SLOUGH BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO: Place Scrutiny Panel (Ext) **DATE:** 1 December 2021

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PART I
FOR COMMENT & CONSIDERATION

A4 EXPERIMENTAL BUS AND CYCLE LANE

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides the Panel with an update of the monitoring data for the experimental A4 bus and cycle lane scheme.

2. Recommendation(s)/Proposed Action

The Panel is requested to consider and comment on the following and refer any comments on the scheme to Cabinet:

a) The monitoring data and officer recommendations for the Experimental Bus and Cycle Lane.
b) Proposals to proceed through the legal process to enable the Bus and Cycle Lane experimental traffic regulation order (ETRO) to be made permanent
c) The proposed introduction of signage and road markings to improve road safety along the route.

3. The Slough Joint Wellbeing Strategy, the JSNA and the Five-Year Plan

3a. Slough Wellbeing Strategy Priorities

The scheme aims to address the following Slough Wellbeing Strategy 2020-2025 priorities:

1. *Priority 1: Starting Well*- By encouraging the use of sustainable modes of travel, the bus and cycle lane aims to improve air quality along the route therefore could play an important role in increasing quality of life for young people with respiratory disease and reducing Slough's health inequalities in the long term.
2. *Priority 2: Integration*- By providing transport infrastructure that includes safer access to transport hubs bus shelters, bus routes that will enable vulnerable elderly members of the community to access health facilities and community centers.
3. *Priority 3: Strong, Healthy and Attractive Neighborhoods* - The experimental bus and cycle lane aims to support active travel that plays a crucial role in maintaining good health, preventing illness, supporting mental wellbeing and generally enabling people to be healthier and happier for longer.
4. *Priority 4: Workplace Health*- The proposed permanent scheme aims to establish better connectivity between places for home and work, provide reliable and sustainable transport for Slough residents.

3b. **Five Year Plan Outcomes**

The scheme aims to deliver the following priority outcomes of the Five-Year Plan 2020-2025 and the Infrastructure Projects Service Plan 2020-21.

- *Slough children will grow up to be happy, healthy and successful* - Enable children and young people to lead emotionally and physically healthy lives – by improving air quality through schemes that reduce congestion and improve safety at key locations.
- *Our people will be healthier and manage their own care needs* -Through the facilitation of, and uplift in active travel. Build on success in making Slough safer, by incorporating road safety measures into all engineering schemes delivered across the Council.
- *Slough will be an attractive place where people choose to live, work and stay* - by improving connectivity of public transport and supporting safer, sustainable travel options that contribute to the improvement of air quality.
- *Slough will attract, retain and grow businesses and investment to provide opportunities for our residents* - Ensure a fit for business transport infrastructure, by reducing congestion and making journey times more reliable and safer.

4. **Other Implications**

(a) Financial

Should the Experimental Traffic regulation order for the scheme be made permanent, associated signage and road markings will have to be introduced to improve road safety.

i. Scheme cost breakdown to make the scheme permanent scheme are set out in table 1 below.

Item	Costs
A road safety audit Stage 3 Audit undertaken for all six sections by an independent auditor to identify any potential hazards or road features that may affect the safety of all road users.	£6,000
Costs for the removal of the road markings for the cycle lane on the A4 junctions between Cippenham Lane and Dover Road.	£30,000
The approximate total cost for additional works (revision to TRO, additional signage and meeting road safety report recommendations.	£32,000
Costs to update signs to include EV's along bus lane (optional)	£30,000
Approximate Total for all costs	**£98,000**

Table 1(i) Costs of making scheme permanent

ii. Scheme costs to remove the scheme including all associated road markings including the cycle lane, signs, signposts, and enforcement cameras are:

Item	Costs
Costs to remove the scheme including all associated road markings (hydroblasting), signs and signposts.	£82, 000
Costs for the removal of the road markings for the cycle lane on the A4 junctions between Cippenham Lane and Dover Road.	£30,000
Approximate costs to remove the enforcement cameras	£ 7,500
Approximate Total for all costs	**£119,500**

Table 1 (ii) Costs of removing scheme

Costs for any scheme changes will be met through the Integrated Transport Budget in P192 Integrated Transport block grant. This is an annual grant issued by Government to Transport Authorities to deliver transport related improvements.

(b) Risk Management

Recommendation from section 2 above	Risks/Threats/ Opportunities	Current Controls	Using the Risk Management Matrix Score the risk	Future Controls
Objection to the permanent scheme due to unfavourable response to the wider public consultation.	Provides the Council with the opportunity to analyse the feedback and identify if there are any additional measures to be undertaken to improve the route.	a) Analyse the existing data to identify if the bus lane has had an impact to the journey times. b) Introduce ETRO's along the route to allow revoking of one or more section as and when required to reduce impacts.	10 (Legal/Regulatory- Marginal impact –High)	TRO process has followed the statutory process and is advertised as per requirements of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 – Section 9 and the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996- Regulation 22.
Financial impact on the Council as a result of the additional works	High costs towards the removal of the bus lane markings, signs and equipment associated with enforcement.	No remedial works have been undertaken until a decision has been made.	10 Economic and Financial Marginal impact -High	a) Additional bids have been submitted to the DfT to support expansion of cycling and walking infrastructure. Continued project management and financial monitoring of the scheme.

Likelihood of collisions because of unclear signs and markings	Increase of KSI's due to unclear signs and road markings.	A Road Safety Audit stage 1 and 2 has been undertaken and if the scheme is to be made permanent a Stage 3 RSA will be undertaken.	4 Health and Safety Marginal impact	New signage to be introduced following approval to make the scheme permanent. Undertake a road safety audit if additional signs are to be introduced or if the scheme is to be made permanent.

Table 2 Risks assessment

(c) Human Rights Act and Other Legal Implications

The ETRO is expected to be made permanent, and this will be subject to procedures under Section 9 the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and Regulation 23 of the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.

(d) *Equalities Impact Assessment*

An EIA was undertaken to identify the impact of the scheme on all road users including older people, people with disabilities and pregnant women. The positive benefits identified as a result of the introduction of the permanent scheme are more frequent buses, more reliable journey times, a shift to sustainable modes of transport and improvements to the public realm, the scheme continues to the support strategic objectives linked to road safety, air quality and public health improvements through increased activity. The likely negative impact of the scheme in the short term is increased congestion levels when accidents occur or as a result of road closures on the A4.

5. Supporting Information

Background

The majority of the A4 corridor comprises a single carriageway road with two traffic lanes operating in both directions In May 2020, a significant decision report approved the introduction of an experimental bus and cycle lane. The implementation of an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order allowed for the installation of the A4 bus and cycle lane scheme in August 2020 between Dover Road and Uxbridge Road junctions and replaced an east and west bound traffic lane to provide 24-hour bus priority.

The scheme was introduced to allow for social distancing measures and the reprioritisation of road space for pedestrians and cyclists as outlined in the government's Emergency Active Travel Fund guidance. Public transport provision was a subsequent step in preparing for the opening of the town after the easing of lockdown restrictions. The scheme provided a 'whole route' approach, to create a bus and cycle corridor and was implemented with a consideration of the wider historic context of increasing traffic levels and congestion in the town – '*Slough's road network remains under significant pressure, particularly at peak times resulting in congestion and air quality issues. Between 1993 and 2017, the amount of traffic in the Borough (excluding trunk roads such as the M4) grew by 15%*' (Transport vision, 2019). The impact of the pandemic reversed this trend; the A4 bus and cycle lane scheme was introduced to ensure that any recovery would not be car led.

