Bus Services in Southwark

Report of Scrutiny Sub-Committee B

June 2009

Southwark Council

Contents

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The recommendation from Scrutiny Sub B's previous report on the "potential for regeneration in Camberwell" stated

"...There is still hope that there may be a tube station in Camberwell, as part of an extension of the Bakerloo line and that the Council should press ahead with making this a priority. In addition, it should not be accepted that an overground station replacement is not possible; unless and until such time as the service provider is able to demonstrate that this is not the case...The lack of adequate signage to public transport is very apparent. It should be a relatively straight forward exercise for the Council to ensure there are good information signs to major transport routes...The Council should press TfL to look at and improve the way the bus interchange arrangements are set up. It is currently difficult to find appropriate bus stops. The current configuration of the bus stops means that several are some distance apart from each other. This ties in to the town centre bid for a better transport interchange...The Council should also press TfL to look at the clustering of buses at the Camberwell Green end of Denmark Hill. Buses regularly park two or three deep, blocking the road and making it hard for people to get on and off buses..."

1.2 With this sentiment in mind, the purpose of the review was to identify where improvements and changes to bus services in the borough are needed, particularly those areas where car ownership is low or where transport links are difficult and to ultimately influence Transport for London.

2.0 Facts and Figures – The London Perspective

2.1 Every weekday over 6,500 scheduled buses carry around 5.4 million passengers on over 700 different routes; amounting to over 1.5 billion passengers a year. The bus network is dynamic, and responds to changes in London's growth and spatial pattern. Every year a fifth of the whole bus service is re-tendered, with around a half of the network subject to some level of review each year. Since TfL was created, the demand for bus services in the capital has been met by the creation of a modern, customer-focused network designed to meet the demands of a 21st century world city. The following figures demonstrate how much the bus network has grown in the last few years:

- London Buses are now carrying the highest number of passengers since 1969
- There is now the fastest rate of growth in passengers since 1945
- 7.3% passenger growth– an extra 104 million passenger trips
- 16% growth in Night bus passengers
- 12% growth in Sunday passengers year on year
- Highest operated kilometres since 1963 (397 million km in 2002/03)

2.2 This dramatic rate of growth has been necessary to meet the target in the Mayor's Transport Strategy, which proposes a 40% growth in passenger journeys from 2001 to 2011. To achieve this, the growth target is about twice the rate of growth for the previous 20 years.

3.0 Facts and Figures – The Southwark Perspective

3.1 Due to Southwark's central London location the borough benefits from a wide range of transport infrastructure. However, the quantity and quality of this varies throughout the borough and the borough also suffers some of the disadvantages that its central position brings, such as heavy congestion, and the convergence of traffic seeking river crossings. In terms of rail, there are 11 surface rail stations in the borough including London Bridge, the Elephant and Castle, South Bermondsey, Queens Road Peckham, Peckham Rye, Denmark Hill, Nunhead, East Dulwich, North Dulwich, West Dulwich and Sydenham Hill. Whilst the number of stations may give the impression of a comprehensive network, there are two major gaps in the network within Southwark. One is centred on the Burgess Park area (from Camberwell to Bermondsey) and the other is centred on the area between Peckham Rye Park and Dulwich Park.

3.2 The underground network is concentrated in the north of the borough where there are nine underground stations including London Bridge, Borough, Elephant and Castle, Kennington, Surrey Quays, Rotherhithe, Southwark, Bermondsey and Canada Water. Four different lines including the Northern, Bakerloo, Jubilee and East London lines service these stations. The London Bus Priority Network (LBPN) covers the borough extensively and provides the main public transport provision in areas away from rail stations. The network is particularly extensive in the northern half of the borough, which is served by approximately 50 high frequency and 12 low frequency bus services as well as 16 night bus services. The Elephant and Castle is a major transport interchange and has more bus routes passing through it than anywhere else in Southwark.

3.3 Southwark's road network comprises approximately 23km of principal roads and 336km of non principal or borough roads. The principal roads are part of the Transport for London Road Network (TLRN) and hence are not directly managed by Southwark Council. Southwark's road network can generally be characterised by the main east west and north south routes that are utilised, not only by local traffic, but a high level of through traffic, seeking access to central London and ways along the south side of the river. The road network also supports a majority of the cycle network, including providing a vital link to central London.

