



meeting **CABINET**

date **4 MARCH 2009**

agenda item number

REPORT OF CABINET MEMBER FOR TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS

POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF BUS STOPS AND BUS SHELTERS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1 To introduce a new policy for the provision of bus stops and bus shelters on the highway and along bus quality corridors, as set out in this report and the Appendix, from April 2009.

2. Background

- 2.1 LTP (2) includes funding and provision for the significant upgrading of bus stops and shelters in the County. The strategy for improving bus stops and bus shelters is included in the Bus and Information Strategy 2006, which includes standards and performance targets for making improvements. Mori surveys show that Nottinghamshire is regarded as one of the best performing shire counties in this area of service provision.
- 2.2 Currently there are 5,183 bus stops in the County, 1,563 have bus shelters, of which 585 shelters are the property of Clear Channel (formerly Adshel). Clear Channel shelters are installed, at agreed sites, as part of the Bus Shelter Advertising Contract awarded in June 2000. The contract will run for a period of 25 years, ending in 2025. As part of the Contract, after the 15th anniversary (2015), the Council has the option to negotiate replacement shelters with Clear Channel where existing shelters are in poor condition or need upgrading to meet the needs of users, especially the elderly and people with disabilities.
- 2.3 All Advertising shelters installed as part of this contract require planning permission from the relevant District / Borough Council.
- 2.4 Programmes and schemes for the provision of new stops and the replacement of existing facilities are formulated as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The programme and funding (approximately £1m: 2009/10) for these stops is agreed in partnership with bus operators as part of the Quality Partnership and area scheme upgrade process. The list of improvements for each year is sent to all Members for information.

2.5 Over many years, various types of shelters and poles have been installed which do not necessarily reflect local users needs. The new programme of upgrades and renewals has taken account of the needs of the local community, including conservation issues, and as such new types and styles will reflect these needs. (See illustrations in Appendix 2). Whilst striving to meet local needs and providing these benefits, it is not always possible to install a shelter offering maximum protection against the elements due to footway constraints. Where there are no constraints every effort will be made to install a fully enclosed shelter. In addition we have received requests to place timetable information inside the shelter and this will be achieved where it is possible. Lighting will be provided where connections are available and within budget. Solar lighting is an optional extra included in the tender and this will be considered as an alternative. The bus shelter outside Trent Bridge House is currently powered by solar lighting on a trial basis so we can assess cost and effectiveness of the unit over a six month period. All new bus shelters will be DDA compliant.

3. The Policy

3.1. A policy has been developed setting out the minimum standards for bus stop and bus shelter provision together with the Council's promise to bus users and the procedure for providing new stops or reviewing existing stops. The policy also sets out legislation, how complaints are to be dealt with, cleaning and maintenance, infrastructure design and new developments. It also details the consultation process involving Local Members and other key stakeholders in the decision making process. The Policy is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.

4. Proposal

4.1 It is proposed to introduce the Policy set out in the Appendix to this report from April 2009.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Cabinet approve the policy, process and all other matters associated with the provision of roadside bus infrastructure as detailed in this report

COUNCILLOR STELLA SMEDLEY
Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways

Comments of the Service Director – Finance

The contents of this report are duly noted, all expenditure must be contained within the relevant capital and revenue budgets. [DJK – 25/11/08]

Legal Services' Comments

The Cabinet Member for Transport and Highways has authority under delegated decision number TH.1 to make the recommendations set out in this report. [NAB – 24/11/08]

Background Papers Available For Inspection:

1. Bus and Information Strategy
2. LTP 2
3. Highway Network Management Plan

Electoral Division (s) and Member(s) Affected

All

POLICY FOR THE PROVISION OF BUS STOPS AND BUS SHELTERS IN NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

1. Background

- 1.1 The strategy for improving bus stops and bus shelters is included in the Bus and Information Strategy 2006, which includes standards and performance targets for making improvements. Mori surveys show that Nottinghamshire is regarded as one of the best performing shire counties in this area of service provision.
- 1.2 Currently there are 5,183 bus stops in the County, 1,563 have bus shelters, of which 585 shelters are the property of Clear Channel (formerly Adshel). These shelters were installed, at agreed sites, as part of the Bus Shelter Advertising Contract awarded in June 2000. The contract will run for a period of 25 years, ending in 2025. As part of the Contract, after the 15th anniversary, the Council has the option to negotiate replacement shelters with Clear Channel where existing shelters are in poor condition.
- 1.3 All Advertising shelters installed as part of this contract require planning permission from the relevant District / Borough Council.
- 1.4 Programmes and schemes for the provision of new stops and the replacement of existing facilities are formulated as part of the Local Transport Plan (LTP). The programme and funding (approximately £1m: 2009/10) for these stops is agreed in partnership with bus operators as part of the Quality Partnership and area scheme upgrade process. The list of improvements for each year is sent to all Members for information.