Objections to the scheme were submitted via a petition which received 5,272 signatures. The bus operating times and permissions to use the bus lane were subsequently reviewed following presentations to, and recommendations by the Extraordinary Joint Meeting of the Overview &

Scrutiny Committee and Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 29 Oct 2020. The changes to the experimental scheme (see Table 4) enabled Hackney carriages, e-scooters, motorbikes, private hire vehicles, any other authorised vehicles to use the bus lane on Monday to Friday and effected a change to a peak time only bus lane, operational between 07:00hrs – 10:00hrs and 15:00hrs – 19:00hrs. The ETRO was amended and sealed on 20 Nov 2020 with the 6-month objection period that started from 4 Dec 2020 to 4 Jun 2021. The ETRO objection period was further extended to 31 Aug 2021 due to the introduction of enforcement cameras along the route.

Options Considered by Officers

Option 1 - Remove the bus lane and cycle lane to allow all vehicles to use the lanes at all times. This option will reduce journey time reliability for motorists and buses. Increased traffic volume on the route will result in a continued worsening of congestion and air quality. The removal of the bus lane will have cost implications that include the removal of road markings, signage, and enforcement cameras to allow vehicles to use both lanes. The cost to remove the scheme is approximately £119,500. This option is not recommended.

Option 2 - To allow the bus lane to continue to operate as a peak time only bus lane by making the ETRO permanent. The peak time only bus lane will give the buses an advantage over traffic by providing congestion free routes that will improve the operational performance and improved bus reliability. Over time, Officers will be enabled to negotiate reductions in bus fares as efficiencies are improved. This Option is considered alongside the design work being undertaken for a segregated cycle lane along the A4, but which has not been costed at this time.

Compared to Option 1, Option 2 will provide a long-term solution that will improve modal shift to sustainable modes. Additional works including revised road markings and signs will need to be undertaken to improve road safety along the route. Costs to make the scheme permanent is approximately £98,000 including updating all the signs to allow EV's to use the bus lane. Costs without updating the signs to include the EVs are £68,000. The approximate costs include costs to introduce additional signage, road markings, traffic management, road safety audits and advertising of the permanent traffic regulation order. Recommended option.

Option 3 - Do nothing – Will result in the experimental traffic regulation order expiring and the council removing all the signage and road markings. As with Option 1, Option 3 will cost approximately £119,500 to remove the infrastructure and will see increasing car use as the network will become more attractive to private car use. This option is not recommended.

Since the installation of the A4 Bus and Cycle lane, two separate workstreams have been progressed by Officers to respond to grant funding opportunities established by government relating to the two distinct, but interrelated modes – buses and active travel. The proposals in report have been put forward based with consideration of the following contexts.

(i) Bus Service Improvements

Significant work has been undertaken relating to bus service improvements. The government strategy, *Bus Back Better* required a Council response namely through the development of the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) and progression to an Enhanced Partnership with bus operators. Funding allocations are yet to be released, but government requires Local Transport Authorities to demonstrate a commitment to improving bus services. The BSIP and proposal to progress to an Enhanced Partnership was presented to Place Scrutiny Committee on the 28 September and endorsed by Cabinet on 18 October 2021.

(ii) Active Travel improvements

A requirement of the Capability Fund Bid made to government (and which is an extension of the Emergency Active Travel Fund and Access Fund) is to demonstrate a clear commitment to increasing the numbers travelling by active modes (cycling, walking and e-scooter use) and a modal shift away from private car use. SBC are in receipt of the revenue element of this fund (£244k) and are awaiting the outcome of a capital bid. A significant decision report is being prepared in relation to this work but awaiting confirmation of the capital fund before circulation. A designer for an A4 cycle lane had already been procured prior to the change in the financial situation in the Council.

An analysis of the evidence base for the A4 Bus and Cycle Lane can be found in points 2.3 - 2.6 below and within the appendices. This report aims to:

- review feedback and objections to the scheme from stakeholders and individuals
- address the issues that were raised by Members at the October 2020 committee.
- set out if the experimental bus/cycle lane has contributed to increased congestion traffic levels
- evaluate any changes to bus journey times and sustainable modes use
- evaluate air quality changes along the route
- set out an analysis of evidence, describing the benefits and dis-benefits of the scheme and within the context of the DfT's BSIP and Active Travel strategic aims.

5.2 Supporting Policies

Strategy	General	How the A4 Bus/Cycle Lane contributes to this strategy
The Carbon Strategy	The council has committed to challenging targets, with a net zero carbon target by 2040 for the borough, and a stretch target of 2030 for SBC's operations.	Increased public transport provision will make a significant contribution to reducing carbon emissions through encouraging a shift away from private car use and reduced congestion benefits.
The Low Emission Strategy	Public Transport will have an important part to play in improving air quality across the borough.	Bus priority and enhanced modal interchanges will contribute significantly to low emissions in the town centre and in around the central transport interchange and providing multi modal connectivity.
The Local Transport Plan & Local and Cycling Infrastructure Plan	This is the over-arching plan for the provision of transport services and infrastructure at local level, across the borough. The current version (LTP3) is currently under review. LCWIP – SBC's review and prioritisation of proposed cycling and walking networks schemes.	The A4 Bus and Cycle Lane encompasses the LTP's objectives. Prioritisation of behavioural change measures leading to significant levels of modal shift, in order to deliver a sustainable and integrated transport solution. Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) schemes have been set out and form the basis of any bids to government. Significant commitment required from LTAs, by government to prioritise Walking and Cycling Schemes.
The Slough Local Plan	The revised Local Plan review is in progress, with the latest proposals put forward in the Spatial Strategy.	The scheme is on a key strategic route in the borough and contributes to objectives such as sustainable economic growth, as well as improving accessibility to good quality housing.
The Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP),	Principles adopted by Cabinet to reverse trends in increasing car use, defining a low car urban core and reducing the attractiveness of car use over time, with a focus on the centre of Slough.	Car journeys should be replaced by realistic and achievable alternatives. Prioritising public transport will enable negotiations with bus operators. With greater patronage, realised through improved efficiencies, opportunities exist to make public transport use increasingly attractive. i.e. Cost and time savings for residents.
The Network Management Plan	The overall Network Management duty involves provision of expeditious movement of traffic on the network, and also across boundaries with neighbouring authorities.	Increased use of public transport will reduce the number of cars travelling on Slough's roads.
Bus Services Improvement Plan and Enhanced Partnership	BSIP and EP are both essential processes required in the national bus strategy – *Bus Back Better* to set out priorities relating to bus priority, fares and ticketing etc.	BSIP noted by Scrutiny on 28 Sep. Presented to Cabinet on 18 October 2021. Slough Borough Council wishes to make it easier for people to travel by bus to get people out of their cars and to provide an alternative for those without access to a car. Bus priority measures such as dedicated bus lanes help to reduce bus journey times and make buses more reliable, thus encouraging people to switch to buses. The A4 bus lanes help to reduce journey times for buses to a wide range of destinations and we hope will provide the conditions in which further improvements to bus services can be made. This is reflected in our Bus Service Improvement Plan, recently published.

Table 3 Supporting Policies

5.3 Consultation

The A4 Bus/Cycle Lane scheme was introduced through an Experimental Traffic Regulation Order process to provide residents and local businesses with the opportunity to comment on the trial scheme post-installation. Statutory consultees including bus operators and emergency services were invited to comment. School communities and businesses were contacted and encouraged to engage in the consultation during the objection period.

For the purposes of this report, the consultation periods are defined as:

- Phase 1 - when the scheme was introduced as a 24 hour scheme and;
- Phase 2 when the experimental scheme was introduced during peak time only.

