
By: Interim Director, Kent Highway Services
To: Highways Advisory Board – 6th January 2009
Subject: **Canterbury Quality Bus Partnership – Targets and Bus Stop Clearways**
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: This report outlines the problems arising following the refusal of the Canterbury Joint Transportation Board to agree to the recommendation that all bus stop clearways in the Canterbury district should be converted to 24/7 restriction

Introduction

1. This report sets out the current position concerning the provision of bus stop clearways in the Canterbury district, and recommends that the Cabinet Member approves the original recommendation of the report considered by the Canterbury Joint Transportation Board (JTB) on 25 November 2008 that all present and future bus stop clearways should be restricted for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

The Canterbury JTB Report

2. The Canterbury JTB considered a report at their meeting held on 25 November 2008 (*see appendix 1*). This report recommended that all bus stop clearways be restricted for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Its recommendation was rejected, and the present policy of bus stop clearway restrictions applying only between 0700 and 1900 endures. This causes serious problems for buses needing to provide level kerb access and egress for all bus passengers during the evenings and early mornings, and also sends out a message which is contrary to the published policy of Kent County Council which supports the development of sustainable transport and promotes travel by public transport in particular wherever possible. This report therefore recommends that the Highways Advisory Board reverses the recommendation of the Canterbury JTB and makes provision for 24 hours a day, 7 days a week restrictions for all bus stop clearways in the Canterbury district.

The Legislation

3. The Department for Transport (DfT) set out its guidelines on the provision of bus stop clearways in DfT circular 02/2003: The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 2002 (*on display*). Paragraphs 24-32 set out the new regulations which were designed to enable buses to pull up level with the kerb at bus stops in order to facilitate easy access and egress for bus passengers. In addition, the regulations foresee the legally binding requirement of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) 2004, which requires all buses to be DDA compliant by 2017. This means that wheel-chair users must be able to access and egress low-floor buses *at all times of operation, including evening and early morning services*. To restrict access by bus to able-bodied passengers only during these times by restricting the times of operation of bus stop clearways would be contrary to the requirements of the DDA and would therefore

require further changes to the bus stop infrastructure when the whole bus fleet is converted to low-floor access by 2017.

4. Paragraph 29 of TSRGD is particularly relevant to the issue of the period of time for which the restrictions should apply to vehicles other than buses stopping at bus stop clearways. It states: *".. and that the hours of operation and enforcement should take account of the hours when buses are operating"*. As buses operate on all the principal inter-urban routes serving Canterbury between 0600 and 2400, and on most of the city centre routes between 0630 and 2330, and as the DfT guidelines permit the restriction to apply 24 hours a day, it is recommended that this provision be applied to all present and future bus stop clearways in the Canterbury district. The reason for this uniform approach is that, where a timed restriction applies, vehicles frequently park during the evening and are not removed until after the morning peak period has commenced, causing serious problems for access and egress at bus stops when they are blocked by parked vehicles.

Conclusion

5. The development and improvement of the bus network is dependent on a constructive working partnership between the bus operator, the City Council and the County Council. This has been exemplified in Canterbury by the operation of a Quality Bus Partnership (QBP), which seeks to promote improvements to bus services through understanding and co-operation between the parties to the QBP. The extension of bus stop clearway restrictions so that they apply all day every day is an essential pre-requisite for the success of the QBP, as it would be indicative of a serious commitment by KCC to the support of the existing bus network and to its future development for the reasons set out in this report.

Recommendation

6. Subject to the views of this Board, it is proposed to recommend to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Environment and Waste that the recommendation from the Canterbury JTB not to extend bus stop clearway orders for 24 hours per day is not supported.

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Background Documents: **Appendix 1** – Canterbury JTB report (25 November 2008)
The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD)
2002 (DfT circular 02/2003) - **on display**