Consultation on proposed changes to bus services in Archway

Response to issues raised
December 2016

MAYOR OF LONDON

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON
EVERY JOURNEY MATTERS

Background

This document sets out our responses to the main issues raised through our recent consultation on proposed changes to bus services in Archway. Changes to the existing bus services are necessary because of a major reconfiguration of the road network at Archway gyratory. This reconfiguration will include the permanent closure to motor vehicles of the south-western arm of the gyratory, and the conversion of the remaining sections from a one-way system to two-way roads.

The consultation on changes to the bus network was open between 11 January 2016 and 29 February 2016. In a separate report we have summarised the consultation process and the responses we received. It is available on our dedicated Archway consultation webpage: https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/archway-consultation

Conclusion and next steps

Having reviewed the responses to this consultation, we have decided to proceed with the changes to bus services, as originally described in our consultation material. We intend to complete this changeover in December 2016, in time for the completion of the new road layout at Archway.

Many respondents directed their attention on changes to the Archway gyratory and the creation of a new public space, rather than on the proposed bus changes. As was explained in our published material for the bus consultation, decisions on the road layout had already been made, following an earlier consultation that generated over 1,000 responses addressing a wide range of issues.

Work to deliver those improvements to the road network is now close to completion and more information can be found by visiting: https://tfl.gov.uk/travel-information/improvements-and-projects/archway-gyratory

We fully appreciate the level of interest and- in some instances - concern that people have expressed towards the changes to the road network and bus services in Archway. Our response to those issues is contained in this document. We remain of the view that the changes we are in the process of completing will make the town centre a more pleasant, accessible and safe area for all road users.

Response to issues commonly raised

We have separated our responses to issues concerning the bus network from our responses to comments and suggestions about the transformation of the road layout. Decisions about the road network have already been taken, and the work is progressing towards completion.

Our response to issues commonly raised concerning the proposed changes to bus services

“The planned bus changes will cause an increase in empty bus running, which is inefficient and will increase pollution and congestion.”

We have made comparisons of empty bus running times for existing Archway services against those that would take their place, using the stopping and standing arrangements described in these consultation proposals. We compared empty bus running times during the AM and PM peaks as well as the midday period and found that empty bus running times would be likely to decrease if the proposals are implemented. The U-turn facility on Archway Road, coupled with the advantages of switching from a one-way gyratory to two-way traffic operations, will facilitate these shorter empty running times.

“The plans rely on more buses using Vorley Road, which is too narrow to provide safety to vulnerable pedestrians and residents that use it.”

Currently, seven bus routes use the Vorley Road bus stand and exit onto Junction Road when starting their route. Once the new highway layout is in operation, the bus stands will be relocated from Vorley Road onto the A1 Archway Road, with the exception of one bus route (41) standing on MacDonald Road.

Following completion of the new highway layout, the one-way traffic operation on MacDonald Road and Vorley Road will be reversed, and two bus routes, the 210 and 41, will use Junction Road. This will reduce the number of buses using Vorley Road from 50 buses an hour to 20 buses an hour.

We will monitor the effects of these changes to the road network in Archway and take any action we think is necessary to improve the safety and efficiency of the new layout.

“The plans disperse common stopping points close to the Underground station. It will be harder to catch different bus routes heading for the same general area, which will be especially disadvantageous to people with mobility

issues. Using bus services in Archway will become more difficult as a result of these changes."

The gyratory removal scheme aims to make Archway town centre a more pleasant and accessible environment for all users. It would not be possible to keep all existing stops in their current location while delivering these improvements, because of the reallocation of traffic lanes. Closing the arm of the gyratory outside Archway station meant we had to choose between relocating services to keep the roads clear and traffic moving, or retaining some services in their existing location and removing others completely. We took the view that it would be preferable to retain the existing level of bus services with bus stops relocated, as Archway is an important transport interchange hub.

For passengers interchanging between London Underground and bus services, we plan to install a live 'next bus' information board at Archway station to help passengers make an early decision about which bus stop to use.

"Can you extend some routes to serve Upper Holloway station and the Whittington Hospital? This would remove some of the need for bus stands on Archway Road and be a useful route for many bus passengers."

We are investigating the feasibility of extending bus routes to Whittington Hospital to the north, and Upper Holloway to the south of Archway. This work requires a detailed assessment of our operational requirements as well as the technical feasibility of putting new stops and stands in those areas. More time will be needed before this can be completed and any proposed changes to bus routes as a consequence of this work would be the subject of a separate consultation at a later date.

Although we are working to explore alternative bus stand locations, the introduction of new stands at the locations mentioned above would not remove the requirement to stand some buses on the A1, owing to the lack of available space elsewhere.

