London Borough of Enfield

Title:	Approve the Introduction of Bowes Road Bus Lane
Report to:	Cllr Rick Jewell - Cabinet Member for Environment Doug Wilkinson – Director of Environment & Street Scene
Date of Report:	20 March 2024
Directors:	Doug Wilkinson – Director of Environment & Street Scene Perry Scott – Executive Director of Environment Communities
Report Author:	Jonathan Goodson jonathan.goodson@enfield.gov.uk
Ward(s) affected:	Arnos Grove and New Southgate
Key Decision Number:	Non-Key
Classification:	Part I Public

Purpose of Report

1. The report considers the response to the consultation exercise of February 2023 on a proposed bus lane on A1110 Bowes Road (eastbound approach to the North Circular Road) and recommends that a scheme be implemented, with minor modifications to the one first proposed as per Appendix A, on an experimental basis.

Recommendations

I. **To approve** – the making of an experimental traffic management order pursuant to Section 9 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the undertaking of all other necessary steps to implement the bus lane and associated parking controls shown at Appendix B on an experimental basis, with operational hours of Monday to Friday 7am to 10am and 4pm to 7pm, and Saturday 10am to 2pm.

II. **To approve** – the funding of the estimated £20,000 implementation costs from the TfL-funded 2023/24 Bus Priority Programme.

Background and Options

2. Enfield residents are well served by a network of high frequency bus routes, whose operation is overseen by Transport for London. The TfL Bus Priority Programme continues to provide boroughs with annual scheme funding awards for specific measures that TfL and the borough in question judge will improve the appeal, reliability, and accessibility of the bus network. With buses offering a very efficient use of road space, and private cars the least efficient, the case to prioritise the former over the latter remains compelling.

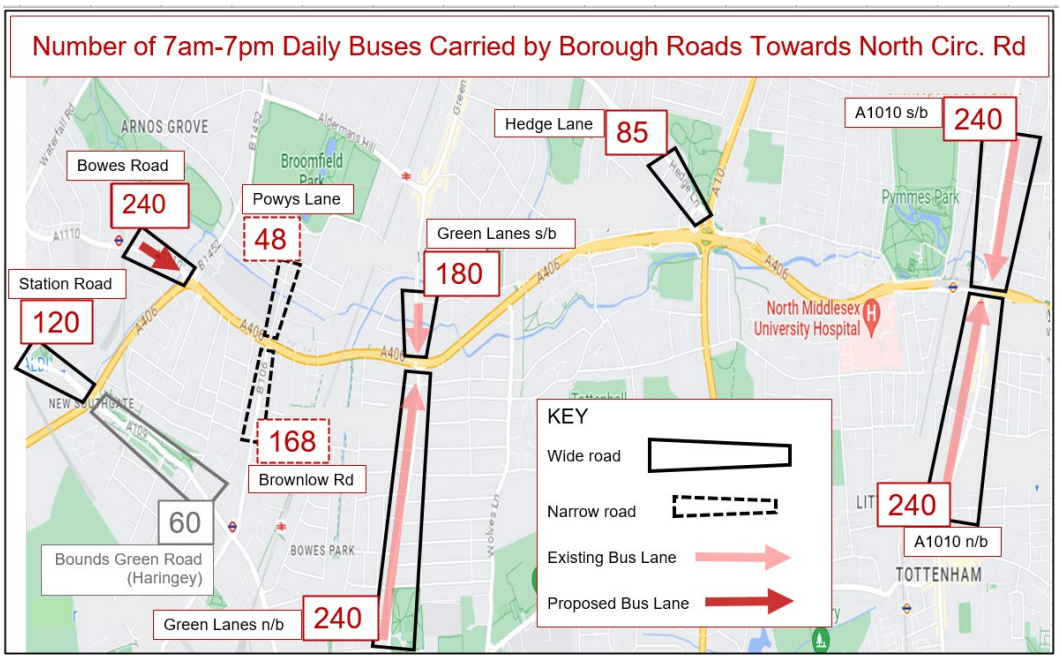
3. A key tool in giving priority to buses over general traffic is by the provision of bus lanes. Where road width is sufficient to accommodate them, these are an effective measure in allowing buses to bypass queues of general traffic. The greater the number of buses a street carries, and the busier the junctions they must negotiate, the greater the potential benefits.

4. The value of bus lanes, even short ones, is most easily appreciated when seen on the approach to busy signalised intersections. At sites where bus lanes are not provided, it can be seen in busy periods that buses must wait - along with other traffic - through multiple cycles of the traffic signals before they are able to proceed through the junction. TfL quantifies changes up or down in bus delay - and assigns monetary value to those changes based on operating costs and wasted passenger time and so forth – using seconds as its base unit of measurement. When considering that bus lanes can reduce the number of whole traffic signal cycles a bus waits for on each journey, and that the signal cycle of busy junctions can be 120 seconds (2 minutes) in duration, the large scale of the journey time savings becomes clear. The demonstrably swifter progress of the bus when using a bus lane relative to private cars using the adjacent all-traffic section of road also sends a powerful and positive message to road users about the benefits of using public transport.

5. Recent guidance from Department for Transport (DfT) on the topic is provided via Local Transport Note 1/24: Bus User Priority. LTN1/24 sets out some clear principles that bus lanes should feature and operate at the locations and at the times of day where clear benefit to bus reliability is gained. In other words, be provided to match the location and hour of congestion seen to delay buses, especially large numbers of buses. It also

confirms the need for explicit parking and loading restrictions to prohibit blocking of the lane by dwelling vehicles during the operational hours.

