This report is to advise Members of objections received to the proposed bus lane extension on Manchester New Road, Middleton, to present the responses of the Director of Highways to the objections received and to ask Members to decide whether the recommendations should be implemented.

1 It is recommended that:

1.1 The Committee considers whether the Borough of Rochdale ((Civil Enforcement of Traffic Contraventions) (Various Streets) (Middleton Township) Order 2008) (Amendment) (No 13) Order relating to Manchester New Road, Middleton, as outlined in paragraph 5 hereto should be implemented.

2 Reasons for recommendation:

2.1 It is considered that the Order, the subject of this report, is strategic in nature and should be dealt with in accordance with Section F2 of the Scheme of Delegation to Township Committees.

3 Alternatives and risks considered:

3.1 To not make the Order. However this is not considered to be a way forward as the bus lane is a bus priority measure that will improve punctuality and journey times of buses and GMPTE have identified these improvements as part of the Cross City Corridor Project.

4 Consultation undertaken/proposed:

4.1 In accordance with statutory procedures, notice of the proposals was advertised in the Middleton Guardian on 4 February 2010. Notices were also served on statutory consultees.
and were posted on site in the vicinity of the Order and copies of the relevant documents were made available in Council Offices.

5 **Bus Lane Extension:**

5.1 It is proposed to revoke those parts of the Borough of Rochdale (Civil Enforcement of Traffic Contraventions) (Various Streets) (Middleton Township) Order 2008 as appropriate.

5.2 It is proposed to amend the same Order by introducing:-

**Schedule No 1.1**

**No Waiting At Any Time**

Manchester New Road, East Middleton Ward

(ni) easterly side from its junction with Farmway to its junction with Mount Road.

Manchester New Road, South Middleton Ward

(ni) easterly side from its junction with Mount Road for a distance of 15 metres in a southerly direction.

(nii) north westerly side from its junction with Ivy Drive for a distance of 67 metres in a north easterly direction.

(niii) south easterly side from its southerly junction with Alkrington Green for a distance of 60 metres in a north easterly direction.

(niv) south easterly side from its junction with Mossway for a distance of 40 metres in a north easterly direction.

(nv) south easterly side from its junction with Mossway in a south westerly direction to the Borough boundary with Manchester City Council.

**Schedule No 2.12**

**No Waiting Monday-Friday 7.30 am-9.30 am**

Manchester New Road, South Middleton Ward

(ni) south easterly side from a point 40 metres north east of its junction with Mossway for a distance of 45 metres in a north easterly direction.

**Schedule No 6.2**

**Bus Lane 7.00 am-7.00 pm**

Manchester New Road, East/South Middleton Wards

(ni) easterly side from its junction with Mill Fold Road to a point 60 metres north east of its southerly junction with Alkrington Green.

Manchester New Road, South Middleton Ward

(ni) south easterly side from a point 85 metres south west of its junction with Kingsway to a point 85 metres north east of its junction with Mossway.

Manchester New Road, East Middleton Ward

(ni) westerly side from a point 10 metres north of its southerly junction with West Crescent to a point 169 metres north of its northerly junction with West Crescent as shown on the plans marked “A”, “B”, “C”, “D” and “E” annexed hereto.
6 Background

6.1 Rochdale has been working with GMPTE to develop highway infrastructure improvements that provide enhanced bus travel across Greater Manchester. The proposed A664 Cross City Bus Corridor scheme is a shared initiative with GMPTE, Manchester City Council and Salford City Council to improve transport connections along three of the regions busiest roads to the north, south and west of Manchester.

These improvements will provide better access to the City Centre and Regeneration Areas where new jobs will be created in the future, particularly around Oxford Road to the south of Manchester City Centre. The scheme will provide improved bus journey times and services across Manchester City Centre from the Middleton and Salford Corridors to Oxford Road, reducing the need for interchange. Direct links will also be introduced to the new Children’s Hospital on Oxford Road, serving the areas formerly covered by Booth Hall and Pendlebury Children’s Hospitals.

The proposals include bus priority measures, providing more reliable and quicker Cross City bus journeys for passengers along the route. Within the Middleton Section of the Cross City Corridor Scheme the bus priority measures involve significant lengths of bus lane in both northbound and southbound directions.

GMPTE have identified that improvements are required to Manchester New Road as part of the Cross City Corridor project.

The proposed bus lanes are a bus priority measure that will improve punctuality and journey times of buses using the Manchester New Road route.

