

SEVENOAKS JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD - 18 SEPTEMBER 2007

BUS STOP IMPROVEMENTS: SWANLEY, HALSTEAD AND KNOCKHOLT

Report of the: West Kent Divisional Director

Status: For Information

Chairman Cllr James London

Head of Service Head of Transportation and Planning – Mr Ray Dines

Recommendation: It be RESOLVED that Members note the key issues of the bus stop accessibility reviews being carried out by Transport for London for bus stops used by London Buses services in Swanley, Knockholt and Halstead.

Background and Discussion

- 1 Unlike in the rest of the country, bus routes in London are not deregulated. The Traffic Authority, Transport for London (TfL), regulates all bus routes in Greater London and they have a significant programme of improving bus stops on all routes. Until now, they have focussed carrying out these improvements within the Greater London boundary, but are now proposing to improve all stops on Routes 233 and R5, including those that are located in Kent.
- 2 TfL's rationale is that since they regulate the operation of the bus service, they would like to ensure that all passengers have equal access to it, regardless of where they live. This is likely to raise some political issues that Members will, in the future, need to consider.
- 3 The objective of the improvements is to ensure that bus stops comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and TfL's "*Accessible Bus Stop Design Guidance – Bus Priority Technical Advice Note, January 2006*". The guidance in this latter document is similar to the County's own policy and is aimed at ensuring that bus stops can be easily reached by those with mobility difficulties, that buses can pull up close to the kerb and that the kerb height allows those with mobility difficulties to board and alight more easily.
- 4 TfL proposes to fund and implement extensive works on Route 233 (Sidcup to Swanley), such as:
 - "At-any-time bus stop clearways" at all bus stops
 - Raising (or lowering) all kerbs at bus stops to 140mm in height
 - Relocating or altering the layout of certain bus stops to enhance their accessibility
 - New bus stops at the London Road / Beechenlea Lane junction and outside 28-36 London Road (opposite Bremner Close)

Item No. 11

- Installing new or replacement bus stop shelters where existing shelters are obsolete
 - Resurfacing every marked bus stop in red asphalt
 - Lengthening every “bus stop cage” road marking. To enable buses to pull-in close to the kerb TfL is recommending that the length of all bus stops is increased (generally to 29metres)
- 5 On Route R5 (Orpington - Halstead - Knockholt), TfL proposes to fund and implement similar works to those in Swanley:
- Raising all kerbs at bus stops to 125mm in height
 - Painting “bus stop cage” road markings at The Crown in Knockholt and at all bus stops in Halstead
 - “Bus stop clearways” at all bus stops in Halstead
- 6 Finally, TfL is proposing to install standard “London Buses” bus stop flags at all stops serving Routes 233 and R5. In Kent, bus stop flags are installed and maintained by the companies who operate the services that use them; local authorities are not involved on any level. Some stops in Swanley already display London Buses flags.
- 7 Currently there are no plans to modify any bus stops on Route 246 (Bromley – Westerham), the only other TfL/London Buses service operating in Sevenoaks District.

Conclusions

- 8 TfL has commissioned feasibility studies for improving bus stops used by London Buses services that terminate in Sevenoaks District. The objective of the improvements is to ensure that bus stops comply with the Disability Discrimination Act. KHS has been consulted during the feasibility process and draft reports have been received. TfL will now be asked to carry out formal consultation with the District Council and the Town and Parish Councils affected. There are likely to be issues of a technical, process or political nature that will have to be addressed by the authorities involved and this Board before final approval of proposed works is granted.

Sources of Information: Copies of the TfL draft feasibility reports and all associated correspondence may be inspected at Kent Highway Services’ offices.

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