



HIGHWAYS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

14 January 2014

REPORT

Subject Heading:

**Proposals to Improve Accessibility for
passengers in Mawney Road by
Forest Road, Romford**

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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 the responses to a consultation for the provision of fully accessible bus stop in Mawney Road by Forest Road and seeks a recommendation that the proposals be implemented as set out in the report.

The scheme is located within **Mawneys 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 that the bus stop accessibility improvements set out in this report and shown on the following drawings are implemented:
 - QM016-of-502 - Bus stop clearway.
 - QM016-of-502 - Provision for accessibility zone for passengers.
2. That it be noted the cost of carrying out the works is £10,000. This would be met by Transport for London through the allocation for 2013/14 Local Implementation Plan for improving reliability of public transport package.

REPORT DETAIL

1.0 Background

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- 1.1 People with mobility problems, the elderly and people travelling with young children find it difficult to board or alight from buses at the existing bus stop situated outside nos. 235/237.
- 1.2 The problem is due to the lack of designated waiting area for passengers used to alight or board buses at the existing bus stop. Passengers board or alight in the driveway of property No. 235 Mawney Road or on the existing grass verge which is practically not safe.
- 1.3 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.

Public transport facilities in Mawney Road, Romford

- 1.1 The existing bus stop provides services for routes 252 (Hornchurch to Collier Row via Romford) and 651 (Romford Station to North Romford) which is a school bus and it operates during school term times only. Route 252 is a high frequency service which runs at every 12 minutes at peak periods ie 10 buses running per hour in both directions.

2. Proposals to improve accessibility for passengers at existing bus stop

- 2.1 Passengers on bus route 252 alight or board in the driveway area of property No. 235, Mawney Road. The conditions at the existing stop are not safe for both mounting and dismounting particularly for elderly passengers with knee arthritis. Bus drivers have often witnessed elderly passengers experiencing difficulties in mounting or alighting buses.
- 2.2 The design guides published by Transport for London require bus stop areas to be 140 millimetres (maximum) above the carriageway level to enable buses to safely dock adjacent to the kerbs. In the case of the existing stop, the driveway is used as a waiting area for passengers. Buses can only lower the platform up to the designed heights, therefore, bus drivers cannot deploy the platforms thus making it difficult for passengers particularly with wheel chairs to board or alight safely.
- 2.3 To overcome the problem, new measures have been designed to provide a hard standing for passengers to wait. The kerb height would be altered to enable buses to park close to the kerb side so that loading ramps can be deployed safely. This would greatly assist wheelchair users and elderly passengers. The proposals are shown on drawing no. QM016-of-502.

3. Alternative measures

- 3.1 Alternative measures were also considered as part of the scheme. Consideration was given to abandon the existing bus stop outside No. 235 with a view that passengers board or alight at other bus stops in the vicinity of the existing bus stop. This option is not viable due to substantial distance the passengers will have to walk, particularly the elderly would be more vulnerable.
- 3.2 There are three bus stops in Mawney Road situated between Marlborough Road and Forest Road. The table below shows locations of existing bus stops, before and after the existing bus stop (ie outside No. 235) and their respective distances in relation to the existing stop.

| Location of bus stops in vicinity of stop o/s 235 Mawney Road. | Distance (metres) |
|--|-------------------|
| Bus stop by Marlborough Road | 282 |
| Bus stop by Birch Road | 252 |
| Total distance between stops | 534 |

3.3 According to the design guidance published by Transport for London, ideal spacing for bus stops is approximately 400 metres, although a closer spacing in town centres and residential areas is necessary to meet the passenger requirements. If the existing stop is abandoned on safety grounds then the distance between the bus stops would be 534 metres. This distance is considerable for passengers particularly for elderly and London Buses would not exceed the recommended distance. As a result, this option is not viable.

4. Outcome of the consultation

4.1 Following the re-approval in Principle by the Council's Highways Advisory Committee as part of the 2013/14 Local Implementation Plan programme, Streetcare Services proceeded with the design and consultation on the proposals.

