
Tonbridge High Street– Bus Stop G (Outside Caffé Nero) progress report

To: Tonbridge Joint Transportation Board, 26 November 2018

By: Tim Read – Head of Transportation, Kent County Council

Classification: Unrestricted

This report provides an update on the options that were to be further investigated following the recommendation made at the 11 June Joint Transportation board to address congestion issues around Bus Stop G (outside No. 34 High Street - Café Nero).

This report is for decision.

1.0 Introduction and background

- 1.1 In 2016 Kent County Council completed a £2.7m improvement scheme in the High Street as part of the Tonbridge regeneration plan. The scheme was primarily aimed at public realm improvements and regeneration and was not a 'congestion busting' scheme.
- 1.2 Kent County Council have recently undertaken post-scheme consultation which highlighted a number of concerns regarding congestion that specifically relate to Bus Stop G.
- 1.3 The nature of these concerns is that the reduced carriageway width means buses accessing the stop block the road and vehicles are unable to overtake while the bus is boarding and alighting. Bus Stop G is used by numerous services and often the bus is standing for some time. If more than one bus arrives at this stop this further complicates issues, causing more delays to vehicles wishing to pass by. It should be noted that bus timetable punctuality is much improved on routes where the stops are 'online' and not held back in lay-bys although there is some driver frustration experienced by private car users.
- 1.4 At the request of the Joint Transportation on 11 June 2018, Kent County Council have further investigated the issues surrounding Bus Stop G, and the local environment. KCC have, to date, concentrated on the alteration of the loading bay to provide a bus layby.

2.0 Progress and options

- 2.1 There are 2 possible layouts as shown in Appendix A and include the tracking of a bus to show what is needed to align the bus flush with the raised kerb (125mm high kerb face).
- 2.2 Option 1 requires the least amount of alterations to the pavement but does require the buses to swing out a little into the opposing lane when exiting the layby and is therefore marginally substandard. Notwithstanding this it does allow the bus shelter facility to remain although slightly relocated. The remaining footway width for both options will be 2.7m at its narrowest. The section showing this can also be seen in Appendix A. Additional drainage channels will also be required in front of the shops as the footway is very flat from the building line across the footway although the longitudinal fall is fine and will prevent ponding.
- 2.3 Option 2 provides a standard bus stop layby requiring more substantial alterations to the footway but does give a better path for the buses to enter and exit. Option 2 leaves no available space for a bus shelter to be provided.
- 2.4 The table below lists the advantages and disadvantages of each option

Option 1 – substandard bus layby	Option 2 Standard bus layby
Allows vehicles to pass stationary bus	Allows vehicles to pass stationary bus
Narrows footway from 4.7m to 2.7m, creating a pinch point / pedestrian bottleneck over a length of approximately 30.0m	Narrows footway from 4.7m to 2.7m, creating a pinch point / pedestrian bottleneck over a length of approximately 50.0m
Option to locate a bus shelter to the front of the layby in a slightly unconventional location (subject to safety audit and planning permission)	Unable to accommodate a bus shelter. The contract between Tonbridge & Malling BC and Adshell may be affected.
Makes the High Street a more attractive route for car drivers passing through town. Encourages more traffic to the High Street	Makes the High Street a more attractive route for car drivers passing through town. Encourages more traffic to the High Street
Potential increase in traffic speeds	Potential increase in traffic speeds
Non-standard bus layby layout	Standard bus stop layout
Removal of 1 No. loading bay	Removal of 1 No. loading bay
Bus Flag located within footway pinch point, potential conflict between pedestrians and bus users	Bus Flag located within footway pinch point, potential conflict between pedestrians and bus users
Bus operators do not support the provision of a layby as they then struggle to exit the layby.	Bus operators do not support the provision of a layby as they then struggle to exit the layby.

Option 1 – substandard bus layby	Option 2 Standard bus layby
Construction period is likely to be 4 weeks and under 2 way temporary lights.	Construction period is likely to be 6 weeks and under 2 way temporary lights.
Only one bus at a time can use the bus layby.	Only one bus at a time can use the bus layby

- 2.5 The utility diversions that may be necessary are still not fully understood however they are not anticipated to be too onerous or cost prohibitive.

3.0 Estimated costs

- 3.1 The estimated costs which will be funded through a mixture of the Local Growth fund and Local Transport Plan fund are:

Option 1: £40,000

Option 2: £60,000

4.0 Programme

- 4.1 The option to take forward will be progressed further to detailed design and the construction phase anticipated to start in the February 2019 school holidays. The duration will be 4 – 6 weeks.
- 4.2 The construction will require temporary 2 way lights as working space and pedestrian routes need to be accommodated. The permanent pelican crossing facility will have to be switched off for the duration of the build and an alternative method used to control pedestrians.
- 4.3 A temporary bus stop will be required at the next loading bay and will not benefit from a shelter or a raised kerb to allow easy access through this period.
- 4.4 The loading bay to accommodate the temporary bus stop will need to be suspended for the duration of the work and therefore cause delivery issues which are still to be fully understood.
- 4.5 Close liaison with affected businesses and bus operators will be required to prior to and during the work as it is likely that the 2 way temporary signals will be disruptive to traffic flows.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.1 Option 1 is recommended to be progressed as it is likely that the bus shelter can remain and is the least expensive option as well as being a shorter construction period.

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Appendices

Appendix A – Plan depicting existing arrangement along with 2 options for alterations.