6. Appreciating that high yield interventions, with respect to bus journey time savings, are going to be found on streets intersecting with the very busiest of our local traffic corridors, it is unsurprising that many of the existing sections of borough-managed bus lane in Enfield are found on the approaches to the A406 North Circular Road.



7. While the borough roads carrying the greatest number of buses will tend to be wide and busy A-roads, there is no clear distinction between these roads and what the community might think of as ‘residential streets’ in terms of the presence of fronting homes. The examples below make the point that, as far as fronting homes are concerned and the demand these generate for parking space etc, they can all be described as ‘residential’.

8. **<u>Original Proposals and Consultation – Feb 2023:</u>** Agreeing with TfL that Bowes Road represented a suitable and strategically important section of road for an eastbound bus lane, the Council drew up plans. These are seen at Appendix A.

9. **Extent of Bus Lane:** The design shows the new bus lane commencing just east of the junction of Arnos Road, around 225m from its natural end point, where the road divides into multiple queueing lanes ahead of the traffic signals at the North Circular Road junction. The Arnos Road junction was deemed an obvious start point, due to observations of queuing traffic extending back as far as Arnos Road in busier periods and also because, west of Arnos Road, the carriageway is notably narrower and less suited to accommodating a bus lane. Queue length surveys and bus delay data (see further details below) indicated some high levels of potential benefit, but confirmed that some periods were more congested than others. Operational times of 7am to 7pm all week were chosen for the original proposals to match the default coverage TfL tends to favour.

10. **Parking Context:** The proposed bus lane covers the frontage of 27 homes on the northern side of the street. While households on the street are generally well-served by having one or more off-street parking spaces, 2 of the 27 homes do not have historic crossovers. Subsequent changes to Council policy around the suitability of creating new vehicular access points on principal roads has established a default position against the creation of new crossovers in this type of street, which remains in effect.

11. The area of interest falls within the Arnos Grove CPZ. Weekday only controls operating 11am to noon have been found effective, historically, in deterring all-day use of the local kerbsides by daily commuters heading to the train station. The section of interest along the northern kerbside features 4 resident permit holder bays accommodating a total of 7 cars. The presence of gaps between crossovers that might have featured additional bays, but instead received the corresponding single yellow line marking, suggests residents did not feel the maximum parking capacity the road layout might have offered was required in the era (circa 1997) when the zone was first introduced.

12. However, recognising that the 11am to noon bays become defunct under the proposed 7am to 7pm bus lane, the drawing shows them being removed and seeks to offer alternative capacity nearby. The southern side of the street also features sections of kerbside where resident bays might have been added but were omitted. By making use of these positions, the 7 spaces for permit holders are, broadly, matched under the original design, but with the bays switching to the southern side of the street.

13. **Summary of community feedback:** The greatest interest came from households on the northern side of Bowes Road whose homes front the proposed bus lane. From these 27 households, 10 submitted objections, including the 2 homes with no off-street parking. Objections were also received from homes on the southern side. From 17 households situated opposite the proposed extent of bus lane, 5 submitted objections. Across the full 72 home direct consultation area, which extended some way west of the limits of the bus lane, 20 objections were received in total: 12 from the northern side, 8 the southern, with zero expressions of support.

14. The centreline of Bowes Road represents the ward boundary between the Arnos Grove and New Southgate wards. Both elected representatives from the former, which covers the northern side homes, wrote to reinforce the comments in opposition to the proposals. A ward councillor for Cockfosters also submitted comments against the proposals. Responses to the plans issued were not received from representatives of New Southgate ward.

15. It is understood that one householder based on the northern side of the road distributed materials in opposition to the proposals in printed form across some adjacent streets. Officers understand that similar materials were also distributed by email. The resident's distribution criteria for the latter is unknown. The result of the exercise was the receipt, by the Council, of numerous emails believed, as a set, to be from some way beyond the direct consultation area, many of which took the form of a template objection originated by the householder.

16. From adjacent streets outside the direct consultation area – likely to have been prompted by the local activity described above - objections were received from 5 households. However, individually composed responses were also received from 4 households in support of the proposals. From the set of contributors believed to live at distance from the street a further 29 objections were received, along with 1 message of support.

17. The template objection raised various concerns around how local parking demand would be satisfied by the future arrangements. Reference was also made to disabled parking provision and to servicing arrangements for the fronting homes, such as grocery deliveries. Accompanying suggestions raised that fall outside the scope of the scheme included: extending the controlled hours of the wider CPZ; removing the historic closure point on the adjacent Seafield Road; adding traffic calming and a lower speed limit to Bowes Road; and placing cameras to deter crime.

18. Further points raised included the four below. One: the idea that the same benefits could be gained without a bus lane by TfL simply optimising the traffic signal operation and better regulating how traffic proceeds across the junction. Two: that the bus lane will make it unsafe for residents to depart driveways. Three: that the proposed layout will pose danger to the structural integrity of homes due to buses, in future, being able to pass along areas of carriageway that sit closer to the building line. Four: that the proposal lacks seriousness due to the bus lane only being 100m long. Note: in reality the proposed bus lane is 200m long, not including the 25m long entry taper.