4.2 Approximately 50 letters were hand delivered in the consultation area. In addition, London Buses and emergency services (Metropolitan Police, Fire Brigade and London Ambulance). The closing date for receiving any comments was 13th December 2013. By the close of consultation 7 (14%) responses were received and these are summarised below.

5. Summary of consultation responses

The responses are summarised and these are included in Appendix 1 of this report. Some of the objections raised by the respondents are identical, therefore, it is up to the Committee to decide if the proposals are implemented.

6. Conclusions

The current report is submitted to the Committee for the second time as passengers are still experiencing problems at the existing bus stop. The current arrangements at the existing bus stop are not safe for the passengers particularly the elderly.

The proposals will not displace any parking for the residents. There is ample amount of free parking available in Forest Road and other roads in the area. In addition, most residents have garages at the rear side of their properties and have a private alleyway to gain access to them. There are tangible evidences that residents use the garages via the alleyway. It is anticipated that once the hard standing is installed, it will improve safety for passengers at the existing bus stop and comply with the Disability Discrimination Act of 1995.

IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS

Financial Implications and risks:

It is estimated that the cost to implement the measures is £10,000, which would be met by Transport for London through the allocation for 2013/14 Local Implementation Plan for measures to improve reliability of public transport scheme. The funding will need to be spent by 31st March 2014, 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 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:

There are no Human Resources implications associated within the scheme.

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, blind and partially-sighted people.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Scheme project file: QM016 – Bus stop accessibility improvements 2013/14.

Appendix 1

Summary of consultation responses

Summary of consultation responses

1. London Buses (LB) Infrastructure

LB (Infrastructure) deal with the installation of bus stops and shelters in London. They support the proposals.

2. London Buses (Operations)

LB (Operations) deal with operation of bus routes in London. LB support the proposals.

3. Metropolitan Police, Traffic Management Unit

The Traffic Management Unit of Metropolitan Police support the proposals.

4. Mr & Mrs Ozbey have objected to the relocation of the bus stop on the following grounds:

- i) The bus stop is frequently used but only for alighting from buses. Very few passengers board the bus at this stop, therefore, to relocation of the bus stop is not justifiable both in terms of usage and the cost that this project would incur.

Staff comments: London Buses were contacted about the loading and alighting information. LB had provided the survey data of 46 board and 170 alight per day. The data is based for mid- August 2013.

The current proposals do not involve the installation of a new bus shelter. It is only the bus stop flag that would be relocated to meet the accessibility measures.

- ii) To reposition the bus stop and installation of a bus shelter would ruin the outlook from their property and would devalue their property.

Staff comments: The current proposals do not involve installation of a new bus shelter.

- iii) The proposed new location of the bus stop and shelter would be dangerous when driving out of Forest Road as it will be impossible to see when a bus is at the bus stop. This would lead to road traffic accidents. Cars already speed in Mawney Road and dangerously over take parked buses at the existing bus stop.

Staff comments: The visibility splay of vehicles exiting from Forest Road was checked on site in relation with a parked bus. It was noted that the visibility was clear and it would not be detrimental in road safety terms.

- iv) The current bus stop is adequate. The Council should consider making it easier for the elderly and disabled to alight at the current bus stop rather than wasting money on a new bus stop.

Staff comments: The existing location where the passengers currently alight or board is not sufficient to meet the requirements of accessibility for passengers on the following grounds:

- Passengers currently alight or board at a driveway of no. 235 Mawney Road. Buses cannot deploy the ramps to allow safe access for wheel chair users.
 - The section between the drop kerb and the bus stop flag is very short. The distance between the doors (entrance and exit) of a bus is approximately 8 metres. Currently, this is not being met with the guidelines of accessibility, therefore, as a result a modest length of 10 metres is proposed.
- v) Most of their neighbours have converted their gardens to driveways and for those have decided to retain the front gardens does not give the Council the right to install a bus stop outside their properties.
- vi) The respondents moved into their house in March 2010 and this is the second time this issue has repeated in the short space of time. It was dealt with in the past and to keep resurrecting this issue is causing them stress.

