

## **Appendix 1 – Grant Licensed Taxi Drivers access to bus lanes across Rotherham**

**We the undersigned petition the council to amend local traffic regulations to permit licensed taxi drivers, both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, to use designated bus lanes throughout the borough. This change would align Rotherham with best practices in sustainable and efficient urban mobility, benefiting our community without compromising the priority given to buses.**

I, Councillor Simon Ball, on behalf of residents, licensed taxi drivers, and regular users of public transport in Rotherham, respectfully present this petition to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council.

Currently, bus lanes in Rotherham are reserved exclusively for buses and, in some cases, cyclists, leaving taxis to navigate congested general traffic. I urge RMBC to introduce a policy allowing licensed taxis full access to these lanes during operational hours, subject to clear signage and enforcement to prevent misuse. This could be implemented via Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), similar to those used elsewhere in South Yorkshire.

### Evidence from Neighbouring Authorities

Rotherham should not lag behind its South Yorkshire neighbours in supporting vital public transport services. A review of policies in nearby councils reveals a clear trend towards inclusion:

- Sheffield City Council permits taxis to use bus lanes and gates, recognising them as essential public transport alongside buses, cycles, and authorised vehicles. This policy extends to both hackney carriages and private hire vehicles, fostering smoother traffic flow in a comparable urban setting.
- Doncaster Council explicitly allows “permitted taxis” to use bus lanes where indicated by signage, alongside buses and cycles, during restricted hours. This exemption is enforced to ensure compliance while prioritising mobility for taxi users.
- Barnsley Council, by contrast, restricts bus lanes to buses and occasionally cyclists, with no provision for taxis despite long-standing requests from the local trade dating back to at least 2013. This outdated approach highlights an opportunity for Rotherham to lead regionally by adopting a more progressive stance.

By granting access, RMBC would harmonise regulations across the Yorkshire and Humber region, reducing cross-border confusion for drivers and passengers alike.

### Key Benefits of Allowing Taxi Access to Bus Lanes

Permitting licensed taxis into bus lanes would deliver tangible advantages for Rotherham’s residents, economy, and environment. These include:

1. **Faster and More Reliable Journeys:** Taxis could bypass congestion, shortening travel times during peak hours, crucial for commuters, shift

workers, and those attending medical appointments for example at Rotherham Hospital.

2. Enhanced Accessibility for Vulnerable Groups: Elderly residents, disabled passengers, and families with young children rely heavily on taxis as a flexible alternative to buses. Quicker access would improve independence and reduce isolation, aligning with RMBC's inclusive mobility goals.
3. Reduced Overall Congestion and Emissions: By keeping taxis moving, fewer vehicles would idle in general lanes, easing pressure on the road network and lowering carbon emissions through more efficient routing supporting Rotherham's net-zero ambitions.
4. 4. Economic Boost for the Local Taxi Trade: Rotherham's licensed drivers provide an essential service, transporting numerous passenger trips annually. Streamlined operations could lower operational costs, potentially stabilising or reducing fares while sustaining jobs in a vital sector.

These benefits are evidenced in councils like Sheffield, where taxi access has contributed to smoother public transport integration without increasing bus delays.

#### Call to Action

I call upon RMBC to convene a public consultation within the next three months to explore this policy change, engaging taxi representatives, bus operators, and residents. A pilot scheme on high-traffic corridors would allow data-driven evaluation, ensuring any implementation is evidence-based and reversible if needed.

Rotherham deserves a modern transport system that values all forms of public mobility. By acting now, RMBC can enhance connectivity, support local businesses, and position our borough as a forward-thinking leader in South Yorkshire.

I urge you to respond positively to this petition and commit to progress.