19. The objector listed five local non-domestic premises from within the direct area of interest that would be disadvantaged by the loss of parking space; The Arnos Arms public house; the dental practice on the northern side of the street; and the doctor surgery, library and swimming pool all sharing the complex that is set back behind an off-highway parking area on the southern side of the road. However, officers note that none of these premises made responses on their own behalf to flag up such concerns.

20. The usage of the template objection helps reinforce the notion that those objecting parties on the northern side of the street have a shared set of

concerns. Two further localised issues are noteworthy. One home on the northern side of the street has a disabled member of the household, for whom a blue badge is used, but no formal off-street parking options exist at the home. This (see below) merits further consideration. Two homes on the southern side of the street submitted objections inferred to relate primarily to pre-existing concerns about school buses blocking their driveway access when seen dropping off pupils at the swimming pool.

21. The 8 southern-side objections consisted of the 2 aforementioned submissions plus 6 households submitting the template objection. The initial instinct of officers was that the proposals were likely to have little direct impact on the southern side households, and their interpretation is that this is borne out in the nature of the responses detailed above relating to that side of the road; 6 are template responses and 2 focus on a pre-existing issue felt to have little relevance to the proposal for the bus lane.

22. **Addressing Resident Anxieties and Objections:** The full set of objections and comments is addressed below.

Objection 1: Bowes Road is a residential street – it is unsuitable for a bus lane, in both character and in road width.
Road space: A1110 Bowes Road is an A-Road. Heading east along the section of interest, it increases in width from 10.75m to 12m. For context, side roads – even those offering a through route - would typically be around 7.5m in width, such as Palmers Road and Brookdale. Reallocating road width such that the 2m portion presently devoted to the parking of a small number of private cars at the northern kerbside makes way for a 3.25m portion for moving buses results in minimal narrowing of the remaining portion given over to other traffic movements and offers better overall capacity for moving traffic. **Bus usage:** Bowes Road carries 4 high-frequency bus services eastbound towards the North Circular Road: routes 34, 184, 232 and the SL1 section of the 'Superloop', (North Finchley to New Southgate to Arnos Grove to Enfield to Walthamstow.) With each service averaging 5 eastbound buses per hour across the traditional 12-hour 7am to 7pm busy period, it can be calculated that 240 timetabled buses per day would potentially gain benefit from the bus lane. **Street character:** The text and graphics at section 6 and 7 above include mapping reviewing the borough streets that carry bus services towards busy intersections with the North Circular Road, and images of similar streets with bus lanes. Together these make the point that, in terms of the viability, efficacy and suitability of accommodating a bus lane, Bowes Road belongs more in the group of streets that already feature bus lanes on the approaches to the North Circular Road (i.e. both approaches on Green Lanes and Fore Street) than in the group that does not, of which some are too narrow or, like Hedge Lane, carry far fewer buses.

While Bowes Road does feature fronting homes (a total of 27 of which might be deemed directly affected by this proposal) only 2 of these lack formalised frontage parking. In the example images it can be seen that other streets have as many fronting homes as Bowes Road, if not more, with some situated closer to the carriageway and often with poorer overall parking options. This undermines the idea that Bowes Road is dissimilar to the other examples; or that it is a street with a primary function for domestic access and parking, not the distribution of local traffic movements; or that is has a particular level of on-street parking demand that must be met to the exclusion of any competing form of usage. The reality in Bowes Road is of nearly 500 daily buses (bi-directional) passing along an urban A-Road, which is clearly at odds with the term 'residential street', in the manner in which it is commonly understood.

LTN1/24 (see section 5 above) confirms the applicability of bus lanes to streets like Bowes Road.

Objection 2: **A 100m long bus lane serves little purpose.**

Bus lane length: The proposed bus lane is 200m long, occupying a length of street that equates to a queue of 35 to 45 cars in busy periods. Officers estimate that buses are held for one or more additional signal cycles by queues of 17 cars or longer. Section 4 above sets out the significant scope for bus journey time savings this can yield, given that a wait of up to 2 minutes can be expected for each cycle of the signals the bus must wait to elapse before advancing. Further analysis of survey data is given in sections found below. LTN1/24 (see section 5 above) sets out the idea of bus lanes extending across the length they offer benefit, rather than covering longer stretches of street where traffic is free-flowing.

Journey benefit: If each peak hour bus carried 30 passengers, it can be calculated that each hour of operation during high congestion periods offers an improvement to 600 journeys. If operational for a total of, say, six hours on a weekday, this would equate to a betterment to 3,600 journeys by Londoners each day. This is a large number relative to the number of journeys each hour by private car that might be argued to be made less convenient by the loss of the parking spaces. Assuming each of the 7 spaces would be made use of once each morning and once each evening by cars that carried, on average, 2 occupants, and that in each case a parking space slightly further away was made use of instead, the corresponding number or journeys made less convenient each day by their removal is just 28, which is less than 1 percent of the 3,600 figure.

Objection 3: This will result in increased congestion, along with other changes recently coming into effect.

The proposed bus lane terminates at the existing section of the street where dual-lane queuing for the traffic signals commences. Accordingly,

it should pose no impediment to the way traffic in general discharges through the junction.