Phase 1 objections triggered an extraordinary joint scrutiny meeting (29 Oct 2020) which resulted in recommendations and changes to the existing scheme as tabled below:

Recommendation from Scrutiny Committee (October 2020)	**Action/ Response**	**Additional comments**
Enable introduction of Hackney carriages, E-Scooters, Motorbikes	Approved through change to revised ETRO	Approved vehicles permitted in the A4 Bus Lane
Enable Private Hire Vehicles and any other authorised vehicles	Slough PHV permitted through change to ETRO. Requirement to apply for a Bus Lane permit which must be shown. Due care to be given to e-scooters/cyclists sharing the lane.	Any other authorised vehicle refers specifically to Electric Vehicles. Government issued guidance relating to *Green Number Plate* vehicles in December 2020. Permitting EVs in all bus lanes would need to be undertaken to avoid driver confusion which will incur costs to replace all signs in all bus lanes.
Change from 24 hour bus/cycle lane to peak time only (Monday to Friday, between 07:00 – 10:00hrs and 15:00 – 19:00 hrs	Approved through change to ETRO	Changes to continue if the scheme is made permanent.
The proposed amendment to the Experimental Traffic Regulation Orders (ETRO) to reflect the changes above and reset the six months objection period, as set out by the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and the Local Authorities Traffic Order (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996.	Six month objection period set from 4 Dec 2020 – 4 Jun 2021.	Due to the introduction of enforcement cameras the objection period was extended until 31 Aug 2021.
The Council takes into account existing objections as part of the consultation process.	Reference has been made to the petition and objections raised with triggered the extraordinary joint Scrutiny meeting (29 October 2020)	The objection period was reset, enabling individuals to raise concerns relating to the revised operational times and permissions.
The financial commitment for the scheme	Noted	The scheme was funded via the Government's Emergency Active Travel Fund (EATF). If the decision is made to retain the bus lane, then changes to the scheme will be funded through the Road Safety Budget or any government

		allocation relating to Bus Service Improvement. Cycling infrastructure improvements can be funded through the government issued Capability Fund improvements.
That the frequency of the new free electric bus service be increased to operate every half an hour, the free bus trial offer be extended beyond the initial two-three month period and the electric bus service be extended into the Langley areas.	The new service ran as a trial scheme. It is not possible to continue with the trial due to competition laws relating to bus service. Bus operations remain a commercial decision by Bus Operators. The Council cannot influence this unless subsidising particular routes.	Work with Bus Operators is moving forward. The Bus Service Improvement Plan is the Council's response to government's bus strategy. As noted by Place Scrutiny Committee and endorsed by Cabinet (Sep/Oct 2021), the BSIP sets out future aspirations for bus service improvements including development of an Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators. Future funding is to be confirmed by government. https://www.slough.gov.uk/transport-travel/national-bus-strategy-bus-back-better/2
That officers be asked to consider means of encouraging more people onto public transport, including: bus subsidy funding, extending the times bus passes can be used, improved bus route provision.	Noted	See point relating to BSIP and Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators. https://www.slough.gov.uk/transport-travel/national-bus-strategy-bus-back-better/2
That officers be asked to consider bus provision for young people and how they can be supported to use sustainable transport options, taking into account the cost of public transport, provision of youth bus passes.	Noted	See point relating to BSIP and Enhanced Partnership with Bus Operators. https://www.slough.gov.uk/transport-travel/national-bus-strategy-bus-back-better/2
To improve traffic flow, the bus lanes where possible be moved from the A4 into service roads.	Traffic flow is monitored.	Road space reallocation in favour of sustainable modes (public transport, cycling, walking, e-scooters) and a reduction in the number of motor vehicles on Slough's roads remains a strategic objective and requirement of DfT funding.
Officers be asked to consider allowing Private Hire Vehicles to use the old bus lanes, on the basis that private hire drivers undertake a crucial role and had essentially become 'key workers' during the Covid-19 pandemic.	Slough licensed Private Hire Vehicles have been able to continue using the bus lanes.	PHV's have continued to use the bus lane although lockdown restrictions have lifted.
Officers be asked to review current 'pinch points' along the A4 bus route, in particular along the three turns to High Street Railway Bridge and the Sainsbury's roundabout. In addition, consideration be given to removing the bus lane from	If the scheme is to be made permanent, changes will be undertaken to improve the bus route particularly at pinch points.	A Stage 3 Road safety Audit will be undertaken by an independent road safety auditor to identify any additional road safety concerns.

this section of highway (along both sides) to allow better traffic flow.		
That the design proposals for the cycle lanes take into consideration the space that could be used off the highway to improve cycle provision.	Noted	Designs for a segregated/part segregated cycle lane have been on hold until Officers understand the funding opportunity from the DfT in relation to the Capability Fund. New design guidance from the DfT emphasises that designs which do not reallocate road space or prioritise pedestrians/cyclists will remain unfunded.

Table 4 Actions from the extraordinary joint scrutiny meeting (29 Oct 2020)

After the implementation of the recommended changes, the Phase 2 consultation exercise was undertaken between 4 Dec 2020 and 4 Jun 2021 via the Slough Citizen Space online portal. https://slough.citizenspace.com/transport/experimental-a4-bus-and-cycle-lanes/.

Officers analysed a total of 862 responses (including 40 Stakeholder responses), which can be seen in Appendix 1. The consultation responses have been categorised into themes. It should be noted that one response may have incorporated multiple themes – each point has been captured and categorised accordingly. Other themes, though low in numbers, provided officers with insights into the impact of the experimental scheme more widely. Whiles these themes have not been tabled they have been noted by officers as affecting journeys on the route. These ranged from an appreciation of including zero emission vehicles and emergency vehicles in the lane, welcoming changes to how the lanes operate, suggestions to relax enforcement during bank holidays, to permit HGV's multiple occupancy vehicles. Specifically in relation to buses operations comments referenced buses being too expensive to use, that public transport use encourages the spread of COVID-19 and part time bus lane not ideal for buses as this has an impact on journey time.

Appendix 2 includes consultation letters received from Operators and Slough Taxi Federation. Appendix 3 references responses received from Operators in relation to the Strategic Infrastructure Im plan.

Table 5 provides a summary of the comments and Officer response.

Table 5: Monitoring comments to online consultation (See Appendices 1.1 – 3.1)

