – 7pm. This will ensure that public transport attractiveness and reliability is maximised during the network peak periods.

6.4 If approved a statutory consultation will be carried out in accordance with the Road Traffic Regulation Act.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 To introduce the bus lane it is necessary to undertake a statutory consultation. The Traffic Management Orders would be made under Section 6 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 (as amended). The Council is required by the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 to give notice of its intention to make a Traffic Order (by publishing a draft traffic order). These regulations also require the Council to consider any representations received as a result of publishing the draft order.
7.2 Statement of Reason
Reallocating the road space would improve the safety and efficiency of bus journeys, improve the safety and efficiency of cycle movements through the town centre and encourage the use of sustainable transport modes in line with the Council’s transport policy.

7.3 The consultation will be carried out in line with the statutory requirement
- Notices will be posted on the lamp columns within the vicinity of the proposed bus lane.
- Notices will be published in the local paper.
- All statutory consultees will be contacted.
- Ward Members will be informed of the consultation (not a statutory requirement).
- A copy of the statement of reason and a copy of the plan will be placed in Wimbledon library, Merton Link and posted on the Council’s website.

7.4 Definition
To install a bus lane from the junction of Hartfield Road with Sir Cyril Black Way to a point 15m south east of the junction of Hartfield Road with Beulah Road. Hours of operation Monday – Saturday between 7am – 10am and 4pm – 7pm. (Plan Z57/206/04)

8. Financial Implications
8.1 The cost of a formal consultation, the introduction of carriageway markings and necessary posts and signs, and the introduction of a traffic management order will be approximately £25,000 (excluding officer time). This will be met from the Merton Capital allocation for 2011/12.

9. Alternative Options
9.1 An alternative option would be to do nothing. However, this option would not support future bus priority in the borough.

9.2 A second alternative option would be to introduce a bus lane as ‘advisory’ only. This option was previously investigated and it was concluded because enforcement would not be possible, it would not provide the potential benefits in terms of bus journey improvements and cycle facility and would create unnecessary confusion and ambiguity for road users.
with a possible risk to road safety. Additionally, it would not be legally possible to mark/sign this facility within the frame work of current regulations.

10. **Risk Management, Health and Safety Implications**

10.1 If the scheme is approved, the road safety implications and the risks to those undertaking construction and maintenance will be fully considered at each stage of the design process.

**Appendices**

Appendix 1: Proposed bus lane layout plan Z57/206/04

Appendix 2: previous removed bus lane

**Background papers**

Useful links
Merton Council’s web site: http://www.merton.gov.uk
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http://www.merton.gov.uk/legal.htm
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