The section of road in question has sufficient width to accommodate two suitably wide lanes for general traffic alongside a 3.25m wide lane for eastbound buses, which replaces a 2m wide portion of the carriageway presently given over to the parking of a small number of private vehicles. Where placed and made operational during the busiest hours of the day, the bus lane will be facilitating the onward journey of around 20 buses per hour, and will be removing the same mass of vehicles from the 200m length eastbound lane for general traffic, which may carry 1,000 vehicles per hour in busy periods. Accordingly, it is reasonable to assume that any marginal impact it has on the movement of general traffic will be positive, rather than negative.

This report does not consider any impacts of other changes with no direct connection to the bus lane proposal.

Objection 4: **The bus lane will pose more vibration or noise to adjacent homes.**

The biggest contribution to unwanted noise in the street is likely to be the overall volume of traffic. The proposals cannot claim to reduce this, in the short term, but are aligned with the longer-term aim of deleting excess car trips and encouraging more of those trips to be made using the fleet of buses that is already moving around the network.

While residents do sometimes complain of vibrations due to bus movements these tend to come from individual properties, not from groups of residents occupying runs of similar homes along a street. The borough, for context, has a great many miles of street along which buses proceed past homes. This tends to suggest that individual perception or localised factors are dominant within complaints, rather than that the combination of buses and fronting homes is inherently problematic. Even where the Council has undertaken in-home measuring of vibrations due to particularly persistent complaints, the measurements have not revealed vibrations at a level likely to be overly noticeable to the average occupant, let alone to pose structural risk to buildings.

The homes in question are set back at a typical distance of 11m from the edge of the road. Under the existing arrangement the nearest face of passing buses may be 14m from the front of these buildings, under the future layout perhaps 11.5m would be more typical. The difference should not be significant in terms of noise or vibration perceived by occupants and in the section 7 images above we see homes set rather closer than 11.5m to existing bus lanes. Homes 325 to 339, further west on the southern side of Bowes Road, are set back around 8m from the edge of the road, where the layout sees the same loading of hourly buses passing adjacent to the kerbline. This arrangement – which would appear to be a worse case example - is not known to generate complaints.

Objection 5: Optimisation of the signalised junction by TfL would achieve the same benefits without the need for a bus lane.

With TfL sits the imperative to maintain effective traffic flow on the North Circular Road in order to meet the needs of the bus network, as well as the needs of other road users, and to avoid traffic relocating wholesale onto borough streets and potentially overwhelming them. Had TfL officers identified even the possibility that a straightforward, viable intervention that hastened bus movements from Bowes Road could be brought about without unduly delaying buses and other traffic on other arms, it is likely the organisation would have investigated it already.

The appeal of the bus lane proposal is two-fold. Firstly, it reallocates road space, and hence priority, to buses over a small number of stationary private vehicles, rather than being of detriment to other traffic streams. Secondly, it targets the resulting boost in capacity specifically to buses, such that it aligns with the aim of shifting modal choice, rather than merely trying to keep pace with overall demand for traffic capacity.

Objection 6: The proposals should not proceed without supplementary or alternative measures coming forward.

With Bowes Road being a busy bus route and A-Road, there are limitations on the sort of traffic calming that it is appropriate to introduce. Even with traffic calming in place, the case to lower the speed limit on such a road to 20mph, while neighbouring side-streets remain 30mph, is questionable. The opportunity at hand is, in any case, to boost priority for buses on a street where traffic is commonly moving very slowly due to congestion, rather than moving with excessive speed. Traffic calming measures are deemed, rightly, to be outside the scope of the scheme and the TfL funding award that underpins it. In terms of explicit road safety interventions, the Council continues to tackle its problematic streets by order of which are generating the most road user injuries. Bowes Road does not, at present, belong in the list of the most problematic.

Removing the historic barrier in Seafield Road would be a controversial measure that would require extensive consultation. It is outside the scope of the bus lane proposals and officers see no strong arguments for why the two ideas should be coupled together.

Reviewing the wider Arnos Grove CPZ – including its zone boundaries and controlled periods - is something the Council intends to consult upon in the near future, taking advantage of monies arising from nearby housing development. Again, there is no particular case to couple together these two dissimilar schemes.

Objection 7: The loss of domestic parking is excessive.

The arguments for why the loss of domestic parking space is, in reality, only modest are as follows:

1) The proposals delete only 7 parking spaces from the northern side, returning a similar number to the southern kerbside.
2) Only 2 fronting homes from 27 lack off-street parking space.
3) The residents already benefit from permit facilities allowing them to dominate use of on-street spaces relative to non-residents and underlining the principle that they have an entitlement to make use of any bays in the zone, not just those immediately outside their homes.
4) The fact that the original parking zone measures left unfilled gaps between crossovers, where other schemes might have fitted extra bays, is likely to reflect the street's overall relative abundance of parking options, thanks to the relatively low-density housing combined with the good kerbside parking options and the high off-street parking capacity.
5) The above point is supported by parking surveys that found that the 7 spaces in question were, on average, used to only 57% of their capacity on a weekday and 48% on a Saturday.

Referring to the points under Objection 2 above, the likelihood of this modest loss of parking convenience unlocking a significant time improvement applying to around 3,600 bus passengers each day, confirms why the proposals are reasonable, despite coming with some drawbacks. LTN1/24 (see section 5 above) confirms the need for corresponding parking and loading controls in bus lanes.

Objection 8: The restriction on loading activity is excessive.