2. A Quality Product

- 2.1 The Government and the County Council recognise that bus services will be the main mode for encouraging people to move away from the private car, providing access to work, training, health, leisure and shopping. To achieve this we need to ensure that services, stops and shelters are appropriate and of high standards to meet these needs.
- 2.2 The County Council, working in partnership with Bus Operators, Local Members, District and Parish / Town Council's, is committed to raising the quality and profile of bus travel for current and potential users and ensuring this is matched with high quality bus stops and bus shelters. As a minimum, this means stops will eventually include the following features:-
 - A bus stop pole complete with flag and timetable case(s) (see Sections 4 and 6)
 - A raised kerb

The majority of raised kerbs will have a 3m raised boarding area to give sufficient room for wheelchair / buggy access. As a general rule all kerbs are raised to a height of 180mm, giving direct access to the bus.

- A hard standing area

The hard stand will be constructed using whatever material is common to the surrounding footway. If laid directly onto a grass verge, the surface will be tarmac. The size of the hard stand will depend on whether it is required for a shelter or bus stop pole and pedestrian flows. A hard stand for a shelter site will measure 4m in length by 2m in width, note that the width may be more where we require a wooden shelter. A pole site will measure 2m by 2m.

- A Bus Stop Clearway

Persistent parking adjacent to bus stops frequently causes problems for bus operators and passengers. A programme of bus stop clearways will be introduced in urban areas during 2009 -11 as part of the Bus Quality Partnerships and at other locations highlighted by bus operators as problem sites which delay the operation of their services.

- 2.3 In some situations it is not possible to install hard stands and raised kerbs, for example, in some rural areas where there is no footway between private frontages and the carriageway. Also where land required is not deemed highway and we are not able to get permission to install a stop.

3. The County Council's Promise To Bus Users

- 3.1 The County Council is committed to installing new and upgraded bus stops and bus shelters, but recognises this can often lead to local concerns from residents directly affected. In order to alleviate some of these concerns we will:-

- Site stops and shelters away from the immediate frontages of residential properties where possible
- Seek to ensure a safe, comfortable waiting environment
- Keep street clutter to a minimum. Where a shelter is provided a separate pole will not be installed unless it is absolutely necessary and extra space for timetables is required.
- Respect the environment in ensuring that "bespoke" shelters and poles are installed in conservation areas, and outside listed buildings, in consultation with local officers
- Work with Local Members, Local Bus Operators, District, Town and Parish councils in agreeing locations and determining the level of infrastructure required
- Endeavour to provide maximum protection from the elements, where possible, when shelters are installed
- Inform residents adjacent to a new stop of the proposals

- Ensure the majority of sites (where possible) are fully accessible by 2011 including the installation of raised kerbs and hard standing areas
- Regularly clean and maintain bus infrastructure which is in our ownership.
- Maintain a bus stop / bus shelter request list and keep people updated of the process which will depend on funding availability.
- Listen where there are concerns over anti social behaviour and seek the best preventative methods to resolve any problems, in line with our policy. (see Section 7)

4. Procedure For Providing New Stops Or Reviewing Existing Stops

4.1 Requests for new stops or the review of existing stops can be identified in a number of ways. Through Bus Quality Partnerships (BQP), area infrastructure “upgrade” programmes identified through the Local Transport Plan and bus stop / shelter requests received from the public, Local Member, District Member, Parish or Town Council and Local Bus Operators.

Bus Stop Poles

4.2 Initially, all requests for new stops will be assessed for patronage, and the location agreed with the local Bus Operator. Full details of the location will then be sent to the relevant Highway (Management) Officer in Highways Division for their recommendation as to the siting and suitability of the proposed location. Once the final location has been agreed with all three parties, a site visit involving the Highway (Management) Officer and Development Officer will then take place to physically identify the stop (i.e. to mark the ground with luminous paint) in advance of any installation taking place. If during the review process a stop is deemed unsafe it will either be removed or a safe alternative found.