Theme	Number of responses	Summary of Officer Response
Congestion	508	Comparison of the baseline data in 2019 of JT data shows that JT across the experimental bus lane did not increase by more than 2min and 57 seconds (this was for the long route)
Road Safety	236	Proposed to improve signage and road markings along the route.
Air Quality / Environment	204	Analysis of the data from the existing monitoring sites does not suggest that the bus lane is worsening the air quality. Continued monitoring of the route is required to identify whether the bus lane has had any positive or negative impact to the air quality.
Increased Journey Times	176	Journey time data shows that between 2019 -2021, journey time did not increase significantly with the highest increase recorded on Route 15 Huntercombe to M4 J5 EB pm that saw an increase of not more than 2 mins 57 seconds in 2020.
Too few buses/ infrequent to justify/buses don't serve right locations	174	Bus Services that use the route include route number 83, X74, 4, 7, 3 and 702. Route number 4 is the only service using the entire route. The Bus Service Improvement Plan is being progressed. Bus Priority measures such as dedicated bus lanes must be introduced to improve efficiencies and improve journey times for Buses. This improves reliability and passenger confidence to use frequently, which will lead to increased patronage and additional buses. Bus Priority measures are essential to facilitate this mode shift.
Reliable bus services/fe buses	27	As above
Waste of money	109	The scheme was funded by the Emergency Active Travel Fund, issued by Govt to introduce measures which would facilitate social distancing and ensure a non-car led recovery. The scheme contributes to wide range of non-monetised benefits relating to road safety, air quality improvement, and public realm improvements. Changes to the scheme will be met through the Integrated Transport Block Funding.
Unclear signs / drivers don't understand	86	If the scheme is to be made permanent all signage will be reviewed.
Reduced attractiveness of area to businesses / Shopping	76	Slough's road network is under significant pressure and cannot sustain continued levels of increasing congestion. Improved connectivity, accessibility and sustainability can be delivered through the promotion of sustainable modes. Behaviour change measures will be actioned to provide information to residents, business and schools of the benefits of reduced car use.
Made travel experience worse /no details/scrap it	61	Journey time data shows that between 2019 -2021, journey time did not increase significantly with the highest increase recorded on Route 15 Huntercombe to M4 J5 EB pm that saw an increase of not more than 2 mins 57 seconds 2020.
Rat running	34	Designs to reduce rat-running, particularly on the A4 service roads have been prepared. A decision to reduce the impact of closing the service road was made to ensure any impacts caused by the A4 scheme would be lessened. If the scheme is made permanent, the service roads will be monitored and reviewed.

Policy / Strategy/ Process/lack of consultation	67	The scheme was introduced as an experimental scheme under the ETRO process. This was in response to the Department of Transport's *Emergency* Active Travel Fund that sought to encourage more sustainable modes of travel and that the 'return to normal' after the lockdown was not car led. The funding requirements set out the need to deliver schemes quickly before car use returned to pre-Covid levels. Consultation was undertaken after the scheme was introduced – as per the ETRO process. The 6-month objection period for this scheme commenced in August 2020. Following feedback from the Committee in October 2020 the scheme the objection period was reset in December to August 2021 to enable residents to respond to the changes that were implemented in December 2020 The scheme meets objectives set out in the Local Transport Plan and Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP), the principles of which were agreed by Cabinet in 2020.
Good Idea /theory understood	33	The additional comments were taken into account and have been included in the themes above.

Table 5 – Comments received through ETRO process

5.4 Monitoring

The remainder of the report discusses the points raised particularly in relation to congestion levels, road safety and air quality. Data for these areas has been analysed to understand positive and negative impacts experienced a result of the A4 Bus/Cycle scheme.

Monitoring data has been collected to measure the impact of the experimental scheme on the network throughout the trial period. 'Before' scheme data collected during 2019 and 'After' scheme data (i.e. after the scheme was constructed) has been collected using a range of data capture methods as set out in Table 7. As a result of the introduction and subsequent easing of restrictions in 2020, findings during this period are skewed. Therefore, a 2019 baseline has been set in some cases, to allow for comparison with 2021 data.

Monitoring the scheme's impacts has been challenging due to the number of national COVID-19 events and Slough specific events that would have impacted travel behaviour and journeys on the A4 route. See Table 6.

Date	COVID-19 related events	Slough specific events
23 Mar 2020	National lockdown	
15 Jun 2020	Schools reopen	
Jul 2020	Restaurants and pubs reopen	
Aug2020	Eat out to help out scheme	
Sept 2020	Schools return	
Oct 2020 – Dec 2020	Regional lockdown. Second lockdown for Slough	Salt Hill Park vaccination site opens 14 December – significant number of journeys on A4.
4 Jan 2021	National lockdown	
Mar 2021	Schools reopen	
Jun 2021	Lockdown ends	

Table 6 – Events that may have contributed to increased journey times

The Salt Hill Park vaccination site increased the pressure on local roads during operational hours of AM 08:00 hrs to PM 20:00 hrs – 7 days a week.

- Between Dec 2020 - Feb 2021
  Average 18,750 visitors per month attended the site.
- Mar, Apr, May, Jun 2021
  Average 17,250 visitors per month attended the site.
- July 2021 to Sep 2021
  Average 15,000 visitors per month attended the site.

Visitors travelled by various means, including foot, organised community buses and coaches. There is a sustained pressure on the road network around this site but modal split for these journeys has not been captured.

5.5 Road Works/ Road Closures

Physical road works would have resulted in additional pressure on the A4 such as increasing congestion or reducing journey times. The Smart Motorway works M4 closures are only relevant in considering the full-time bus lane (Aug – Nov 2020) and resulted in the M4 being closed at weekends between Nov 2020 – Mar 2021. In addition:

- Junction improvement works on A4 Wellington Street /Wexham Road civil works completed by 10 Nov 2020.

- From 9 Nov– 30 Nov 2020 – 24/7 slip road closure on junction 7 westbound slip road.

Exemptions have been applied to allow vehicles to use the bus lane if there are any collisions on the M4 that is causing congestion on the A4.

Data Capture	Appendix	Derived measures	Monitoring outputs	Collection Period	E/W Bound	Peak	24 - Hour	Further information
Consultation feedback VIA Citizens space	Appendix 1.1 to 1.8	Responses to consultation	Feedback	4 Dec 2020 and 4 Jun 2021	n/a	n/a	n/a	Survey was undertaken to collect feedback about the experimental scheme. 862 responses including 40 Stakeholder responses were received. Individual letters/emails of support
Permanent Slough ATCs	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data	Traffic volume	Increase in traffic volume	Aug 2020 – Aug 2021	✓	✓		Sites: AS009 - A4 Bath Road, west Stowe Road; AS001 - A4 Bath Rd, west Lansdowne Road & AS005 - A4 Sussex Place, west PS071 Toucan
Permanent Bluetooth surveys	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data	Traffic volume	Increase in traffic volume	Jan 2019 – Sep 2021	✓	✓		Bluetooth devices between Huntercombe roundabout to M4 Junction 5 for traffic. Routes were created along the section to measure journey time.
Data feed of First Berkshire Bus Service 4 from JMW.	Appendix 3	Bus journey times	Bus journey time changes	Feb 2020 – Dec 2020.	✓	within peak times	✓	Bus Services that use the route include route number 83, X74, 4, 7, 3 and 702, however to identify if there have been any improvements to the bus journey times along the entire corridor, Route 4 was used to evaluate changes as a result of the scheme. 08:00-09:00hrs and the pm peak 17:00hrs – 18:00hrs was used
Slough temporary cycle counters via video survey	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data	Travel by alternate modes	Cycling Trips		✓		✓	Cycle survey data for Nov 2020 and Oct 2020 at 10 set locations along the A4 include both carriageway and off carriageway counts
ITS Monitoring	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data		SCH Cycling Trips		✓		✓	Scheme closed during first lockdown
Neuron Mob Monitoring	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data		E-scooter Trips		✓		✓	E-scooter scheme launched in Nov2020.

Air Quality dispersion tubes	Appendix 4	NO2 levels / air quality	Air quality change – improvement or worsening		✓		✓	Three of Slough's AQMAs are within close proximity to the A4. SBC has a range of locations where diffusion tubes are in place as part of a general monitoring programme. Diffusion tubes measure Nitrogen Dioxide levels which is closed linked to vehicle emissions. Air Quality improvements have been estimated, but to obtain reliable data would require an extended monitoring period due to the variables that can impact findings
Stats 19 reports	Crashmap Portal Data	Collision and casualty data	Safety and collision rates		✓		✓	Data from TVP is uploaded onto the Stats 19 database. Typically there is a 3 month lag between data being collected and uploaded. Only accident data where TVP attended is recorded an uploaded onto the system.
ANPR cameras	Appendix 2 Monitoring Data	Compliance	Compliance rates		✓		✓	Cameras installed in May 2021. 5 cameras along this route, 2 cameras enforcing the westbound bus lane and 3 cameras enforcing the east bound traffic.

