



# HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

12 August 2014

# REPORT

**Subject Heading:**

**BUS STOP ACCESSIBILITY  
SQUIRRELS HEATH LANE  
Outcome of public consultation**

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**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Clean, safe and green borough	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Excellence in education and learning	<input type="checkbox"/>
Opportunities for all through economic, social and cultural activity	<input type="checkbox"/>
Value and enhance the life of every individual	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High customer satisfaction and a stable council tax	<input type="checkbox"/>

## SUMMARY

This report sets out the responses to a consultation for the provision of fully accessible bus stops along Squirrels Heath Lane and seeks a recommendation that the proposals be implemented.

The scheme is within **Squirrels Heath** ward.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the representations made recommends to the Cabinet Member for Environment that the bus stop accessibility improvements set out in this report and shown on the following drawings are implemented;
  - QN008-OF-A60-A
  - QN008-OF-A61-A
  - QN008-OF-A62-A
  - QN008-OF-A63-B
2. That the Head of Streetcare proceeds with the design and public consultation on proposals to extend the existing 8am to 6.30pm, Monday to Saturday, part time parking restriction from the junction Squirrels Heath Lane and Hardley Crescent to a point east of the access to the David Lloyd sports centre access and that the outcome of the consultation be reported to a future committee meeting.
3. That it be noted that the estimated cost of £8,500 for implementation will be met by Transport for London through the 2014/15 Local Implementation Plan allocation for Bus Stop Accessibility.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 People with mobility problems, the elderly and people travelling with young children find it difficult to board or alight from buses, unless the vehicle is able to pull in close to the kerb (within 200mm). The difficulty of gaining kerbside access is often caused by indiscriminately parked vehicles, or lack of high kerb space adjacent to stops.
- 1.2 Improvements to the bus stop environment such as raising kerbs, relaying footway surfaces, providing short footway links to stops and (in exceptional circumstances) providing pedestrian crossing facilities can help with making bus stops fully accessible to all people. In some situations, it may be appropriate to build the footway out into the road to provide an accessible bus stop, although this will only be appropriate where carriageways are very wide.

- 1.3 The introduction of bus stop clearways improves the accessibility of bus stops by providing sufficient space for buses to pull in close to the kerb. It is important with the provision of buses in London that are fully wheelchair accessible, because the benefits of low-floor/ kneeling buses are considerably reduced (if not removed) if the bus cannot be positioned next to the kerb.
- 1.4 Drawing QB109/00/01B shows a standard bus stop layout where the bus stop is within a length of parked vehicles. In such a situation, a 37 metre long bus stop clearway is required to enable buses to meet the kerb so that both loading doors can be used. Where local conditions allow, this length can be reduced and so any design work will consider needs on a case by case basis.
- 1.5 In some situations, it is recognised that buses stopping on the carriageway can have an impact on traffic flows, especially on narrow roads. However, bus stops which are fully accessible to all people allow for buses to use stops more efficiently, minimising the length of time a bus is stationary. This will have the positive effect of reducing disruption to traffic flows to a minimum.
- 1.6 Where buses cannot fully access the kerb, then there may be delays in the loading or unloading of passengers leading to buses stopping longer than necessary. In some cases, certain passengers may not be able to access buses at all or the bus driver will simply need to pass the stop by where access to the kerb is not possible.
- 1.7 There are 690 bus stops in Havering. 663 are on borough roads, 20 are on the Transport for London Road Network and 7 are in private areas (e.g. Queen's Hospital). Data as of March 2014.
- 1.8 Of these stops, 56% are fully accessible. In order for a stop to be fully accessible, it must meet the following basic criteria;
  - The kerb to the footway must be between 125mm and 140mm in height to be compatible with the front and rear loading doors of the bus and the ramp deployed from the rear loading doors;
  - The bus stop should be restricted from parking and stopping by a bus stop clearway so that the stop is always available for buses to be able to pull into tightly to the kerb.
- 1.9 For Havering, funding for Bus Stop Accessibility works has mainly come from the Transport for London Local Implementation plan (LIP), but occasionally funding is secured as part of the development process.
- 1.10 Staff from StreetCare work with TfL London Buses and the Police (where required) on a programme of mainly route-based Bus Stop Accessibility improvements, although individual sites are investigated from time to time where there are particular passenger access problems.

1.11 The route approach allows for comprehensive review of existing bus stop positions for accessibility, convenience, safety etc. and sometimes requires stops to be moved away from points of conflict such as where parking or proliferation of vehicle crossings prevent stops being accessible in their existing positions.

