

# No live bus times on new tracker until summer

**Edinburgh's new bus tracker screens are not expected to provide real-time service information until summer, the council has said.**

Issues with the roll-out of the city's £2.9m 'travel tracker' system mean digital on-street displays continue to only show timetables, leading to a rise in complaints about inaccurate arrival times being shown at bus shelters across the capital.

Council officials said the ongoing testing process was "complex" and "is likely to identify issues where some further development is required," while Lothian Buses is yet to finish upgrading GPS tracking technology on their fleet. A two-year delay to the project has been blamed mainly on the pandemic and Brexit-related issues.

"The best estimate at this time is for real time information from all operators to be available from summer 2024," they said.

Edinburgh Bus Users Group (EBUG) said it was "hard to understand why it's taking so long to fix".

It added: "Passengers want a reliable system that clearly and simply displays when the next buses are coming, rather than timetabled bus information."

In November transport convener Scott Arthur apologised and admitted it had "not been clear" that departures advertised on the new full colour screens – which are also capable of receiving and displaying tram, rail, and air times – were not based on the live location of buses.

Now a note advises what is being shown is 'timetabled information' only.

Morningside councillor Marie Clair-Munro, who said she had been "inundated" with complaints from constituents regarding the situation, warned it could "put people off using public transport".

The latest update to councillors, which will go before the transport and environment committee on Thursday, March 7, said: "Operators are responsible for their own real time data and are expected to maintain a high level of consistency and accuracy. Council is working closely with Lothian Buses to address ongoing issues with the real time data feed.

"Lothian Buses are in the process of installing new tracking equipment on their fleet, which alongside the associated back-office system, will communicate real time and other information seamlessly to the Council's Travel tracker system.

"Lothian Buses will continue to display scheduled information until their new system is implemented. Replacement of on-street signs is progressing well and as of 8 February 2024, 224 signs out of 330 have been replaced. All signs will be replaced by mid-March 2024.

"The testing process is complex and is likely to identify issues where some further development is required to ensure consistent and accurate information. The best estimate at this time is for real time information from all operators to be available from summer 2024."

Delays have already led to an extra £1.7m being spent on keeping the existing, outdated digital bus boards running.

An EBUG spokesperson said: "The Council decided to renew the system in 2019. It's hard to understand why it's taking so long to fix.

"Passengers want a reliable system that clearly and simply displays when the next buses are coming, rather than timetabled bus information and the next flight to Tenerife.

"In February we asked the Council to use its communication channels to explain the problem, and when it would be sorted. We also urged a focus on doing proven basics well, and not

getting over-excited by high-tech 'solutions'.  
"This is beginning to look like a case in point."

***by Donald Turvill Local Democracy Reporter***



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