The prevailing set of controls for the parking zone place no restriction on loading activity. Outside of the specific loading prohibition needed to accompany the bus lane, a grocery delivery driver, for example, could make use of a single yellow line or a permit holder bay at any hour for their unloading event and commit no offence. The street overall, it follows, does not lack for loading positions; less so in harness with a decent set of pedestrian crossing facilities.

For their ease and convenience, those delivery drivers would naturally favour stopping at the nearest kerbside. The Council's argument is that the convenience of the 3,600 daily bus users should take priority. The delivery driver's suitability for the role would include the capacity to convey goods from the vehicle to the doorstep and would routinely entail conveying them over slightly longer distances. Grocery retailers wishing to serve homes on the northern side of Bowes Road can seek to avoid scheduling deliveries during the controlled period or can absorb the marginally longer delivery time within their operations and over-heads. It

seems very unlikely that any such retailer would refuse a household's custom rather than seek a suitable work-around.

For delivery activity that is more occasional but greater in difficulty or duration - such as house-moving or delivering large items – the relevant parties should be able to plan their operations to avoid the controlled period.

LTN1/24 (see section 5 above) confirms the need for corresponding parking and loading controls in bus lanes.

Objection 9: The loss of parking for nearby non-domestic premises is excessive.

The doctor surgery, swimming pool and library are set back from the road on the southern side of the street behind an off-highway parking area. The Council is the owner of the land and could introduce further controls in due course, if these proved necessary to deter commuter parking and free up essential space for visitors to the facilities.

The Arnos Arms public house and the dental practice on the northern side of the street, as with those premises listed above, made no response to the consultation. This may reflect the idea that the northern kerbside, with its historical parking controls to favour residents, is not felt to be of particular importance to any of these premises in providing for visitor parking.

Objection 10: There are road safety concerns with drivers emerging from frontage parking areas across the bus lane, or needing to cross the street from southern side parking bays.

When the bus lane is operational it should be clear of parked vehicles. Drivers emerging from access points should then enjoy good visibility towards oncoming buses. By delaying a turn out until an approaching bus has passed, they should then enjoy a suitably long period before the next bus arrives in which they can wait for a gap in traffic to make turns, in similar fashion to the way they would need to act at present.

Officers feel that, given the width of the road and the high volume of traffic, there is scope for improvement in the pedestrian crossing facilities. A refuge island crossing in front of the library complex would serve the

facilities therein, and the existing bus stop and be well positioned for the replacement parking bays. This spot, midway between the existing zebra crossing to the west near the station and the existing facilities within the traffic signals to the east, 200m from each, would be ideal. This measure would require the removal of the existing free parking bays to ensure traffic can pass the island.

Objection 11: It can't be right for the Council to push ahead with plans that enjoy such little support from those in the street.

Interventions to promote the greater use of active and sustainable travel are prone to impose certain limitations on the convenience of car use inside the scheme boundary. Parking zones come with permit costs; traffic calming schemes impose lower speeds on drivers; new bus stops, cycle lanes or pedestrian crossing points require sections of kerbside to be sterilised of parking space. In this case the need to remove parking bays to leave space for the bus lane interrupts existing parking habits. The schemes are thus prone to attract opposition.

Those members of the community who benefit most clearly from the scheme - in this case bus users, or future bus users - are a more nebulous group to target when soliciting opinions and may not perceive the benefits to be sufficiently great or directly applicable to them to prompt a response.

Although 10 households in the section of street directly affected have written in opposition to the proposals, 17 households from the same section offered no complaint. Although material was distributed locally by a resident or residents that focussed only on the potential drawbacks of the scheme, it prompted – from nearby streets - almost as many messages of support (4) as it did opposition (5). Although opponents claim a bus lane to be out of place in Bowes Road, viewed objectively a wide A-Road carrying 240 daily buses towards a trunk road is very natural territory for such a facility. Although some households will, of course, regret the loss of parking space, even without the comparable number of spaces being provided nearby the street remains far better served for domestic parking options than many other neighbourhoods in close vicinity to the North Circular Road.

