



Highways Committee
27 March 2017

**Report from the Strategic Director of
Regeneration and Environment**

For Action

Wards Affected: Sudbury, Wembley Central,
Tokyngton, Stonebridge, Harlesden, Kensal
Green, Queens Park

Motorcycles in Bus Lanes

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 This Report provides information on local authorities (regional and national) that allow motorcycles to use their bus lanes and the likely benefits if this approach is adopted by the Council.
- 1.2 It provides information on a proposed trial on the A404 corridor and how the outcome will inform a future policy decision on allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes throughout the borough.

2.0 Recommendations

- 2.1 That the Committee notes the contents of this report and information on the experiences of other Local Authorities in terms in a national and regional context.
- 2.2 The Committee instructs the Head of Highways and Infrastructure to undertake the necessary statutory and non –statutory consultation, consider any objections or representations regarding the pilot scheme and proceed with implementation if objections or representations are considered groundless.
- 2.3 That the Head of Highways and Infrastructure reports back to a future Committee on the results of the trial and makes recommendations on a decision to allow motorcyclists to use all bus lanes across the borough

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Motorcycles are by definition, motorbikes, scooters and mopeds, which are sometimes referred to collectively as power-two-wheelers (PTW's).
- 3.2 Motorcycling has become increasingly popular as it is a cheaper alternative than travelling by car, it provides independence and mobility which in turn widens opportunities for employment where public transport is limited. It also reduces journey times on congested roads and usually carbon dioxide emissions.
- 3.3 However, motorcyclists are one of the most vulnerable road user groups in London along with pedestrians and cyclists. Around 17% of those injured on London's roads and 24% of serious casualties are motorcyclists despite this mode accounting for a small minority of traffic. The

number of motorcyclists injured on London's roads is increasing and last year 236 motorcyclists were injured in the borough, an increase of 7% from the previous year.

- 3.4 One reason for this is because other road users can have difficulty detecting motorcyclists due to their small combined frontal area (motorcycle and rider).
- 3.4 Officers are working with Transport for London (TfL) on a number of initiatives to reduce the number of accidents involving motorcyclists which include road safety campaigns and allocated £145,000 specifically for short term engineering measures in 2016/17. These will include Vehicle Actuated Signs to help reduce traffic speeds at accident hot spots and raise motorcycle safety awareness.
- 3.3 The London Assembly Transport Committee report (Easy Rider) into motorcycle safety identified the need to make our roads safer for motorcyclists as competition for road space increases. One of the biggest concerns raised in this report was the inconsistency in access to bus lanes for London's motorcyclist as this can help improve safety as it reduces rider's exposure to general traffic.
- 3.4 Between 2009 and 2011 TFL conducted two trials to allow motorcyclists to use bus lanes and following its success, a decision was made to allow motorcyclists to ride in all bus lanes on the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) as from January 2012. The TLRN are red routes and includes only the A406 North Circular Road in Brent. Research conducted during these trials (which lasted 18 months each) identified reduced journey times and environmental benefits with no significant safety issues for motorcyclists or other vulnerable road users. Due to the short duration of the trial it could not determine safety benefits, accident trends are usually considered over 36 months.
- 3.5 There are currently 31 bus lanes in Brent measuring a total of 7,780m which covers 1.4% of the boroughs roads. All except one bus lane are 'with flow' (travelling in the same direction as the traffic on the road) although the days and hours of operation vary for each bus lane. The map in Appendix A illustrates the bus lanes in the borough
- 3.6 The London Assembly's Transport Committee Paper titled 'Easy rider -Improving motorcycle safety on London's roads' (March 2016) highlights that there is inconsistency in policy across London and while motorcycles can access all bus lanes on the TLRN, most individual boroughs do not allow access to bus lanes on borough-managed roads.

Road Safety GB, which represents road safety professionals including officers working at all London boroughs, calls for 'A consistent policy across London to allow motorcyclists into all bus lanes. Currently motorcyclists are allowed into some bus lanes and not others, creating confusion amongst riders. By allowing motorcycles into all of London's bus lanes, this will enable the motorcyclist to make safer and easier progress by blending within the traffic.'

