

37544 A8 Bus Lane Removal

Any analysis of the effect of removing the bus lane from the A8 on:

a) bus journey times

During the last few months, but particularly over the first two weeks of June, a return to more traditional peak period commuting travel patterns has been observed along the A8. This recent upward growth in traffic has resulted in increased congestion heading westbound along the A8 during the evening peak travel period. This increased congestion had recently reached a point with traffic gridlock occurring on a more frequent basis. This is consistent with the feedback from Lothian Buses. The effect of this congestion creates wider network traffic issues, including hindering bus journeys along the A8, i.e. the queuing traffic prevents the bus from accessing the bus lane.

Since the removal of the bus lane, bus journey times from Gogar to Newbridge appear to be broadly unchanged. We have appointed Transport Consultants, Stantec, to support us in continuing to monitor the situation closely. It will take a few weeks for us to identify trends and get accurate evaluation data, capturing fluctuations in general traffic levels.

Additional Note:

Before the bus lane was installed, our specialist transport consultants, who helped design the temporary bus lane, advised us that at some point in time the bus lane would lose its benefit, and consequently, its removal would be required.

b) bus passenger numbers.

This information is retained by the bus operators and is not held on Council files. For information, the bus operators would consider their passenger numbers to be commercially sensitive so would be unlikely to share this on request.

Any information on the options which were considered as an alternative to removing the bus lane.

Through the Scottish Government's Bus Partnership Rapid Deployment Fund (BPRDF) local authorities were asked to identify areas where temporary bus priority measures could be implemented to improve bus journey times and make services more reliable during various tiers of pandemic restrictions. During the first months of the pandemic, the Council appointed multi-disciplinary consultants Jacobs Ltd., to help develop the BPRDF measures.

Jacobs reviewed where bus lanes would be most beneficial and appropriate during the pandemic. They explored various bus lane configurations and a range of options right across the city. The development of temporary bus lanes used a range of tools such as traffic modelling and specialist consultancy knowledge and expertise in the evaluation of options. Options explored also built on previous studies, and on the A8 corridor, these studies include: WETA 2010, A8/A89 Public Transport Corridor Improvements Study and [WETA Refresh](#) in 2016.

(<https://www.edinburgh.gov.uk/downloads/file/25278/west-edinburgh-transport-appraisal-refresh-report-december-2016>)

And although the BPRDF was temporary, this has provided an opportunity to test bus priority measures, collect live data and has also helped advance thinking on the active projects that are better placed and more relevant to lead on the development, design and implementation

of permanent Bus Priority measures on the A8/A89 corridor, where alternative solutions for bus priority on the A8 are actively being progressed through the following projects:

1) The West Edinburgh Transport Improvement Programme (WETIP) is focusing on the delivery of an ambitious construction package of sustainable transport measures (Active Travel and Public Transport) along the A8/A89 corridor between Maybury and Broxburn. With a permanent bus lane westbound on the A8 currently in development.

2) The Edinburgh and South-East Scotland City Region Deal Bus Partnership Fund (ESESCRD BPF) is currently developing business cases for Bus Priority measures right across the South East Region of Scotland, where the A8 is being captured.

Both WETIP and ESESCRD BPF continue to explore opportunities to accelerate the delivery of bus lanes across the city, including on the A8.

Any information on the application of the transport hierarchy to the removal of the A8 bus lane.

The Council, through its current policies and on street priority measures, supports the use of sustainable travel modes, including public transport, for all journeys. Specifically, for bus travel, the Council works closely with bus companies to ensure services operate successfully across the city.

As noted in the response to Q2, the A8 bus lane was a temporary measure installed as part of the BPRDF. The traffic modelling analysis carried out prior to installation indicated that once traffic levels increased towards 2019 levels, the bus lane benefits would reduce and therefore its removal would be required. The bus lane was removed to ensure buses were not hindered by the increased congestion occurring on a more frequent basis. Bus operators were involved in all stages of the BPRDF project and were aware that removal would occur as conditions reached the trigger point; which was recently witnessed. We continue to work with operators to develop alternative permanent measures on this corridor and the data collected during the pandemic has helped advance thinking on how permanent measures can be further optimised to maximise outcomes for Public Transport, in line with the transport hierarchy.

Any analysis of how the removal of the A8 bus lane contributes to the council's net-zero targets.

The A8 bus lane, and other BPRDF measures, although temporary and expired, have contributed to the council's net-zero targets by providing an opportunity to test bus priority measures, collect live data and help advance thinking on the active projects that are better placed and more relevant to lead on the development, design and implementation of permanent Bus Priority measures on the A8/A89 corridor.