

Leicester
City Council

**WARDS AFFECTED
ALL**

FORWARD TIMETABLE OF CONSULTATION AND MEETINGS:

Cabinet

2nd September 2002

CREATING ACCESSIBLE BUS STOPS

Report of the Director of Environment, Regeneration and Development

1. Purpose of Report

To report the views of the Highways and Transportation and Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committees on the proposed scheme to provide accessible bus stops and protect them with traffic regulation orders and to seek the support of Cabinet to the proposals.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Disability Discrimination Act requires that all buses are accessible by disabled people by 2017. Both the major bus companies in Leicester have recently undertaken significant investment in new low floor buses; not only are these accessible to disabled people, including those in wheelchairs, but pushchairs can also be wheeled straight onto the bus without having to remove the child and fold the pushchair up.
- 2.2 To match this investment in vehicles it is proposed that bus stops are provided with raised kerbs to provide level access into the vehicles. A pilot scheme has already been undertaken and it is now proposed to extend this to all bus stops on the routes being operated by low floor buses (and ultimately to all bus stops).
- 2.3 It is proposed that the stops should be protected with bus stop clearway orders to prevent their obstruction by other vehicles in order to maximise the benefits of the raised kerbs. Every effort will be made where possible to minimise the loss of kerb side space for parking or loading where there is a high demand.
- 2.4 This is an issue which is likely to generate some public concern in those locations where parking space is lost, especially in residential and retail areas. How these will be addressed is set out at point 1.6 in the covering report.
- 2.5 The proposals were reported to the Highways and Transportation and Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committees in July. Both Committees endorsed the proposals and their resolutions are set out in the attached supporting information.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the principle of introducing raised kerbs at bus stops to maximise the accessibility of bus services.
- 3.2 That Cabinet recognises the need to protect bus stops from obstruction by other vehicles and approves the principle of the use of bus stop clearway orders to achieve this.

4. Headline Financial and legal Implications

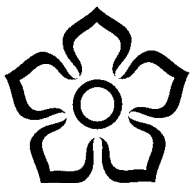
- 4.1 Approximately £180,000 will have been spent in 2001/02 on the pilot scheme and approximately £950,000 is proposed to be spent on additional stops in 2002/03. Funding for this expenditure and for additional expenditure to reconstruct all the stops in the City is available through the SCA provided from the Local Transport Plan.
- 4.2 Traffic regulation orders are introduced under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996. All aspects of that legislation will be complied with.

5. Report Author/Officer to contact:

- 5.1 Barry Pritchard, Team Leader Central Area Team, Traffic Group, Ext 6522

DECISION STATUS

Key Decision	Yes
Reason	Capital expenditure over £1 million / Significant effect on two or more wards
Appeared in Forward Plan	Yes
Executive or Council Decision	Executive (Cabinet)



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SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Report

- 1.1 The Disability Discrimination Act requires that all buses are accessible by disabled people by 2017. Both the major bus companies have recently undertaken significant investment in new low floor buses; not only are these accessible to disabled people, including those in wheelchairs, but pushchairs can also be wheeled straight onto the bus without having to remove the child and fold the pushchair up.
- 1.2 This is a significant step forward both in improving the accessibility of the bus services and also in generally improving their quality, which will assist in encouraging people to use public transport instead of cars.
- 1.3 Although these buses have low floors and can “kneel” to further improve accessibility, these advantages are completely lost if the bus cannot stop immediately adjacent to and parallel with the kerb, and the kerb must be high enough to enable disabled people and pushchair users to have level access into the vehicle. In order to achieve these conditions it is proposed to construct a raised kerb at all bus stops in the City and protect them with a traffic regulation order to prevent their obstruction by other vehicles.
- 1.4 Starting with the stops on those routes now being operated by low floor vehicles, but ultimately extending to all routes and bus stops, it is proposed to construct a 4m length of special kerb 180mm high. This will provide a “platform” almost level with the bus floor but not so high as to cause danger of impact between the body of the bus and the kerb – a completely level access can be provided by kneeling the bus if necessary. This height (180mm) compares with a standard kerb height of 125mm and actual kerb heights which are often lower.
- 1.5 Inevitably many bus stops are located in areas where there is conflicting demand for use of the kerb space. This may, for example, arise from residents in housing areas, shoppers or delivery vehicles in retail areas or workers in employment areas. It is essential, therefore, that the bus stops are protected in such a way that buses will always be able to stop at the accessible bus stop to ensure that the service remains accessible.