Table 7 Data collected for the Experimental bus and cycle lane scheme.

5.6 Monitoring Data

The following section reviews the monitoring data. The method of data capture, the scope of the data capture and intended monitoring outputs of the review is summarised in Table 7

i. Automatic Traffic Counts - Slough Permanent ATCs

Analysis of the peak time traffic was undertaken to identify if there was any increase in traffic volume along the route. A key trend identified at all three monitoring sites is a noticeable decline in traffic volume from Oct 2020 which coincides with the regional lockdown period. Another sharp decline observed was in Feb 2021 where traffic volume was low compared to the rest of the months in 2020, which reflects the second national lockdown. There is a sudden peak in Mar 2021 at all peak times except for the 19:00hrs peak time period. This increase in traffic volume coincides with the relaxation of the lockdown that enabled schools to open, and permitted outdoor gatherings in Mar 2021. There is a drop in traffic volume in Apr 2021 and for the remainder of the year there is a steady decline of traffic volume. This may be attributed to the increase of employees working at home. Traffic volumes recorded from Aug 2020 to Feb 2021 show a similar trend.

Appendix 1 shows tables for each permanent ATC location between Aug 2020 and Aug 2021.

ii. Journey Time Monitoring – Permanent Bluetooth Monitoring Devices

Data for 2020 has been included in this analysis to present the impact of COVID -19 restrictions on journey times along the route. The routes have been set up as corridors along the scheme. Table 8 shows an analysis of data collected in 2019 which provides baseline data to 2021 when the scheme was operating as a peak time only scheme shows the following:

Route	AM	PM
EASTBOUND JOURNEYS		
Route 15 Huntercombe to M4 J5 EB	Journey time (JT) did not increase but was similar to or slightly lower than the baseline data (2019). JT data recorded in 2020 presents increased JT in Aug, Sept and Oct of not more than 1 min 39 sec This reflects the period when the scheme was introduced as a 24-hour experimental bus lane.	JT except for May 2021 did not in increase but was similar or slightly lower/ than the baseline data (2019). The highest recording in 2021 was in May and compared to the May 2019, JT increased by at least 28 seconds JT data recorded in 2020 however presents increased JT of not more than 2 mins 57 sec between Aug and September, this reflects the period when the scheme was introduced as a 24-hour experimental bus lane.
Route 15c : Huntercombe Rdbt to Dover Rd EB	JT increased slightly by 39 seconds in January 2020 compared to the baseline data of 2019. (Note the bus lane scheme starts from the A4 Dover Road junction eastbound therefore vehicles between route 15c use both lanes throughout the study period)	Similar to the AM analysis, JT during peak time increased slightly in January 2020 by 14 seconds compared to the 2019 baseline data. This route is not part of the experimental bus lane.

Route 15e Dover Rd to Tuns junction EB	JT data along this route increased by not more than 16 seconds in May, Jun and Sept 2021. The analysis shows that in 2020 JT for this route was above the base line data (2019) in Feb, Aug, Sep, Nov and Dec 2020 with not more than 52 seconds.	JT for the PM shows that JT was below the baseline data (2019) and in Sep 2021 the JT was slightly higher in 2021 by 13 seconds compared to the baseline data of 2019. 2020 data shows an increase in journey time of not more than 1 min 9 sec between Aug and Oct 2020 compared to the other years. Schools returned in Sep 2020.
15f HoS to Sainsbury Rdbt EB	The JT for this route show an increase throughout all the recorded months in 2021 with an increase of up to 1min and 3seconds In May compared to 2019 data. There is also an increase in Sep journey times across all years and this is likely due to schools returning. The data shows that compared to 2019 JT, in 2020 JT increased by not more than 22 seconds from August to December 2020.	The PM data presents a similar pattern into the AM data, with 2021 JT higher than the base line data in 2019. The highest increase in 2021 was 1min and 53 sec compared to 2019 JT. Compared to 2019 data, 2020 JT data shows a sharp increase of 2 mins and 55 seconds between Aug 2020 to Sep 2020. Though in October to December 2020 journey times is still more than JT for 2019, by not more 27 seconds. The increase in JT may have been influenced by a combination of the A4/ Wexham Road junction works and the introduction of the 24hr experimental bus lane.
WESTBOUND JOURNEYS		
Route 16 Through M4 J5 to Huntercombe WB	Similar to the eastbound route, the westbound route 2021 JT did not increase above the base line data. Compared to 2019 JT, 2020 increased by 2 min 5 seconds in Jan 2020.	PM JT data for this route shows that the JT in 2021 increased to not more than 1 min 28 seconds in Aug and Sep compared to 2019 data. Compared to 2019 JT, 2020 increased by 1 min 54 seconds in Jan 2020.
Route 16c Dover Rd to Huntercombe Rdbt WB	Route 16c JT data does not show any increase to JT. The 2021 JT runs below the base line data except for the month in Sep where the JT time is the same as 2019. Compared to 2019 JT, 2020 increased by 1 min 4 seconds in Jan 2020.	PM JT monitoring shows a similar pattern except from Jul 2021 the JT starts to increase at least by not more than 22 seconds compared to 2019 data.
Route 16e Tuns junction to Dover Rd WB	2021 JT monitoring along this route shows is below 2019 data until May 2021 where JT increased by note more than 29 seconds. Compared to 2019 JT, 2020 increased by 1 min 6 seconds in	Similar to am data, the 2021 JT are below the 2019 up to May 2021 where JT increases slightly for the rest of the observed months. The highest JT was observed in June 2021 with not more than 32 seconds compared to 2019 JT.

	Sept 2020.	
Route 16d HoS to Tuns Junction WB	Compared to 2019 JT, 2020 increased by 15 seconds in Jan 2020.	The 2021 data is below the baseline until Mar 2021 where the JT continues to be above baseline data (2019) The highest increase in JT is in May 2021 by 57 seconds compared to the 2019 JT.
16F2 Sainsbury's Rdbt to Heart of Slough WB	JT observed in 2021 is below the base line data (2019).	JT observed in 2021 is below the base line data (2019).
Other Routes		
Route 26 Northborough Sheffield Oatlands Drive, Stoke Poges Lane to HOS route	JT observed in 2021 is below base line data except for the month of May and June where there is a slight increase in JT by 48 seconds compared to JT in 2017. Data for this year is not available for the full year. Comparable data for 2017, 2020 and 2021 for journey times in August and September show that journey time in August 2021 is lower than the journey time lower in 2019 but for the September months, journey time in lower in 2020.	JT observed for the pm data shows that there was no increase in journey times between January and February 2021 but journey time was observed to have increased from March 2021. The highest increase was in April 2021 by 2 minutes 14 seconds, compared to JTs in 2017.

Table 8 - Comparison of Bluetooth journey data

The comparison of the monthly journey time for each year between 2019 and 2021 presented data that shows that the peak time experimental scheme has had a minimum impact to journey time along the A4 Bath Road. Compared to the baseline data of 2019, the highest increase in JT was by 2 min 57 seconds in Aug 2020 on the Route 15 Huntercombe to M4 J5 – EB, with JT 2020

Data from roads that are likely to be used as a short cut by the commuters, shows that there has not been a concerning increase of journey times along the route. Further data showing the monthly journey times for each year for the above listed routes are in appendix 1.

iii. Bus Journey Time

Bus journey times were derived from JMW for the First Berkshire Bus Service 4 that runs between Heathrow and Maidenhead via Slough. The bus service number 4 was used to monitor the impact of the experimental bus priority measures that have been introduced on the A4 Bath Road between Dover Road and Uxbridge Road from Feb 2020 to Dec 2020.