7. Objections received and related responses of the Impact Partnership:

7.1 A total of nine objections have been received to the bus lane proposals in the Order.

7.2 Letters of objection have been received from
Angela Hartley, 16 James St South, Chadderton, Oldham, OL9 9JA.
Gemma Cresswell, 27 Tangmere Avenue, Hopwood, Heywood, OL10 2WA.
Jill Boardman, 6 Sunnyfield Road, Prestwich, Manchester, M25 2RD.
Richard Craven, 29 Dovedale Drive, Wardle, Rochdale, OL12 9LR.
Helen Skidmore – No address given as objection was e-mailed.

7.3 All of the objectors have the same objections to the proposed bus lane. They object to the plans to create a bus lane on Manchester New Road as this will restrict parking all along the road on both sides. They all work for the NHS at London House where on-site parking for staff is limited and park on Manchester New Road, mainly adjacent to West Crescent and East Crescent in order to not upset local residents; none of them live in the area.

They say it is a similar story for a number of other businesses in the area including the Post Office, Job Centre and McBride’s where on-site parking for staff is limited.

Many of them used to park on Mill Fold Road but moved on to Manchester New Road due to verbal abuse from residents and some vandalism of vehicles.

7.4 If the proposals were to go ahead it would displace some 35 to 40 cars that would no longer be able to park along Manchester New Road; where do you suggest these cars park? The multi storey car park is expensive and not convenient for staff carrying heavy equipment or attending numerous meetings during the day. Private parking at the mill adjacent to London House is also expensive and is reaching capacity.
Additionally the proposals will cause problems and extra expense for many workers in a poor economic climate and will also cause inconvenience for residents who would no longer be able to park outside their homes.

7.5 They say that there used to be many car parks to choose from in the centre of Middleton. However, since Tesco's arrival parking has greatly reduced; what is the Council going to do about this?

7.6 They feel that the bus lane is not required as traffic flows extremely well on this section of the main road; the bus lane will only increase the frustration of other drivers due to congestion caused by the reduction of the road to one lane.

They all say that in the time that they have been working in the town centre area (between 15 months and four years) they have only seen delays on a handful of occasions and these have been due to accidents further along the road and near Victoria Avenue. They fail to see what benefit would be gained by extending the bus lane and do not believe it will speed up bus services.

7.7 They believe that the plans will eventually kill Middleton town centre and businesses will be lost. They also believe that residents on surrounding side streets will also become angry as more and more vehicles drive around in search of parking places.

Response of the Head of Highways & Engineering Service

7.8 The degree to which parking can be accommodated on a highway is always going to be a balance of functions of a particular road and Manchester New Road is a primary route. With the ever increasing pressures of traffic growth on the major highway network and the inherent capacity problems it creates, it is always likely that restrictions on parking or other traffic management measures may eventually have to be put in place.

The primary function of a public highway is to allow vehicles to pass and repass and gain access to adjacent property. The Council do not have a duty to provide parking on the highway; it is the responsibility of the vehicle owner to provide suitable parking facilities for their vehicles.

7.9 Residents fronting onto Manchester New Road will not be too inconvenienced as they all have driveways on which to park their vehicles. They and their visitors can also park at night and overnight when the bus lane is not in use.

7.10 Manchester New Road is not being reduced to one lane in each direction; it is already one lane in each direction. The carriageway being taken up by the proposed bus lane is currently marked out for parking bays and advisory cycle lanes. The proposed bus lane allows for cyclists use.

Traffic capacity will be maintained, as the number of lanes at junctions will not be decreased and improvements will be made at key junctions along the route.

Delays do vary and whilst this is not the worst part of the corridor, the bus lanes are necessary to ensure that variability of journey times are minimised, and thus reliability is maximised.

7.11 Parking in Middleton town centre will be affected by the Tesco development, which will have a much bigger effect than the proposed bus lanes.

7.12 A letter of objection has been received from Hazel Healey, 13 East Crescent, Alkrington, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1DA.
7.13 Mrs Healey is objecting on behalf of herself, her husband and her nearby residents.

Mrs Healey objects to the Notices that were erected and to the notification in the Middleton Guardian because not everyone will have seen the Notices or read the local paper and there are some people who may want to object but do not write letters.

7.14 She is very concerned about the proposed bus lane on Manchester New Road and the effect it will have upon residents of East Crescent, West Crescent and Manchester New Road. She says she has been in communication with local Councillors and even attended a residents’ meeting on Monday 7 December 2009. Her opinion is that not even the local Councillors see the need for this extension to the bus lane and in spite of consultations she feels that the bus lane is a ‘done deal’ and is going to happen.

