

Post Meeting Note: Aylestone Ward Meeting 11th April 2018

Planning Policy in relation to Bus Stop Provision

At the meeting the Head of Planning had confirmed that whilst promoting and encouraging public transport provision was a key objective of planning policy, categorical empirical requirements in terms of distances of houses from bus stops were no longer acceptable in the context of the Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), and that public transport accessibility standards were now considered as guidance rather than absolute requirements.

Policy AM05 in the 2006 Local Plan (which pre-dated the NPPF) had previously sought to achieve more specific definition as follows:

“Planning permission for large scale development will not be granted unless:

- a) at least 75% of the development is within 250 metres walking distance of a bus stop;*
- b) no part of the development is more than 400 metres from a bus stop; and*
- c) routes for buses through the development are such as to provide direct links with the highway network, by priority access arrangements if necessary, and maximise the opportunity for extending the existing network of bus services in the City.”*

However on advice from the Government's Planning Advisory Service and Planning Inspectorate this specific policy wording was not carried forward into the replacement Core Strategy 2014 which states at Policy CS14:

“.....New development being designed and located so that it is within close walking distance to frequent high quality bus services”

This less specific wording avoids difficulties such as defining walking distance (ie as the crow flies, whether using only existing highways or using proposed improvements brought forward as part of the proposal) and also the fact that the ability to require smaller and medium sized new developments to be served by public transport service is often not viable nor within the gift of developers as such provision is largely operator-led, and defined by market forces.