National Context

- 3.7 Bristol was the first town to allow motorcycles in bus lanes in 1995 and now over 30 UK towns and cities permit this in one or more lanes, these include:
 - Aylesbury
 - Bath
 - Bedford
 - Belfast
 - Birmingham
 - Colchester
 - Coventry
 - Derby

- Edinburgh, the first city in Scotland to allow this and standardised the times of most lanes to peak periods only
- Hull
- Northern Ireland (allowed in all bus lanes since 2004)
- Plymouth (trial 2007/8)
- Reading (permanent in 1999)
- Sheffield
- Sunderland
- Swindon
- York

Regional Context (London)

3.8 With regards to London in addition to the TLRN there are currently 11 London Boroughs that allow motorcycles in some or all their bus lanes, these are:

- Bromley (all)
- Hammersmith and Fulham (some)
- Kingston (some)
- Merton (all)
- Newham (all)
- Richmond (some)
- Sutton (all)
- Waltham Forest (all)
- Wandsworth (all)
- Westminster (all)

3.9 Appendix B provides map showing bus lanes in the London boroughs where motorcyclists are allowed. The majority of these boroughs introduced these bus lane changes following the TFL trials.

TFL and other trials

3.10 In depth research was conducted during both TFL trials, the first trial looked at motorcyclist's behaviour in bus lanes which helped shape the second trial which included increased enforcement against motorcyclists speeding in bus lanes and a road safety marketing campaign.

3.11 An independent review of the second trial was carried out by the Transport Research Laboratory (TRL) which included an analysis of data to assess changes into collision rates between the second trial period and the period before motorcyclists were allowed in bus lanes.

The key findings of the review included:

- Collision rates in bus lanes in the second trial decreased by 5.8 per cent for motorcyclists and by 8.5 per cent for cyclists when compared with the first trial.
- There was no significant change in the collision rates for pedestrians in bus lanes between the two trials.
- When comparing the second trial with the period before motorcyclists were permitted access to bus lanes, there was a significant (11.6 per cent) decline in overall cycling collision rates in bus lanes and no significant change in collision rates in bus lanes affecting motorcyclists or pedestrians
- The average speed for motorcyclists in bus lanes reduced by 6.5% during the trial
- Reduced journey times and traffic congestion which in turn reduces CO2.

Full details of the report and all TFL information to motorcycles riding in bus lanes can be found here: <https://tfl.gov.uk/modes/driving/red-routes/rules-of-red-routes/bus-lanes/motorcycles-in-bus-lanes>

- 3.13 Prior to the TFL, trial Westminster conducted a detailed study on eight bus lanes where motorcycles were permitted. They assessed the impact on bus operations, motorcycle journey times and road safety. This study also included surveys to record traffic flow, bus lane use and conflicts with motorcycles. The 'Impacts of motorcycles in Westminster bus lanes' study was produced by TRL in 2008 under contract by the DfT and Westminster City Council, full details can be found at <http://www.dft.gov.uk/rmd/project.asp?intProjectID=12435>

The results of the study indicated:

- The traffic flow remained consistent on four of the eight sites and increased on the other four routes although all were operating below capacity
- Although motorcyclists were using bus lanes prior to the study and being allowed to do so the number almost doubled when permitted to use bus lanes. This number increased on busier routes as a result of perceived journey times
- Lane discipline improved as less motorcycles weaved between bus and non-priority lanes
- Bus journey times increased slightly, an average of 4 seconds between the timing points and no delays at bus stops
- The effect this had on motorcycle speed varied, on some routes it increased and others remained the same
- On six of the eight bus lanes conflicts between motorcyclists and other road users reduced which implies there could be safety benefits. The two sites that witnessed a higher number of conflicts had a large number of bus and taxis manoeuvre from the kerb side and high trafficked side roads
- The number of accidents (one year after compared to one year before) reduced or stayed the same at seven of the sites
- The number of killed or seriously injured (KSI's) increased at the two sites with a higher number of conflicts and decreased on all other bus lanes
- In conclusion, safety benefits may be reduced if there is highly trafficked side roads and/or lots of bus and/or taxi's manoeuvring from the kerb

- 3.14 Following the TFL trial some boroughs decided not to allow motorcyclists to use their bus lanes, these included:

Lambeth, they aim to reduce the number of people using motorised forms of travel (including motorcycles) and increase the number of people walking and cycling.

Ealing ran their own trial and found the number of accidents in bus lanes increased, also their residents survey resulted in a high number of objections from cyclists with the potential to jeopardise the targets set to increase the number of people cycling in the borough.