4.3 For a new stop, or existing stop where a new pole is not a like for like replacement, once the location has been agreed residents in the vicinity will be advised of the proposal. This is defined as the properties directly behind the stop, to either side of the stop and directly facing it. In the case of a request, residents will receive two letters, the first advising them of the request and the second confirming the course of action. Copies of the first letter will also be sent to Local Members, District / Borough and where appropriate Parish / Town Councils. It is important to note that these letters are advisory only and not consultation letters. The County Council, as the Highway Authority, is not obliged to consult in order to install bus stops or bus shelters. (see section 6.1).

4.4 Where the stop is part of a BQP, and no request has been made, residents will only receive one letter confirming the course of action.

4.5 Where a stop does not directly front a property and there are no other properties in the immediate vicinity, we will continue to advise Local Members, District and Parish Councils of our intended course of action.

A new bus stop pole will usually be installed within six to eight weeks from the date of the second letter unless there is a requirement for a hard stand and/or raised kerb in which case the process may take up to twelve weeks.

- 4.6 Where there are a number of new stops to be installed as part of a BQP or corridor / area upgrade programme, an audit of the stops involving the Highway (Management) Officer, Development Officer, and the primary local bus operator will take place. On these occasions the bus operator will be asked to provide a vehicle to travel the route in order to properly identify any highway management or general issues.
- 4.7 If a request is received to relocate a bus stop pole already in existence, this will normally only be considered if the request is received from the local bus operator or there are new highway safety implications identified.
- 4.8 A bus stop pole will not be removed, unless it is deemed redundant following a bus route or service changes or there are highway management issues, identified by the Highway (Management) Officer.
- 4.9 Lighting is not normally provided for bus stop poles, however, where there are fear of crime issues, consideration will be given to background lighting particularly where this can be provided through solar energy.

5. Bus Shelters

- 5.1 All bus shelters are owned and maintained by the County Council unless they are owned and maintained by District / Borough Council.
- 5.2 All requests for new bus shelters will be assessed for highway safety and the process will be the same as that for bus stop poles (see Section 6.3). A request for a bus shelter will be considered if patronage exceeds more than two boarding passengers per journey in urban areas on a frequent service i.e. a bus every 10 minutes, and in rural areas with a less frequent service, patronage exceeds more than one boarding passenger per journey. The number of passengers using the bus stops will be determined by ticket machine and survey information. If a stop serves alighting passengers only, requests will not be considered. Installations will be prioritised in relation to the funding available and no guarantee can be given to provide a bus shelter even if the criteria is met. Private funding will be considered where we would normally provide a shelter if the budget was available and the request meets with our policy.
- 5.3 Depending upon the width of the footway (see Section 6.1), we will seek to install, as a minimum, a cantilever shelter, comprising roof and back panels with a bench style seat for extra passenger comfort, flag pole with flag and a timetable case(s). If the footway is wide enough, a fully enclosed shelter will be installed which offers maximum protection against the elements and this will include full end panels and where appropriate, front panels.

- 5.4 Occasionally requests are received to provide a lay-by facility. Lay-bys are not generally well received by bus operators as they tend to increase journey times. Requests for lay-bys will therefore only be considered with the full support of the bus operator and Highways Division. It should be noted that current highway policy is a presumption against lay-by provision unless the on-line bus stop impacts severely on safety or congestion.
- 5.5 Adverts or fly posters on any County Council owned infrastructure will not be considered without our prior agreement, and in any case exceptions will only be granted where a poster forms part of a bus promotion organised by the County Council or local Bus Operator. As part of the Bus Shelter Advertising contract, Clear Channel has agreed to the Council having access to one advertising panel per Authority ward.