1.12 Proposals for accessibility improvements have been developed for various bus stops along Squirrels Heath Lane as set out in the following table;

<b>Drawing Reference</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Description of proposals</b>
QN008-OF-A60-A	Outside Squirrels Court	29metre bus stop clearway.  140mm kerb and associated footway works provided at bus boarding area.
QN008-OF-A61-A	Opposite 27 to 41	43 metre bus stop clearway.  140mm kerb and associated footway works provided at bus boarding area
QN008-OF-A62-A	Outside Snowdon Court	41 metre bus stop clearway.  Adjust Zig Zags of depart side of zebra crossing
QN008-OF-A63-A	Outside 82 to 88	31metre bus stop clearway.  140mm kerb and associated footway works provided at bus boarding area.  <i>Note: Space would be left should number 84 requests a formal vehicle crossing in the future.</i>

1.13 Approximately 20 letters were hand-delivered to those potentially affected by the scheme on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2014, with a closing date of 9<sup>th</sup> July 2014 for comments.

1.14 In addition, ward councillors, HAC members and standard consultees (London Buses, emergency services, interest groups etc) were sent a set of the consultation information. Public notices were also placed within bus stop timetable display units.

## **2.0 Outcome of Public Consultation**

2.1 By the close of consultation, 7 responses were received as set out in Appendix I to this report.

2.2 London Buses and the Metropolitan Police Traffic Unit did not raise any concerns with the proposals.

2.3 4 residents raised concerns in connection with the existing bus stop outside Nos.82 to 88. The issues mentioned include;

- Concerns about safety of bus stop position being on a bend,
- Difficulties residents have pulling off driveways because of visibility, especially where passengers are standing at the stop,
- Concerns that the footway is too narrow for passengers and passing pedestrians,
- Parking opposite residents mean that full road width is not available for drivers to overtake buses and residents to safely pull off their driveways,
- The bus stop should be removed completely or relocated (sites to the east and west of the current position being suggested).
- Concerns about the impact on vehicle access to residents' properties.

2.4 1 resident supported the proposals for the existing stop outside Nos.82 to 88, but cited more general concerns with the increase in commuter parking in the local vicinity of the stop proposed for accessibility improvement and the stop opposite which was improved the previous year.

### **3.0 Staff Comments**

3.1 The existing bus stop outside Nos.82 to 88 has been in place for many years and although residents have raised concerns about its position in response to the consultation, Staff are content that the layout is reasonable.

3.2 If the Committee was minded that the stop should be relocated, Staff would suggest that moving it towards Ardleigh Green Road (east) would be preferable as it would equalise the distance between the preceding and following stops. It should be noted that the footways to the east are no wider than the current location.

3.3 Staff are generally reluctant to propose the relocation of a bus stop because of the impact on residents not currently affected and likely objections arising, but where accessibility and/or safety is considered better at an alternative location, such an alternative will be explored.

3.4 With regard to the concerns about access to properties, Staff have adjusted the layout to try and accommodate access needs. Drawing QN008-OF-A63-B shows the adjustments which have been achieved by slightly reducing the length of the accessible area, while still serving both bus loading doors.

3.5 In response to the local parking issues, Staff recommend that a consultation is taken forward to consider the extension of the existing part time restriction which ends near Hardley Crescent. It is proposed that this restriction be extended to a point just west of the David Lloyd Centre access which would

leave the area either side of this bus stop and the one in the opposite direction clear and would assist residents in leaving their driveways.

## IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

### **Financial implications and risks:**

The estimated cost of £8,500 for implementation will be met by Transport for London through the 2014/15 Local Implementation Plan allocation for Bus Stop Accessibility. The funding will need to be spent by 31st March 2015, to ensure full access to the grant.

The costs shown are an estimate of the full costs of the scheme, should it be implemented. It should be noted that subject to the recommendations of the committee a final decision then would be made by the Lead Member – as regards actual implementation and scheme detail. Therefore, final costs are subject to change.

This is a standard project for StreetCare and there is no expectation that the works cannot be contained within the cost estimate. There is an element of contingency built into the financial estimate. In the unlikely event of an overspend, the balance would need to be contained within the overall StreetCare Capital budget.

### **Legal implications and risks:**

Bus Stop Clearways do not require traffic orders, but Department for Transport guidance suggests that local consultations should take place.

### **Human Resources implications and risks:**

None.

### **Equalities Implications and Risks:**

The Council has a general duty under the Equality Act 2010 to ensure that its highway network is accessible to all users. Where infrastructure is provided or substantially upgraded, reasonable adjustments should be made to improve access. In considering the impacts and making improvements for people with protected characteristics (mainly, but not limited to disabled people, the young and older people), this will assist the Council in meeting its duty under the Act.

