

## Bus Shelter Project – Questions & Answers

### **Why are we doing this?**

We want to offer more and better bus shelters for existing and prospective bus passengers. This will help attract more passengers to use buses to improve on the 43 million bus passenger journeys in Essex last year.

### **When will new shelters start to be installed?**

The plan is for the new contract to be in place by late Autumn 2020, subject to a successful tender outcome. Shelters will begin to be built and installed once the contract is signed, as part of a replacement and new build programme over many years.

### **Isn't this just a County 'take-over'?**

No, this is very much a collaboration between Essex County Council and all Borough, District and City Council's across Essex. We're working together to deliver a unified, improved bus shelter estate to resolve some of the current problems – namely, patchy provision, a poor standard and variable standards due to mixed ownership.

### **When will my local shelter get replaced?**

Once the winning supplier is confirmed, and the contract commences, we will publish the replacement and new build programme on our website; which will include projected dates for each shelter included.

### **I don't have a shelter at the bus stop I currently use – how I can I request one?**

Requests for new shelters can be made via your local Essex County Councillor who can make the request at the Local Highways Panel (LHP) for your area. Please see the following link for more details on the LHP process:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/highway-schemes-and-developments/local-highway-panels.aspx>

### **Why do I have to have my County Member's approval for a bus shelter request to be considered?**

This is the current process and remains unchanged by the new Essex-wide Bus Shelter initiative. It ensures that there is wider local democratic consideration before a request is put forward for a decision to the Local Highways Panel.

## **How do I know who owns which shelters?**

An interactive map is provided on the Essex Highways website that shows current ownership of bus shelters across Essex. This will be updated once the new Essex-wide Bus Shelter Contract commences

<https://www.essexhighways.org/interactive-maps-and-live-travel-information/highways-information-map.aspx>

## **The current bus shelters are dirty and unclean, will the new contract deal with this issue?**

Yes! For shelters included in the contract, there will be a pro-active maintenance requirement that includes the cleaning and repair of shelters.

If you notice a shelter that needs attention, please report it via the Essex Highways Report It tool.

<https://www.essexhighways.org/tell-us/bus-stops.aspx>

## **How long is the Essex-wide Bus Shelter contract being let for?**

The contract will run for a 10 year period, with a 5 year extension option, to provide long-term stability for Essex residents and the Council. It will also ensure sufficient payback period for the investment we are making into this important facility for passengers.

## **Isn't this really just a venture into advertising to make money?**

No, the main reason for implementing this contract is to provide an improved bus shelter estate for Essex residents that are sustainable and consistently good quality.

Sustainability not only includes environmental aspects, but also economic. All income that Essex County Council receives from advertising through this contract is being ringfenced and spent solely on bus infrastructure costs across the County.

## **So what you're saying is that every shelter will be covered in Advertising?**

No, and as it happens, most current shelters to be included in the contract are non-advertising.

The winning supplier, working in partnership with Essex County Council, will determine which bus shelters will have advertising on them; focussing on key areas where this is suitable to generate enough return on investment.

**I read that Parish Council owned shelters are not included in the contract. How will the new contract impact on my local Parish?**

Town and Parish Councils will not be required to undertake any new responsibilities under the future contract and their existing way of managing shelters will continue. Town/Parish-owned shelters are not included in the contract at this stage.

For new shelter requests, current arrangements will continue with requests for shelters coming through the local Essex County Councillor to the Local Highways Panel. Options will be available to support Councils with construction and installation of the shelters, and, as now, maintenance of shelters that towns/parishes own will remain their responsibility. We will continue to keep these arrangements under review.

**What options will there be for different types of shelters?**

One of the key aims of this contract is to provide similar high-quality bus stops, (including space for wheelchairs, seating and lighting), to Essex residents. Once installations begin, you should expect to see a consistent look and feel to the new shelters.

**Will seating and lighting be provided in the new shelters?**

Yes! Listening to residents feedback, we know that safety and comfort are two keys areas for improvements. Proper seats will be provided and lighting installed in every new shelter, under the new contract.

**What advertising policy will be used to determine adverts that can be displayed?**

Essex County Council has developed and agreed a Highways & Transport Advertising Policy at the Cabinet meeting in February 2020.

A copy of the policy can be found on the Essex Highways Bus Shelter webpage:

<https://www.essexhighways.org/getting-around/bus/essex-bus-shelter-project.aspx>

### **Which bus shelters will be improved first?**

We are agreeing a way of prioritising the work and we will share that nearer to the launch of the new contact. Priority will take account of several factors – including deadlines due to funding restrictions (e.g. Section 106 planning issues), local circumstances, suitability for advertising and more.

### **Why can't a bus shelter be installed at every bus stop?**

Whilst this would be ideal, it is unrealistic for several reasons.

Firstly, the cost would be far more than the funding available. Secondly, not every bus stop requires a bus shelter. There are over 7,500 bus stops across Essex and many of those have very low use, with only a handful of passengers using them.