Between Apr and May 2020, there was a reduced service due to the Covid -19 lockdown measures therefore peak times accommodating the service have been set to start at 07:30hrs and 16:30hrs.

For determining changes in journey time and variability and to monitor the performance of bus priority measures along the A4 through Slough Town Centre, monthly weekday average peak hour times (AM and PM Peak average), for weekdays only at am peak – 08:00-09:00hrs and the pm peak 17:00hrs – 18:00hrs was used.

The study looked at the journey times for the following segments, in both directions:

- Dover Road to Heart of Slough (Library stop now known as The Moxy Hotel);
- Dover Road to Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's.
- Heart of Slough (Library stop) to Dover Road; and
- Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's to Dover Road.

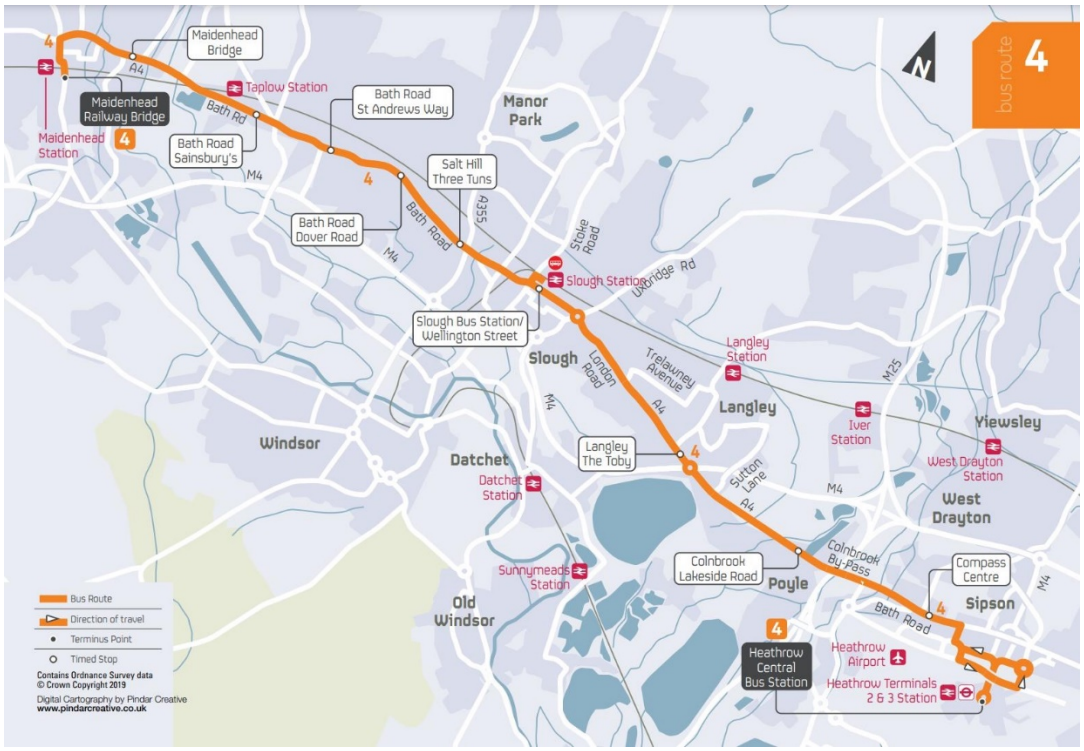

Figure 1 Bus Route for study

Analysis of journey time data collected between Feb 2020 to Nov 2020, indicates high levels of journey variability, which is likely to result in poor reliability of the bus service at each stop between Dover Road and Slough Library along and beyond the study area. Due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions, there was a reduction in the number of journeys from mid-Mar until early Jun. However, the data shows there was little variability in journey time for the remaining services when in the context of low traffic congestion due to the lockdown travel restrictions, and it can be inferred that congestion has a significant impact on Service 4.

For the Library (now known as The Moxy Hotel) to Dover Road section, no significant patterns can be observed after Apr which shows typically a 5 minute variability and evening peak journey times are often higher compared to AM journeys, but surprisingly, there was only a low increase in journey time after lockdown reopening and the start of the school term in Sep 2020.

Further analysis of the average journey times and standard deviation per month for AM and PM peak shows the late Mar and Apr lockdown journey times presenting a useful 'best case' scenario of low congestion and short journey times for buses. Observed data from Apr shows the lowest journey times across the 10 months for both the segments, Library (6.5minutes) and Uxbridge Road (8.4 minutes). The highest journey times are in Feb 2020 for the Library segment (9.1 minutes), and in Sep 2020 for the Uxbridge Road segment (14.3 minutes).

Post-lockdown and at the start of the school term in September, bus journey times were negatively impacted by reopening on the section between Library and Uxbridge Road. It appears that nearly half of the journey time between Dover Road and Uxbridge Road is made up of congestion-related delays, with a low-to high journey time gap of 5.9 minutes between Apr and Sep. Whilst journey times up to Heart of Slough (Library) remain relatively consistent across

the year, the last three stops, between Library and Uxbridge Road, contribute to a significant increase in journey time. However, there is a positive trend beyond Sep 2020, with journey times decreasing towards the end of 2020.

The section between Dover Road and Slough Library improved in both journey time and reliability after the implementation of bus lanes, saving 2 minutes in journey time, compared to pre-lockdown conditions and becoming significantly more reliable. Overall, the analysis demonstrates that the bus lanes were providing buses with a comparative advantage over car journeys, particularly as traffic builds up (post-lockdown), with some exceptions on the longer route (to Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's) mainly seen in Oct.

Comparison of Bus journey time vs Normal traffic

General traffic journey time data was extracted from the Slough real-time 'Drakewell' database for the same segments and time periods.

The comparison of general traffic journey times and bus journey time data shows that in most months, through 2020, bus journey times were lower than general traffic journey times for both journey segments in the eastbound direction, (i.e., between Dover Road and the Library and between Dover Road and Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's), with the exception of Feb, Mar and Oct, when bus journey times were slightly higher on the longer route section only. Furthermore, the difference in journey times, between buses and general traffic, were greatest between Aug and Nov, likely related to the introduction of the bus lanes reducing bus journey times, as well as to some extent related to the fact that overall traffic flows were likely to be higher due to the easing of lockdown restrictions, related to COVID-19, during these times, pushing up general traffic times. In particular, on the segment between Dover Road and the Library stops, bus journey times remained relatively constant (Apr to Nov), whilst the traffic journey times increased from Jul. They are also notably lower than comparative months of Feb and Mar (pre-lockdown), suggesting the bus lanes have some impact here. Overall, it therefore demonstrates that the bus lanes were providing buses with a comparative advantage over car journeys, particularly as traffic builds up (post-lockdown), with some exceptions on the longer route (to Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's) mainly seen in Oct.

Journey times for the westbound direction on the A4 in Slough section between the Library and Dover Road, between Uxbridge Road Sainsbury's and Dover Road shows less overall variation in journey times across the year, compared to the eastbound direction, except for a slight dip between Apr and Jun, which could be due to the lockdown restrictions resulting in less traffic on the roads. There is also less variation in journey times between buses and general traffic, on both route segments throughout the year. It should also be noted that on the longer route segment, average bus journey times are actually longer than the general traffic journey times between Apr and Aug which could be explained again by the lockdown restrictions that resulted in less traffic on the roads and hence relative less congestion for general traffic.

