

Transport and Environment Committee

10.00am, Tuesday, 28 October 2014

Princes Street: Tour and Sightseeing Buses and Coaches

Item number	7.4
Report number	
Executive/routine	
Wards	11 – City Centre

Executive summary

Congestion on Princes Street has been exacerbated by coaches using it as a through route (which is currently permitted), and by vehicles stopping to load/unload where not permitted.

This problem is not new. However, it is desirable to address the issue now in order to reflect the Council's general aspiration to improve the environment on Princes Street and to maximise the operating efficiency of buses using Princes Street and the tram.

It is therefore proposed to amend the Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) on Princes Street to alter slightly the eligibility of vehicles permitted to use Princes Street, and to facilitate enforcement of the TROs.

Links

Coalition pledges	P19
Council outcomes	CO7 , CO8 , CO9 , CO10 , CO22
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1

Princes Street; Tour and Sightseeing Buses and Coaches

Recommendations

- 1.1 It is recommended that Committee commence the statutory procedures to make the variation to TROs as described in this report.

Background

- 2.1 The principles of vehicular access to Princes Street, including permitted vehicle types, have been in place for nearly a decade, with the exception of the recent introduction of trams.
- 2.2 This has generally worked well. However, now the tram is operating, it is appropriate to address outstanding problems. The most immediate of these is congestion caused when coaches stop to load/unload where not permitted.
- 2.3 Loading/unloading during the day has not been permitted for many years. Nevertheless, even though hotels have co-operated with enforcement, it has proved difficult to eliminate. Whilst not a very frequent occurrence, each incident has significant impact.
- 2.4 The benefits and challenges of reducing the impact of traffic on Princes Street have been discussed by the Council (for example report to Committee 29 October 2013 'Building a Vision for the City Centre').
- 2.5 The Public and Accessible Transport Action Plan includes Action H25 'review coach set down and uplift points'.

Main report

- 3.1 The current TROs on Princes Street comprise three sections:
 - Lothian Road - South Charlotte Street: no access restriction. Waiting and loading prohibited at all times.
 - South Charlotte Street - South St David Street: access restricted to permitted vehicles 0700-2000. No waiting. Loading permitted 2000-0700 (ie when access is unrestricted) around nos 101-127 and 53-74 east and westbound.

- South St David Street - North Bridge: no access restriction. No waiting. Loading prohibited except at 10-14 Princes Street and Waverley Steps (prohibited between 0800-0915 and 1630-1830) and the Balmoral (loading any time).
- 3.2 Vehicles permitted between South Charlotte Street and South St David Street are: pedal cycles, taxis, trams/tram maintenance vehicles, fire/ambulance/police vehicles, defined building operations etc/roadworks vehicles (24 hrs notice), and:
- PSV (as defined by Section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981).
 - local bus (PSV used for a local service per Section 2 Transport Act 1985, not an excursion or tour).
- 3.3 The first point above permits coaches and buses which do not provide a local bus service, for example, those that are providing a pre-booked tour, transporting a private group, or a long distance bus service which is not registered per Section 2 of the Transport Act. Hop on/hop off sightseeing buses ('Edinburgh Bus Tours') are registered local services and so qualify under the second point.
- 3.4 Loading is permitted between South Charlotte Street - South St David Street only when access is permitted to general traffic (2000-0700); and then only at specific locations. Nevertheless, it is evident that passenger un/loading does take place outwith the permitted times and locations. Although incidents of unauthorised loading and unloading of passengers are infrequent, they can cause significant congestion and delay to tram and bus services.
- 3.5 It is therefore proposed that PSVs (as defined by Section 1 of the Public Passenger Vehicles Act 1981) are no longer permitted to use this section of Princes Street between 0700 and 2000. This would remove coaches and buses which do not provide a local bus service. Local buses would not be affected.
- 3.6 This would reduce overall traffic on Princes Street throughout the day, and enhance enforcement. No change is proposed between 2000-0700.
- 3.7 If approved by Committee, it is proposed to consult from 10 November to 12 January 2015 (two months plus one week allowance for the festive period). This would include discussion regarding loading/offloading coaches with the hotels in the relevant section of Princes Street. The outcomes would be reported to Committee on 17 March 2014.

Measures of success

- 4.1 Traffic congestion on Princes Street is reduced.

Financial impact

- 5.1 Initiating this consultation carries no financial risk.
- 5.2 The costs associated with the statutory procedures will be approximately £1,000. These costs will be met from existing budgets.
- 5.3 The cost of implementing the TRO will be reported to a future meeting of this Committee.

Risk, policy, compliance and governance impact

- 6.1 The recommendation in this report is consistent with existing policies and aspirations of the Council.
- 6.2 Amending TROs on Princes Street may well be sensitive. This report proposes only to consult on the TROs; nevertheless this may generate varied reactions, which may or may not reflect possible eventual outcomes.

Equalities impact

- 7.1 Initiating this consultation has no impacts on equality or rights. An Equalities and Rights Assessment would be in effect through any subsequent programme to amend the TROs on Princes Street.

Sustainability impact

- 8.1 The impacts of this report in relation to the three elements of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 Public Bodies Duties have been considered, and the outcomes are summarised below:
 - The report's proposals to consult will have no impact on carbon emissions.
 - The need to build resilience to climate change impacts is not relevant to this report's proposals to consult.
 - This report's proposals to consult will have no impact on achieving a sustainable Edinburgh.

Consultation and engagement

- 9.1 The report recommends a consultation programme.

Background reading/external references

None.

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Links

Coalition pledges	P19 - Keep Lothian Buses in public hands and encourage the improvement of routes and times
Council outcomes	CO7 - Edinburgh draws new investment in development and regeneration CO8 - Edinburgh's economy creates and sustains job opportunities CO9 - Edinburgh residents are able to access job opportunities CO10 - Improved health and reduced inequalities CO22 - Moving efficiently – Edinburgh has a transport system that improves connectivity and is green, healthy and accessible
Single Outcome Agreement	SO1 - Edinburgh's Economy Delivers increased investment, jobs and opportunities for all
Appendices	None