3.4 The highest daily traffic flows generally occur in the northern section of the borough on roads such as: the inner ring road comprised of Kennington Lane, the Elephant and Castle, New Kent Road and Tower Bridge Road; Old Kent Road; Jamaica Road and the Rotherhithe tunnel; and Blackfriars Road and London Bridge. The Mayor's congestion charging scheme (CCS) has made a significant difference to the pattern of flows within the zone although generally, volumes around the edge of the zone on the inner ring road have remained relatively unchanged. Traffic volumes on many of the roads in the south of the borough are however, nearly as high, such as: the A202 comprised of Camberwell New Road, Peckham Road, Peckham High Street and Queens Road; Walworth Road; Camberwell Road; Denmark Hill; and Dulwich Common.

3.5 Due to its location adjacent to the river Thames, Southwark also contains various river crossings and piers. The main road crossings are Blackfriars Bridge, Southwark Bridge, London Bridge, Tower Bridge and the Rotherhithe Tunnel. In addition, there are two rail bridges, Blackfriars and Cannon Street, three tube tunnels (including the Brunel Tunnel) and the Millennium Bridge footbridge. There are eight piers on the south bank of the Thames, within Southwark's boundaries. These piers serve varying functions including public passenger transfer, private passenger trips and

waste transport. Ownership and operation of the piers is shared between London River Services (LRS), the Port of London Authority (PLA), and various private interests. The PLA generally has responsibility for the safe operation of the piers and performs a regulatory function in terms of licensing operators. Only two piers are serviced by public passenger ferries run by LRS, these being Bankside Pier and London Bridge City Pier.

3.6 According to the 2001 Census data, 76.3% of Southwark's actively employed residents commute to work by means other than a private motor vehicle, including 16.3% that either walk or cycle to work.

Table 1: Travel to work by mode

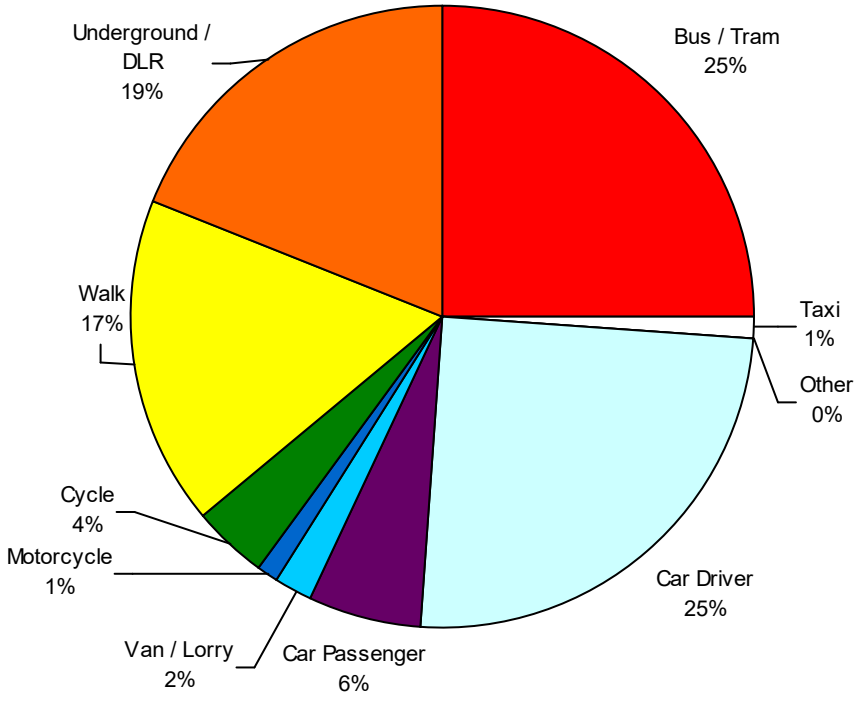
	England 2001	Inner London 2001	Southwark 1991	Southwark 2001
% by rail/tube/tram	8.1	42.0	22.7	33.1
% by bus or coach	8.3	15.7	24.7	24.0
% by private car	67.2	23.5	29.3	23.7
% by bicycle	3.1	3.8	2.9	4.0
% on foot	11.0	12.0	12.9	12.3

Source: ONS Census Data 2001 and 2002

3.7 By contrast to the Census data, which only relates to the journey to work, the 2001 London Area Transport Study (LATS) indicated that up to 29% of all journeys in Southwark were carried out by private car, 35% were carried out by public transport and 36% by non motorised means. Transport for London (TfL) has predicted an overall growth in travel, both within the borough and from the wider regional area particularly the south east.

