

CROSS CITY BUS PRIORITY – ALCESTER ROAD (NORTH) TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDER CONSULTATION REPORT

Background Context

Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) & the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA), in partnership with Birmingham City Council (BCC), have been developing a package of highway improvements to deliver the Cross City bus project. This briefing relates to the proposed introduction of bus priority measures that will make permanent TRO changes on Moseley Road and Alcester Road.

The TROs measures introduce:

- No right turn restriction from Moseley Road (southbound) into Cromer Road
- No right turn restriction from Moseley Road (northbound) into Brighton Road.
- No entry into or out of the service road at the junction of A435 Haden Way/Moseley Road
- To introduce and vary bus lane restrictions (with exemption for black cab, pedal cycle, solo motor cycle) on lengths of Moseley Road & Alcester Road (all southbound bus lanes will be operational Mon-Fri 4.30 p.m. to 6.45 p.m. and northbound bus lanes will be operational Mon-Fri 7.30 a.m. to 10.00 a.m.)
- To introduce a bus only restriction on an approximate 20 metre length of Haden Way - showing as Moseley Road on street (with exemption for black cab, pedal cycle, solo motor cycle).
- To introduce and vary no waiting at any time and no loading/unloading Monday-Friday at certain times of the day along the length of the corridor.
- To introduce and vary no waiting Monday-Friday at certain times of the day, no loading/unloading Monday - Friday at certain times of the day, limited waiting Monday-Friday at certain times of the day and maximum stay 1 hour with no return within 1 hour on lengths of Alcester and Moseley Road.
- The measures were drawn up and TROs formally advertised on 15th June 2022 with the closing date on 15th July 2022, with a two-week extension granted following a request from members of the public.

In addition to the requirements laid out as part of the statutory process, BCC and the WMCA undertook additional measures to raise awareness of the notices including:

- Letters announcing the consultation (incl. a copy of the Notices) were sent to 100 surrounding properties fronting the extents of the works.
- Relevant information was uploaded to the Be Heard website;
- All consultees were able to request hard copies of the plans applicable to their homes;
- All consultees were able to request a call-back or email response from one of the BCC Project team to discuss the plans and request any clarification.

Consideration & Responses

Following the advertising of the TROs thirty-five responses were received, and four of the responses have been considered as objections, all referring to the removal of the right turn off Moseley Road, onto Cromer and Brighton Road. Responses were provided to comments related to matter, other than the abovementioned.

The measures for which comments and objections were received are summarised below.

1. The removal of the right turns on Brighton/ Cromer Road
2. Necessity for BLE and Parking Enforcement systems
3. Lack of provisions of cycling lanes
4. Visibility of the proposal benefits quantification

Scheme Promoter Responses:

1. The removal of the right turns on Brighton/ Cromer Road

The removal of the right turn movements is to reduce inter-green time within the signal operations, (time-lag between each movement). This has allowed the introduction of controlled pedestrian facilities at the junction. Traffic modelling has also shown there to be an improvement for north and southbound traffic as a result of these changes.

Traffic surveys were undertaken at the junction to assess the impact of the proposed right turn ban as part of traffic modelling. The breakdown is presented below:

Turn Direction	Turn Name	0800-0900	1700-1800
South to East	Moseley to Brighton Rd	20 vehicles	33 vehicles
North to West	Moseley to Cromer Rd	31 vehicles	49 vehicles

The proposed removal of these movements was tested in two models:

- The Birmingham City Council Strategic Model (SATURN)
- A local model of the corridor (VISSIM) commissioned by TfWM.

In both models it was presented that the impact of the right turn ban was negligible. This is twofold: The right turns as shown above are local trips, with these movements likely to re-route within a wider area. For example, a driver from the City Centre direction would likely be aware of the ban and have planned a re-routed trip in advance, not impacting on the local corridor. Motorists unaware of the ban will also be informed by way of advanced warning signage, as proposed within the scheme design, and make the right turn at the next available opportunity (Runcorn Road and Tindal Street, or otherwise available).