She feels that the bus lane has been poorly advertised and consultation only took place last November; everything is happening too quickly.

7.15 People living on Manchester New Road will not be able to park outside their own properties between 7am and 7pm and friends and relatives will not be able to visit and park. Even though they pay road tax, they will not have the right to park outside their own homes. People who cannot park on Manchester New Road will use East and West Crescent, Mill Fold Road, Farmway, Alkrington Hall Road North, Mount Road and Alkrington Green and she does not know how the Councillors are going to manage to control the situation. East Crescent is narrow and poorly surfaced and needs room for the Emergency services and refuse collections.

7.16 She says that she has seen the DVD about the bus lanes and the idea was to facilitate better travel to the hospitals on Oxford Road; there was no mention of a bus lane traversing Manchester centre.

At the moment buses are so early for their ultimate destinations that they are waiting up to five minutes at Mount Road just before Middleton and en route to Manchester.

**Response of the Head of Highways & Engineering Service.**

7.17 Please see previous response to the five objectors regarding ‘parking on the highway’.

7.18 Please see later response to Mr Bamford and Mr Barnes regarding the advertising and Notice of Proposals and response to Mr Cook regarding public consultation in general.

7.19 Delays do vary and whilst this is not the worst part of the corridor, the bus lanes are necessary to ensure that variability of journey times are minimised, and thus reliability is maximised.

7.20 The degree to which parking can be accommodated on a highway is always going to be a balance of functions of a particular road and Manchester New Road is a primary route. With the ever increasing pressures of traffic growth on the major highway network and the inherent capacity problems it creates, it is always likely that restrictions on parking or other traffic management measures may eventually have to be put in place.

7.21 There are proposals for a number of bus priority measures across the package, including across Manchester City Centre. This is to ensure that buses can operate reliably. Previously bus operators have stated that traffic delays have prevented them from operating across the city centre, which is why a greater level of bus priority is a feature of these proposals. The proposals for the city centre have developed in conjunction with the Transport Strategy for Manchester City.
7.22 Consultation started in October 2009. Over 80,000 leaflets were delivered, 8 public exhibitions were held, and there was a website with detailed proposals, adverts in local newspapers, on street advertising and radio adverts. The 12 week consultation period is in line with Government guidelines and was in addition to the statutory process.

7.23 Letters of objection have been received from
Mr M Bamford, 179 Manchester New Road, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1DE
Mr J M Barnes, 180 Manchester New Road, Middleton, Manchester, M24 4DE

7.24 Both the above have the same objections to the proposed bus lane.

7.25 They have resided in their properties for the last 36 years and 22 years respectively.

They say that Rochdale Council has only made one announcement regarding the proposed bus lane and this was in the Middleton Guardian on 4th February 2010. They ask if Rochdale Council think that 28 days notice to residents is adequate regarding the impact on access to their properties through the 12 hour working of the bus lane.

7.26 They say they are not experts but blighting both sides of Manchester New Road from 7am to 7pm with a bus lane will affect the value of their properties.

*Response of the Head of Highways & Engineering Service.*

7.27 Before making a Traffic Regulation Order, the Order making authority (Rochdale MBC), under the Local Authorities Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England and Wales) Regulations 1996 should:-
- Publish a Notice of Proposals, containing the particulars, in a newspaper circulating in the area in which the roads relate.
- To ensure adequate publicity about the particulars, the authority must also display Notices in the roads affected by the Order.
- Deposited documents shall also be made available for public inspection at the times and in the places specified in the Notice of Proposals.
- Any person may object to the making of the Order by the date specified in the Notice of Proposals, which in this case was 28 days from the publishing of the Notice and displaying of the Notice referred to above; the period can be reduced to 21 days.

All the above procedures were complied with in the advertising of this Order.

7.28 Parking on the public highway is not part of any valuation of a property. The only parking provision that can be included is that within the cartilage of the property and to which the owner has full control.

7.29 A letter of objection has been received from Frank Cook, 289 Manchester New Road, Alkrington, Middleton, Manchester, M24 1NR.

7.30 Mr Cook objects to the proposed extension to the bus lane on Manchester New Road, particularly the stretch between Mainway and Mossway.

