

Woking Road bus lane changes: Statement of reasons

Proposed amendments to the existing traffic regulation order enforcing the two existing “with-flow” bus lanes in Woking Road (A320), Guildford due to the implementation of the town centre transport package, Guildford and quality bus corridor in the Guildford town centre area.



Proposed change to the operational hours of the two existing bus lanes in A320 Woking Road, Guildford

In July 2019 Surrey County Council declared a climate emergency and in April 2020 Surrey's Climate Change Strategy was approved. The strategy was developed by Surrey's twelve local authorities and is the result of a shared ambition across the County Council and the Districts and Boroughs for Surrey's Greener Future - one where residents can live in clean, safe and green communities and embrace their environmental responsibilities.

To deliver on Surrey's ambitions, the County's current rate of carbon consumption would have to decrease significantly. Buses are a vital mode of transport for Guildford, used by 15,000 people per day. Surrey County Council has committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions across Surrey by 2050 as 46% of the county's carbon emissions are produced by transport. Making buses more practical and attractive for journeys has an important part to play. Additionally, with new homes proposed in the Borough of Guildford over the next 20 years, a reliable bus network will be vital in ensuring that an already congested road network is not overwhelmed.

It is, therefore, planned to convert existing bus lanes in Guildford (and other areas of Surrey) to operate 24 hours per day, seven days a week from their current operating times of either 7:00am and 7:00pm on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive or 7:00 am and 10:00am and between 4:00pm and 7:00pm on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive. This is intended to:

- improve bus journey times, reliability and punctuality;
- increase levels of bus patronage; and
- reduce bus journey times.

Bus lanes can also be used by pedal cyclists so the longer operating hours proposed for the two bus lanes in Woking Road (A320), Guildford would also provide an enhanced facility for them as well.

Five bus services currently operate between Guildford and Woking along the A320 Woking Road between approximately 5:30am and 10:30pm with a frequency of generally every 20 minutes.

Drafting amendments

It is intended to include some minor amendments relating to buses and pedal cycles. The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1995 ("the 1995 Regulations") have been repealed and replaced with a new set of Regulations, The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Regulations 2016 ("the 2016 Regulations"). The definition of what is a bus and a pedal cycle is now contained in the 2016 Regulations and it is, therefore, now intended to alter the definition of bus and pedal cycle as contained in the current Order enforcing the two existing bus lanes in A320 Woking Road, Guildford so as to take account of this change. The definition of what is a bus and a pedal cycle applies throughout the country so there is no variation in Surrey's definition from that applying elsewhere in England, Wales and Scotland.

As indicated immediately above the 1995 Regulations were replaced in 2016 by a new set of Regulations (the 2016 Regulations). In the Order which currently enforces the two existing mandatory “with-flow” bus lanes in the A320 Woking Road there is a reference to a particular traffic sign as contained within the 2002 Regulations. This is the traffic sign to Diagram 1010 in Schedule 6 to those Regulations which is used, inter alia, to indicate the edge of the carriageway at a road junction or lay-by or at an exit from a private drive onto a public road or the division between the main carriageway and a traffic lane which leaves the main carriageway at a junction ahead. This is because there is a lay-by fronting Nos. 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38 and 39 Woking Road, Guildford, Surrey, GU1 1QD, which is used by the occupiers of those premises for parking and loading and unloading purposes. It can also be used by “all-comers” to leave their vehicles at any time. The road marking is used to mark the division between the bus lane and the aforesaid lay-by. However, the references to this particular road marking are now contained within the 2016 Regulations so it is intended to alter the definition in the Order (as amended) enforcing the two existing bus lanes in A320 Woking Road regarding this particular traffic sign, particularly as the 2016 Regulations have made some changes as to the circumstances when this particular traffic sign may be used (these changes do not affect its current use at the boundary between the existing bus lane and lay-by). This change will not affect the operation of the two existing bus lanes in Woking Road (A320), Guildford, except as provided for elsewhere in this Statement of Reasons.

For the avoidance of doubt it is intended to insert into the Interpretation article of the existing Order enforcing the two existing bus lanes in A320 Woking Road, Guildford the following expressions: “day” and “week”.

This is required due to the proposed change of the operational hours of those bus lanes (referred to above) from 7:00am and 10:00am and between 4:00pm and 7:00pm on Mondays to Saturdays inclusive to at any time of the day or night throughout the week.

It is also proposed to change the definition of “telecommunication system” to “electronic communication apparatus” to account for a change made in Paragraph 1 of Schedule 2 to the Telecommunications Act 1984 in that Order.

This is merely to clarify the situation and formalise the current arrangements and involves no actual changes to the way the existing Order enforcing the two existing bus lanes in A320 Woking Road presently operate.