"If you allowed buses to use the right turn from St John's Way it would allow for improved bus services throughout the area."

We have extensively investigated whether it would be practical to allow the right turn from St John's Way into Archway Road, including design options submitted by the Vorley Road Children's Centre. Despite detailed investigations, the right turn could not be accommodated in the design without significant impacts for all users, including substantial journey time increases for general traffic and buses on St John's Way and Holloway Road.

The main issue with accommodating the right turn is a lack of space and the impact on northbound and southbound movements. All of the options investigated, including allowing the right turn only for buses, either do not meet acceptable design standards or impact the journey times and/or safety of multiple users including pedestrians, buses and traffic. Some work was also completed on designing a road layout that ignored the constraints of existing building lines and the boundary wall of the park. This would still result in increased journey times on the A1 and that, along with safety concerns associated with allowing a right turn, caused us to conclude that it was not a practical or achievable outcome of this project.

The right turn from St John's Way is the lightest movement at the junction, with traffic counts showing that an average of just below two vehicles per minute currently make the right turn in the busiest morning peak hour and one vehicle per minute in the busiest evening peak hour. For comparison, the traffic flow on Archway Road in one direction (southbound) in the morning peak is approximately 14 vehicles per minute.

The majority of this traffic goes to Highgate Hill, although some goes to Archway Road. It is not possible to determine exactly how much of this traffic would reroute or use borough roads as alternative routes to Highgate Hill or Archway Road, as these two vehicles per minute in the morning peak, or one in the evening peak, could choose from a number of routes: via Vorley Road; via Hazelville Road and Hornsey Lane; via Hornsey Road and Hornsey Lane; or via Cressida Road. Any given alternative route in the locality is therefore likely to take only a share of the two (or one) vehicles per minute. Alternatively, some traffic might choose alternative routes earlier in their journeys, and therefore by-pass the area altogether.

We are satisfied the design retains traffic movement on the main highway network and have taken into consideration the responses provided during the design phases by numerous local stakeholder groups and during the public consultation. Further details on the public consultation can be found here: https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/archway-junction/

Together with Islington Council, we are committed to monitoring the traffic levels following construction and will consider mitigating measures if the monitoring shows significant increases in traffic flows on local roads.

"It is not safe for buses to use the new stop on Tollhouse Way"

We have conducted additional investigations into the issues raised by Arriva regarding route 41 (serving Tollhouse Way). Several runs of the traffic model have been conducted and no incidents were observed. Of all the major roads at Archway, Tollhouse Way is due to have the lowest traffic flows in the proposed highway layout, and it would be less busy than current operations.

Buses will pull away from the new bus stop, across a single lane in the carriageway, to then turn right. This type of manoeuvre is not uncommon for many routes across the road network, including current bus operations outside Archway Station. At present, these routes experience a much higher flow of traffic than will be experienced by the 41 bus on Tollhouse Way, and we are not aware of any collisions of the type described.

It is anticipated that, owing to a 90 degree bend in the road (at the junction of Highgate Hill with Tollhouse Way) and the sequencing of signal phasing, the speeds of traffic approaching the new bus stop will be relatively low. It is also noted that there are other similar stopping arrangements on the road network and buses are able to pull in and out of them in safety.

We will work with Arriva to address their concerns and monitor the performance of the new road layout on an ongoing basis. We will ensure that any risks are appropriately mitigated.

Our response to issues commonly raised concerning changes to the road network in Archway

Many respondents directed their attention on changes to the Archway gyratory and the creation of a new public space, rather than on the proposed bus changes. As was explained in our published material for the bus consultation, decisions on the road layout had already been made, following an earlier consultation that generated over 1,000 responses covering a wide range of issues. We responded to the most common of these issues in our report of the road scheme consultation. It can be accessed on our website: https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/archway-junction

In the following section, we have repeated or updated our response to some of those issues concerning the road network that were raised again through the consultation on bus services.

“The new road layout will increase congestion for all road users in Archway.”

Our changes to the Archway gyratory system will mean changes to journey times for traffic. In the main these changes would not be significant, with some bus and road journeys getting shorter and some getting longer. The most notable change is an increase to journey times for traffic heading north on the A1 in the morning peak.

Our designs include changing the traffic signal timings in the local area to ensure delays are kept to a minimum, and to improve journey times where possible. We are investing in advanced traffic signal technology to allow us to better manage traffic in London, depending on differing conditions at any given time.

Further details on the traffic impacts of the scheme can be found here:
https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/7de015b0

And a summary of the traffic modelling results are here:
https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/archway-junction/user_uploads/summary-of-modelling-results.pdf

"The new U-turn facility on Archway Road will add to congestion and pollution. It will also cause accidents."

