

## **REGENERATION, COMMUNITY AND CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**3 OCTOBER 2013**

### **MEMBER'S ITEM: USE OF BUS LANE, CANAL ROAD, STROOD**

Report from: Robin Cooper, Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture

Author: Steve Hewlett, Head of Integrated Transport

#### **Summary**

This report sets out a provisional response to an issue, raised by Councillor Hubbard, regarding whether taxis could be allowed to use the Bus Lane in Canal Road in Strood. A verbal update following initial consultation will be presented at the committee.

#### **1. Budget and Policy Framework**

- 1.1 Under Medway Constitution Overview and Scrutiny rules (Chapter 4, Part 5, Paragraph 9.1) Councillor Hubbard has requested that an item on this matter is included on the agenda for this meeting.

#### **2. The Issue**

- 2.1. Councillor Hubbard has requested that an item was placed on the agenda and the reasons are set out as follows:

At the Regeneration, Community & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 13 December 2012 Members discussed an item on the Council Plan performance monitoring 2012/2013 - quarter 2 and referring to Minute 655 of that meeting:

It was asked whether taxis could be allowed to use the Bus Lane in Canal Road in Strood, especially now that CCTV enforcement cameras were in place, as this would reduce the number of taxis using residential roads.

The Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture responded, "that taxis could not currently use the Bus Lane in Canal Road, as it was linked to a planning condition that restricted the number of vehicles using the Bus Lane. He advised that a local Taxi Association (MTLDA) had written to the council asking for taxis to use the Bus Lane in Canal Road and he had offered to review the situation in six months time. The Director advised that he would provide further information to the committee via a Briefing Note and would also hold a review on the use of the Bus Lane in Canal Road, Strood in early 2013."

Members of the committee agreed that a review was required and its decision was, "The committee agreed to: (b) request further information on the restriction of vehicles using the Bus Lane in Canal Road, Strood via a Briefing Note and ask the Director of Regeneration, Community and Culture to review the use of the Bus Lane as soon as possible."

On April 24 Cllr Glyn Griffiths e-mailed the Director, "Cllr Maple and I recently had a meeting with representatives of the MTLDA. One of the issues raised relates to the Strood bus link in Canal Road which taxis are prevented from using. I note from correspondence that you had with the MTLDA that you indicated that the current ban would be reviewed in March this year. What was the outcome of the review?"

"I know that my colleague, Cllr Hubbard has raised this as the Ward Councillor, and it does seem perverse that taxis picking up clients wishing to go to the Medway City Estate have to go out of Canal Road (causing additional congestion on the A2 that you indicated that you were concerned about), back into Station Road and then access the estate via Banks and Commissioners Road. Given that we recognise taxis as part of our integrated public transport system, I would urge you quickly to address this deficiency. I look forward to hearing from you on this matter."

In reply the Director said he was "Happy to consult".

I request that the committee be updated on the outcome of the consultation. Allowing taxis to use the Canal Road to Commissioner Road Bus link will enhance Strood/Medway's integrated public transport system by allowing Strood Station based taxi's to better serve Medway City Estate and further afield to Wainscott & Hoo Peninsula - plus via Medway Tunnel to Chatham Maritime. There would be a limited effect on only two homes by the change - one house more than the other - and the extent of the change will be that Taxis will come from behind the properties rather passing the front of the two houses. Homes in Station Road, Banks Road, Commissioners Road and Frindsbury Road/Hill will benefit from not have such traffic passing by.

### **3 Director's comments**

- 3.1 Following consultation with ward councillors, a letter was sent to local residents directly affected by the proposal, attached at Appendix A, consulting them on the use of the bus lane on Canal Road, Strood. On receiving details

of the consultation area Cllr Hubbard requested the area of consultation be extended to include all of Commissioner's Road and this was subsequently undertaken. The consultation will last for two weeks and the results will be reported back to the committee verbally at the meeting.

#### **4 Risk Management**

4.1 No risks identified as no decisions are currently being proposed.

#### **5. Financial and Legal Implications**

5.1 There are no financial or legal implications at this stage. Should the proposal be agreed there will be a requirement to undertake formal consultation under the Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to enable the existing Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to be amended.

5.2 The description of the development detailed in the planning application for the bus link and the associated conditions to control the use by unauthorised vehicles indicates that allowing taxis to use the link would be a material change of the planning consent. As a result it is likely that a planning application would be required.

5.3 The costs associated with the proposal will include formal consultation associated with changes to the TRO, planning application fees to amend the use and changes to signage. The value of these costs has not been determined at this stage.

#### **6. Recommendations**

6.1 That:

- a) Members are asked to consider the provisional findings of the consultation.
- b) A report outlining proposals following consultation be presented to the committee at the next meeting.

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#### **Background Papers**

None