



HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

15 January 2013

REPORT

Subject Heading:

Proposals to improve accessibility at existing bus stand in Essex Gardens, Emerson Park

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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 deals with the outcome of a consultation relating to problems with inconsiderate parking at an existing bus stand by motorists/delivery drivers. The bus stand is in close proximity to shops in Essex Gardens. Buses are prevented from gaining access to the bus stand which presents difficulties for passengers boarding and alighting buses.

This report recommends a course of action aimed at reducing the level of inconsiderate parking.

The scheme is within **Emerson Park** ward.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the Committee having considered the responses and information set out in this report recommends to the Cabinet Member for Community Empowerment the implementation of a scheme to convert the existing bus stand in Essex Gardens to a 24 hour clearway for buses. The new clearway would be located on the south side of Essex Gardens from a point 3.5 metres from the western flank wall of No. 2 Essex Gardens, extending westward for a distance of 27 metres. The proposals are shown on drawing no. QL027-of-101.
2. That it be noted the cost of carrying out the works is £5,000. This would be met by Transport for London through the allocation for 2012/13 Local Implementation Plan for improving reliability of public transport package.

REPORT DETAIL

1. Background

Transport for London has allocated funding via the Local Implementation Plan for 2012/13 to improve the reliability of public transport. The existing bus stand in Essex Gardens is part of this scheme where it has been identified that buses experience difficulties in gaining access to the existing stop due to inconsiderate parking resulting by the lack of any parking restrictions. Such parking prevents buses from gaining kerbside access to the bus stop making boarding and alighting difficult for some users.

2. Existing traffic conditions in Essex Gardens

- 2.1 Essex Gardens mainly conveys local traffic and it is connected to Wingletye Lane which in turn is connected to A127 Southend Arterial Road in the north. The southern end of Wingletye Lane is connected to A124 Hornchurch Road. The A127 and A124 handle a considerable amount of both local and through traffic.
- 2.2 Essex Gardens is mainly made up of residential properties but it has some businesses including a newsagent and a mini-market (Essex Express). These businesses attract a significant number of customers and receive multiple deliveries throughout the day.

Public transport facilities in Essex Gardens

2.3 Essex Gardens is served by a high frequency bus service namely route 193 which operates between Romford (Queen's Hospital) and Emerson Park (County Park Estate). The existing bus stop is designated as a bus stand where buses on route 193 terminate their service prior to entering into service again. 5 buses per hour operate in one way direction on this designated route.

3. Proposals to improve accessibility for passengers at existing bus stand

3.1 Buses in Essex Gardens sometimes experience difficulties in gaining access to the existing bus stand due to inconsiderate parking. Current parking patterns force buses to stop in the road away from the kerb. This poses difficulties for passengers, particularly those with disabilities, alighting or boarding the bus as the bus is unable to pull within 200mm of the kerb and extend its loading ramp.

3.2 The existing bus stand in Essex Gardens does not have clearway restrictions to prevent waiting and loading 'At Any' time, applicable throughout the week, therefore, restrictions are considered necessary at this stage to improving accessibility.

3.3 It is proposed to provide clearway restrictions to the existing bus stand. Clearways will reduce the problem of accessibility by allowing buses to gain unhindered access and pull close to the kerb and safely deploy their load ramps. In addition, clearways allow buses to use the stops more efficiently thus minimising the length of time a bus is stationary which would improve traffic flow.

3.4 Another important measure to improve accessibility is altering the kerb heights to enable buses to park close to the kerb side so that loading ramps can be easily deployed. This would greatly assist wheelchair users. The proposals are shown on drawing nos. QL027-of-101.

4. Outcome of the consultation

4.1 Following the Approval in Principle by the Council's Highways Advisory Committee as part of the 2012/13 Local Implementation Plan programme, Streetcare Services proceeded with the design and consultation on various proposals.

4.2 Approximately 40 letters were hand delivered in the consultation area and site notices were displayed at various locations in the affected area. The closing date for receiving any comments was 21st December 2012. By the close of consultation 3 (7.5%) responses were received.

5. Summary of consultation responses

The first respondent, Essex Express a local business has objected to the clearway restrictions extending across their drive way. The drive way located on the eastside of the electric sub-station leads to land used by the respondent for parking vans.

Staff comments: A site meeting was held at the request of the respondent during which officers explained that the importance of extending the restrictions across the driveway to ensure that buses get clear access to the bus stop. The respondent was advised that their land would remain accessible for vehicles or alternatively there is an ample amount of free parking in the immediate area.

Comments by London Buses (LB) Infrastructure

- a. LB has commented that the clearway restrictions will keep the stand free for buses and adjustment to kerb heights would make the stand fully accessible.

b. Metropolitan Police, Traffic Management Unit

Police have no issues with the plans as presented, therefore, fully support the proposals.

6. **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the proposals as consulted are implemented which involves provision for clearway restrictions at the existing bus stand and altering the kerb heights so that buses can pull close to the kerb side and deploy their ramps. The measures are shown on drawing no. QL027-of-101, attached to this report.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and risks:

It is estimated that the cost to implement the measures is £5,000, which would be met by Transport for London through the allocation for 2012/13 Local Implementation Plan for measures to improve reliability of public transport scheme. The funding will need to be spent by 31st March 2013, to ensure full access to the grant.

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 over spend, 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 to be publicly advertised but the Department for Transport guidance suggests that local consultations should take place.

Human Resources Implications and risks:

The proposal can be delivered within the standard resourcing within Streetcare, and has no specific impact on staffing/HR issues.

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

Scheme project file: QL027 – Improving reliability of public transport scheme.