The bus routes that will use the new stands on Archway Road will turn around by making a U-turn at a new set of traffic lights. These will be coordinated with the other lights around the gyratory to ensure that traffic along Archway Road moves as smoothly as possible.

Congestion
We will ensure that sufficient green signal time is given to southbound traffic on Archway Road through the pedestrian crossing and U-turn signals. The traffic lights around the gyratory, including the U-turn signals, will be closely coordinated to avoid traffic queuing back from the next stop line (at the Tollhouse Way junction) and blocking the pedestrian crossing and U-turn facility.

Pollution
We take the potential environmental impacts of schemes very seriously and have undertaken assessments of what impact the Archway scheme may have on air and noise quality, including the impact of the bus stand relocation and bus U-turn.

We have taken significant steps to reduce air pollution from our bus fleet. All buses in Greater London currently meet Euro IV standards or better for NO_x. To support the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ), all double-decker buses operating in the Congestion Charging zone will be hybrid electric vehicles and all single-decker buses in the zone will emit nothing from their engine exhaust (i.e. they will be fully electric or hydrogen models). In response to the Mayor's ambition for TfL buses to do more, we are proposing the following additional improvements to reduce emissions from the TfL bus fleet:

- Ensuring all of our buses in central London are compliant with the ULEZ emission standard ahead of its introduction (by 2019) and a commitment that our double-decker buses operating in the area will be hybrid
- Implementing up to 12 'Low Emission Bus Zones' across London – tackling the worst pollution hotspots by concentrating cleaner buses on the dirtiest routes. The first zones will be delivered in Putney High Street and Brixton/Streatham from 2017
- Expanding the Euro VI bus retrofit programme to 3,000 buses by 2020 (up from 800) and to over 5,000 by 2021

- An ambition to purchase only hybrid or zero emission double deck buses from 2018

Routes 43, 134, 263, 4, 17 and 390 all pass through the ULEZ. This will help to reduce traffic-generated pollution in Archway.

Safety

There are currently two other locations on the TfL Road Network which operate a bus only U-turn provision; at Waterloo Road and Forest Hill Road in Southwark. Both operate without adversely affecting traffic on a busy road network.

At Archway we are replacing the subway at Despard Road with a new signalised pedestrian crossing that will operate concurrently with the bus U-turn manoeuvre, maximising green man time for pedestrians. General traffic will be held on a red signal while both pedestrians and the bus U-turn receive a green signal.

The U-turn facility has been thoroughly assessed to make sure there is sufficient space for buses to turn while also ensuring the safety of pedestrians. A distance of 22 metres has been provided between the stop line from where buses will make the U-turn manoeuvre and the new pedestrian crossing.

As with all other TfL highway schemes of this nature, the Archway designs have undergone a multi-stage Road Safety Audit process.

“Having a cycle lane in front of the entrance to the Underground station will be dangerous for pedestrians.”

The cycle facility will be 3 metres wide (1.5 metres in both directions), with clear lines of sight for both pedestrians and cyclists. Pedestrian crossing points will be clearly marked and we will use contrasting colours and materials to help distinguish areas for cycling from other areas. We will monitor the effectiveness of these measures once the shared use area is open.

“The presence of new bus stands on Archway Road will make it more dangerous for vehicles to enter the road from side streets such as Pauntley Street, where visibility will be reduced.”

Vehicles exiting from Pauntley Street will need to cross the bus lane to join the southbound traffic lane on Archway Road. Having considered the responses to the public and bus consultations, we will install ‘keep clear’ markings at this location to make it easier for vehicles to merge with general traffic.

“Increased congestion on main roads will cause more vehicles to use quiet residential roads.”

We have worked closely with Islington Council to understand existing traffic flows on residential roads and have assessed how these roads may be impacted by the Archway gyratory developments. Monitoring work will be undertaken following construction to assess any impacts to local roads, and mitigation measures will be identified if required.

“Removing a bus stop from Junction Road will reduce footfall to an extent that will affect local businesses.”

The introduction of the new public space and closure of the road adjacent to the town centre should reduce the traffic-dominated environment and attract investment as well as new visitors to the area. The new public space will make Archway a more attractive place to work, live and visit, which we anticipate will result in increased footfall for the whole Archway area.

“Can the plans for the pedestrianised area be changed so that buses can serve the area in front of the Underground section?”

A design that allowed buses to use this section of Highgate Hill was considered earlier in the project, when various different options were assessed for their suitability.

The Archway gyratory causes severance between the main shopping areas on the island at Archway Close and Junction Road. By closing Highgate Hill and Archway Close to all motorised traffic the effects of this severance will be removed and the whole of the Archway area will benefit from the improved opportunities to travel safely on foot or by cycle. Allowing buses to use the new pedestrianised area would undermine these benefits and we therefore decided not to pursue this option.