

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

The Motorways Traffic (Amendment) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2019

S.R. 2019 No. 19

1. Introduction

- 1.1. This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Department for Infrastructure to accompany the Statutory Rule (details above) which is laid before the Northern Ireland Assembly.
- 1.2. The Statutory Rule is made under Article 20(3) of the Roads (Northern Ireland) Order 1993 and is subject to the negative resolution procedure.

2. Purpose

- 2.1. The rule amends The Motorways Traffic Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2008 ("the Motorways Regulations").
- 2.2. The purpose of the rule is to extend the lengths of the citybound hard shoulders of the M1 and M2 Motorways, including the citybound off-slip at Fortwilliam Roundabout, which can be used as bus lanes and amends the hours they are available for use by buses and coaches from 7.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. on Monday to Friday inclusive.
- 2.3. The rule also adds a length of bus lane on a purpose built length of carriageway at the Duncrue Street off-slip of the M2 Motorway which terminates at a new 'bus gate' (a set of traffic lights established for the sole use of buses or other vehicles permitted to use the bus lane leading up to the bus gate) at its junction with Duncrue Street. This bus lane will operate 24/7 in tandem with the bus gate.
- 2.4. The provision of the new and extended bus lanes is intended to improve bus journey times and service reliability on the M1 and M2 Corridors and therefore to encourage modal shift from car to bus use and help reduce congestion and encourage more use of the Department's Park and Ride facilities.

3. Background

- 3.1. Bus lanes have been provided on the hard shoulder of motorways in the UK for a number of years. The first such bus lane in Northern Ireland was created in 1999 with further lengths of hard shoulder bus lanes added in 2004, 2006 and 2007.
- 3.2. The Motorways Regulations, which regulate the use of special roads in Northern Ireland include provision, amongst other things, for areas of hard shoulder of lengths of the M1 Motorway to be used as bus lanes during the hours 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. and 3.00 p.m. to 6.30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday inclusive and lengths of the M2 Motorway to be used as bus lanes during the hours 7.30 a.m. to 9.30 a.m. from Monday to Friday inclusive. This rule will change the days and hours of operation for these existing bus lanes.

4. Consultation

4.1. The PSNI has been informed and has agreed to the regulations. Belfast City Council, Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council and Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have been advised but no objections have been received. Antrim and Newtownabbey Borough Council have advised that they support the proposals.

5. Equality Impact

5.1. Consideration has been given to compliance with section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. No equality issues have been identified by the Department.

6. Regulatory Impact

6.1. A Regulatory Impact Assessment was not considered necessary as the proposal does not result in any costs or savings to business, charities or the voluntary bodies.

7. Financial Implications

7.1. None.

8. Section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998

8.1. Consideration has been given to compliance with section 24 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. No human rights issues have been identified by the Department.

9. EU Implications

9.1. Not applicable.

10. Parity or Replicatory Measure

10.1. Not applicable.

11. Additional Information

11.1. Not applicable.