

Mayor's Office

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Councillor Peter Curling
London Borough of Hillingdon
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Our ref: MGLA050209-6342

Date: 16 MAR 2009

Dear Peter

Re-routeing of bus service U7 – new bus stops

Thank you for your email.

I do understand the sensitivities involved with placing bus stops on the public highway in view of people's homes. However, I think it is worth providing a little background to this proposal.

The suggestion to change route U7 arose from meetings between Transport for London and local residents chaired by John McDonnell MP in Autumn 2003. The meetings were initially intended to resolve conflict between car parking and buses at the Charville Lane terminus of routes 195 and U7. TfL has since resolved this by providing a new standing area for buses, separate from residents' parking.

During these meetings, and at an exhibition held by TfL in the Charville Community Centre in 2004, residents requested a new direct link from Charville Lane to Hayes Grapes. TfL evaluated this suggestion through its usual bus service planning framework, and established that the suggestion would provide a considerable number of households with a more attractive bus service. This is in line with TfL's Transport Duty under the GLA Act 1999, and I am sure you will agree that improved local bus services are generally to be welcomed.

The benefits of this particular proposal include:

- new direct bus link from Charville Lane to Hayes Grapes and Lombardy Retail Park
- more direct link from Charville Lane to Hillingdon Hospital and Uxbridge
- improved bus access to three schools: Mellow Lane, Abbotsfield and Swakeleys
- fewer buses will terminate and stand at Charville Lane, further addressing this issue
- 570 households in the Charville Lane area will have improved bus links
- all households in and within walking distance of Pole Hill Road, Mellow Lane West and Hewens Road gain a new bus service

Turning to your specific points, I understand that the design of the stops themselves has been developed by your council officers in close co-operation with TfL, and, as you mention, has been approved by your council's Cabinet Member. I am reluctant to interfere with the workings of the local democratic process. I am assured that this change does not involve the felling of a tree, or any construction on green belt land, but that the bus stops will be installed in front of the adjacent hedgerow and tree, on a highway verge.

TfL does try, so far as possible, to site stops where their impact will be minimised, but in some cases the choices are few, and there would be no point running buses which had nowhere to pick up or set down passengers.

The new stops will provide accessible boarding and alighting for people from households in the local area, and for students of Abbotsfield and Swakeleys Schools. You suggest a 'Hail & Ride' service, but fixed stops rather than 'Hail & Ride' allow better accessibility in accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act. They enable better safety management compared with buses pulling up at ad-hoc points. They also mean that safe walking routes to and from the bus, sight-lines and the effect on other traffic can be properly planned for and considered.

You mention concerns over safety. If you know of any particular safety issue related to the presence of buses at this location over the existing risk from general traffic, it would be helpful if you could identify this so it can be investigated.

I hope that this explains some of the background to the proposal and addresses the concerns you have raised.

Yours ever,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Boris Johnson', written in a cursive style.

Boris Johnson
Mayor of London