

10<sup>th</sup> Jan 2021

## CPT RESPONSE TO THE ROYAL PARKS MOVEMENT STRATEGY CONSULTATION

**The Confederation of Passenger Transport UK is the trade association of the bus and coach industry, representing over 1000 operators including large bus and coach companies and numerous small and medium enterprise (SME) companies.**

### Introduction

**As an industry, we welcome any balanced proposals which will improve travel and the lives of those resident in or visiting the Capital, enhance the environment, making it more attractive and appealing to Londoners and visitors alike.**

### General

The coach industry is an integral part of London's transport infrastructure, providing travel links, particularly for groups and those with impaired or restricted mobility and those who have particular needs requiring special attention, children or those for whom English isn't their first language for instance, all of which supports the City's tourism and commerce.

CPT broadly supports any measures which will improve the experience of living, working and visiting the Capital. It is recognised that the measures proposed here will in the main achieve this by making the Royal Parks more accessible and improve the visitor experience. We would however have comments on the overall scheme plans and on a number of the proposals for individual parks.

### The Proposals

With regard to the proposals, CPT would wish to raise the following general points:

- CPT applauds all efforts to improve the experience of visiting the Royal Parks and would highlight that the proposals do broadly address the aims and will enhance the visitor experience.
  
- In tourism terms, Royal Parks are a National asset and as such should be available to all, regardless of where they live. With this in mind, we would encourage provision to allow access to all regardless of their physical ability, place of residence or mode of travel. As group visits in the main use coaches, we would urge that consideration is given to how groups travelling by coach can access all parks and that facilities to accommodate coaches are

considered in the overall strategy – Set down and pick-up, parking and access to toilets for visitors.

- It is perhaps questionable to be undertaking this trial at a time when the period of the trial has been subject to so much uncertainty and indeed the results of the trial will be influencing the future over which there hangs even greater uncertainty. Not wishing to pre-empt any particular outcome, CPT would urge that the proposals as finally implemented after the trial are monitored and reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of visitors in the future. We don't believe that this in any way can be forecast with any degree of accuracy at the present time.

#### **The Proposals by individual location:**

Dealing with the proposals themselves, we would wish to comment on the following areas specifically:

#### **Hyde Park**

Hyde Park is of course relatively well provided for in terms of coach facilities, the Park Lane coach bays are a long established part of London's tourism infrastructure. As these bays are currently suspended to allow the temporary re-purposing of street space during the pandemic, the return of these bays to their normal use is critical to the return of London's tourism economy in the future and ensuring that the needs of cyclists can be catered for by the parallel Cycle Super Highway through the park is essential to allow the coach bays to be returned. The proposals appear to fully support this but confirmation that there are no plans to reduce the capacity of the routes for cyclists in the park would be welcome.

#### **Regents Park**

The removal of coach parking from London Zoo in 2018 has resulted in major difficulties for coaches and we believe has resulted in a decline in group visits to ZSL, school groups in particular. CPT would urge that all options are explored to restore at least a proportion of the coach parking to allow group visits to continue on the scale of pre-2018. ZSL has suffered considerably, as have the groups during the pandemic and a solution which will help to restore visits to previous levels would be a real boost to both.

## St James Park and The Green Park

The difficulties that groups travelling by coach have in accessing the Changing of the Guard ceremonies are long standing, the unacceptable congestion along Buckingham Gate is universally condemned and the recent steps taken to deal with this are welcome, however this will only be successful if suitable facilities are available to cater for the undisputed demand. Whilst it's accepted that use of the Horseride parking on the North side of the Mall is not a possibility at the present moment, we would urge that this facility is "package protected" in all future proposals in the hope that circumstances will prevail at some point to once again allow this facility to be utilised.

The Saturday closures proposed here will undoubtedly cause some difficulty to visiting groups, the majority of UK based tourists will visit London over a weekend and Saturdays in the summer months are invariably popular. Similarly, there are overseas groups whose schedule will only allow them a very small window of opportunity to be in the Capital and removing an additional day which allows a drive through the parks to gain a view of Buckingham Palace, will undoubtedly be a significant blow, particularly those who have limited mobility. We would urge provision is made for coaches to continue to have access, we firmly believe that a thorough risk assessment coupled with suitable mitigations could allow this to continue safely.

CPT is of course willing and available to discuss any aspect of the proposals, the consultation or our response and we look forward to hearing more on this in the near future.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Andy Warrender".

Andy Warrender  
Coaching Manager  
Confederation of Passenger Transport