

TO: SWALE JOINT TRANSPORTATION BOARD
DATE: 18th June 2012
SUBJECT: A2 The Street, Bapchild – Bus stop improvement
BY: Traffic Schemes & Member Highway Fund Manager
Classification: Unrestricted

Summary: A report for Members to consider an objection received to the upgrade of an existing bus stop in The Street, Bapchild.

Decision Required: Members note the report and recommend that officers progress the revised bus stop improvement.

Introduction

On 12 December 2011, this Board recommended the establishment of the Swale Quality Bus Partnership, which subsequently came into operation on 1 April 2012. Amongst the intended outcomes of this Partnership is better access for all passengers, and a more reliable bus service. Funding has been made available to support these targets, through the introduction of raised kerb boarders (to permit easy access to the low-floor buses for wheelchair users, for those whose mobility is impaired, and for parents with children in buggies); and bus stop clearways, to keep stops clear of parked vehicles to enable buses to pull in and out of each stop and to serve it parallel to the kerb.

Discussion

1. For the financial year 2011/12, £50,000 was allocated by Kent County Council towards supporting the emerging Swale Quality Bus Partnership. This funding was to be spent on upgrading existing bus stops with new bus stop poles, flags, timetable cases, clearway markings, and raised kerb boarders.
2. Through discussions with the bus operators, the first priority route identified for these upgrades was the 333 service between Key Street, Sittingbourne, and Faversham town centre. As there are over 60 stops along this section of the route, site visits were undertaken with the bus operator, to ascertain the most appropriate improvements for each stop. The proposed improvements were marked out, and notification leaflets hand delivered to all immediately affected residents and business owners (see Annexe A).
3. In the majority of locations the improvements have been carried out to the satisfaction of residents and passengers alike. For a smaller number of stops, representations were received from residents and local elected members. Wherever possible, further discussions have taken place with residents to resolve issues through compromise, and on the whole this approach has been successful.
4. In one circumstance this approach has not yielded a mutually agreeable compromise. The stop in question is the Sittingbourne bound bus stop in the centre of Bapchild, locally known as “Pomphreys Garage”. It is located at the boundary of no. 46 The Street and “Van World” (see Annexe B).
5. The original proposal for this stop upgrade is shown in Annexe C. A raised boarder was not put forward here, as it is one of the lesser used stops on the route, and the installation of the raised kerbs was being prioritised towards more popular stops. However a yellow clearway marking

was requested by the bus operator, to keep the stop clear of parked vehicles and facilitate easier boarding by passengers and a quicker dropping off / picking up turn around time. This would also ensure that the bus did not have to stop in the middle of the road and hold up traffic on the A2 travelling between Faversham and Sittingbourne.

6. A nearby affected resident contacted KCC Highways to express concern over this proposed layout, as it would affect the ability of visitors to park near their property. This is because only buses are allowed to stop within a clearway marking. Officers opened discussions with the neighbouring business, to ascertain whether the clearway could be shifted to cover more of their frontage instead. The business owners were willing to agree to a revised proposal, to shorten the clearway length, but extend more of the parking restrictions to cover their frontage by one car length (Annexe C). This revised proposal was then presented to the adjacent resident.
7. KCC Highways was also approached by Bapchild Parish Council (BPC) on behalf of the resident. They wished to carry out a consultation to relocate the bus stop. KCC Highways agreed to this request, on the provision that the bus stop could only be moved if the alternative location was safe, convenient for passengers, and did not attract any additional objections. BPC consulted on moving the stop to directly outside Pomphreys Garage. Although this particular business did not object, a nearby resident did, and regrettably this meant that the consultation was unsuccessful.
8. An email was subsequently received by the adjacent resident who originally objected to the clearway, which can be summarised as follows:-
 - To confirm their objection to any yellow box lining to the road outside their property.
 - To express disappointment that neighbours objected to the relocation of the stop.
 - To ascertain that the village is well served by stops at either end of the village, and as such this one can be removed.
 - Has had no problem with the stop for 8 years, until this proposal to restrict parking.
 - Expresses concern over the safety of entering and exiting their drive.
 - Displacement of parking will restrict their view when reversing out of the drive.
 - The adjacent business does not encourage visitors to park on their site.
9. The revised proposal for the clearway has shortened the length of restricted parking to its minimum possible extent of 13 metres. It no longer covers the resident's driveway, which means that it would not be blocked by a waiting bus. The Highway Code advises that drivers "do not reverse from a side road into a main road. When using a driveway, reverse in and drive out if you can." The removal of this stop would leave a large gap of 650 metres between the stops at either end of Bapchild, to the detriment of existing (and potentially new) passengers.
10. The improvements have been put on hold, pending the recommendation of this Board.

Decision Required

To note the report and recommend that officers implement the revised proposal, as shown in Annexe C.

Contact Officer: Steve Darling

Background documents:

Annexe A – Notification leaflet to residents

Annexe B – Location of existing bus stop and proposed relocation

Annexe C - Original and revised proposals for bus stop clearway

Annexe A – Notification leaflet to residents

Highway Improvements in Your Area

Route 333 – Bus stop improvements

Between the A249 Key Street roundabout, Sittingbourne, and Faversham town centre.

