

# Priority at Signalised Junctions and Crossings

April 2023



## Introduction

The publication of the “Bus Back Better” the national bus strategy (2021) and “Gear Change – a bold vision for cycling and walking (2020)” set out the government’s objectives to transform the way we travel. Focusing on the movement of people over the movement of vehicles and ensuring ease and convenience to encourage cycling, walking, wheeling and bus travel.

Our signals need to be configured to reflect national and local policy. Each location will have its individual circumstances, this document provides the principles which will be followed when prioritising movement.

Recent national policy guidance includes the following three statements.

*Places will be truly walkable. A travel revolution in our streets, towns and communities will have made cycling a mass form of transit. Cycling and walking will be the natural first choice for many journeys with half of all journeys in towns and cities being cycled or walked by 2030 - Gear Change, 2020*

*The key to making buses more attractive is making them faster and more reliable. – Bus Back Better, 2021*

*...buses are vital to ensuring the economy meets Net Zero carbon emissions and driving the green transformation. In congested areas, substantial modal shift away from the car will soon be needed if clean air targets and the Government’s broader climate goals are to be met. The only mode capable of sufficient expansion in the time available is the bus. – Bus Back Better, 2021*

The documents outlined below provide the foundation for this Signal Policy.

### **Hierarchy of road users**

The hierarchy of road users supports the use of sustainable transport modes to reduce the impact of transport on our environment and is used throughout this document to guide the policy.

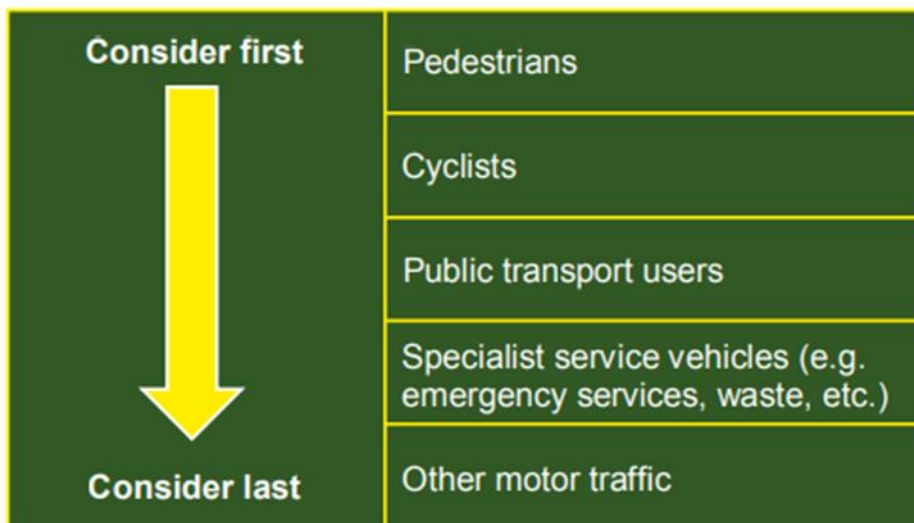
### **Traffic Signs Manual**

The manual reflects the shift in street design and described in the following paragraphs in Chapter 6 “Traffic Control”,

1.7.1. Traffic signals are a key tool in managing traffic. They are provided for a number of reasons – to manage flows and delays between main and side roads, to provide safe crossing places, and to reduce conflicts.

1.7.2. They achieve this by separating conflicting traffic in time, and sometimes space, safely, efficiently and effectively. Note that the term “traffic” includes all road users: pedestrians, pedal cycles (which are vehicles), equestrians, public service vehicles, and motor vehicles.

1.7.4. There has been considerable shift in street design in recent years, with an increasing focus on ‘place’ over ‘movement’, particularly in urban areas. The advice in this chapter takes its lead from the Manual for Streets and Manual for Streets 2, which include a hierarchy of provision putting pedestrians at the top and motor traffic at the bottom. While recognising that the primary function of traffic signals is to control vehicular traffic, this type of approach is likely to be more suitable for dense urban areas (see Figure 1-1).



**Figure 1-1** Hierarchy of provision

## Highway Code

The updated Highway Code introduced new rules relating to the hierarchy of road users, placing those most at risk of injury at the top of the consideration when providing facilities.

## Local Transport Plan

Priority themes in the emerging Local Transport Plan<sup>5</sup> are

- Decarbonisation
- A Strong, Resilient and Fair Economy
- Health, Wellbeing and Social Inclusion
- Creating Better Places

These themes integrate at a regional level with Transport East's Transport Strategy priorities and in local level Town Plans are being produced to detail the transport requirements of our larger urban areas. Signal priority to provide advantage for active travel and bus movement supports the themes.

## **Suffolk Design Street Guide**

The Suffolk Design Streets Guide<sup>6</sup> provides guidance on the design of highways to provide for all users. The movement framework section includes description how the needs of all modes should be considered and prioritised based on the nature and use of the route.