- 1.6 Each stop is being audited to identify current problems and determine whether the stop is in the best location or whether an alternative location exists where these problems can be overcome or at least minimised. In addition, in locations of high demand for use of kerb space, alternative designs for bus stops are being considered to minimise the loss of parking etc. including creating build outs for the bus stops, placing parking/loading in a layby or reducing the length of the raised kerb.
- 1.7 If it is considered that the best solution requires the relocation of a stop, the Council's current practice of holding a site meeting to which Ward Councillors, the bus companies and the police are invited, is followed. If a new location is identified then any affected frontages are notified to see if there are any factors not known to officers, which might affect the location of the stop.
- 1.8 As part of the design, provision is being made at each stop for the possible inclusion at some point of a shelter, a Startrak sign and a timetable case. In addition the bus stop pole and flag is either being replaced if necessary or reused and in the case of the bus stop pole repainted.
- 1.9 Whatever design is chosen for the bus stop it is proposed that the stop is protected by a bus stop clearway order which prevents stopping (which includes waiting and loading) by all vehicles other than buses. While every effort will be made to minimise the length of kerb affected (as described above) in some cases it will be necessary to apply the order to 25m of kerb in order to allow sufficient space for the bus to pull in and stop parallel and adjacent to the raised kerb.
- 1.10 While every effort will be made by stop location and design to minimise the loss of parking space there will inevitably be locations where this will happen. In residential and retail areas this has the potential to be badly received by the public and result in much pressure on Members to withdraw the proposal. Obstruction at unprotected bus stops will be difficult if not impossible to control and would mean that those stops would cease to be accessible to disabled people, people with walking difficulties and those with pushchairs.
- 1.11 Because of the nature of the bus stop clearway order any unresolved objections would result in the need for a public enquiry. In order to maximise efficient use of officer time and of financial resources it is proposed that if objections are received which cannot be resolved then the alternative lesser restriction of no waiting at any time be introduced and the bus stop clearway orders for all the stops so affected be re-advertised at a later date when they can be dealt with through a single public enquiry. This could result in these bus stops being obstructed for short periods by vehicles loading or picking up or setting down passengers but would prevent vehicles being parked on the bus stops.
- 1.12 The Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 3rd July 2002 and resolved
 - i. That Cabinet be advised to give approval to the principle of introducing raised kerbs at bus stops to maximise the accessibility of bus services
 - ii. That Cabinet be advised to recognise the need to protect bus stops from obstruction by other vehicles and give approval to the principle of the use of bus stop clearway orders to achieve this.

1.13 The Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee considered the report on 4th July 2002 and resolved:

That the Scrutiny Committee recognises the importance of creating accessible bus services for all and recommends that Cabinet approve the principle of introducing raised kerbs at bus stops to maximise the use of bus services by all citizens in Leicester and the need to protect them with bus stop clearway orders.

FINANCIAL, LEGAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

2. Financial Implications

2.1 Approximately £180,000 will have been spent in 2001/02 on the pilot scheme. It is proposed to spend a further £950,000 in 2002/03 on completing work at the bus stops on those routes where low floor buses have been introduced.

2.2 It is anticipated that further expenditure on other bus routes will be proposed in future years until all stops in the City have been dealt with.

2.3 Funding for this expenditure is available from the City Council's allocation of SCA through the Local Transport Plan.

3. Legal Implications

3.1 Traffic regulation orders are introduced under the 1984 Road Traffic Regulation Act and the Local Authorities' Traffic Orders (Procedure) (England & Wales) Regulations 1996. All aspects of that legislation will be complied with.

4. Other Implications

4.1

OTHER IMPLICATIONS	YES/NO	Paragraph References With Supporting information
Equal Opportunities	Yes	1.1, 1.2
Policy	No	
Sustainable and Environmental	Yes	1.2
Crime and Disorder	No	
Human Rights Act	No	
Elderly / People on Low income	No	

5. Background Papers

5.1 Report to Cabinet 25th March 2002, Transport Capital Programme
Report to Highways and Transportation Scrutiny Committee 3rd July 2002, Creating Accessible Bus Stops

Report to Finance, Resources and Equal Opportunities Scrutiny Committee 4th July 2002, Creating Accessible Bus Stops

6. Details of Research & Consultation

6.1 Consultation takes place with Ward Members, bus companies, the police and affected frontages if a bus stop is proposed to be moved.

7. Report Author

7.1 Barry Pritchard, Team Leader, Central Area Team, Traffic Group, Ext 6522