3.8 In terms of distance travelled, 16.3% of Southwark residents that work within the borough travel less than 2km to work. 46.4% of residents travel less than 5km to work and 75% travel less than 10km. This raises the question as to why so many residents (23.7%) choose to travel to work by private motor vehicle, when the distances travelled are eminently suitable for more sustainable modes such as walking, cycling or even public transport. A further breakdown is shown on the following page.

Travel to work by mode



Source: ONS Census Data 2001 and 2002

3.9 According to the 2001 Census, of the 105,806 households in Southwark, 51.9% do not have access to a car, which is similar to the inner London average but considerably higher than the greater London average of 37.5%. Despite this, the number of cars in Southwark has been steadily increasing, from 38,029 vehicles in 1981 to 62,733 vehicles in 2001.

Table 2: Number of cars or vans per household by ward

Ward Name	No. of H'holds* All H'holds	No. of H'holds No car or van	No. of H'holds 1 car or van	No. of H'holds 2 cars or vans	No. of H'holds 3 cars or vans	No. of H'holds 4 or more cars or vans	No. of H'holds Total cars or vans
Brunswick Park	4592	2487	1733	325	36	11	2535
Camberwell Green	5498	3436	1748	262	43	9	2437
Cathedrals	5201	3086	1815	259	30	11	2467
Chaucer	5162	3014	1791	315	26	16	2581
College	4603	1724	2007	694	132	46	4002
East Dulwich	4651	1854	2159	567	59	12	3521

East Walworth	5382	3258	1803	279	32	10	2497
Faraday	5252	3110	1829	265	30	18	2539
Grange	5680	3320	2040	277	30	13	2760
Livesey	5110	2995	1777	299	27	12	2513
Newington	5767	3453	1950	311	42	11	2742
Nunhead	4525	2396	1714	353	51	11	2635
Peckham	4208	2241	1642	288	30	7	2340
Peckham Rye	4930	2000	2244	579	86	21	3750
Riverside	5412	2758	2253	339	44	18	3153
Rotherhithe	5137	2635	2022	415	45	20	3091
South Bermondsey	5213	2749	2067	348	40	9	2919
South Camberwell	4829	2315	2007	429	56	22	3124
Surrey Docks	5269	2079	2473	618	77	22	4049
The Lane	5294	2856	1968	401	53	16	3002
Village	4090	1174	1905	831	151	29	4143
Southwark	**105805**	**54940**	**40947**	**8454**	**1120**	**344**	**62800**

*H'holds = Households

Source: April 2001 Census Data / Southwark Analytical Hub

3.10 Public Transport Accessibility Levels (PTALs) are a method of assessment utilised by TfL and a majority of London boroughs to produce a consistent London wide public transport access mapping facility. PTALs assess the level of service, walk and wait times to produce indices of accessibility to the public transport network. These levels are often shown as contours on a local map. There is evidence that car use reduces as access to public transport, as measured by PTALs, increases. The coverage and accessibility of public transport varies significantly across the borough and this is shown on the following map which details the relative PTAL levels for Southwark.

3.11 Southwark will continuously seek further investment in its transport infrastructure to ensure that services and facilities are of high quality, provide access for the mobility impaired and cater for the travel needs of residents, local businesses and the increasing number of visitors to the borough. The key public transport deficiencies in the borough arise from a lack of rail provision in certain parts of the borough and accessibility to existing services for the mobility impaired. A series of major transport projects are planned that would help to reduce deprivation and ease social exclusion in the parts of the borough that have been identified as having the greatest need. These projects include:

- Cross River Tram;
- Thameslink 2000;
- East London line extension, phases one and two; and
- City Tram.

4.0 Purpose of the Review

4.1 The committee's purpose for scrutinising Bus Services in Southwark was to identify where improvements and changes to bus services in the borough are needed, particularly those areas where car ownership is low or where transport links are difficult and to ultimately influence Transport for London. As part of the review's terms of reference, Members investigated

- Short routes and how they can be extended;
- Poorly served areas (i.e. route 42 bus and the possibility of its extension into Village, E Dulwich College and S Camberwell wards);
- (Difficult) Orbital Journeys; and
- Links with rail an underground routes

4.2 Throughout this stage of the Committee's work members of the public as well as Elected Members submitted their views and perspectives on a range of bus services in operation within the Borough. The full range of responses can be seen at Appendix (iii)

4.3 A submission from the Chair of Evolution Quarter Residents' Association (EQRA echoes the pinch pints experienced by regular service users of Southwark Buses. About the Cross River Bus 'CR1', he suggests the introduction of a new bus service which follows the route of the axed Cross River Tram (CRT) through Central London, allowing residents in North Peckham and elsewhere along the route to get directly into and through London without having to join the tube or change buses. This could run along either Southampton Way (which is served by the 343 but only to London Bridge) or Chandler Way and would significantly improve accessibility to and from our community, supporting new jobs, housing and amenities.