6. Legislation

- 6.1 Although the County Council has no legal obligation to consult on the installation of bus stops and bus shelters, it is good practice to notify local communities, especially those people directly affected. As part of this notification process residents adjacent to the stop will be advised of the Council's proposal in writing. A number of highway management issues have to be considered prior to a stop / shelter being installed. For example the relationship of the stop to a junction, pedestrian access around the stop and consideration of visibility where there are access points. Other issues to consider are:-
- A minimum of 1.5m clear passage either behind or in front of the stop, this is to allow for wheelchair / buggy access.
 - A stop sited at the front of the footway must be positioned at least 0.5m away from the kerb edge to avoid collision with bus mirrors.
 - If a stop is sited to the rear of the footway, consideration will be given to what lies behind it, for example a hedge that will need to be accessed for maintenance and as a general rule a gap of 0.5m will be maintained.
 - All stops / shelters will conform to DDA standards in relation to accessibility, site, seat, and position of timetable case.
 - A minimum of 2.1m height clearance for a bus stop flag / shelter roof on footways or a minimum of 2.3m on combined or segregated cycleways
 - All stops, where it is physically possible to do so, will have a raised kerb. The majority of these will be installed by 2011.
 - Where the road is designated a "clearway", buses stopping at a bus stop are exempt from clearway legislation if the area is bordered by a traffic sign. (see section 2.2).
- 6.2 The above issues have a bearing on how we identify the most appropriate location. In some locations, typically in more dense rural areas, it is not possible to adhere to legislation and in these circumstances we are unable to install bus infrastructure.

7. Dealing with Complaints

7.1 The siting of bus stop poles and shelters is a sensitive issue, especially the provision of new stops and in the event of a complaint the following policy will be followed:-

- If the stop is new, upgraded or previously in existence (for example the flag was previously attached to a lighting column) and the complaint refers to visual disturbance it will not be removed other than in exceptional circumstances.
- Where a complaint refers to a highway safety issue, not previously addressed in the audit, the Highway (Management) Officer will be asked to provide further comments. Where the complaint is upheld the stop will be removed / relocated to a more appropriate location as advised by the Highway (Management) Officer. Where the complaint is not upheld the stop will remain and the complainant advised accordingly with the right of address through the County Council's Corporate Complaints procedure should they wish to pursue the matter.
- Where a complaint refers to anti social behaviour, we will contact the local police for further evidence from incident reports where these exist. This will enable us to make a judgment on whether the problem is perceived or actually exists. It is difficult to take any preventative action where only a bus stop pole exists, however complaints of anti social behaviour at these sites are rare. Where a shelter is in existence it will not be removed other than in exceptional circumstances. It may instead be modified with the removal of the seating and end panels (where appropriate) making it a less attractive environment for anti social behaviour, but still providing some protection for bus users. In cases where this course of action does not result in any improvement, then we may seek to install CCTV, and will work with the police, relevant District / Borough Anti Social Behaviour Officer, Community Wardens and other agencies to find a resolution.
- If a request is received to remove a shelter installed as part of the Advertising Contract, this will be referred directly to Clear Channel for their recommended course of action as owners of the infrastructure in this instance.
- The County Council is committed to providing high quality bus stops and shelters for bus users and will honour this commitment, to the extent that unless there are highway management issues that are identified and agreed with the Highway (Management) Officer, other environmental constraints identified, or the stop is no longer on a bus route therefore deeming the site redundant, then bus stops

and/or bus shelters will not be removed, other than in exceptional circumstances.

8. Cleaning and Maintenance

- 8.1 Under the Guidelines contained within the Service Level Agreement all shelters / stops installed as part of a Bus Quality Partnership (BQP) will be cleaned and maintained fortnightly. All remaining County Council owned infrastructure will be cleaned and maintained monthly.

9. Infrastructure Design

- 9.1 All bus stops and bus shelters procured by the County Council will be a mix of glazed shelters powder coated in black, timber bus shelters and silver, green or black bus stop poles, suitable for most urban, rural and conservation areas respectively. All bus stops and bus shelters will conform to DDA standards and glazed shelters will be glazed with polycarbonate to reduce the impact of vandalism. In areas of conservation we will work with the County and District Conservation Officers and English Heritage (where appropriate) to agree a bespoke design where it can be demonstrated that our standard products would have a detrimental impact on the surroundings.

10. New Developments

- 10.1 Under Section 106 Agreements, developers will be required to provide new bus stops and bus shelters as part of the planning condition. This can refer to either the upgrade of existing infrastructure or the provision of brand new facilities. The level of funding is dependant upon agreement by the relevant budget holder in these instances. For major developments the County Council will seek the provision of a package of high quality bus stops, shelters and services.
- 10.2 In the case of a new development, the County Council is normally consulted and invited to meet developers to discuss requirements. In all instances we will seek to negotiate the best possible location with minimum visual impact. We will endeavour to ensure that any agreement to the provision and positioning of new bus stops and bus shelters is done in consultation and with minimum inconvenience. If the land does not become adopted highway then the terms and conditions relating to the installation of bus infrastructure, will need the prior agreement of the land owner.

APPENDIX 2





