

TRANSPORT

Briefing

Milton Keynes begins bus real-time system roll-out

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Milton Keynes is to install real-time passenger information displays at bus stops across the borough to help passengers plan their journeys and provide accurate details of bus arrival times.

Starting this month displays will be installed in some of the most used stops on bus routes 4, 5, 7 and 8 as part of the Central Milton Keynes Public Transport Improvements project. Further indicators will be fitted to stops at key destinations on other routes. Large screen displays will be erected at locations including thecentre:mk, Midsummer Place, Xscape ski centre, Bletchley town centre and Milton Keynes General Hospital. The work is expected to take two to three months to complete.

After installation there will be an initial trial period during which the signs will display test data while the system, branded 'Smartime', is checked before it goes live. The town's Quality Bus routes will be the first to display real-time information and will be followed by other routes operated by Arriva within the Borough of Milton Keynes.

John Lewis, chief executive of development agency Milton Keynes Partnership, said: "Milton Keynes has been waiting a long time for real-time passenger information and the technical nature of the scheme makes it a challenging and complex project to deliver. The system must be tested thoroughly before it is officially launched this summer and we are working closely with our partners at Milton Keynes Council and with Arriva and supplier INEO Systrans to achieve this."

Pele Bhamber, head of transport at Milton Keynes Council, added: "The council is looking at ways to improve the bus service in Milton Keynes and RTPI is one of a package of measures that will help to make buses more attractive to use. There are plans to invest more than £3 million into local bus services, on top of the £2 million already allocated by the council this year. Arriva has also invested around £4.85 million since 2006 which shows that we are all committed to providing a high quality service for bus passengers."

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