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## NORTH AYRSHIRE COUNCIL

11 June 2019

### Cabinet

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**Title:** A738 Kilwinning Road, Stevenston  
Experimental Traffic Regulation Order

**Purpose:** To seek approval for the promotion of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order to enable the trial of taxis utilising the Bus Lane in Kilwinning Road, Stevenston.

**Recommendation:** That the Cabinet agrees to:

- a) Approve the promotion of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order to enable the trial of taxis utilising the Bus Lane; and
- b) Receive a future report on the outcome of the experimental Traffic Regulation Order and further recommendation(s).

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### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The A738 Kilwinning Road Stevenston (Bus Lanes) Order 2006 restricts the use of the bus lane to buses carrying eight or more passengers. Requests were received from TOA Taxis in 2008 and 2018 to amend the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to enable taxis to also utilise the bus lane. These were refused given concerns regarding misuse by other vehicles and impacts on bus journey times given significant investment in the bus corridor infrastructure. This was informed by consultation with Police Scotland, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and the main local bus operator.
- 1.2 In January 2019, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered a petition from TOA Taxis requesting that taxis be permitted to use the bus lane. The Committee agreed to remit to Officers to further investigate the promotion of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order alongside complementary measures to improve the traffic flow and ease congestion within this localised area and report to Cabinet for a recommendation.
- 1.3 This report seeks approval for the promotion of an experimental TRO to enable taxis to use the Kilwinning Road bus lane for a period of 12 months and to allow the impacts of this to be monitored.

### 2. Background

- 2.1 North Ayrshire Council secured funding from the Public Transport Fund for a joint project with East Ayrshire Council for the development of a Quality Public Transport Corridor between Ardrossan and Kilmarnock. This delivered a range of improvements along the route including improved bus shelters, bus boarders and dedicated lanes between 2002

and 2006. These aimed to contribute to improved reliability and journey times as well as enhancing users' experience to encourage bus travel.

- 2.2 A bus lane was created on the A738 Kilwinning Road, Stevenston between the Pennyburn and Hayocks Roundabouts as part of this project. This aimed to address delays at peak times between these locations which impacted significantly on the operation of the key quality bus route between Ardrossan and Kilmarnock. Improvements to the route including Real Time Passenger Information (RTPI) were also funded through Strathclyde Partnership for Transport's (SPT) Capital Programme.
- 2.3 The A738 Kilwinning Road Stevenston (Bus Lanes) Order made in July 2006 restricts the use of the lane to buses adapted to carry eight or more passengers (exclusive of the driver) and pedal cycles. The bus lane is used by a range of vital bus services for local communities including:
  - Service 11 operating every 10 minutes between Kilmarnock and Ardrossan; and
  - Service 585 operating every 30 to 45 minutes between Ayr, Ardrossan and Greenock.
- 2.4 Improvements have been made to the bus lane since its introduction which aimed to improve vehicle flow and bus travel. Funding was secured from SPT's Capital Programme to expand the roundabout to allow eastbound buses to continue along the existing nearside lane, removing the need for eastbound buses to change lanes into the general traffic lane which at peak times resulted in delays.
- 2.5 Requests were received from TOA Taxis in 2008 and 2018 to amend the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to enable taxis to also utilise the bus lane. These were refused given that:
  - The purpose of the bus lane was to improve public transport journey times, encouraging more people to use public transport.
  - A private hire taxi can be viewed by road users as no different to any other car/van using the road and general road users may be aggrieved by taxis driving in the bus lanes. This could encourage misuse of the bus lane by motorists.
  - Enforcement of the Order by Strathclyde Police would be more difficult.
- 2.6 In January 2019, the Audit and Scrutiny Committee considered a petition from TOA Taxis requesting that taxis be permitted to use the bus lane. It agreed to remit to Council Officers to further investigate an Experimental TRO alongside complementary measures to improve the traffic flow and ease congestion. The justification for this was that it would potentially allow taxi companies to provide a more cost-effective service to elderly customers, customers with mobility issues and in areas where there is no direct bus service. This would also allow the bus lane to be monitored to assess the impact on bus operations and misuse by non-taxi vehicles.
- 2.7 Further consultation has been undertaken with Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and the main local bus operator, Stagecoach West Scotland. Whilst both organisations have expressed continuing concerns, it is recognised that an experimental TRO would provide the opportunity to assess the impact of the inclusion of taxis in the bus lane.
- 2.8 On this basis it is proposed that the full length of the bus lane be the subject of an experimental TRO permitting taxis to utilise the bus lane for a period of 12 months. This will allow Hackney Licenced and Private Hire vehicles to utilise the bus lane. This would

allow a sufficient period to assess its impact on bus services and incidences of misuse by non-taxi vehicles. The experimental nature of the TRO would also provide the Council with the flexibility to rescind the Order should the monitoring identify a sufficiently negative impact on bus services.

- 2.9 This will enable the Council to make a more informed decision on the future operation of the bus lane in the long term. SPT and Stagecoach remain in discussion with the Council more generally about network performance and congestion, including the implementation of a traffic control system to provide buses with priority at traffic lights in Irvine and Kilwinning.

### 3. Proposals

3.1 The Cabinet is invited to agree to:-

- a) Approve the promotion of an experimental Traffic Regulation Order to enable the trial of taxis utilising the Bus Lane; and
- b) Receive a future report on the outcome of the experimental Traffic Regulation Order and further recommendation(s).

### 4. Implications/Socio-economic Duty

<b>Financial:</b>	The costs associated with implementing the proposal will be met from existing Council budgets.
<b>Human Resources:</b>	The Officer time required to implement, respond to complaints and monitor this proposal will be met from existing resources.
<b>Legal:</b>	The experimental Traffic Regulation Order will be promoted by the Council. This requires consultation with Police Scotland and SPT however there is no requirement to publish the proposals and no right to objection.
<b>Equality/Socio-economic Duty:</b>	This will be fully assessed through the experimental period to establish the implications to taxi journey times and costs and the implications for the bus services.
<b>Children and Young People:</b>	This will be fully reviewed through the experimental period to assess implications for access to education, leisure and employment facilities.
<b>Environmental &amp; Sustainability:</b>	This will be fully reviewed through the experimental period to assess impacts to air quality and emissions.
<b>Key Priorities:</b>	The proposal aims to contribute to the outcome of an inclusive, growing and enterprising community by improving access to local services and facilities. The experimental period will assess any impact on public transport provision.
<b>Community Benefits:</b>	The impact on effective communities will be assessed as part of the experimental period.

## **5. Consultation**

- 5.1 The Council's Commercial Services, Strathclyde Partnership for Transport and the main local bus operator, Stagecoach West Scotland, have been consulted on the proposal and in relation to previous requests as detailed in the report.

Karen Yeomans  
Executive Director (Economy and Communities)

For further information please contact **Louise Kirk, Active Travel and Transport Manager**, on **01294 324766**.

### **Background Papers**

None.