



Position statement 8

Improving bus journey times and enforcement

This statement sets out shared principles on securing improvements to bus journey times and their reliability, including mechanisms for monitoring and enforcement.

Improvement of bus journey time is essential to both achieve patronage growth and retain existing customers. Improvement takes two forms: reduction of journey time and reduction of variability of journey time. Where the journey time is attractive compared with other modes, predictability of journey time is considered by bus users as more important than journey time itself. Non users require both an attractive journey time and one that can be achieved on a consistent basis in order for them to consider modal shift to bus.

Analysis of bus service performance and in particular the design of schemes to improve the bus offer, should focus on the key indicator of journey time to meet these objectives.

Measuring the performance of all corridors helps highlight both the outcome from infrastructure schemes and also clearly indicates those corridors encountering the greatest problems, which then helps prioritise future investment in improvement measures, taking into account other variables such as patronage volumes, future developments etc.

Improving bus journey times

Journey times

- Journey times must be achievable. To this end they need to reflect variable conditions at different times, days and seasons.
- Specification of journey time reductions at individual locations as part of an infrastructure scheme is not necessarily helpful as these tend to be small and difficult to measure and all are potentially subject to individual failure. An overall journey time target should be specified.
- Must have challenging and agreed targets - this will not always mean an overall reduction in journey time.
- Journey times should be specified as an end to end total, be competitive to (and compared with) other modes, and in this respect have regard to onward journey times too (e.g. the walk from the bus to key shopping areas vs the walk from a central car park).

Journey predictability

- The objective must be to reduce the variability of journey times as much as possible.
- Reduced variability in journey times makes trips more predictable to customers, and operators.
- Challenging but achievable performance targets need to be agreed.
- Journey time specification needs to account for stopping patterns, time of day, day of

week and seasonal variations. Whilst these need to be variable, it is the achievement of these times that must be achievable without variation on successive observations.

- Passenger perception of delay due to layover, i.e. lengthy waits at bus stops must also be avoided, although provision of layover must be recognised as essential to the delivery of a punctual service. Reduction of variability leads to a reduced requirement for recovery time.

Tools

Data should be collected on journey times as follows:

- Real-time and manual schedule adherence survey data.
- Timetable/schedule review.
- Start time and timing point analysis.
- Analysis of on/off bus ticketing.
- Identification of “pinch points”
- Bus driver reports
- Survey of Traffic Regulation Order compliance.
- Survey of bus stop access.
- Other external issues affecting surveys (weather, road works, accidents etc)

Design

Whilst largely covered in other guidelines, the principles of achieving the targets specified above can be summarised as:

- Operators to develop realistic schedules taking account of differing conditions by time day and season
- Provision of bus priority wherever possible
- Maximising self enforcing measures (transponders, bus gates, guideways etc)
- Protection of bus stops
- Enforcement of traffic regulation orders
- Relocation of kerbside activity
- Monitoring of compliance by all parties
- Ongoing review of performance and continuous improvement
- Publicising positive achievements and improvements

Where road works are anticipated to have a major disruptive effect on bus service punctuality, steps must be taken to keep this to a minimum. Although not within the direct

control of either bus operators or PTEs/ITAs (currently), collective influence should be brought to bear on local highways authorities and statutory undertakers in order to minimise the disruption thus caused. Activity should comprise (but not necessarily be limited to):

- Active management of road works both overall and for individual instances
- As much advanced warning of road works activity to bus operators, with the greatest possible notice period practicable
- Coordination of planned road works by multiple contractors
- Consideration of all options to minimise or mitigate for delays caused, for example works undertaken out of hours.
- Consultation with bus operators on mitigation options and planned temporary traffic management arrangements
- Reinstatement of surfacing, signage and markings to an appropriate standard

In the cases where major and /or extended disruption is likely, additionally:

- Setting of targets for the duration of the works prior to commencement and regular updates on progress against programme. With monitoring put in place and penalties levied for overrunning
- Advice to operators, in writing, of the anticipated delay occasioned by the road works per journey or, where it is considered impossible to predict this, written advice that this is the case. Where additional bus resource is required funding should be made available by the party carrying out the works to cover this cost.
- Assistance to operators and PTEs/ITAs in publicising the road works and their anticipated effects to passengers

Although not within the direct control of either bus operators or PTEs/ITAs (currently), collective influence should be brought to bear in order to achieve enforcement policies which complement and support public transport operation and use. The following areas are identified for local negotiation and action:

Enforcement

Principles of enforcement

Enforcement must be visible and consistent in order for it to be a deterrent to illegal behaviour. The following types of illegal behaviour are detrimental to the operation of punctual and efficient local bus services:

- Illegal roadside parking
- Illegal roadside deliveries
- Blocking/occupation of bus stops
- Illegal parking adjacent to bus stops

- Illegal parking/delivery in bus lanes
- Illegal use of bus lanes
- Attempts to use bus gates by non equipped vehicles

Mechanisms for enforcement

Beat officers: can be very effective by providing a visible deterrent. Beat officers are now largely employed by the local authority having decriminalised parking enforcement, but their powers are limited to action against breaches of parking and loading regulations and exclude (for instance) action against those parking in a dangerous location, which remain the responsibility of the police. Police enforcement officers by contrast have wide ranging powers but often are not deployed to such tasks having other priorities.

