

Report to the Cabinet

Meeting to be held on Thursday, 11 April 2024

Report of the Director of Highways and Transport

Part I

Electoral Divisions affected:
Chorley Central and Chorley
Rural East;

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;

Proposal to Construct Bus Stop Clearways on the Stagecoach 125 Bus Route in the Area of the A6 and A673 Chorley to Horwich

(Appendix 'A' refers)

Contact for further information:

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Brief Summary

This report proposes to introduce bus stop clearways and associated traffic regulation orders as part of a works package to improve bus stop access along the Stagecoach 125 bus route between Chorley and Horwich, making stops Equality Act compliant and providing improvements for those with mobility impairments.

Consultation and formal advertising of the proposals has been undertaken with objections being received.

Recommendation

Cabinet is asked to approve:

- (i) The revocation of 4 bus stop clearways on Bolton Road and Chorley Road.
- (ii) The introduction of 13 bus stop clearways and associated works on Bolton Road and Chorley Road.



Detail

As part of the Bus Service Improvement Plan, Lancashire County Council has been awarded funds to carry out bus stop and service improvements along the 125 bus route from Preston to Bolton (up to Horwich within the Lancashire Boundary).

The scheme has been split up into phases, where proposals have been advertised on the first phase of stops from Chorley to Horwich. A future phase will look to capture further stops along this same length that require further consideration before advertising.

Bus stop clearways have been advertised at various stops along the length, in addition to No Waiting At Any Time restrictions (double yellow lines) to support the clearway restrictions.

These restrictions have been proposed to enable buses to reach the kerbside unobstructed by vehicles, allowing passengers to board without crossing a gap in the carriageway, and making bus stops accessible to those with mobility issues.

Some bus stops have been relocated to mitigate any disadvantage from introducing clearway restrictions. This has been carried out in accordance with best practice guidance wherever possible and balances the benefits of the proposals against disbenefit that may be caused.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' is attached to this report. For clarification, it is summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Bus Stop Clearway Plans (Introduction and Removal)

Consultations

Public consultation was undertaken from 16 January to 13 February 2024 with letters delivered to properties fronting proposals along the route, together with the Council's formal advertising process including the erection of site notices, and the advertisement of Traffic Regulation Orders in the local paper.

Two objections have been received and are summarised below along with a response:

Objection 1:

The bus stop relocation on Chorley Road close to the Asshawes may increase the risk of accidents. When a bus is stopped in the proposed location, vehicles exiting the side road have limited visibility of any vehicles overtaking the stopped bus. Existing Double yellow lines were installed to protect visibility from the side road. (1 consultee).



Officer Response:

Whilst a stopped bus will impact visibility for vehicles waiting at The Asshawes (towards vehicles to the right), drivers have a responsibility to proceed with due care and attention, both when pulling out from the side road with temporarily reduced visibility, and when overtaking a bus on the opposite side of the carriageway.

The existing double yellow lines protect against waiting under many circumstances; however, they do not fully protect visibility as blue badge holders are entitled to wait for up to 3 hours, and loading is not prohibited where vehicles as large as a bus could be stopped to load for a prolonged period.

A bus at the stop is likely to impact visibility for a short duration up to and around 30 seconds. The service operates on a 10-minute basis; however, it is unlikely that the stop would be called in to use on every 10-minute interval. Additionally, the clearway restriction would provide greater protections for visibility at those times where a bus is not present, because it would restrict loading and stopping over its length.

For those very short periods in which a bus does impact visibility, there is still 30.5m of visibility to a passing vehicle. Under the existing arrangement, when a standard car is legally parked up to the double yellow lines for an unlimited period, there is 35m of visibility to a passing vehicle. The recommended visibility splay is between 40-43m. The bus stop clearway would provide over and above the recommended visibility splay for most of the time when a bus is not stopped.

There are no recorded collisions at the junction over the past 5 years (the period over which data is held). The junction is one of two accesses to a 20mph residential estate which is not a through route and has approximately 109 properties.

Objection 2:

The existing location is also closer to bungalows housing elderly residents and the proposal will increase the distance for those residents to access the stop (2 consultees).

Officer Response:

Whilst the existing stop is located closer to bungalows housing elderly residents, the proposed location has been selected by balancing the need for a raised boarding point and clearway, mitigating the loss of parking in a built-up length fronting properties, and avoiding drainage issues where raising the kerb at the current location would cause surface water to backfall towards residential properties.

Implications:

This item has the following implications, as indicated:



Risk management

Should the proposals recommended within this report not be implemented, people with mobility issues may continue to be disadvantaged and unable to use various bus stops along the length.

Financial

The costs of the proposals would be fully met from the £2.996 million within the Bus Service Improvement Plan Capital Programme for 2022/23 and 2023/24 Superbus Route Reviews, which is financed through the Department for Transport Bus Service Improvement Plan funding. The proposals presented are part of the A6 125 Superbus scheme which currently has £910,000 allocated to it within the Capital Programme, as approved by the Enhanced Partnership Board. Any risk of overspend would need to be managed by funds within the overarching programme and/or descopeing and value engineering.

Legal

The proposals in this report would be implemented under the Highways Act 1980, the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953 and The Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016.

List of Background Papers

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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None

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

