

Hundreds of drivers on Princes Street ignore bus lanes



The council has discovered from watching video footage that an average of approximately 160 drivers *per day* ignore the bus lane restrictions on Princes Street.

But they also found that on other routes there can be as many as 250 daily infringements. The four routes with the highest rates are Calder Road eastbound, Duddingston Park South northbound, Liberton Road northbound and Lothian Road southbound.

Most of those guilty of infringing the rules on Princes Street were driving at either end of the mile long street.

Some drove from the section west of Waverley Bridge heading west and others from Princes Street going east of Charlotte Street.

The council therefore proposes to install four or five bus lane cameras to deter those drivers who chance their arm on the main thoroughfare. (And they are taking no chances as they are also going to install some dummy cameras too.) The real cameras will cost around £20,000 which will be funded from the bus infrastructure capital budget. The other change will be self-funded from revenue from enforcement notices.

Transport Convener, Cllr Lesley Hinds, said: "Princes Street is a unique street where we want to encourage people to spend time, visiting the local shops and taking in the sights. We also want to ensure that public transport is prioritised along

the route, which is why we are installing bus lane cameras so it remains a corridor for buses and trams.

“This is all part of our review of the city’s bus lane network, which plays an essential part in promoting the use of public transport in Edinburgh, as well as keeping traffic moving. Future analysis will allow us to find out which parts of Edinburgh will benefit from the expansion of the network.”

✘ The council cannot enforce fines until they have installed the cameras. When they are in situ each infringement will carry with it a fine of £60. It is hoped this will be enough to make drivers think more carefully in future, and that it will help buses run to time.

The council must first of all promote a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) to introduce a ‘bus gate’ from 7:00am to 8:00pm on Princes Street before it can erect the new cameras.

It will take about 18 months to allow for consultation with stakeholders and development of the proposals until the first cameras can be put up.

There are 65km of bus lanes in the city at present and the council also plans to look at several new locations where traffic might be restricted in this way: Maybury Road (south end), North Junction Street, Ferry Road (east end), Gilmerton Road (additional bus lanes), Liberton Brae and Liberton Gardens (additional bus lanes) and Waterloo Place – Regent Road – Montrose Terrace.

The effectiveness of bus lanes in the city are discussed with bus operators on a quarterly basis to ensure that public transport traffic is allowed to flow freely.

Recent reviews of the way that the bus lanes operate has led to changes. Permission was granted to allow motorbikes to use them as well as buses and bicycles on a trial basis, and most have been made part-time at either end of the day.

In addition the council's Transport Committee will hear that the council has reviewed two bus lanes which they plan to make redundant. These are in Bread Street and the A1 eastbound off-slip road at Newcraighall.

The space on Bread Street may be used instead for a cycle lane, but the council will discuss this with SPOKES to decide on this proposal.

A further report on bus lane trials will be presented to the Transport Committee next autumn.

The council's Transport and Environment Committee meets next Tuesday 27 October 2015.