On street cameras can be used to monitor illegal use of bus lanes and traffic signal infringements (including those related to use of bus gates). The local authority is required to have implemented decriminalised parking enforcement and then secured approval for enforcement of moving traffic offences. Cameras also act as a deterrent in themselves, provided that they are prominently identified. One of the simplest and most cost effective means of deterrence is through clear and unambiguous road signs, prominently deployed so as not to confuse car drivers. The use of consistent parking restriction times across districts (or preferably across ITA areas) also reinforces knowledge of these details and aids compliance.

CCTV is useful in guiding beat officers to areas where there are localised problems through radio communications from base. Such cameras can usually be controlled remotely allowing one camera to cover a potentially large area. Cameras also act as a deterrent in themselves especially for abuse of bus lanes/gates, provided that they are prominently and properly identified.

On bus cameras facing outwards can also be used as both devices to identify problems and guide deployment of beat officer resources, but also where appropriate type approval has been obtained and the local authority has the requisite powers, as enforcement cameras for illegal use of bus lanes and bus gates.

Operator observations from drivers and from other operator staff can be used to inform the local authority of localised problems to allow deployment of beat officer resources. Blitz operations over several days or weeks in a problem area can have significant effects on the levels of illegal activity, but need to be repeated at regular intervals to prevent the onset of complacency.

Whilst tow-away action is the best deterrent of all, it is recognised that this is a high cost activity and unlikely to be accorded the highest priority by police forces in the event of bus lane infringement. However a few high profile instances can act as a significant deterrent to future infringements and such a demonstration should be encouraged on a regular basis.

Practicalities of enforcement

Accountability and responsibility

Neither operators nor PTEs have the power to conduct enforcement activity (except for limited use of on bus cameras) therefore are reliant on police and local authority resources for this. In order to secure their cooperation and buy-in there is a need to convince them of the wider benefits such activity brings. These include:

- Achievement of LTP Targets for modal share and journey times
- Identification of wider illegal activity (many of those stopped by the police for bus lane infringements are found to be engaged in other criminal activity)
- Improvements to all road users, in a way that can be cost neutral

Shared responsibility for such activity should take the form of service level agreements between the enforcement bodies, the operators and PTE, but in return there is a need for the operators and PTE to undertake to provide intelligence to the enforcement bodies.

There is also a need to ensure that appropriate backup procedures are in place to ensure consistency of evidence and that one party does not undermine another's position in the event of dispute. It is particularly important to secure the understanding and support of the local police in this respect.

Funding

Resources are limited and it is often the case that a greater level of enforcement activity can be stimulated through the use of funding incentives. Operators and PTEs have already jointly funded additional enforcement efforts in major towns and cities targeted on specific areas or corridors or at more critical times of the year, for example in the run up to the Christmas period.

Any such arrangements need to be underpinned by formal partnership agreements and service level agreements and are relevant where and whenever abuse of bus priority and parking measures occur.

Consistency of approach

Any enforcement activity will only have credibility and act as a deterrent if it is regularly and consistently followed through with appropriate action. There is a need to secure agreement with all parties that enforcement is only the first step towards action and that prosecution will follow in the event that fines are not paid.

It is also recommended that such action is widely advertised to the public prior to its commencement to avoid the risk of it just being seen as a revenue generation activity. For new measures such as bus lanes/gates, steps like introducing a pre-enforcement period (e.g. for 2 months) where warning letters are issued rather than fines is valuable, especially when introducing enforcement into areas of historic facilities with no record of enforcement. A

shorter but similar approach could be adopted for other Traffic Regulation Order changes (e.g. 2 weeks).

Monitoring

It is recommended that the level of parking abuse and hours of enforcement are monitored every month so that operator experience, level of enforcement recorded etc, can be evaluated and correlated. This can then guide future enforcement activity and deployment of resources.

Further work

In conjunction with local highways authorities, codification of the management of road works activities to minimise adverse effects on bus passengers and operators through diversions and disruptive effects on bus service punctuality.