

## CONTENTS

Introduction	1
Consultation	1
The Gloucestershire Approach	1
The Gloucestershire Local Bus Information Strategy	3

**For further details, please contact:**

**Derek Lucas**  
**Transport Procurement and Operations Manager**

**Tel: 01452 425343**

**Email: [derek.lucas@gloucestershire.gov.uk](mailto:derek.lucas@gloucestershire.gov.uk)**

**[Revision 2: March 2006]**



# Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

## Introduction

This Local Bus Information Strategy meets the requirements of the Transport Act 2000. The Act enables the County Council to require certain standards of information provision from bus operators and, where they fall short, to recoup the reasonable costs of acting in the operators' stead. The Strategy builds on best practice and seeks to ensure consistent standards of bus information.

## Consultation

The Act requires the County Council to have consulted "such organisations appearing to the authority to be representative of users of local services" and the Traffic Commissioner. Accordingly, all Parish and District Councils have been consulted together with individuals and organisations who have previously expressed an interest in bus services in Gloucestershire.

## The Gloucestershire approach

The Strategy builds on the County Council's achievements to date in the field of information provision and those of local bus companies. It seeks, within the framework of the Act, to ensure consistent standards throughout the County for all bus services, both commercial and supported. It seeks to spread and develop current best practice. It also sets out the County Council's continuing activities over and above what individual operators might provide.

The principal features of the Strategy are:

- The operation and funding of Traveline (the national travel telephone enquiry service)
- The provision of clear printed timetable information
- The distribution of information
- The maintenance of up-to-date roadside information
- Internet information services
- On bus information

The Act does not empower the Council directly to force bus operators to provide information, nor to impose penalties for failure. It works by the Council requiring certain standards for bus operators' information provision and, where operators fall short of those standards, to recoup from operators the Council's reasonable costs in meeting those standards instead of the operators.

The implementation of the basic Strategy does not entail additional cost to the Council. In principle, the Act allows extra costs to be recouped. There may also be scope for recouping some existing costs but this depends entirely on how much information operators produce themselves. Council staff resources will need to be devoted to monitoring the provision of information.

The Strategy incorporates the County Council's commitment on data supply and funding to Traveline (the national public transport information service) as required under the contract with SWPTI (the regional partnership of local authorities and major bus companies).

The Strategy is already being implemented having started from April 2005.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

The Local Bus Information Strategy builds on and develops current best practice in the provision of information, setting clear standards for operators to meet and the role of the County Council. Its format is designed to make clear the obligations on all relevant parties and to enable the County Council to take the actions allowed by the Act. It takes note of the comments received from consultees. It aims to improve information for the public by promoting and implementing best practice, taking account of available resources.

### **The Gloucestershire Local Bus Information Strategy**

#### **1. The Transport Act 2000**

The 2000 Transport Act empowers the County Council to require certain standards of bus operators' information provision and, where operators fall short of those standards, to recoup from operators the Council's reasonable costs in meeting those standards in the operators' stead.

The Act specifically refers to local bus services. These are registered local bus services, not long-distance coaches or rail services.

Section 139 of the Transport Act 2000 states that each local transport authority must from time to time determine, having regard to their Local Transport Plan:

- what local bus information should be made available to the public ("the required information"), and
- the way in which it should be made available ("the appropriate way").

#### **2. What information should bus operators make available to the public?**

Following consultation under the terms of the 2000 Act, Gloucestershire County Council considers the required information to be:

##### **2.1 Telephone Information Service**

Bus operators should offer an impartial telephone information service.

"Impartial" means giving information about all operators' services in the South West of England (the local authority areas of Bath & North East Somerset, Bristol, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, North Somerset, Plymouth, Poole, Portsmouth, South Gloucestershire, Somerset, Torbay, Southampton, Wiltshire, Bournemouth, Swindon) and, where necessary, referring the caller to an equivalent telephone enquiry service in another region.

The service should be available from 0700 until 2100 daily. The information available should consist of routes, times, the location of bus stops and, from a date to be specified, fares (including concessions).

In the absence of such a service provided by the operators, the County Council considers that Traveline meets this requirement in the appropriate way and (unless the operator is already a partner in SWPTI, the partnership of local authorities and major bus companies) will therefore recoup a sum from each operator towards the cost of operating Traveline in proportion to the benefit received. The benefit will be assessed by SWPTI on the basis of the number of public enquiries received by Traveline relating to each operator or service.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

### 2.2 Printed Information

Bus operators should provide printed route and timetable information.