Advantages and dis-advantages

3.15 The table below highlights the advantages and dis-advantages of allowing motorcycles to use bus lanes.

Advantages	Disadvantages
Reduction in congestion for other traffic on routes used by motorcyclists	Potential conflict between motorcyclists and pedal cyclists
Potential modal shift from cars to motorcycles as more convenient	Possible impact on bus journey times as additional traffic in bus lanes
Consistency across boroughs. Riders will not have to check individual lanes to see if they can access as more boroughs allow this	May receive negative publicity from cyclists and pedestrians
Possible reduction in motorcycle casualties at junctions where previously had to cross the bus lane	
Environmental benefits, reduction in CO2 emissions	
Lower fuel consumption for riders	

4.0 The A404 Corridor Trial

4.1 Officers recommend the trial should take place on the A404 as it is a principal road, is part of the Strategic Road Network (SRN) and is heavily used by buses. It was decided that A404 would be appropriate as it stretches from the north to the south of the borough and has numerous bus lanes covering some 3,410m.

4.2 Prior to the commencement of the trial an assessment of the bus lanes along the A404 corridor will be conducted to ensure they are all suitable for motorcycle use, this will include:

- highway layout including width of bus lane (if narrower than 4m may not be suitable)
- mix and flow of traffic (surveys)
- queuing characteristics
- pedestrian activity
- existing signage and changes required

4.3 The trial is proposed to be for 24 months, this will allow officers to collect adequate data to determine the benefits or otherwise from the scheme.

4.4 The evaluation criteria will include:

- casualty numbers for all vulnerable road user groups to enable us to compare this to pre-trial figures
- bus journey times, impact on bus journeys
- traffic flow
- vehicle speeds, speed survey
- stakeholder views

The above recommendations are supported by the DFT Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/07 'The Use of Bus Lanes by Motorcycles'

4.5 Personal injury accident data will be analysed in detail to include the number involving vulnerable road users (motorcyclists, cyclists and pedestrians) along the proposed pilot route. This will form the baseline data to which the outcomes of the trial can be compared.

- 4.6 A consultation, communications and road safety publicity strategy will be developed for the trial in consultation with the Lead Member for Environment.
- 4.7 Changes to the operation of the bus lanes will require changes to the Traffic Management Order and therefore a statutory consultation process with stakeholders to include TfL Buses and neighbouring Local Authorities.
- 4.8 Publicity will include promoting the trial on our website and in addition to our statutory stakeholders and councillors we will consult with Brent Cyclists and motorcyclists via our online motorcycle magazine <http://www.brentrider.co.uk/articles/contents/>

Targeted messages will be developed for:

- motorcyclists
- other bus lane users - including bus companies, taxi's and cyclists
- pedestrians, advising to look out for motorcyclists if crossing roads with bus lanes

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 The three main costs associated with the trial are:

Amendments to the Traffic Regulation Orders (TRO)	£10,000
Revision of bus lane signage (approx. 40 x £350)	£14,000
Publicity	£ 6,000
Total	£30,000

- 5.2 The total estimated cost for implementing the trial will be £30,000 and can be fully funded from the £100,000 capital Transport for London Local Transport discretionary fund for 2017/18. This includes both physical and enabling work for the project.
- 5.3 The Council issues penalty charge notices to vehicles entering bus lanes using CCTV. Motorcycles account for a small minority of road traffic and the pilot scheme should not have a significant impact on enforcement arrangements and costs.

6.0 Legal Implications

- 6.1 The Local Highway or Traffic Authority is responsible for deciding whether or not to allow motorcycles into its bus lanes and currently taxis and bicycles are allowed.
- 6.2 To allow motorcycles to use bus lanes under the pilot scheme will require the amendment of the existing Traffic Management Order (TMO). The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the procedures, (which includes consultation requirements) set out in the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996, permit the proposed change of use of bus lanes to be made. At the end of the pilot scheme the Council will need to decide whether or not to make the changes permanent.
- 6.3 New signage will be required to accompany the TRO which will include a motorcycle symbol to inform riders they are permitted to use the bus lane.
- 6.4 The Council is required to exercise the functions conferred on it by the RTRA 1984 to secure the "expeditious, convenient and safe movement" of traffic (including pedestrians) and to have regard to the importance of regulating and restricting the use of roads by heavy commercial vehicles and the consequent effects on local amenities (section 122). The Traffic Management Act 2004 places a duty on a local traffic authority to manage their road network "with a view to achieving" the expeditious movement of traffic on its road network and the road networks of other traffic authorities.

7.0 Diversity Implications

- 7.1 S149 of the Equality Act 2010 provides that the Council must have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic, and those who do not.
- 7.1 The proposals in this report have been subject to screening there are considered to be no diversity implications that require full assessment.
- 7.2 The trial proposed does not have different outcomes for people in terms of race, gender, age, sexuality or belief as road users represent all these groups.

Appendices

Appendix A - Bus lanes in Brent

Appendix B - Motorcyclists access to bus lanes in London

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