

Report to: Lead Cabinet Member for Transport and Environment

Date of Meeting: 18 January 2021

By: Director of Communities, Economy and Transport

Title: Bus Stop Clearway proposals in Hastings

Purpose: To consider objections received to a notification to install measures at a bus stop in Hastings, designed to make it accessible to service users who are disabled or have mobility difficulties.

RECOMMENDATION: The Lead Member is recommended to:

- (1) Note the objections to the application of a 'Clearway' markings at the bus stop set out in this report, and,**
 - (2) Approve the application of the 'Clearway' marking to improve accessibility to the bus stop and promote its use for all members of the community.**
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1. Background Information

1.1 East Sussex County Council as the local transport authority (LTA) is responsible for bus stops. In undertaking their activities LTAs and other public bodies are subject to the Equality Act 2010 and the duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure bus stops are sufficiently accessible to meet the needs of disabled passengers. All local service buses designed with 22 seats or more must comply with the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations, including being able to carry passengers who are wheelchair users.

1.2 The County Council has been promoting improvement works to a series of existing bus stops on the most frequent bus routes across Bexhill, Hastings and St Leonards, as part of the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Package which is being funded using Local Growth Fund (LGF) monies secured through the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (SELEP). A prioritised list of 85 bus stops requiring improvement across Bexhill (40 stops) and Hastings & St Leonards (45 stops) was developed in consultation with the County Council's Transport Hub Team and the bus operating company Stagecoach and includes stops where passengers or buses may have difficulty accessing the kerbside. Improving bus stop provision could also attract more use of public transport, thereby helping to ease traffic congestion and improving air quality.

1.3 Varying from stop to stop, the works comprise adjustments to make the stops more accessible to passengers, which benefit disabled persons and those who face difficulties in using bus services, including the elderly and parents with infants in buggies. This includes installing high kerbs to reduce the distance to step on or off the bus, providing a hardstanding area for passengers to stand; and at some stops real time passenger information displays boards have been installed to inform users of when the next bus is expected. In addition, bus stop 'Clearway' markings were proposed to be installed on the carriageway, preventing vehicles from stopping in the vicinity of the stops and allowing the bus to pull up to the kerbs.

1.4 Stakeholders, including County and District/Borough Councillors; the Borough or District Council; residents and businesses living adjacent/opposite to a stop, were informed either by email or via a letter which included a plan of the proposed works to a bus stop where they may have an interest, in advance of work taking place. In addition, a laminated Notice and plan drawing was erected at the stop or nearest item of street furniture (i.e. street lighting column).

1.5 These works, including the application of the 'Clearway' markings (which restrict on-street parking) do not require a Traffic Regulation Order to implement and are not subject to standard consultation or

objection periods. However, the County Council offers a 21-day period for stakeholders to raise objections, comments and observations. The County Council and East Sussex Highways have attempted to resolve any received objections by exploring alternative methods of achieving the accessibility objective. These may include reviewing 'Clearway' restriction times, adjusting kerb layouts, providing bus stop build-outs to reduce the impact on parking spaces and re-locating the stop.

1.6 However one stop has drawn an objection from a resident where resolution has not been possible and the objection remains. A plan and photograph of the site – A259 Old London Road, Hastings - is contained within Appendix 1.

1.7 This is a long-standing bus stop served by two buses an hour on Mondays to Saturdays and one bus an hour on Sundays (Stagecoach 'Wave' routes 100 and 101 and route 70). Data on the actual use being made of each bus stop is not available. Surveying usage would not be appropriate during the pandemic period due to changed travel patterns.

1.8 This bus stop also serves residents in Richmond Street and parts of North Terrace, as well as those in Old London Road and Stagecoach have re-affirmed their concern that this bus stop lacks adequate protection from parking.

2. Detailed Information

2.1 H78 A259 Old London Road, Hastings.

Current situation

2.1.1 On-street parking at this bus stop prevents buses getting close to the kerb, preventing them from being able to deploy their wheelchair ramp and impeding accessibility for those with mobility difficulties. The proposal is to apply a 'Clearway' marking, prohibiting vehicles from stopping at this location during the hours of 7am to 9pm to accord with the operational hours of the bus services which use this stop. The last bus is at 8:48pm. The proposed Clearway is 31m long and will remove up to six car parking spaces to provide enough space for the bus to manoeuvre but will permit parking at this location overnight between 9pm and 7am.

2.1.2 Letters and plans were issued to residents at the stop, both sides of the road, on 15 May 2020 and the period for comment ended on Friday 5 June 2020.

2.1.3 One objection was received from a resident via email regarding the necessity for the bus stop or the works, sightline obstructions and other safety concerns together with the inability for residents to park outside their properties. Further details on the objection is at Appendix 2. The resident has stated they will not withdraw their objection to the Clearway proposal.

Commentary

2.1.4 This bus stop is identified by the Transport Hub Team and the bus operator as one where buses are unable to access the kerbside due to on-street parking. There are accesses to private drives for most of the properties in this location, but this does not prevent residents or visitors to these properties parking across the accesses. It is an existing bus stop and visibility for residents will not alter from the current situation. The Personal Injury Crash records have shown no recorded incidents near this bus stop over the last three years. The site has been considered by the County Council's Road Safety Team and their observations have been taken into account. The Police have also been advised of the proposal and they have no safety concerns.

2.1.5 In order to improve accessibility for passengers at the bus stop and support the overall punctuality of buses accessing this stop, it is recommended to proceed with the proposal and apply the 'Clearway' marking and provide kerbside access to the stop for buses.

3. Conclusion and Reason for Recommendation

3.1 Improvements to the public transport infrastructure in Hastings and Bexhill will help to improve passenger accessibility at bus stops and support the punctuality of bus services across both towns and

help engage more people to use public transport. In turn, this will contribute towards the County Council's commitment of net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and the Government's decarbonising transport agenda.

3.2 Following local consultation on improvements to a network of stops, an unresolvable objection has been received in relation to improvements in A259 Old London Road in Hastings. For the reasons set out in sections 2.1.4. – 2.1.5, it is recommended to not uphold the objection to the proposals for this bus stop and to agree that the works progress as part of the Hastings and Bexhill Movement and Access Local Growth Fund package for Hastings and Bexhill, subject to any delivery risks and delays arising from the current COVID-19 pandemic.

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LOCAL MEMBERS

Councillor Tania Charman

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None