The provision of fully accessible bus stops assists with making public transport more inclusive to all sectors of the community, but most especially disabled people and people using pushchairs. Accessible bus stops will be of benefit to people using wheelchairs, but also people who have walking, balance and dexterity difficulties; and blind and partially-sighted people.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Project file: QN008, Bus Stop Accessibility 2014/15

**APPENDIX I**

**CONSULTATION RESPONSES**



Drivers view when leaving 82 Squirrels Heath Lane





Respondent	Drawing Reference & Location	Response and Staff Comments (were required)
Resident of 80 Squirrels Heath Lane	QN008-OF-A63-A Outside 82 to 88	<p>I am writing to you regarding the above bus stop outside 84 Squirrels Heath Lane. I live at number 80 and thought I'd just highlight how unsafe the position of this bus stop is. I have enclosed 3 photos which demonstrates how restricted the view of oncoming traffic is. This makes it very dangerous when pulling off my drive.</p> <p>The first photo also shows how little space there is for people to stand, which causes the person walking by to almost step in the road.</p> <p>There are far more suitable places for this bus stop. In particular the other side of Hardley Crescent, which has a wide pavement and where the road does not bend.</p>
Resident of 82 Squirrels Heath Lane	QN008-OF-A63-A Outside 82 to 88	<p>I am writing to you regarding the proposal to upgrade the bus stop outside 82/84 Squirrels Heath Lane.</p> <p>I have lived at number 82 for many years now and have seen the siting of this stop become increasingly dangerous over that period. I have in past years communicated with TFL on this matter and they did agree that there were better places for this stop but did not agree that it had become dangerous.</p> <p>I did not pursue this any further as I had made my point and do appreciate having what is a readily available stop considering my own muscular dystrophy.</p> <p>Things have changed even more now though. Relatively recent changes have included cars parking on the opposite side of the road (this had never occurred for over 30 years), Sat-Nav encouraging the use of Squirrels Heath Lane by much more traffic and even it becoming a main route for emergency vehicles. With the bus stop where it is I fear there will soon be a serious accident. This would appear to be an</p>

	<p>ideal time to reposition the stop to where it would be much safer.</p> <p>The dangers as I see them are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• With just 1 or 2 people waiting at the stop it is impossible to see vehicles approaching from Ardleigh Green when I attempt to pull off my drive as the entire pavement is blocked. This is made worse by the bend in the road at this very point and a further small bend in the road towards Ardleigh Green. See picture below.</li><li>• It is an obvious point that if I cannot see approaching vehicles then their drivers cannot see me.</li><li>• In addition regard must be given to the fact that for 5 days per week the opposite side of the road is solid with parked cars from 7am onwards. This makes pulling away towards Ardleigh Green hazardous as that side of the road is not available. This also makes pulling onto my drive a real issue as reversing on is increasingly dangerous from both directions. Reversing off my drive is too dangerous to be a valid option.</li><li>• With a bus at the stop and cars parked opposite vehicles become confused and pull round the bus from one direction and the parked cars from the other direction. I have seen 2 accidents in the last year because of this, with injury only avoided in one instance by a driver deliberately steering into a parked car.</li><li>• Referring back to my first bullet point, I should also point out that when there are people standing at the bus stop pedestrians in transit are sometimes forced to walk in the road to get past. This has even involved mothers with pushchairs. In part my neighbours must face similar problems.</li></ul> <p>I have 2 suggested new sites for this bus stop.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. West of Hardley Crescent adjacent to the post-box. This will give better lines of sight, wider exit from front drives, a very wide pavement allowing sight past any people queuing and a bus shelter might be possible. Pedestrians would have no problems passing. There are no parked cars opposite. The distance to the next stop westbound would be 240 m. The new site would be of great benefit to the residents of the new Dreywood development of 93 homes for older people. The downside is</li></ol>
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		<p>the increased distance from The Ardleigh and Dragon stop, but this only impacts on the south side of the road area as there are no properties on the north side at all. I think that only approximately 20 properties in Squirrels Heath Lane itself would be put further away from a bus stop.</p> <p>2. Outside 92/94 Squirrels Heath Lane. This will give better lines of sight with no bends or hill. There will be no cars parked opposite. Due to the level ground the nearest houses have far wider entrances to the properties and would be able to put a better lock on their steering on entry and exit. The distance from the Ardleigh and Dragon would be reduced by 45m.</p> <p>There is a third option outside numbers 106/108 but I would not suggest it as there are cars parked opposite. My favoured option from the safety point of view is adjacent to the post-box; and this is after all the leading point of my objection to the upgrade at number 82/84. There is great merit in the number 92/94 option. I am reminded that in my communications with TFL in past years I was told that they would like to put an additional bus stop on the south side of Squirrels Heath Lane. Perhaps my suggested sites 1 and 2 above could both be brought into play? This would be an excellent plan. Whatever happens something could be done about the safety issue.</p> <p><b>Staff Comment: Photo at start of Appendix.</b></p>
Resident of 84 Squirrels Heath Lane	QN008-OF-A63-A Outside 82 to 88	<p>I am writing regarding the proposed access improvements at the bus stop located on Squirrels Heath Lane, near to Hardley Crescent.</p> <p>I live at number 84 Squirrels Heath Lane and after reviewing the enclosed drawings would like to point out that this will have an enormous impact on the access to our property. The drawings supplied allow access via the left hand side as you face the house, however this does not take into account a wall, tree and shrubs that we have on our property. This would make entry onto our property impossible. We would not</p>

