

Response from Herts Vision Loss Group

Stevenage Sight Life Group discussed SBC Environment and Economy Select Committee questions on the local bus services. These are their responses:

1. Do you use the HertsLynx – intalink service? How do you find this service?

Group unsure what HertsLynx is. Prefer paper copies of bus timetables. Not everyone has a mobile phone or computer access.

2. Are you able to use the bus service in Stevenage easily or are there challenges to using the service?

The group found the information shown at bus bays at Stevenage bus station and all stops using a display screen, but the print was too small with poor contrast. They also found the display screen was placed too high.

They commented that some buses park in a different bay to the one the timetable/display screen states.

They would prefer all screens to display bus information in real time not just the timetable – to reduce the amount of information.

At night with no attendants there is no help unless a bus driver can be of assistance.

3. Are you able to get onto and off buses safely?

Leaving the bus can be hazardous especially as people are allowed to get on the bus before all passengers leave.

They found some bus drivers start driving before all the passengers are seated.

The group noted that some buses stop a short distance from the kerb making it difficult/slower to exit the bus.

Verbal instructions (as on a train) are helpful.

Travelling on a bus in the evening is difficult – especially in recognising the correct stop to exit.

4. Are the bus services that you use regular and reliable?

No – often do not arrive – no way of knowing if a bus has been cancelled.

People often have to wait without information.

5. How often do you use bus services each week?

Most of the group use the buses regularly – it's their only mode of transport unless they use a taxi or have help from relatives.

6. What could be done to improve the service?

An attendant should be always present at the bus station.

The driver waits until all the passengers exiting the bus leave before new passengers get on.

Temperament of drivers is usually good but not always.

Larger text with good contrast on display screens – placed at eye level height and away from sun.

More bus stops to have display screens.

Buses to be painted a bright colour that is in contrast with surroundings – red or yellow, not green or blue.

To have bus stops close to pedestrian crossings.

Training to include understanding of visual impairment in all ages.

7. Would any of your members be interested in meeting with SBC Officers and Members to share their views about bus services?

Yes

Please forward the groups views to the Stevenage Borough Councils Environment & Economy Scrutiny Committee.

Thank you

Alison Macdougall

Herts Vision Loss volunteer