There is some evidence, however, that as journey times increased for general traffic on both the longer and shorter route segments, notably between Aug and Nov, bus journey times remained fairly constant (despite overall traffic flow increases), which could be attributed to the introduction of the bus lanes. The bus journey times were comparatively much higher in Feb and Mar 2020, on the shorter route segment, before the bus lanes were introduced.

iv. Cycle Data

Cycle survey data for Oct, Nov and Dec 2020 was recorded and collected at 10 set locations along the A4 include both carriageway and off carriageway counts. Cycle data collected between Oct and Dec 2020 shows there is a high number of cyclists using off road routes compared to the on-road cycling route (using the bus lane) between Heart of Slough and Burnham Lane. The A4 has a shared cycle/pedestrian lane in place, where footways have been demarcated for both modes. Cycling on a bus lane suits confident cyclists. The highest recorded number of cyclists captured at Site 6 (A4 Bath Road/ East of Tuns Lane) in

Oct 2020 with a total of 5787 cyclists passing this point. Cyclists number decreased in December for all monitoring sites in December with the lowest recording of 577 cyclists passing site 10 (A4 Wellington Street/ East of Aldin Avenue South). While take up of cycling was significant, this may infer that many of the additional cyclists may have been less experienced cyclists.

Data collected in Nov 2020 shows that there continues to be a high number of recorded cyclists between Heart of Slough / Town Centre and Burnham Lane. This increase is influenced by the land uses including the Trading Estate, Burnham Station, Slough Station and Town Centre area that are served by the route. Compared to the previous month, the recorded cycle flows for both on carriageway and off carriageway cyclists show slight changes to the cycle flows captured in Nov 2020. However, the data continues to show a high number of cyclists using the off-road cycle routes compared to on road cycling. There is missing footage between 12- 31 Oct 2020 for site 4 that has affected the westbound cycle flow data.

See Appendix 1 for Slough Cycle Hire trip data.

v. Cycle Hire

Compared to 2019, cycle hire scheme usage along this route has decreased. The scheme was closed for a period soon after the first lockdown between 26 March 2020 – 29 June. The reduced use to the cycle hire along this route may have been as a result of competition from the newly introduced e-scooter scheme as well as the reduced number of workers using the cycle hire between the two main stations to the trading estate. The cycle hire usage continued to decrease across all the station. Separately, a full review of the cycle hire scheme was set out in a Significant Decision report dated Jun 2021. Slough Cycle Hire data, at this time does not contribute to the consideration of the A4 Bus and Cycle Lane.

vi. E-Scooters

The E-scooter scheme was launched in Oct 2020 and Nov 2020 has seen an increase in the total number of trips, riding hours and distance covered by the e-scooter users. Data obtained from Neuron Mobility shows that the e-scooters continue to grow with total number of trips recorded being 222,032 and an overall distance of 475,288 covered since the scheme was launched in Oct 2020. The data shows that the growth in ridership has been significant, with high levels of use and shows the use of the scheme for the entire scheme with the highest recorded trips of 36,583 in Jul 2021 and an overall 475,000 KM covered since the scheme started. This is an average of 20,000 trips made per month (including low use periods due to lockdown in Jan/Feb 2021).

Monthly Data	Total Number of trips	Total riding hours	Total distance covered (km)
Oct-20	7,973	1,396	11,561
Nov-20	14,928	2,932	28,942
Dec-20	13,156	2,221	23,164
Jan-21	8,185	1,364	15,127
Feb-21	8,512	1,486	16,076
Mar-21	15,417	2,739	30,478
Apr-21	24,036	4,255	72,756
May-21	27,348	4,530	73,771
Jun-21	31,859	5,326	91,132
Jul-21	36,853	6,140	112,281
Aug-21	33,765	5,676	101295
Total	**222,032**	**38,065**	**475,288**

Table 9`: Monthly data for e-scooter trips

While it is not possible to attribute any growth in this mode due to the A4 Bus/Cycle Lane, a user survey issued by the e-scooter provider, Neuron Mobility showed that 50% of e-scooter trips replaced car trips. Combined, 57% of scooter trips are introducing individuals to micro mobility infrastructure, making them more aware of active travel options. There was a recognition when the A4 Bus and Cycle Lane was introduced in August utilising the Emergency Active Travel Fund (EAFT) that there had been a significant increase in active travel nationwide. The success of e-scooters in Slough indicates that behaviour change, away from private car use is a realistic aim.

The e-scooter user data has been analysed to understand this mode's impact on the private car use and modal shift. During the month of September 2021, there were 21,569 e-scooter rides. 1,794 of these started in close proximity to the Bath Road area between the Huntercombe roundabout and the Uxbridge Road Junction with the A4 and 2,078 trips ended in this location. This means that at least 18% of trips have more than likely used the Bath Road.

Applying this percentage to the 285,000 trips Neuron Mobility have had since launch in October 2020, indicates that at least 51,000 of these trips have used the Bath Road. Using the user survey data that showed 50% of e-scooter users trips replaced car trips then this results in over 4 tonnes of CO2, as shown by the below calculations.

51,000 km travelled x 50% car displacement rate x 160g CO2e / km) = 4 tonnes CO2 saved.

(*1 tonne of C02 is equivalent to driving 6000km with a diesel car).*

However, this figure does not include the trips that have used the Bath Road, but did not start or end there (ride through journeys). The carbon saving figure of 4 tonnes saved is conservative and further interrogation of the e-scooter user data and ride- through journeys is likely to show higher carbon savings.

vii. Air Quality

Three of Slough's AQMAs are within close proximity to the A4. Air quality therefore is one of the key factors to be considered when reviewing the impacts of the bus lane scheme. As the bus lane was installed where traffic volumes were reduced far below typical levels, this resulted in a positive air quality impact. It should be noted that baseline data (pre-lockdown levels) was unavailable for this route and given the urgency of introducing the scheme (to ensure a recovery was not car-led), it was not possible to obtain this data.

A review of the bus lane related impacts however using monitoring data is challenging, as the effect of the pandemic is likely to have masked bus lane related impacts. While an analysis of the data from the existing monitoring sites does not suggest that the bus lane is worsening the air quality, there are many factors which influence air quality, with weather being the primary one. It is therefore not possible, to state with confidence that the bus lane is the cause of the low concentrations experienced in 2021 but may be a contributing factor.

The data (presented in Appendix 1) suggests that neither the full time, nor peak time only bus lane schemes have caused a worsening of air quality at monitoring locations in close proximity to the scheme or on connecting roads. Short term monitoring is unlikely to demonstrate that the scheme has a strong positive impact. There is risk that the congestion that is likely to be caused by the scheme may result in a worsening of air quality on the A4 and connecting roads, as vehicles are restricted to using one lane of traffic only, but conversely the scheme has potential to improve air quality by increasing the distance between the receptors and the main traffic flow, and allowing for greater increase of active travel and use of public transport, reducing congestion in the long term.

Due to the influence of the pandemic on traffic levels, it remains difficult to ascertain the level of improvement that the bus lane has on NO_2 concentrations, as most impacts would be masked by the positive effect of the pandemic. When reviewing 2021 data, NO_2 concentrations across

Slough have not returned to pre-Covid-19 levels, despite traffic volumes starting to return to typical levels. This may be due to climatic effects or could be due to schemes such as the experimental bus lane, however the data suggests that low concentrations of NO_2 are experienced borough wide, rather than just at locations in close proximity to the bus lane scheme. It may be that both factors are causing a positive impact on air quality, however to determine the full impact of the scheme, further monitoring should be undertaken to determine whether NO_2 concentrations continue to remain low as traffic levels continue to rise.