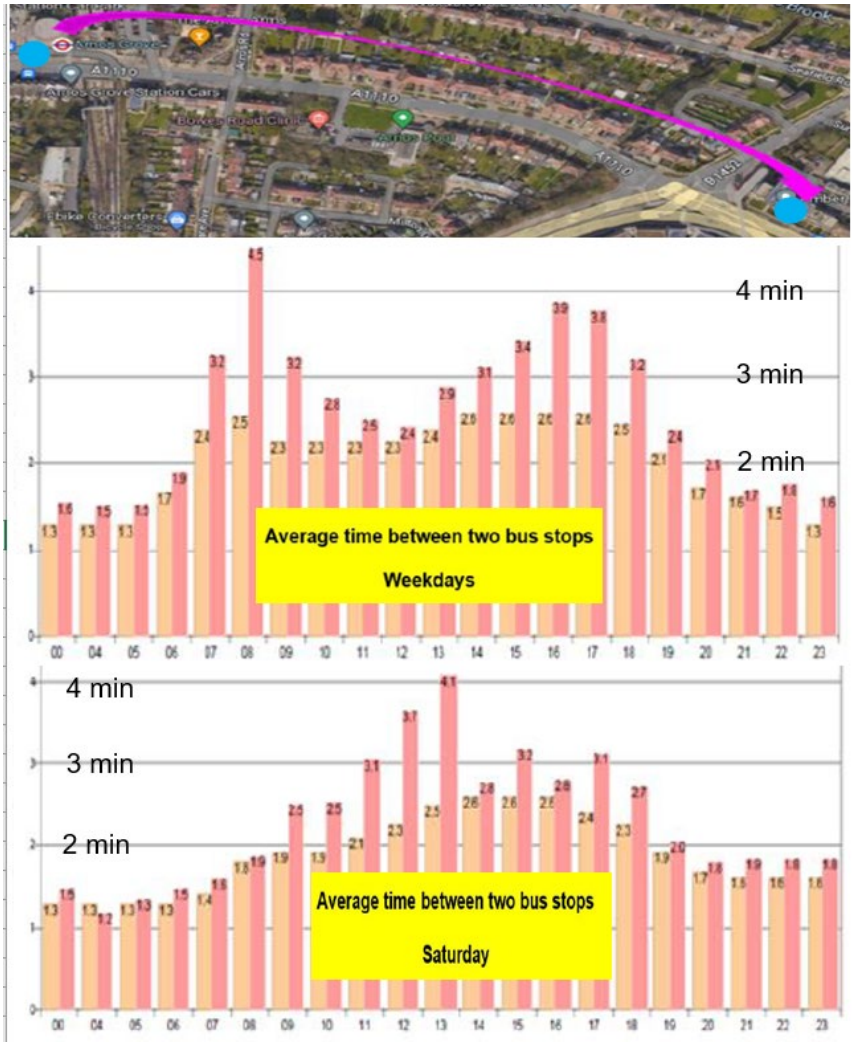
There is a tendency for the local community to oppose proposals at the consultation stages but then swiftly adapt to them with little further complaint once they have bedded in. The option of taking forward schemes under experimental powers allows for final decision making on their permanence to be done in the light of experience and with the benefit of community feedback of how the arrangements work in reality.

For all of those reasons, advancing a scheme that offers clear benefits to the appeal and convenience of sustainable travel, provided it is not unduly out of balance with other factors, can be the right thing to do despite a lack of local support.

Objection 12: School mini-buses sometimes block crossovers when off-loading visitors to the swimming pool.
A section of double yellow lines to support a new refuge island near the swimming pool complex might represent an alternative position for a school minibus to pull up. Should this not prove the case, other options could be investigated. The issue, although an understandable cause of irritation, is not a legitimate reason for the bus lane scheme at the opposing kerbside to be abandoned.
Objection 13: A home on the northern side of the street has a disabled member of the household, for whom a blue badge is used, but no formal off-street parking options exist at the home. The proposal removes a permit holder bay sited close to the home. The proposal also hinders visits by medics and so forth.
It is understood that the household has previously had an application for a crossover rejected due to the Council's policy against providing new crossovers on principal roads. The presence of a tree and utility equipment on the highway in front of the home is another complication to a formal crossover being provided. However, in light of the wider benefits associated with the bus lane, there is merit in reconsidering the Council's previous position. The report recommends the addition of dropped kerbs at the home be viewed favourably and facilitated to enable use of the existing hardstanding, providing it is technically feasible, subject to necessary approvals, to unlock the clear benefits of the overall scheme. The formalisation of an off-street parking area may also provide space for car-based medical visits.

23. **Analysis of Survey Data:** In light of the notable opposition to the scheme from within the community, decision-makers asked officers to repeat certain surveys, being sympathetic to the idea of proceeding with shorter hours if this matched the data. This rationale matches that of the subsequent DfT guidance document LTN1/24, referred to at section 5 above.