	<p>be able to drive on and off our drive on such a busy road. Even if this area was made wider for our access, we do have two cars and with the space left us it would make it impossible to park both cars on our drive.</p> <p>There is not enough available space for you to make these changes, without them having a very negative impact on my accessibility and the value of my house. This part of the pavement is far too narrow and there is not enough space between driveways.</p> <p>I have written to you in the past regarding this bus stop and highlighted the dangers that I have seen since moving here. This is still the case; the pavement is too narrow to accommodate even a few people. This path is used frequently due to the location to Ardleigh Green School and Gidea Park station and I have witnessed people with pushchairs walking in the road as they cannot get past people standing there. Having a raised curb will hinder people even more.</p> <p>This bus stop is also located on a curve in the road with parking allowed opposite. This makes it very dangerous when driving in and out of my property, as well as my neighbours. When there are people standing there, this becomes even more hazardous.</p> <p>I strongly believe that the location of this bus stop needs to be moved to a suitable place that can accommodate the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Wider pavement</li><li>• A part of the road that does not bend</li><li>• Available space that does not impede access to property</li></ul> <p>If you are unable to move this bus stop, then I believe consideration needs to be given to removing it completely. The main reason is due to the unsafe location and that there are bus stops available at the top on Ardleigh Green Road and also on Squirrels Heath Lane, near Westmoreland Avenue. It appears to me that the</p>
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		<p>majority of people using it during the day are from the college and the bus stop on Ardleigh Green Road is closer and much more suitable.</p> <p>To conclude, my main point is that the proposed changes will have a negative effect on my property and those of my neighbours. If you are unable to relocate or remove this bus stop, then I strongly believe that this bus stop should be left as it is. Further attention should not be brought to this bus stop as it is too dangerous and the path is too narrow.</p> <p>Your changes are proposed to enable people with wheelchairs and buggies to easily get on and off the bus, yet there is a much bigger problem for them to wait at the bus stop which does not have the space to accommodate them causing risk to all parties previously mentioned. People still need to walk by and drive in and out of their properties.</p>
<p>Resident of 86 Squirrels Heath Lane</p>	<p>QN008-OF-A63-A Outside 82 to 88</p>	<p>With reference to the proposed access improvements to the bus stop situated outside 82 Squirrels Heath Lane, I would like to make several observations.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. I fully endorse and laud the council's desire to improve the accessibility for users with mobility problems as well as to ensure that buses have all the necessary space to stop.</li> <li>2. However, I would like to point out that the reference drawing is not quite accurate. The road is, in fact not straight, it has a bend in it and the bus stop is situated at its apex. This also nearly the top of a slope. The pavement is made narrower by the shape of the road at this point and the bus stop post increased this effect.</li> <li>3. Because of the geography most passengers congregate at this narrowest point so they can see incoming buses. Some, the most considerate and nimble, move up the road and wait there until they see a bus coming in order to allow pedestrians past. Many do not. Pushchairs, wheelchairs, people with reduced mobility cannot and of necessity remain by the bus stop. As a result the bus stop is a problem for passengers and pedestrians alike.</li> </ol>

		<p>4. In view of this I would like to suggest that accessibility for all users of the pavement would be better improved by considering resiting the bus stop somewhere wider, away from the slop and bend do that waiting passengers can have more space to spread out while retaining visibility and pedestrians can get by without going into the road itself. I fully appreciate that this would involve more than planned, but if the aim is, as stated, to help passengers with difficulties, a better sited bus stop would do so. Especially considering that the residents of the new retirement homes would then be able to use a more easily accessible stop.</p>
<p>Resident of 88 Squirrels Heath Lane</p>	<p>QN008-OF-A63-A Outside 82 to 88</p>	<p>I would like to say that I am fully in favour of this programme, in Squirrels Heath Lane. The bus stop opposite number 90 was improved earlier in the year and it has made a tremendous difference, particularly to passengers safety. However I would like to point out something that does concern me, within the last year to eighteen months Squirrels Heath Lane has been invaded by commuters from Gidea Park station parking along the road on a daily basis, they park opposite the bus stops outside numbers 82 and 90. When a bus arrives at the stop it severely restricts the traffic flow on a very busy road that is used regularly by the emergency services.</p>
<p>Matthew Moore London Buses Infrastructure</p>	<p>All locations.</p>	<p>These plans have my backing.</p>
<p>Martin Young Metropolitan Police Chadwell Heath Traffic Garage</p>	<p>All locations</p>	<p>I have no issues with the plans as presented.</p>