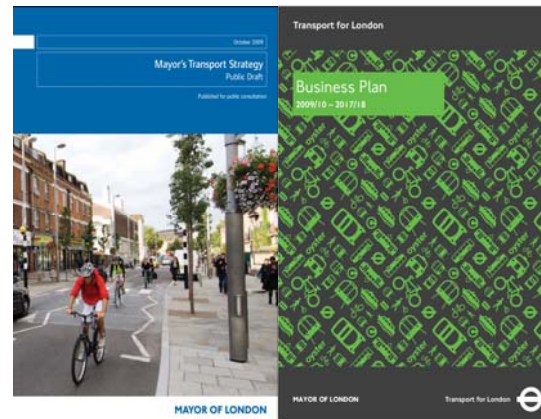




## Information Pack COUNTDOWN

In line with the Mayor of London's aim to enhance the quality of life for all Londoners, Transport for London (TfL) is committed to providing personalised real time information (RTI) for bus passengers across all of London's bus services.

As a key manifesto pledge, this commitment is reflected in both the proposed Mayor's Transport Strategy and TfL's current Business Plan 2009/10 – 2017/18.



*The Mayor through TfL, and working with the London boroughs and other stakeholders, including developers, will improve bus passengers' journeys through... the implementation of a new Countdown system to deliver expanded access to real time information for all Londoners via SMS and the web"*

Proposal 24, Draft Mayor's Transport Strategy, p 143

London has historically been served with real time passenger information showing bus arrival predictions via 2000 bus shelter signs: the system known as Countdown. While this has been extremely successful, its implementation is limited by both the technology and cost. Currently, Countdown only serves 10 per cent of the network and travelling public.

We recognise the value that passengers' place on good quality information and believe that we must expand the range of ways in which RTI is provided.

Through the advances in information technology, TfL is now able to provide a more complete information service showing bus arrival predictions for every one of London's 19,000 bus stops through a number of different methods (or channels), including mobile phone text messages, fixed and mobile web, as well

as providing a new generation of bus shelter mounted signs.

This new Countdown service allows TfL the opportunity to provide RTI across its entire bus network for the first time. New media channels and formats allow TfL to reach more passengers than ever before, in a cost effective way.

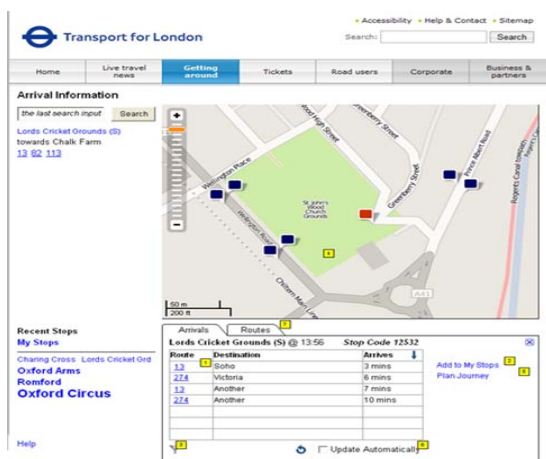
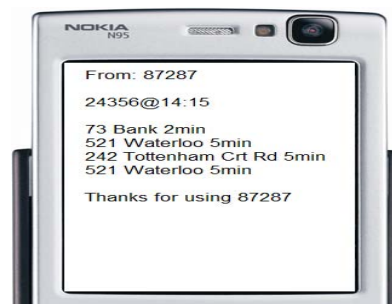
The introduction of Internet and text messaging services will secure access to bus RTI for Londoners both at and away from a bus stop. These services will be complemented by a new generation of Countdown signs which will provide RTI at around 2,500 key bus stops in London.

The internet and text message services are scheduled to be available in 2011. The roll out of 2500 new Countdown signs will commence in spring 2011 and will be completed by summer 2012.

## KEY FACTS

**Live SMS and Web** - arrival time predictions for every one of the 19,000 bus stops and all 700 routes in London.

**Text Messaging** - The mobile phone option will allow passengers to text their bus stop code or bus stop name and/or bus route to a central telephone number to receive real-time bus arrival times for that stop and/or route directly to their mobile phones.



**Web** - With greater flexibility to provide RTI than text messaging, web users can be helped in their selection of the appropriate bus stop or route, with passengers enabled to search for their bus stop by bus stop name, street name, area and post code. The fixed internet service will also allow searches on a map via our website.