24. Data from TfL indicating the prevailing level of bus delay at this section of street is seen below.

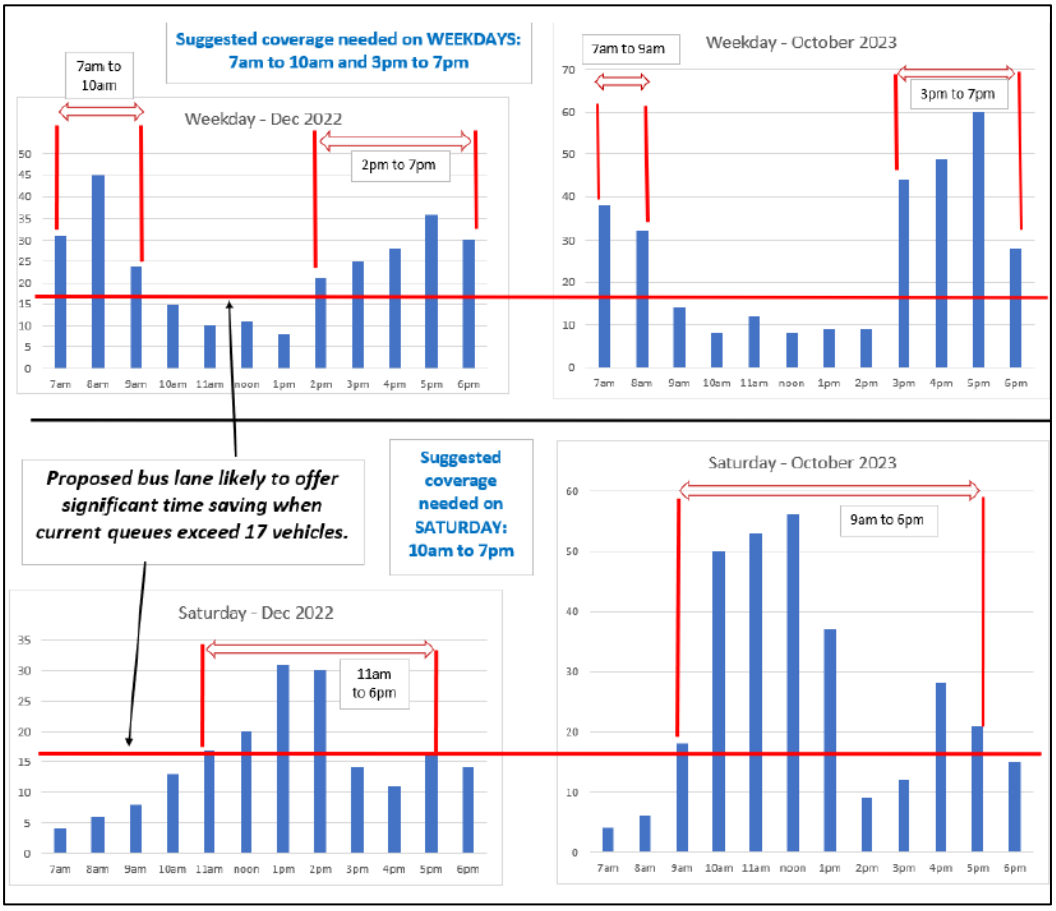


25. The graph above aggregates monthly data captured automatically from vehicles operating the 34 bus service and shows the duration of trips between the sequential stops at Arnos Grove station and the first stop reached on the North Circular Road broken down by the hour of the day. It can be seen, on weekdays and Saturdays alike, that in the quietest periods (say, 4am) the trips take just over a minute. It can be deduced that the increase in trip duration (spiking at over 4 minutes) recorded at busier periods is associated with congestion. It is a reasonable assumption that queuing towards the signalised junction is the major component of the surplus journey time between these two particular bus stops.

26. This data is useful in demonstrating that the potential time savings from buses being able to proceed directly to the front of the queue are significant (up to 2.5 minutes) relative to the baseline duration of the trip, measured at just over 1 minute. It also shows, at a glance, that on weekdays delays reach their highest at the traditional morning and evening peak traffic periods; while on Saturdays the greatest delays occur in an extended middle-of-the-day period.

27. Surveys to quantify the actual length of eastbound queues towards the junction (done by counting cars using video footage) were undertaken in December 2022. In the graphic below this data is compared to that found

from repeat surveys from October 2023. The top part, again, shows the weekday data, the bottom the data from a Saturday.



28. The blue columns that can be seen to vary in length across the day, in the graphs above, represent the number of cars counted in the queue during each hour of the survey, when aggregated across 5 minute periods. It can be seen that the general pattern from the TfL data is repeated across both survey periods in that the weekdays have spikes in queues in the morning and evening rush hour periods; the Saturdays during the middle of the day.

29. The horizontal red lines have been added to help judge when the bus lane would offer most benefit to the swift progress of buses to the front of the queue. The dual-lane queuing area, which the proposals show being retained downstream of the bus lane, can accommodate around 8 or 9 vehicles. Site observations suggest that a bus arriving and advancing far enough to dwell within this area has a good chance of clearing the junction when the signals first turn to green. But if the queue is doubled to, say, 17 vehicles, the bus is likely to wait for at least one additional cycle before advancing through the intersection due to vehicles queuing back further west. Hence, under this rationale, periods when the bus lane would offer clear benefit to quicker bus journeys are those when the queue exceeds 17 vehicles.

30. The surveys also suggest some natural variation in queue lengths. In October 2023 the weekday evening queue was more pronounced and slightly later in the evening than that measured the previous December. In

the Saturday of October 2023 queues were longer than those of the previous December, and tailed off more gradually into the evenings.

31. While the overall patterns are consistent, there is a degree of subjectivity to concluding what the most suitable operational periods are for weekdays and weekends. The case that controls are needed on Saturdays at the middle of the day is clear, and likewise that on weekdays the traditional peak periods should be covered. Officers felt, on balance, that the traditional 7am to 10am and 4pm to 7pm periods were most suitable for weekdays. Drivers should find these the most familiar and hence easiest to remember. On Saturdays the period of 10am to 2pm was deemed a sensible proposal that would be more easily conveyed in the associated signage than two separate weekend periods.

32. **The Case for Proceeding Under Experimental Powers:** Clearly there is scope for variation from any one survey date to another. This tends to support the approach of introducing the measures under experimental powers. Should experience indicate that the controls need to be longer to tackle the most congested periods, or that shorter controls on Saturdays would achieve almost as much benefit, then the proposals can easily be varied and tested anew before a final decision on the matter is taken. This approach helps the measures align with the provisions of LTN1/24, as referred to at section 5 above.

33. Using experimental powers also enables the Council to weigh up with more certainty the suitability of the parking arrangements.

34. Should the decision, in light of operational feedback, ultimately be to remove the bus lane signage and replace the northern side parking bays, officers would be inclined to argue for retaining the refuge island. This would continue to offer benefit in serving crossing movements for the pool and nearby bus stop and should also offer a modest slowing effect on westbound traffic due to the localised narrowing effect. The addition of the refuge island is an example of how TfL funded project work around bus priority can also present an opportunity to make other minor improvements to the borough network that would be difficult to fund under other circumstances.