Staff comments: The reason the current consultation has come for the second time is because the passengers are experiencing difficulties in boarding, alighting and waiting at a reasonably safe location.

- vii) The respondents have heard that double yellow lines are to be introduced along Mawney Road. This will cause us even more inconvenience as we are frequently unable to park in Mawney Road and Forest Road due to park users. In short the council is discriminating against car owners and home owners.

Staff comments: The parking restrictions are only proposed at this stage and these will not be installed prior to consulting the local residents in the immediate vicinity. Such requests normally come from the local residents and in this case the purpose of the request is to prevent the visitors to King George's Playing Fields from parking indiscriminately in the road.

5. Mr John Kitchen has objected the proposals on following grounds:

- i) There is no need to relocate the existing bus stop as it is only the sunken kerbs need to be repaired which have been compressed into the ground and the resurfacing has left the kerb flat with the road surface. This gives a false effect that there is a dropped kerb. He has further suggested relocating the stop to its original location by Susan Close.

Staff comments: The section of the sunken drop kerbs is not sufficient to accommodate the accessibility zone.

- ii) The stop has been moved further north as compared to the previous public consultation and relocating it further will make it too close to the junction with Forest Road which is a) only a short distance from the next bus stop by Birch Road and b) will be dangerous to traffic exiting from Forest Road as it will severely restrict vision while a bus is parked at the stop.

Staff comments: The visibility splay of vehicles exiting from Forest Road was checked in relation with a parked bus. It was noted that the visibility was clear and it would not be detrimental in road safety terms.

- iii) Mr Kitchen and his wife are retired and both suffer from spinal and arthritis problems. They have never experienced problems getting on or off the bus, as the buses lower their suspension.
- iv) Mr Kitchen is concerned that there will be damage inflicted to his property as he has seen waiting passengers vandalise front garden walls, deposit rubbish into the front gardens where bus stops have been installed outside those dwellings.

Staff comments: Any vandalism to personal property should be reported to the Metropolitan Police.

- v) At the present, buses stopping at the existing stop generate excessive noise and vibrations in their property and moving it closer would exasperate the problem.
- vi) The Council has proposals to provide parking restrictions at this location which will make it necessary for the front garden owners to apply for dropped kerbs for off street parking. The loss of front gardens would have a detrimental impact on the environmental ambience of Mawney Road.

Staff comments: The present position is that the local residents have not been consulted on the proposed parking restrictions. They will have the opportunity to object or provide their comments at the time when they will be consulted.

- 6. Mrs. Coleman has stated that the proposals will make boarding and alighting safer for passengers. She is only concerned about the limited availability of parking as several properties do not have driveways including those close to the existing bus stop, therefore, she has requested more parking bays.

Staff comments: The proposals will not involve substantial loss of parking spaces. Parking works on first come first serve bases and it is not guaranteed that residents will find a parking space directly outside their properties.

- 7. Mr M Ahadi has stated his strong objections for relocating the bus stop outside his house, 237 Mawney Road. By moving the bus stop in front of his property he would be unable to have a drive way to park his car off street.

At present the respondent parks his car in Forest Road which has had several criminal damages. He considers that this could have been prevented if he had the off street parking.

By moving the bus stop in front of his property he would not be able to have drive way, therefore, it would significantly devalue his property.

He further considers that a 24 hour clearway is unnecessary as it would make difficult for him to park away from his property particularly in dropping and picking up shopping for his car.

Staff comments: Information about the drop kerb applications was sourced from the Council's Streetcare (Highways) to check the details about applications received for driveways from the local residents of nos. 237 to 241 Mawney Road. It has been confirmed that the owner of property no. 237, Mawney Road had applied for a drop kerb in 2008 but the owner has not proceeded with the application. Furthermore, since the time when the consultation letters were delivered, the owner has again requested application forms but has not returned them to be processed.

Furthermore, the residents of nos. 235 to 249 have garages at rear side of their properties and they gain access via a private alleyway from Forest Road. Most residents park in those garages and it is reasonable to say that the respondent can safely park his car there.

Appendix 2

Proposed layout drawing

QM016-of-502