
**PENCESTER ROAD, DOVER – PROPOSED NORTHBOUND
BUS LANE**

To: Dover Joint Transportation Advisory Board – 30 November 2023

By: Director of Highways, Transportation and Waste

Classification: Unrestricted

Ward: Town and Castle

Summary: This paper outlines the proposals for a northbound bus and cycle contraflow lane in Pencester Road, Dover to support and enhance the proposed Dover Fastrack bus service.

For Information

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The proposed bus contraflow scheme in Pencester Road aims to support and enhance the upcoming Dover Fastrack bus service that is due to become operational in Spring 2024. The Housing Infrastructure Funding (HIF) funded Dover Fastrack project has been developed to mitigate the traffic impacts of the major housing allocations of the Whitfield Urban Expansion (5,750 Homes) and Connaught Barracks (500 Homes), by providing a high quality, frequent and reliable public transport service to link the new developments to the Town Centre and Dover Priory Station. The Pencester Road scheme could not be afforded within the HIF allocation, so BSIP funding is allowing this scheme to be progressed.
- 1.2. The southbound Fastrack route into the town centre will be via Castle Hill Road, Castle Street, Market Square and then using York Steet and Folkestone Road to arrive at Dover Priory Station. It will provide good access into the centre of Dover and its amenities. The northbound route is currently proposed to exit the Station and travel via Folkestone Road, York Street, A20 Townwall Street, Woolcomber Street and then Castle Hill Road to continue its journey toward Whitfield. This route experiences a high volume of traffic heading to the Port of Dover and leads to regular congestion and delays along this part of the highway network. This is further compounded when ferries are delayed at the Port, leading to the implementation of Operation Tap and Operation Brock.
- 1.3. The use of the A20 for the northbound route is not ideal as journey times cannot be guaranteed, and it also does not provide a direct access to the town centre amenities. Therefore, alternative options to improve the journey time reliability and better access to the town centre were considered as part of the original route planning for the service. Traffic movements within Dover are restricted due to its one-way routes but, two main alternative routes were identified:

- 1.3.1. A256 Priory Road, Ladywell, Park Street and the A256 Maison Dieu Road. This route was considered to offer little or no benefit to the A20 as it was also prone to congestion and delays. We found that there was little opportunity to provide bus priority measures or a direct access to the town centre amenities.
- 1.3.2. Worthington Street, Pencester Road and A256 Maison Dieu Road. This offered a more direct route than the A20 and would provide better access to the town centre amenities. With this route we are also able to consider bus priority measures which would provide greater journey time reliability for the service, and is hence is the option now being promoted.

2. Scheme Description

- 2.1 To access the Pencester Road contraflow, Fastrack buses will use Worthington Street, joining at its junction with the A256 York Street. Worthington Street is one-way northbound and will require some physical changes at its junction with Biggin Street to realign the existing footways to allow buses to make the manoeuvre across into Pencester Road.
- 2.2 To ensure a bus can proceed unhindered, there will also be the need to make changes to existing parking provisions in Worthington Street, as follows:
- One taxi space moved from Worthington Street and an additional taxi space provided at the taxi rank in Biggin Street and two spaces retained in Worthington Street – No loss in Taxi spaces.
 - An additional disabled bay added – An increase in one disabled space.
 - One on-street parking space relocated to accommodate the relocation of a taxi space and one space added – An increase in one additional on-street parking space.
- 2.3 A dedicated bus and cycle only contraflow lane will be provided along the western side of Pencester Road between Biggin Street and A256 Maison Dieu Road. This will require the realignment of the existing footways at both junctions to provide the additional space for two-way traffic, and the introduction of new central islands, new signing and coloured surfacing at the two 'bus gates' at either end of the contraflow lane.
- 2.4 New junction signals will be provided at the Worthington Street, Biggin Street and Pencester Road junction, which will retain the existing controlled crossing of Pencester Road.
- 2.5 New junction signals will be provided at the A256 Maison Dieu Road and Pencester Road Junction. This will retain the existing controlled crossing of Maison Dieu Road and will also provide an additional controlled crossing of Pencester Road.
- 2.6 As a result of the contraflow lane, there will be a need to make changes to the existing parking provisions in Pencester Road, as follows:

