

Secret report advised against floating bus stops

Calls for immediate halt to projects after revelation of ‘buried’ advice from disability experts



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Published 04 July 2026 1:52pm



Ministers were accused of ‘underplaying’ fears about floating bus stops in a secret report Credit: Belinda Jiao

A panel of experts on disability demanded a halt to new floating bus stops because dangerous cyclists [refuse to stop at their zebra crossings](#), a secret report revealed.

The Government’s disabled persons transport advisory committee (DPTAC) accused ministers of “underplaying” vulnerable pedestrians’ fears [over the stops](#), which involve crossing a bike lane to board a bus.

It also criticised the Department for Transport for pandering to the cycling lobby, claiming draft guidance implied that cyclists “should not be inconvenienced” by road rules.

The 2025 document, marked “official – sensitive”, was released under freedom of information laws and showed how the expert committee, set up in 1985 to advise ministers on disabled people’s needs, had repeatedly called for a “pause” [on the controversial bus stops](#).

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The bus stops were designed to prevent cyclists from overtaking buses, but have proved hugely divisive after research showed that the majority of cyclists do not give way at zebra crossings leading to and from the stop.

Commenting on guidance for local authorities designing the bus stops, the DPTAC panel wrote: “For the record we would wish to restate that, as set out in our [2024] advice, our position remains that there should be a pause on all new installations until further research is complete.”

Its report, published in October last year, called for “greater prominence” to be given to the fears disabled people – including the visually impaired – have about being hit by inconsiderate cyclists.

“The review of the research carried out somewhat underplays the concerns expressed by disabled people: the psychological impact of near misses and people avoiding the particular areas for fear of encountering this infrastructure,” it says.

“We would like to see more emphasis on suitable calming measures to alert cyclists of the need for a change in behaviour, to slow down and give way to pedestrians. There are points in the guidance where it almost seems that cyclists should not be inconvenienced by such measures...”

In November last year, the Government ordered a pause on stops where passengers – including the elderly and pregnant women – had to step on or off the bus on to a live cycle lane.

The disability panel also called for “vital, consistent signage” and “critical” education to encourage cyclists to obey the law and stop for pedestrians at zebra crossings over bike lanes leading to the bus stop.

It questioned how police can enforce the law when “resources are strained” and “cyclists are not easily identified”, adding that “local patrols” and the “introduction of cameras” could improve road safety.

Councils that introduce floating bus stops should monitor them to see whether road rules are being followed, and they should “be prepared to modify or remove them if they are failing”, the report added.

Sarah Gayton, of the National Federation of the Blind of the UK which uncovered the report, called for an immediate halt to the bus stops.

“This advice was never published but was kept secret from Parliament. Had MPs and Lords known they would have voted against floating bus stops,” she said. “No more research will make these designs safe or accessible for blind people to use independently.”

Richard Holden, the shadow transport secretary, said: “The Government asked their own experts whether so-called floating bus stops were safe for disabled people and they did not like the answer they got, so they have tried to bury it.

“Labour have repeatedly ignored evidence and public opinion on anything to do with transport, and would rather ram it through because they think they know best.”

A Department for Transport spokesman said: “We have listened carefully to the concerns raised about floating bus stops from a wide range of groups, including DPTAC and disability charities.

“Following our pause on some floating bus stops in November, further research is being carried out to ensure accessibility is at the heart of these designs, and funding is available to help local authorities make changes to existing sites.”

In January, The Telegraph revealed how the British Standards Institution, which produces voluntary codes of conduct for best practice, issued advice in 2018 stating that “pedestrians should have access to and from the bus stop without crossing cycle routes”.

The Telegraph also forced [Transport for London to withdraw a report](#) that claimed floating bus stops were safe after it revealed on two separate occasions that its data were flawed.