For each service operated on a commercial basis, the bus operator should provide, free of charge, printed route and timetable information in sufficient quantity through the outlets mentioned in section 3.1.

Printed information about bus service alterations should be published and distributed at least seven days before the date of implementation of the change. The information should also be made available on board the bus on the route concerned, by means of notices for passengers, again at least seven days before the date of implementation.

In the absence of such printed information provided by the operators, the County Council considers that its individual timetable leaflets and area bus timetable booklets meet this requirement in the appropriate way and will therefore recoup a sum from each operator towards the cost of producing and distributing these booklets in proportion to the benefit received. The benefit will be assessed by the County Council on the basis of the amount of space in each booklet relating to each operator's commercial services.

Printed route and timetable information should incorporate the following:

- 2.2.1 The printed information should appear on paper of at least A5 or A4 size (folded as appropriate). Information should refer to individual routes or a number of routes, in which case a booklet will be acceptable subject to its compliance with the requirements set out in the following sections.
- 2.2.2 Print size should be minimum 8-point, as recommended by the Disabled Persons' Transport Advisory Committee. Print size should preferably be larger than this if possible (See also 2.2.15). Print style should be a simple upright sans serif typeface (the County Council uses Arial) of a medium weight with simple but clear character definition. In choosing a typeface, it is important that attention is paid to the actual size when printed. Lower case print is much easier to read and should be used almost exclusively. Clear numerals are very important in order to avoid confusion between numbers. Where emphasis is required **bold type** may be used.
- 2.2.3 The information should include service numbers and a full timetable showing all registered journeys and their days and periods of operation, including start date, and when known, as in the case of seasonal services, finish dates as well. Timetable headings should include the route number and a heading indicating the route termini but may include a selection of important places served en route. Reference should be made to any variations on Public Holidays, school term/school holiday variations or special events. For urban routes or other routes specified by the County Council, the information should include a route description. Times should be displayed in 24 hour format. It should be presented without punctuation (eg: 2340, not 23.40). Where possible a conversion chart between 24 hour and 12 hour clocks should be included. Each timetable must give a clear indication as to the date on which the timetable is current from. If the end date is known this should also be displayed.
- 2.2.4 Timetables should display information about days of operation in a consistent style. "Mondays to Fridays" is acceptable, the term "Weekdays" is not.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

- 2.2.5 Timing point descriptions should conform with those currently in use by the County Council for consistency. The County Council will ensure that it conforms to any current standard of timing point descriptions laid down (currently the National Public Transport Access Nodes (NaPTAN) database). The County Council will provide operators with guidance on request (01452 425608).
- 2.2.6 The County Council may require operators to use standard codes for describing days and variations to operation. Separate consultation will take place with operators about this.
- 2.2.7 Timetables should be in conventional matrix format (for journey direction read downwards), unless agreed otherwise by the County Council.
- 2.2.8 Reference should be made to the availability of any relevant network or rover tickets or other ticket availability on the service/s. This should include any time restrictions.
- 2.2.9 The Traveline telephone number must be included.
- 2.2.10 Advice should be included as to how to make lost property enquiries, complain about failures in service or to submit comments to the operator.
- 2.2.11 On routes which the County Council may from time to time see fit to designate, where commercial and financially supported services are integrated or run in parallel, a composite timetable should be shown.
- 2.2.12 The information should identify those journeys which are normally operated with fully accessible vehicles.
- 2.2.13 The information should identify any sections of route which are non-stop or limited stop.
- 2.2.14 It is recommended that good quality white paper be used to minimise “shadow” from the opposite side rather than thin, flimsy or highly reflective paper. Print colour should be either black or a colour which contrasts strongly with the background.
- 2.2.15 Large-print timetables (14-pt) should be made available on individual request. The availability of this facility should be mentioned on timetables.
- 2.2.16 The County Council may, from time to time, require operators of commercial local bus services to use route numbers to be mutually agreed in order to avoid confusion for bus service users.
- 2.2.17 or principal commercial routes or local networks which the County Council may from time to time see fit to designate, a special individual leaflet should be produced and made available in sufficient quantity, ie inclusion in an area or company booklet will not be sufficient. This printed information should meet the same standards as those in section 2.2 and be distributed as detailed in section 3.1. In the absence of such special leaflets provided by the operators, the County Council will produce these and will recoup a sum from the operator(s) to cover the cost of production and distribution.