35. **Revised Proposals:** The revised proposals shown at Appendix B reflect the various discussion points set out above. Notably: the shortened operational hours (which are now Monday to Friday 7am to 10am and 4pm to 7pm, and Saturday 10am to 2pm); the placement of the refuge island with associated double yellow line replacing free parking bays; and the inclusion of the disabled bay.

36. The permit-holder only controls that apply to the four pre-existing parking bays that fall within the extents of the bus lane operate during the 11am to noon weekdays only period that applies to the wider parking zone. Thus, the permit control hours do not clash with the reduced bus lane hours, and it would be feasible, at least theoretically, to leave the bays in place. However, the purpose of the one-hour permit-holder only controls is to deter all-day occupation of the kerbsides by commuters and hence allow

residents to dominate use of the spaces across the day, not just in the single hour the controls are in effect. Accordingly, retaining the bays would offer false utility to residents, who would need – taking the weekday example - to vacate spaces at 7am and leave vehicles elsewhere until after 10am, and vacate spaces again at 4pm until 7pm. Providing instead, the equivalent offering of permit-controlled spaces beyond the limits of the bus lane - that residents could leave vehicles in all week, if desired - is a more meaningful mitigation for the loss of parking options.

Preferred Option and Reasons For Preferred Option

37. The arrangement shown on Appendix B, introduced under experimental powers, is the preferred option, for the various reasons set out above.

Relevance to Council Plans and Strategies

38. The scheme will support the following Council priorities:
    - Clean and Green Spaces – by helping to reduce harmful emissions and encourage use of public transport.

Financial Implications

39. The proposal has estimated £20k implementation costs, to be fully funded from the 2023/24 TfL Bus Priority Programme. The table below confirms that this is capital expenditure, there are no revenue costs. The Bowes Road Bus Lane scheme will be treated as highways infrastructure enhancement for capital purposes.

	2023 / 2024 £000
Capital	20.0
Funded by:	
TFL Bus Priority Programme	20.0
Revenue contribution	0.00

40. Financial Risk: There is a risk that the implementation costs exceed the estimate. The TfL grant is applicable to the present financial period only. Risks are mitigated by the relatively low cost of the measures and their close correlation to the detailed estimates produced by officers.

41. Value for Money: The investment is fully funded from external grant. The new bus lane is intended to improve bus journey times and reliability, reduce emissions and noise from traffic, and have minimal impact on parking and loading.

42. Borrowing and VAT: No implications identified, due to the measures being fully funded from TfL grants.

Legal Implications

43. Section 122 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act (RTRA) 1984 places a duty on the Council to secure, as far as reasonably practicable, the ‘expeditious,

convenient and safe movement of vehicular and other traffic (including pedestrians) and the provision of suitable and adequate parking facilities on and off the highway'. The proposed addition of the bus lane and accompanying changes to the parking controls are in accordance with the discharge of this duty.

Section 9 of the RTRA enables traffic management orders to be made on an experimental basis.

Section 45 of the RTRA 1984 provides authority for the Council to designate parking places on the highways.

The Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 prescribe the procedure to be followed in making an experimental traffic management order.

The Council's also has a network management duty under section 16 of the Traffic Management Act 2004 ("the 2004 Act"). That is, the duty "to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as may be reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives (a) securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and (b) facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority". In moving forward with both an experimental order and perhaps later determining as to whether the necessary order should be permanent, the Council will take into account this duty.

The recommendations contained within the report are in accordance with the Council's powers and duties as the Highway Authority.

Equalities Implications

44. An equalities impact assessment has been carried out, as seen at Appendix C. The implementation of the proposed Bowes Road bus lane is expected to have an overall positive impact across all residents. Full consideration has been given to the consultation feedback. Where this includes anxieties about issues having a disproportionate impact on protected groups, mitigating actions have been added, as set out below.

45. One of the few premises fronting the proposed bus lane that lacks a formal crossover is also home to a young person with a disability. The report acknowledges that prohibiting parking in the bus lane at certain times could adversely disadvantage this family. The report recommends the addition of dropped kerbs at the home be viewed favourably and facilitated to enable use of the existing hardstanding, providing it is technically feasible, subject to necessary approvals.

Environmental and Climate Change Implications

46. The proposal has clear benefits for prioritising bus use over the use of private cars, and thereby encouraging greater uptake of more sustainable

local travel habits. There is significant scope to reduce carbon emissions by the resulting lowering of local trips undertaken by private car. Given that the additional road space for buses is repurposed from existing infrastructure presently given over to parking, rather than by construction of new road space, the implementation comes with minimal addition of carbon.

Public Health Implications

47. Incentivising greater uptake in use of bus services, over the use of private cars, brings public health benefits in terms of lower emissions. A shift from private cars to more use of public transport also offers health benefits with regard to creating a reduced scope for road user injuries to occur, due to poor driving or other types of driver error. TfL also has a target for increasing physical activity through public transport as the first and last stage of such journeys will typically be through walking.

Other Implications – Procurement Implications

48. Any expenditure in relation to the implementation of these measures must be in line with the Council Contract Procedure Rules and the Procurement Regulations 2015. Any contracts let or accessed must be managed in accordance with the Contract Management Framework.

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Appendices
Appendix A – Consultation Drawing
Appendix B – Revised Detailed Design Drawing
Appendix C – Equality Impact Assessment

Background Papers
None.