## **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

The Suffolk Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan sets out measures to achieve improvements for active travel. It includes reducing the wait times at signalised crossings to encourage walking, wheeling, and cycling.

## **Bus Service Improvement Plan & Enhanced Partnership**

As part of Suffolk's response to Bus Back Better (the national bus strategy for England), a Bus Service Improvement Plan (BSIP) was produced. The BSIP generated obligations on the Enhanced Partnership (EP) which includes

“Progress the introduction of traffic light priority on public transport routes where infrastructure allows and develop a policy for future rollout as identified in BSIP Proposal (b) Increase bus priority measures”

The Enhanced Partnership document<sup>9</sup> was approved by Cabinet on 29 March 2022 in advance of the first Enhanced Partnership Board meeting which was held the following month.

## Headline Objectives

Traffic signals are used to manage traffic flows, but also to handle waiting times for pedestrians, cyclists, and buses.

Traffic signals should be configured to optimise the movement of people rather than simply the movement of vehicles. For example, buses provide the potential for moving large numbers of people using a relatively small amount of road space (a full double-decker bus can take up to 75 cars off the road<sup>10</sup>). Walking, cycling, and bus travel provide the greatest opportunity to relieve traffic congestion, improve air quality and benefit public health by encouraging an active lifestyle.

The LCWIP and Enhanced Partnership recognise the value of buses and active travel in providing access to employment, education, leisure, healthcare, and other key destinations. Signals need to support a high quality, accessible and integrated transport network developed to increase patronage and to improve sustainable transport opportunities.

Both the LCWIP and Enhanced Partnership provide the opportunity for their stakeholders to identify signalised junctions which can provide modal priority. Thorough workshops and site visits these are examined and evaluated for any proposed changes.

The LCWIP generated a network plan and is continuing to develop town plans which identify the most appropriate corridors for cycling, walking and bus movements. Key bus corridors were identified by the EP, through a series of workshops and analysis of existing routes using Agent Based Modelling. Improvements to include, but not limited to, these bus corridors and to include re-balancing the priorities at signals.

## **Signal Policy**

The following policy statements provide our approach to providing priority at signals. Local situations will vary but the statements provide the principles to be used when making decisions.

### **General**

1) Instances where there is significant and conflicting demand for pedestrian crossing, cyclists either using a route or a toucan crossing and bus services will be resolved through the application of the hierarchy of provision for road users

### **Pedestrian**

2) Pedestrian waiting times will be minimised, especially for standalone crossings on walking routes to key destinations such as schools, hospitals, rail stations, visitor attractions and town centres.

3) Crossing times set to allow pedestrians to cross at a suitable speed (currently recommended at 1.2m/sec), with more time allowed where possible.

4) Pedestrians will be prioritised at signalised junctions on prominent walking routes to key destinations such as schools, hospitals, rail stations and town centres except in situations where severe impact on road safety, air quality or other severe impacts are clearly demonstrated.

5) All signal junctions with connecting footways will be provided with a pedestrian call for a green person signal as far as reasonably practicable

6) At junctions with a very high foot fall and low volume vehicular traffic, a continuous green person signal (until a vehicle is detected) should be considered, to provide optimum pedestrian priority whilst avoiding bus delay

### **Cyclists**

7) Cyclist waiting times at standalone crossings or when crossing signalised junctions will be minimised on cycle routes prioritised within Suffolk's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and documented in the town plans

8) Segregated cycle lanes will be provided on the approach to all signalised junctions where there is demand for cycling and space to do so as far as reasonably practicable

9) All signal junctions with connecting cycle routes will be provided with a cyclist call for a green crossing signal as far as reasonably practicable

10) Cycle lanes on the approach to signalised junctions will link to

Advanced Stop Lines as far as reasonably practicable.

11) Cyclist early release systems will be considered on cycle routes prioritised within Suffolk's Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan and at busy junctions to improve road safety

12) The Junction Assessment Tool will be used to inform changes to signalised junctions

### **Horse Riders**

13) The waiting times for horse riders at Pegasus crossings will be minimised as far as reasonably practicable



14) All signal junctions with connecting horse walks will be provided with a call for a green crossing signal as far as reasonably practicable

### **Buses**

15) Bus lanes and signalised bus gates that prioritise bus movements over general traffic will be considered on all roads where there is a frequent bus service, congestion delays and physical space to install the infrastructure

16) Bus lanes that utilise bus gates should be physically segregated from other traffic lanes where there is a risk of conflict with other road users accessing the bus lane for legitimate purposes

17) Bus services will be given signal priority over side roads adopting the measures available to respond to a bus approaching the signals

18) Consideration should be given to trialling changes to phasing and monitoring the impact on all road users as far as reasonably practicable in situations where the cost of the trial and any remedial work to revert to existing arrangements is commensurate with the scale and nature of the scheme

19) A detailed explanation of any alterations made to signalised junctions will be made available to Suffolk's Enhanced Partnership upon implementation

## References

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