### **3. How should bus operators make information available to the public?**

Following consultation under the terms of the 2000 Act, Gloucestershire County Council considers the appropriate way to be:

#### **3.1 Distribution of Information**

Leaflets should be distributed free of charge.

The printed information referred to in section 2.2 should be distributed free of charge along the route (including principal points in adjoining local authority areas) through all bus company outlets. This includes bus stations and offices of both the operator of the service in question and of other operators) and in addition, subject to agreement by the outlet, through the following:

- railway stations,
- public libraries,
- tourist information centres,
- village shops and/or post offices (minimum one outlet per parish where they exist)

Sufficient copies should also be sent to the Clerk of each Parish Council along the route so that any willing parish council may maintain notice boards and other facilities. The County Council will supply parish council contact details on request. Copies should also be available on request by post for members of the public. In the case of the latter a postage and packing charge may be made. The County Council will also require reasonable quantities to be sent to the Integrated Transport Unit at Shire Hall.

#### **3.2 Roadside Information**

The bus operator should provide roadside timetable information. On commercial routes, the bus operator should provide and maintain roadside timetable information at key bus stops which the County Council may from time to time see fit to designate.

##### **3.2.1 Bus Stop Flags**

A bus stop flag complying with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 1994 should be fitted. The flag should show the Traveline telephone numbers for travel enquiries. A company logo may be shown provided this is in addition to the legal requirements and does not conflict with the legally required layout. Up-to-date route number information is preferred. Additional service destination information may be included if appropriate. If the stop name is included, it must be consistent with the County Council standard (please see section 2.2.5). The County Council may provide a bus stop pole. It is envisaged that, in due course, there may be a requirement to display a stop number which will allow waiting passengers to text for details of when the next bus is due. Bus Stop flags provided by the County Council must not be amended or modified in any way without the permission of the County Council. When a bus company erects a bus stop flag in Gloucestershire, they must notify the County Council in writing within two weeks of the erection.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

### 3.2.2 Display Cases

All service information should be contained in a watertight display case either separately mounted or as an integral part of a bus shelter and the printed information should meet the same standards as the leaflets referred to in section 2.2.

### 3.2.3 Bus Service Alterations

Roadside information about bus service alterations should be posted no later than the date of implementation of the change.

### 3.2.4 Shared Bus Stops

Operators sharing stops should liaise with one another to ensure effective joint use of display space and a reasonable charge may be made by an operator making display space available to another operator and inserting information.

In the absence of such roadside information provided by the operators, the County Council will meet this requirement in the appropriate way and will therefore recoup a sum from each operator towards the cost of doing so. At key stops, which the County Council may designate, that are used by more than one operator, the County Council will set up and maintain information and will therefore recoup a sum, from each operator towards the cost of doing so.

The County Council aims to ensure during the first year of implementation of the Information Strategy that all parishes with a population of 750 or above should have at least one roadside timetable display at their principal bus stop.

## 3.3 Web Site Information

Any bus operator maintaining a web site should include a link to the Gloucestershire County Council and Traveline sites and other transport sites requested by the County Council. The County Council will supply the operator with details of these on request.

## 3.4 On Bus Information

- 3.4.1 Bus operators should co-operate with the County Council in the display of public transport promotional material on board buses and at company offices.
- 3.4.2 Bus operators should endeavour to ensure that there is timetable information relating to the service being operated available on the vehicle
- 3.4.3 It is recommended that all destination displays on vehicles show accurate, legible information which is capable of being illuminated when visibility conditions require.

### **4. How about financially supported services?**

Gloucestershire County Council will provide information for financially supported services.

For financially supported services the County Council will provide the printed information described in section 2.2, plus special leaflets for key supported routes and will distribute it as required by section 3.1. Operators of supported services should also refer to the relevant paragraphs of the Conditions of Contract.

For financially supported services, the County Council will make a binding agreement with contracted operators as to who (usually the council or the bus operator) will be responsible for posting roadside information.

### **5. What happens if bus operators do not meet with the Strategy?**

The 2000 Act requires the County Council to ascertain whether the required information is being made available to the public in the appropriate way.

If, in the County Council's opinion, this is not, the Council must seek to make arrangements with local bus operators to make the required information available in the appropriate way.

If it is not possible to make satisfactory arrangements with operators, the Council must take steps to ensure that the required information is made available in the appropriate way and may then recover their reasonable costs from the operators.