See Appendix 1 for tables.

viii. Accident data

Feedback from the consultation highlighted road safety concerns particularly at key junctions along the route. An analysis was undertaken by officers from available data to identify if there are recorded collisions that have occurred along the bus lane. Between 1 Aug 2020 to Mar 2021, 29 collisions were recorded along the route with 23 slights and 6 serious. There were no fatal collisions recorded. Of the 29 recorded collisions, 2 collisions were recorded by the Police occurred in the bus lane. The first collision was a slight collision and involved car travelling in bus lane colliding with motorcycle turning left. The second collision was a serious collision involving a pedestrian crossing the A4 Bath Road approximately 36m from Windmill Road collided with a car travelling southeast. No Stats 19 data has been received for Apr to Sep 2021.

ix. Parking Enforcement

The enforcement data shows that the westbound cameras on A4 Bath Road near Eden Girls (LP161) and A4 Bath Road towards Dover Road (LP115) have the highest number of penalty charge notices (PCNs) issued. The PCN data presented shows that despite the introduction of enforcement along this route, vehicles still use the bus lane- this may have been influenced by the relaxation of Covid- 19 restrictions and returning commuters being unfamiliar with the bus lane. See Appendix 1 for PCN Data.

Summary

Data from various sources discussed in the report do not fully capture the extent of the performance/impact of the experimental bus lane on the network and bus journey times. It is recognised that continued monitoring is required to identify continued improvements.

Consultation feedback mainly highlighted the impact of the bus lane on journey time and congestion, however an analysis of traffic monitoring sites did not identify any increase in traffic volume that may have been of concern between Aug 2020 and Aug 2021 when the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order started. This analysis is further supported by journey time data that shows delays to normal traffic travelling along the route have not increased to any levels of concern.

A likely diversion route was selected to understand if there was any rat running. Data was reviewed for one direction only along Northborough Road via Farnham Road via – Sheffield Road, Oatlands, Stoke Poges Lane to the Heart of Slough- Wellington Street. The data for this route was inconsistent over certain periods, and therefore 2017 was set as the baseline. The data, obtained from the study period, shows that there has been an increase of journey time on this diversion route between Apr 2021 and May 2021 by not more than 48 seconds for the AM. For PM peak time journey time increased by at least 2 minutes 14 seconds in 2021, compared to journey times in May 2017

The A4 remains a key diversion route when the M4 experiences planned and emergency closures. In order to mitigate congestion and journey time delays caused by planned for or unpredicted events, active monitoring of the A4 is required which enables actioning the correct response. For example, with the new vaccination site opening at Salt Hill Park on the A4 caused

significant tailbacks on the route. The Parking Enforcement team was able to suspend enforcement during these times, enabling an appropriate response at a critical time. Optimising existing infrastructure and adopting technology to improve traffic flow is an aim to be applied across the entire road network.

Bus journey times from Feb 2020 to Nov 2020 has been collected to identify any journey time improvements for Bus route 4. The data shows that the bus journey time has improved by 2 minutes compared to pre-lockdown levels and is therefore becoming more reliable. However, given the various factors that have influenced behaviour of traffic on the network, such as changes to working patterns, it has not been possible to fully infer the benefits of the scheme at this time.

Unlike other data collection methods where less data can be analysed for insights, for air quality data the monitoring period is not sufficiently long enough to conclude if there are any benefits or disbenefits to air quality along the A4. It is concluded that there is no worsening of air quality as a result of the scheme but further monitoring is required to understand fully the impact of the bus lane.

The comparison data was collected during Covid- 19 restrictions when concerns around contracting or spreading the virus by commuters alongside the new way of working from home resulted in a significant change in commuter travel behaviour. The scale of the Covid-19 crisis could trigger even more significant and longer-lasting effects on mobility patterns, particularly for public transport journeys. The government recognised the decline in bus patronage and set out a strategy to stimulate its growth. Bus journey improvements such as better journey times, reliability and cheaper fares are aims in SBC's Bus Services Improvement Plan. Bus priority infrastructure improvements must be introduced to prioritise buses, particularly during peak times, to achieve these aims. The A4 bus scheme upholds these objectives.

Additionally, the introduction of the bus lane will unlock several opportunity corridors supporting the expected growth of the residential dwellings, which will increase patronage along the route. The return of commuter journeys to Heathrow will also support bus patronage growth. The scheme complements the historic sustainable schemes that focus on improving Slough's journey times and including the delivery of SMaRT projects. By enhancing favourable conditions for a modal shift favouring public transport, the bus lane is critical in facilitating sustainable travel choices and curbing an increase in traffic levels and the associated dis-benefits of private car use, with improved bus operational conditions enabling greater accessibility and connectivity.

6. **Comments of Other Committees**

A report was prepared and submitted to the Extraordinary Joint Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 29th Oct 2020. Following the meeting the experimental scheme bus lane and cycle lane was changed to a peak time only experimental bus lane that also allowed permitted vehicles to use the route.

7. **Conclusion**

Officers have reviewed the available monitoring data and consultation responses and identified that the scheme has not contributed significantly to journey time delays along the A4. Further data is required to identify whether the scheme has improved air quality along the route.
Based on the monitoring data and consultation feedback, the recommendation is that the bus lane is allowed to continue to operate at peak times only and that the ETRO is made permanent with additional road marking and signage introduced to improve safety along the route.

8. **Appendices Attached (see Appendix Pack)**

1. Consultation

1.1 Consultation Details and Overview map
1.2 FAQs issued for consultation
1.3 Anonymised consultation responses
1.4. Consultation Letter - Thames Valley
1.5 Consultation Letter – Reading Buses
1.6 Email - Slough Taxi Federation
1.7 Email – Thames Valley Police
1.8 First Bus UK – response to SBC's Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP)
1.9 Reading Buses – response to SBC's Strategic Transport Infrastructure Plan (STIP)

2. Monitoring Data for

2.1 Automatic Traffic Counts
2.2 Bluetooth Journey Time Monitoring
2.3 Cycle Data
2.4 Cycle Hire Data
2.5 E-Scooter use data
2.6 Parking Enforcement data

3. Bus Journey Time

An analysis of the bus journey time was undertaken by Atkins.

4. Air Quality

Slough currently operates 5 continuous analysers which report NO2 data on an hourly basis. The data from two continuous analysers (Wellington Street SLH 10 and Windmill SLH 12) have been reviewed to determine the impact of the scheme both when first operational (Aug– Nov 2020) and with the new peak time only operations (Dec 2020 – Aug 2021).

9. **Background Papers**

1. Officers submitted an SD in May 2020 to undertake the experimental A4 bus and cycle lane scheme.
2. A report was prepared and submitted Extraordinary Joint Meeting of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Neighbourhoods and Community Services Scrutiny Panel on 29th Oct 2020 that enabled the introduction of peak time only experimental bus lane that also allowed permitted vehicles to use the route.
3. A consultation was prepared and uploaded on to seek feedback from commuters and residents. https://slough.citizenspace.com/transport/experimental-a4-bus-and-cycle-lanes/
4. SD A4 Bus Lane Amends was submitted in November 2020

Related Significant Decision reports include:

5. Emergency Active Travel and E-Scooter Trial - July 2020
6. LCWIP (Local Cycling and Walking Implementation Plan) - July 2020
7. BSIP and Enhanced Partnership- July 2021
8. E-Scooter extension - Sep 2021
9. Cycle Hire Review - Jun 2021