7.31 He says that the bus lane is not required because there are insufficient buses to justify it. This is quite unlike Oxford Street in Manchester where at peak hours the bus lane is filled with buses. Here on Manchester New Road buses are scheduled for one every three minutes, with the No 17, 163 and 124 services each nominally at 10 minute intervals plus occasional 131 and 156 services. This leaves significant time when the bus lane is empty.

7.32 There is rarely any traffic congestion on this road; they do occur but only in morning rush hours and only in school term time. Mr Cook deduces from this that the cause is, at least in part, the school run and this is aggravated by the current bus lane restricting traffic flow.
To reduce such congestion, he suggests improvements to the traffic lanes at the Victoria Avenue traffic signals and better lane markings.

He says that if a bus lane must be provided, then imposing the restrictions on the Manchester bound bus lane in the evening rush hour is needless and unnecessary as there is little traffic towards Manchester.

7.33 He believes that since the introduction of the present bus lane, there has been a significant increase in speed along Manchester New Road and there is a high level of undertaking. Some of this may be due to frustration, but some of it is patently a wanton desire to exceed the speed limit. Unfortunately there seems to be no enforcement of the law on speed limits and undertaking and it is likely that GMP will not have the manpower to do so, except on rare occasions.

7.34 He suggests that the proposed bus lane is not needed especially in the evening; it does not provide any significant advantage, it impedes the non-bus traffic and makes the road more dangerous because of the increased speed and the level of undertaking.

7.35 He suggests that posting Notices on lighting columns is not adequate enough and that each house should have been sent a copy. This, he says, would not have been expensive as the Council has been distributing information leaflets during this period.

7.36 There is no statement of the regulations which will apply to the existing and revised bus lanes. It is important to know who is allowed to enter a bus lane or to stop and wait or park, what taxis or delivery vans etc. Any restrictions can have a significant impact on the residents.

Response of the Head of Highways & Engineering Service.

7.37 The service level on Manchester New Road is high. The bus lane will preserve capacity for buses which, due to their high capacity, carry a significant proportion of people along the corridor.

7.38 The variability in journey times is the most significant factor affecting service reliability. Current bus lanes do not adversely affect capacity as capacity is maintained through junctions. There are proposals at the south side of the Victoria Avenue junction being progressed by Manchester City Council.

7.39 Bus lane times comply with the standard times agreed by AGMA and ensure consistency so as not to confuse drivers by changing the restriction times along routes.

7.40 There is no evidence that bus lanes lead to an increase in speed. Evidence from the Quality Bus Corridor programme is that there is a reduction in accidents.

7.41 With regard to the advertising and Notice of Proposals for the scheme, please see response to Mr Bamford and Mr Barnes.

7.42 With regard to public consultation in general, a sizeable public awareness programme took place during October 2009 in Middleton and Manchester. This involved leaflets being posted through approximately 2045 properties in the Middleton area asking for feedback and inviting them to a consultation event on the 20th October 2009. Only 17 residents provided feedback on the Middleton section of the corridor and the public exhibition in Middleton was attended by only 21 people. Other public exhibitions took place along the route of the proposed corridor, in total 234 people attended the public consultation events and a grand total of 1522 people provided feedback.
The deposited documents which were made available for public inspection at the times and in the places specified in the Notice of Proposals included full details of all the restrictions that apply to the proposed bus lanes.

7.43 As the objector states, the Police have full responsibility for speed limit enforcement and will act as and when deemed necessary. Speed related problems on Manchester New Road would still be evident with or without the bus lane being in place. Bus lane enforcement for vehicles illegally entering bus lanes and / or undertaking may come low on the police list of priorities, with greater focus being put on crime, however if this was seen to be a persistent problem then enforcement could be put in place; camera enforcement of bus lanes is always an option.

8 Conclusions of the Director of Highways

8.1 The Service suggests that the Committee should decide whether to implement the proposals whilst taking into account that GMPTE have identified that improvements are required to Manchester New Road as part of the Cross City Corridor project and that the proposed bus lane is a bus priority measure that will improve public transport.

9 Personnel Implications

9.1 None

10 Financial Implications

10.1 The funding for the scheme will be provided by Greater Manchester PTE

11 Conclusions

11.1 Committee is asked to decide whether or not to implement the proposals set out at paragraph 5 of this report.

For further Information and Background papers: For further information about this report or access to any background papers please contact Donna Shaw, Legal Executive, General Legal Section, Legal and Democratic Services, Town Hall, Rochdale OL16 1AB, Telephone (01706) 924732.

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