If the standards set out in this Strategy are not being met by a bus operator, Gloucestershire County Council will ask them to meet those standards. If operators can not or will not meet those standards, the County Council will make the necessary arrangements and will recoup reasonable costs from bus operators. In carrying out these functions, the County Council will co-operate with District Councils within Gloucestershire and also neighbouring Unitary and County Councils. At present, the County Council envisages that it will seek to recoup costs from bus operators for the following items of information provision:

- Traveline
- area timetable booklets and leaflets and certain individual route leaflets, and
- roadside information.

### **6. What extra information will Gloucestershire County Council make available to the public?**

In addition to the standards required of bus operators, the County Council will:

#### **6.1 Media, Advertising and Local Events**

Promote the use of local bus services in conjunction with Travelwise, Travel Plans and other initiatives through all appropriate media.

#### **6.2 Web Site**

Maintain a web site providing an explanation of how bus services are provided (commercial and supported) and the County Council's role, advance notice of bus service changes (based on registrations received) plus links to other relevant sites.

#### **6.3 Supply Publications**

Supply timetable and other relevant publications as available on request free of charge – except for a charge (£4.00 as at April 2005) for three or more different area timetable books in one request. The public may ring Gloucestershire County Council on 01452 426342 to the Integrated Transport Unit at Gloucestershire County Council, Shire Hall, Gloucester, GL1 2TH.

#### **6.4 Bus Map**

Publish a Gloucestershire bus service map at regular intervals which operators will be required to make available to the public through their offices and which the County Council will distribute in line with section 3.1. Local area bus maps may be published from time to time as the County Council sees appropriate.

#### **6.5 Timetable Leaflets and Area Transport Guides**

Publish leaflets and area timetable books, where considered appropriate, which will be distributed in line with section 3.1. As well as bus information, these will include summary details of principal coach and rail services as appropriate and as available.

#### **6.6 Guidance on how to use buses**

6.6.1 The County Council will produce, from time to time, a leaflet which provides guidance on how to read a bus timetable. This will be made available to operators in digital form, on request, for use in their own timetable publications. The County Council will also produce, from time to time, the same leaflet translated into a series of other languages which are used by minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire.

6.6.2 The County Council will produce, from time to time, a leaflet which provides guidance on how to catch a bus. The County Council will also produce, from time to time, the same leaflet translated into a series of other languages which are used by minority ethnic groups in Gloucestershire.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

### **6.7 Tourism by public transport**

Produce appropriate literature promoting tourism by public transport in partnership with appropriate tourism bodies. Operators will be required to make this literature available to the public through their offices.

### **6.8 Roadside Information**

In the case of roadside timetable displays, maintain roadside information where the County Council is able to provide or use appropriate displays.

### **6.9 Local Transport Information**

Co-operate with and assist Parish Councils or appropriate local groups to produce and distribute local transport information, leaflets or booklets where appropriate.

### **6.10 County Council Publications**

Seek to ensure that the County Council's own publications include appropriate reference to public transport.

### **6.11 Information Boards**

Maintain at certain key locations, which the County Council may from time to time designate, comprehensive transport information boards.

### **6.12 Real Time Passenger Information**

Develop a programme for the provision of roadside real-time passenger information displays, remote information termini and web-site in partnership with operators and utilising funding available through Government grants and developer contributions from planning agreements.

### **6.13 National and Regional Initiatives**

6.13.1 Maintain its commitment on data supply and funding to Traveline as required under the contract with SWPTI.

6.13.2 Co-operate with any new initiatives such as Transport Direct

### **6.14 Glossary**

GSP - The Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership is a partnership of around 40 public, private and voluntary sector agencies in the county, established according to the provisions of the Local Government Act 2000.

Community Strategy - Community Strategies are developed and delivered by service providers from the public, private, voluntary and community sector. The different sectors have worked together in the Gloucestershire Strategic Partnership to agree the content and actions in the Community Strategy.

## Appendix C: Local Bus Information Strategy

PPG – Planning Policy Guidance notes determine national policies on different aspects of planning and the rules that govern the operation of the system. They are currently issued by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM).

PPS – Planning Policy Statements are gradually being developed to replace PPGs.

S106 - Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as substituted by the Planning and Compensation Act 1991, is one of a number of sections which allows Local Planning Authorities to take contributions for measures that are necessary in planning terms to accommodate or mitigate the impact of the development on a range of facilities and services including transport.