**Accessible Information: Audio – Visual Stop Name**

**Background**

The Bus Services Act 2017 allows for operators to be required to provide audio visual information on vehicle.

The Department for Transport is planning to introduce this requirement.

During the consultation process in 2018 there was a re-occurring issue was around the naming of stops and the final destination. A number of respondents across all stakeholder groups asked for consistency in the stop naming being used.

Currently different operators have different names, even often within the same operator and NaPTAN has a different name again.

The guidance to support the requirement to provide audio visual information will need to provide the necessary clarity on the name to be presented. This will need to refer to a nationally available standard source to ensure consistency across operators using the same stop.

There is no specific location to store this information in any of the currently maintained national databases.

**Options**

1. Improve NaPTAN so that fields could be used consistently
   1. A challenge is handling long distance route as these currently tend to use town names, whereas local routes around a town would use specific stops
   2. Would require changes to existing systems which will take time and cost money both of which particularly changes that take time, ideally are avoided.
2. Use NeTEx which has fields for announcement texts (and other forms of output).
   1. This could be populated alongside NaPTAN.
   2. We will need to move to NeTEx at some stage.
   3. There would be significant cost and process change with this proposal.
3. Use lesser used fields in NaPTAN
   1. None immediately obvious or little-enough used,
   2. “misuse” the language codes
   3. Can only be a stop gap pending the introduction of NeTEx
4. Use TransXChange using Destination Display and Dynamic Destination Display within the TXC.
   1. The operator can then choose what text is displayed – the requirement is that the name is consistent across operators and this would allow variation.

**NaPTAN Data Fields**

The potential fields that could be used in NaPTAN are:

* CommonName
* ShortCommonName
* Landmark
* Street
* Crossing
* Indicator
* LocalityName
* ParentLocality Name
* GrandParentLocalityName
* Town
* Suburb
* Notes

Other fields are not of a suitable type for example being numbers, or refences to other data.

The CommonName field should provide a suitable name for the stop, where the name is too long then the field ShortCommonName, which has currently 97,647 records (just under 1 in 4 stops), is perhaps the most appropriate given the original specified purpose.

For long distance routes and where there are multiple stops of the same or similar name along a route it would be appropriate to concatenate the CommonName or ShortCommonName with Locality. E.g. rather than just Library it would become Library, Penistone.

Guidance on the use and population of NaPTAN fields would be appropriate for the Bus Service Act to introduce given the new statutory responsibility for authorities that is being introduced and the current lack of formal guidance.

We recognise that not all stop names are supported by Operators and the traveling public. To address this a consultation process for proposing name changes between operators, the public and authorities would be appropriate. This could be managed either nationally or locally by each authority.

Achieving correct population of fields will require an initial project, ongoing management and auditing processes to be in place.

Multi-lingual:

Any field used should not hinder the use of *Field*Lang option to allow multi-lingual support which is required for use in Wales.

This may remove the option to use a language for the AV stop name

One option would be to select a language that is not used in any areas at the moment and designate that to the AV name, this way CommonName could be used.

Not all stop management systems support languages so the use of a language for the AV name would require some development for some suppliers and or authorities.

**Abbreviations**

Any use of an abbreviation should be done using a standard to ensure that a text to speech engine that may be used can correctly speak the abbreviation. This may have to be highly prescriptive to allow for lower cost less intelligence engines. For example “St.” = Saint, “St” = street

**Recommendation**

**Next Stop**

Of these the existing fields in NaPTAN the field CommonName and ShortCommonName Are the most appropriate given the original specified purpose. This would provide the Next Stop name for stopping services and consistency with other public outputs.

For express/inter urban routes a different solution of locality & CommonName or locality & ShortCommonName, or just Locality is more appropriate.

**Destination**

Destination could usefully be provided through DynamicDestination in TransXChange

For both it recommended that guidance on the use and population of NaPTAN fields is developed and suggested approaches for consultation on stop names with operators and the public is provided.