

To: Ashford Joint Transportation Board

By: Kent County Council – Highways and Transportation
Ashford Borough Council – Parking Services

Date: 7th March 2023

Subject: Kent Bus Stops & Enforcement

Classification: Information Only

Summary: This report provides information on the responsibilities and arrangements for bus stop infrastructure in Kent, specifically focusing on regulations and policy with respect to enforcement.

1.0 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 As Highways Authority, Kent County Council (KCC) is responsible for the siting of marked bus stops across the county. As part of this role, KCC maintains approximately 6,500 existing assets, investigates new bus stop requests and looks to undertake improvement works at existing locations to ensure the operation of reliable and accessible bus services as far as possible.
- 1.2 Responsibilities in relation to infrastructure at bus stop locations is split between KCC and District Councils. Typically, KCC provides bus stop poles, timetable cases, raised / dropped kerbing, areas of hardstanding, bus stop clearway markings and clearway plates. District Councils typically undertake enforcement and the refreshing of bus stop clearway markings and provide / maintain bus shelters. Some bus shelters are provided and maintained by Parish Councils or through housing developments.
- 1.3 The Equalities Act (2010) places a duty on both public transport operators and highway authorities to provide reasonable adjustments to ensure that disabled passengers are not disadvantaged. At bus stops, KCC undertakes to ensure that any new bus stop installation is compliant with the 2010 Act through the provision of accessibility features such as raised kerbs, clearway markings and areas of hardstanding as necessary. For example, an accessible vehicle and accessible stop is only accessible to a wheelchair user if the bus can pull up cleanly alongside the stop. For this reason, as resource permits, KCC also considers requests from bus operators and bus passengers to improve existing assets with respect to accessibility, introducing improvements where appropriate.

- 1.4 A key element of providing accessible infrastructure includes the provision of bus stop clearway markings. Clearway markings are introduced to set design standards and ensure that buses are able to pull up appropriately to the kerbside, allowing those with mobility issues / disabilities to board and alight safely. Following installation, bus stop clearways are enforced by District Councils, usually through the Authority's Parking Enforcement team.

2.0 Restrictions at Bus Stops

- 2.1 Unless there can be certainty that buses can pull up to the boarding/ alighting point at a bus stop without obstruction, bus stop clearway markings are typically required, at busier locations in order to ensure that operators can provide a safe and accessible boarding point for intending passengers. KCC will install bus stop clearway markings at all new bus stops where they are required for this reason and seek to provide them at existing stops if reports concerning accessibility and safety are received. On occasions, safety risk may require action to be taken on an urgent basis.
- 2.2 Bus stop clearways consist of yellow markings surrounding the bus stop boarding point, including a thick yellow line on the pavement side of the road, a yellow bus stop "cage" and yellow wording to highlight the location as a bus stop. In line with national guidance, clearway markings are required at a total clear length of 31m to allow appropriate and accessible boarding. If there are other restrictions (e.g. double yellow lines) or a junction at either side of the bus stop boarding point this length can sometimes be reduced.
- 2.3 In order to be enforceable, bus stop clearways require a thick solid yellow line along the length of the bus stop cage (Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 1025.1) as well as a bus stop clearway plate (TSRGD Schedule 7, Part 6, Clause 1). The plate should specify the days and times that restrictions apply.
- 2.4 The installation of bus stops or related bus stop clearway markings does not require a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO). This means that restrictions (and indeed bus stops themselves) can be installed on the highway at any time at the discretion of the Highway Authority. Whilst this is the case, KCC does understand the installation of bus stops and/or restrictions can have an impact on local residents / businesses. As such, KCC does look to consult with directly affected properties (i.e. those opposite or adjacent the proposed site) when there is an opportunity to do so. On occasions (i.e. if there is a safety issue at an existing bus stop) this may not be possible however.
- 2.5 When clearway markings are present, KCC looks to tailor restrictions to correspond with bus operating days and times. E.g. if a service operates on Monday – Saturdays between 0800 and 1800, restrictions would typically be in place an hour before and after these times. In some instances where there is a risk of regular and sustained abuse of markings, restrictions will be in place 24/7.

3.0 Approach to Enforcement

- 3.1 Once a clearway has been installed as with other parking and waiting restrictions, ABC Civil Enforcement Officers (CEO's), as agents of the highway authority would be expected to issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to vehicles found parked in contravention.

A clearway of this kind allows no stopping other than by local buses (or taxis) during the period in which the clearway is in force as indicated on the sign.

Enforcement is done when CEOs are patrolling an area, any Information on areas where Stagecoach are experiencing problems are passed over for enforcement to be increased when possible.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.1 This report is provided to Members for information.

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