- The removal of two taxi spaces
 - The removal of four disabled spaces
 - The removal of five limited waiting bays (1 hour, no return within 2 hours).
 - The removal of eleven pay and display spaces on western side and provision of five new spaces on eastern side – net removal of six pay and display spaces.
- 2.7 Initial discussions with the local parking authority, Dover District Council, has identified that the nearby public car parks at Pencester Road, Maison Dieu Road and Stembrook have capacity that will help to mitigate the removal of the on-street parking and disabled bays. Disabled drivers will also be able to use the five pay and display spaces being provided in Pencester Road, and the additional spaces being provided in Worthington Street.
- 2.8 The new contraflow lane would also allow the bus operator to review existing bus routes which have been limited by the existing road network. This could help to improve the wider efficiency, performance and resilience of bus services within Dover town Centre. There would also be an opportunity to provide a direct connection between Dover Priory Station and the Port of Dover, via Pencester Road, providing better integration of different modes of transport.
- 2.9 The new Fastrack bus service, and the opportunities to improve the existing bus services, will also provide a greater choice in the mode of travel for residents when wishing to travel to the town centre, particularly the elderly and mobility impaired by providing services to the heart of the town centre.
- 2.10 The contraflow lane could also be used by cyclists, supporting active travel and increasing accessibility within the town.
- 2.11 The proposals can be seen on the scheme drawings nos. 1000009228-1-0050-0001, 0002, 0003 and 0004, included as **Appendix A**.

3. Public Consultation

- 3.1 A public consultation on the proposals and Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) for the bus contraflow lane and changes to the parking provisions will be carried out between 17 November and 11 December 2023.
- 3.2 A consultation page has been setup on KCC's Let's Talk Page which provides information and plans on the proposals. Comments and representations can be made online at www.kent.gov.uk/pencesterroad
- 3.3 Following the conclusion of the consultation, a consultation report and recommendation will be prepared for the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport to make a decision on the scheme and TRO's.
- 3.4 If a decision is taken to proceed, the TRO's will be advertised as Made Orders.

4. Programme

- 4.1 A decision on whether to proceed with the scheme or not, is expected to be made by the end of January 2024.
- 4.2 If the decision is taken to proceed with the scheme, then it is expected that works will start at the end of February/early March 2024.
- 4.3 The works would take approximately four months to complete and to carry them out safely some localised road closures and overnight working would be required for certain activities. Prior to commencement a newsletter would be circulated providing detailed information about the programme and how the works would be carried out.

5. Funding

- 5.1 KCC have secured £18.9m of funding from Department for Transport (DfT) through the Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP), for a series of improvements throughout Kent.
- 5.2 The proposal to provide the bus contraflow in Pencester Road is estimated to cost £1.5m and will be fully funded by the BSIP funding.

6. Summary

- 6.1 A northbound bus contraflow lane is proposed in Pencester Road to support and enhance the Dover Fastrack Service by providing a route that will improve and offer greater journey time reliability as well as providing better and more direct access to the town centre amenities.
- 6.2 The bus contraflow will provide opportunities for the bus operator to review existing bus routes, which have been limited by the existing road network. This could help to improve the wider efficiency, performance and resilience of bus services within the town centre.
- 6.3 There is an opportunity to provide a direct bus service from Dover Priory Station to the Port of Dover via the proposed bus contraflow lane in Pencester Road.
- 6.4 There will be changes in the current parking provision in Pencester Road and Worthington Street, which is in part mitigated by the spare capacity of the public car parks in Pencester Road, Stembrook and Maison Dieu Road.
- 6.5 A public consultation on the scheme and TROs is being carried out between 17 November and 11 December 2023. At the conclusion of consultation a report will be prepared, which will also be shared with members of the JTAB
- 6.6 A decision whether to proceed or not is expected to be made by the Cabinet Member for Highways and Transport by the end of January 2024.
- 6.7 If the decision to proceed is given, works are likely to start at the end of February 2024 and take approximately 4 months to complete.
- 6.8 The project is fully funded by the BSIP funding provided by DfT.

7. Recommendations

7.1 For Information only

8. Background Documents

8.1 Appendix A - Scheme drawings nos. 1000009228-1-0050-0001, 0002, 0003 and 0004.

Contact Officer

Barry Stiff, Senior Project Manager
Major Capital Programme Team
Kent County Council