## 2500 new Countdown signs

The live text messaging and web services will also be complemented by a new generation of Countdown signs which will provide RTI at around 2,500 key bus stops in London.

The selection of stops within the Countdown roll-out programme will be based upon a stop-selection strategy formulated to achieve widespread passenger benefit and secure a balanced and effective distribution of on-street signs across the network.

New generation Countdown signs will deliver audio RTI (via RNIB React - a key fob trigger device) for visually impaired passengers, therefore making bus RTI more inclusive and the displays

themselves will be fully compliant with the latest disability guidelines.

The standard shelter mounted signs will contain an illuminated element of LED with an amber colour on black background. The casing of the new signs is currently being designed by our suppliers.



Note: The above images are used to serve as an example only. They do not reflect the final design of the web or SMS service or the new on-street sign.

The new Countdown signs will be able to offer more information than those currently in use. As well as predicting bus arrival times, they will be able to display other relevant travel information such as service updates, disruption information or network wide messages.

The technology used by the new Countdown system will increase the

flexibility to redeploy signs to accommodate any changes in the use of stops across the network, for example, due to housing or retail developments or changes in demographics.

TfL will periodically reassess the network and deploy or move signs as the network evolves using its stop selection strategy.

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## STOP SELECTION OVERVIEW

The new Countdown programme presents TfL with a unique opportunity to rethink the sign allocation to stops, allowing greater benefit to passengers while achieving a more considered and informed allocation.

There are currently around 19,000 bus stops in London. While we appreciate how useful Countdown would be at all bus stops, we need to balance the cost of providing Countdown on-street signs with the benefits to customers.

As part of the roll out of the new Countdown system, the selection of stops to receive on-street signs will be based upon a stop-selection strategy in which every stop in London will be assessed against a range of criteria.

**The stop selection strategy is now finalised and serves as the basis for the allocation of signs to on-street locations.**

The Stop Selection Strategy aims to prioritise bus stops for Countdown signs by targeting locations where the need for on-street RTI is thought to be greatest.

New generation Countdown signs will be installed at strategic locations where they will provide the most benefit to the greatest number of passengers, whilst addressing social needs where possible.

To ensure these objectives are met, it will be necessary to review the existing locations of Countdown signs. Those existing signs which do not satisfy the requirements set out in the stop selection strategy will be removed.

The criteria used to assess stops are the following:

- Number of passengers using stop
- Proximity to centres of population
- Proximity to transport interchanges
- Proximity to key local services
- Number of low frequency services
- 24h routes serving stop

Each stop has been scored against each of the above criteria.

Bus stops scoring the highest are then selected to receive a new generation Countdown sign.

All stops across the London bus network have been considered as part of this “stop selection” process.

It is expected that approximately 35 per cent of the allocation of existing signs will be removed and replaced at locations where they will provide the most benefit to passengers.

The final location of on-street Countdown signs will be confirmed following discussions with each of the London

boroughs which will commence in January 2010 and conclude in November 2010.

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## CONTRACT DETAILS

Three contracts have been awarded as part of the new Countdown programme.

- The systems integrator contract covers the development of the software and the delivery of web and mobile content. It has been awarded to **telent**.

- The sign supply, installation and maintenance contracts cover the installation and maintenance of the bus stop signs. These have been awarded to **ACIS** and **Trueform**.

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## GOING FORWARD

We recognise the importance of working with each borough to develop the best possible outcomes in delivering effective and accurate real time information to London bus passengers.

As such, we ask that you take the necessary time and give careful consideration to reviewing this information pack.

In two separate attachments, you will find:

- A detailed map of those locations in your borough which have been selected to receive a new Countdown sign in accordance with the finalised stop selection strategy
- A Communications Tracker - which will be used to track and record any of your suggestions or comments regarding the selected locations for signs in your borough

The Communications Tracker will include three separate tables highlighting:

- o New bus shelter locations proposed to receive a new sign, as shown on the map

- o Existing sign locations that are proposed to receive a new sign, also included on the map
- o Existing sign locations that are proposed to be removed in accordance with the finalised stop selection strategy.

A corresponding column for comments is included for each proposed sign.

Please take the necessary time to review this list of allocated stops for your borough and record any comments or suggestions in the enclosed "Communications Tracker" prior to forwarding to [countdown@tfl.gov.uk](mailto:countdown@tfl.gov.uk)

Please provide any comments by Friday 26 February 2010.

The Countdown project team will be in contact shortly after receiving your comments to agree the best approach for any future discussions with your borough.