What are we planning to do?

The bus stop improvements will largely consist of a combination of bus boarders (raised kerbs), “yellow box” bus stop clearways, new bus stop poles and timetable cases. An indicative drawing is shown overleaf.

Why do we want to do this work?

Kent County Council is upgrading bus stops along the 333 route to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act, by providing easier access on to and off the buses. To achieve this it is necessary to permanently restrict parking in the vicinity of the bus stop, so that the bus can stop unimpeded next to the raised kerb, thereby allowing safe access for wheelchair users, people with small children and prams, the elderly and the less able.

How will we carry out the works and how will it affect you?

Generally the works will involve localised coning, barriers and occasionally temporary traffic lights, in order that the work can be carried out safely. The contractor will usually only be allowed to use temporary signals if required between 9.30am and 3.30pm, to minimise traffic disruption. Works may be carried out at more than one stop at a time, and we apologise in advance for any inconvenience caused by these essential works.

When will the work start and how long will it take?

We will be gradually working our way along the bus route, starting on Monday 19 March 2012 at the A249 Key Street roundabout. We will then move east through Sittingbourne, Bapchild, Teynham and Ospringe, ending in Faversham around 9 weeks later. The works at each individual stop are anticipated to take a week in total, and the stop will be temporarily relocated during this time.

How to contact us?

Visit our website www.kent.gov.uk/highways to find out how we look after the roads in Kent. If you have any concerns about how these road works will affect you please call us on 08458 247 800 and quote “333 Route Service Improvements”.

Please respect our workers space and safety by driving carefully and slowly through the roadworks. Feedback from our workers shows that too many drivers go too fast through roadworks. Everyone is entitled to a safe workplace. Our men and women work next to moving traffic and risk injury every day.

Please keep this in a safe place so you can refer to it if you need to contact us whilst the works are being done – call us on 08458 247 800

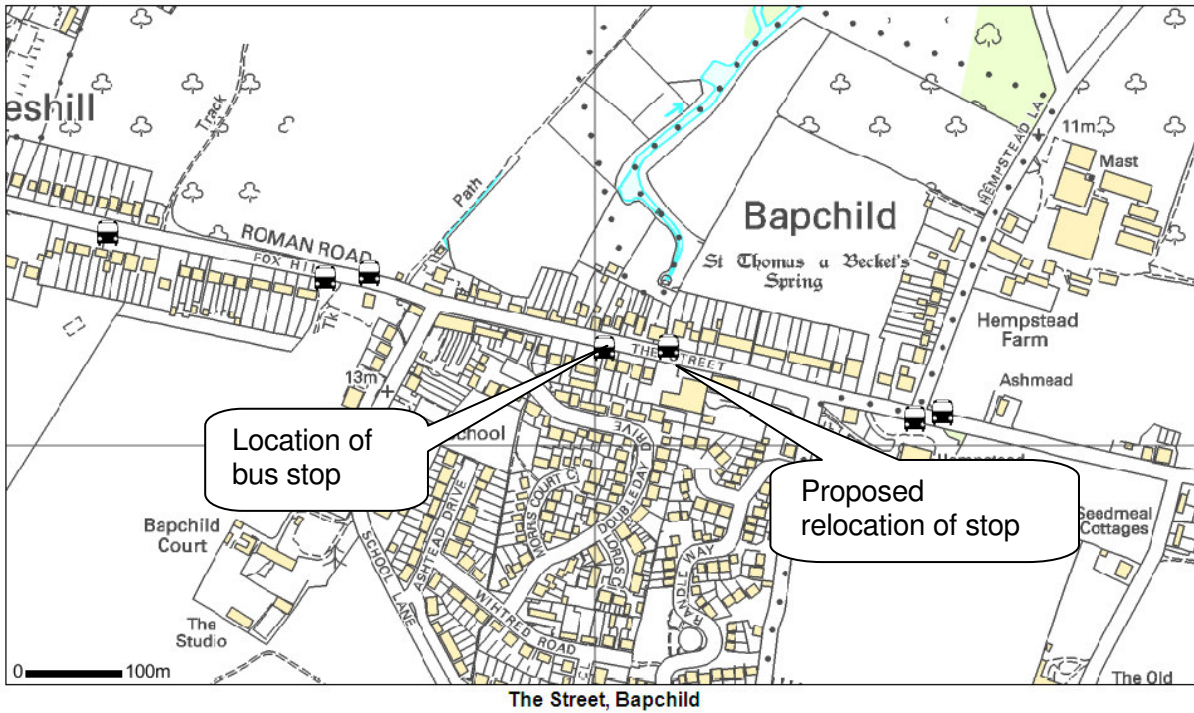
WARNING – Beware Bogus Callers

Kent County Council Highways & Transportation do not allow works to be carried out on private properties. If anyone says they are working for us or our specialist contractors and offer to carry out any work for cash they should be treated with caution and you are advised to contact Kent County Council Trading Standards on 0845 3450210, 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

www.kent.gov.uk



Annexe B – Location of existing bus stop and proposed relocation



Produced using KentView by KCC Highways on Monday, 21 May 2012 at 11:41

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Image: Existing bus stop, looking west towards Sittingbourne