It is considered that given the small number of movements affected by the right turn ban any re-routing to alternative routes can be accommodated within the local highway network capacity with limited adverse impact.

The proposal is also providing a pedestrian phase. The additional inclusion of time for right turning vehicles and a pedestrian phase would result in significant additional delay to the junction for all modes (including pedestrians) as time allocated to each movement would need to decrease and the overall junction cycle time would need to increase.

2. Necessity for BLE and Parking Enforcement systems

Birmingham City Council are currently in the process of finalising proposals for a scheme which would see new bus lane enforcement (BLE) cameras installed at a range of locations across the city. This includes provision for several cameras to enforce sections of the proposed or existing bus lanes on Alcester Road. These cameras will be implemented to compliment the works being carried out by Transport for West Midlands and will seek to ensure that those measures are effective in improving bus movements on a very busy corridor. A key part of the proposed BLE scheme will be the implementation of the Traffic Regulation Order amendments being proposed by TfWM. As this will address several discrepancies between the bus lane hours of operation and parking/loading restrictions.

The Outline Business Case for the BCC scheme to install the new cameras is currently being finalised, prior to being submitted through internal governance processes. Once approved, this will allow the detailed design works to be undertaken and the production of the Full Business Case. Part of the detailed design process includes undertaking a “fair and reasonable” assessment to ensure that the positioning of the cameras targets specific locations where delays to buses may occur due to drivers illegally using the bus lane and impeding movements, also ensuring that there is no clashes between bus lane operation hours and times when parking or loading is permitted. The detailed designed process also verifies that the bus lane signage and road markings are clear and visible, and that it meets the standards laid out in the Traffic Signs Manual (2019); that seek to avoid the possibility of unintentional movements into the bus lanes by unauthorized vehicles. The detailed design phase is expected to take place mid 2023 with the civil engineering and camera installation works earmarked for late 2023/24.

3. Lack of provisions of cycling lanes

The proposed scheme targets bus journey time improvements within the available permitted funding. The proposals do not worsen the existing provision for cyclists, with cyclists permitted to use the proposed additional bus lanes. Targeted cycling improvements within the scope of works would require extensive additional funding that is not currently available. However, it may be considered as part of future proposals on the corridor.

4. Visibility of the proposal benefits quantification

The project will improve access for people of a working age to employment zones and the Curzon HS2 terminal with Birmingham city centre. The HS2 growth strategy

focuses on bringing everybody in the region within a 45-minute journey time of HS2. The Curzon Masterplan will capitalise on the HS2 opportunity by bringing forward plans to deliver significant missed use development around the HS2 terminal.

The sheer volume of passengers using the A435 corridor by bus, combined with the journey time improvements delivered by the scheme will materially contribute to the objectives of the HS2 Growth Strategy and wider Curzon Masterplan.

The scheme will increase connectivity to emerging economic centres. This will be achieved by improving journey times thereby increasing work catchments to labour markets. This will buck the trend where, in the last 10 years, 216,000 fewer people within Birmingham are within a 45-minute journey time to the city centre by bus.

The VISSIM analysis indicates that the project would result in a journey time improvement through the network of approximately 20%.

The project is expected to save 10.5 of the 52 collisions in 5 years, or 20.2%. This overall saving equates to a forecast collision saving of 2.1 collisions per annum, of which 1.6 are slight and 0.5 serious. This would save 3.3 casualties per annum of which 2.8 are slight and 0.5 serious. The rate of collisions and resulting casualties has been processed using collision cost data from WebTAG.

The delivery of new rail stations along the Camp Hill Line and bus priority measures along A453 Alcester Road/Mosley Road are not mutually exclusive; both are recognized in both local and regional strategy as being required to support the continued growth of the city and wider West Midlands. The outline business case (OBC) for proposed stations at Hazelwell, Kings Heath and Moseley has been reviewed as part of the project to understand its impact on benefits of bus priority measures.

Recommendation

That the Assistant Director Transport and Connectivity, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Transport, approves the implementation of the permanent Traffic Regulation Order.