4.4 About the 171 / N171 he suggests the current 171 bus route could make a short diversion so that it travels north along Southampton Way OR Peckham Hill Street. If the former route is chosen, it could follow the 343 route as far as Wells Way, but then turn left down Albany Rd and right onto the Walworth Road, re-joining its old route. This way we would finally have a means of public transport direct into Central London (the 343, 63 and 363 do not go direct into Central London, the 363 terminates at Elephant & Castle). The number 12 bus would continue to get people from Peckham to Camberwell Green and the Elephant, so there are already other routes covering this short deviation to the existing route. Another option would be for the 171 to go down Peckham Hill Street and turn left along St George's Way (flanking the south side of Burgess Park). It could then re-join the Walworth Rd in the same way (via Wells Way and Albany Rd). It is incredible that no buses currently service St George's Way which is a very long street and has a high density of population. It would pass the bottom of Chandler Way and still be of huge benefit to all our members. This seems like a minimal change that would make a maximum difference to many people's lives.

5.0 Evidence taken by the Committee

5.1 Councillor Hubber discussed how the meeting should be divided to obtain the best possible evidence from the invited witnesses. He suggested the first half of the meeting should discuss bus services in general, with the second half concentrating on Routes in the Borough.

5.2 Councillor Hubber introduced members of the witness panel invited to give evidence to the Committee, these being

- Andrew Boag – Consultation Manager, Transport for London (Surface Transport Communications)
- Councillor Toby Eckersley
- Councillor Caroline Pidgeon – London Assembly Member
- Barbara Selby – Head of Transport Planning (Southwark Council)
- Patrick Horan – Chair & Access Officer: Southwark Disablement Association

5.3 Mr Boag provided the committee with a statistical synopsis to London's bus services by saying that

- there are more than 8,000 buses running using 700 routes
- there are 130 night services
- six million passengers use London's buses everyday (the largest number since 1962)
- 71% passengers use London's buses since 1991

5.4 Mr. Boag discussed an accessibility policy Transport for London (TfL) are currently championing. All buses have a ramp that is working. During the morning checks, if it's not working then that particular bus is cancelled. London's bus fleets are now 100% accessible, ahead of the Government's 2016 target, although there is still much to do.

5.6 Councillor Pidgeon stated that the role of the GLA's Transport Committee is to hold the Mayor to account. Although they have no direct control over the capital's transport infrastructure they do have a duty to represent all Londoners. In this instance the Transport Committee have composed a variety of scrutiny reports considering the many aspect of London's transport infrastructure. Holding the Mayor to Account, the Committee have considered and commented on Public Private Partnership (PPP) Contracts, Door to Door transport, the passenger experience and the more recent and topical issue of the impact of the extreme weather on London Transport.

5.7 Mr. Boag discussed close liaison between TfL and the Southwark's Transport Planning Department when plotting and reconfiguring routes within the Borough. Mr. Boag stated that the ultimate role is to find out what the aspirations of the bus users are. Throughout the process of network planning, Mr. Boag informed the Committee that TfL get a feel for where people want to go., therefore TfL attempt to get involved in the planning and consultative process as early as possible. Mr. Boag stated TfL do not want to alter (orbital) routes too much as routes such as the 12, 36 and the 53

are very much fixed in peoples minds. Shorter routes such as the 42, P45 and the 199 as well as North to South routes are always a challenge for both TfL and Southwark's' transport planning department.

5.8 Mr. Boag informed the Committee that on the more frequent routes (i.e. those where buses run every 10-12 minutes) a time table is not published, there fore there is no point in insisting in on a timely service on these route. The 301 for instance is a classic example whereby the operator is not the most effective and should be doing better. The Go Ahead Group runs the best service in the borough and it can be concluded that the performance is about the internal culture of the operator and the service they are willing to provide, it's not always about whether the service is running on time.

5.9 Mr. Boag discussed the implications of implementing the Countdown e-timetable and its associated iBus system. With iBus, GPS provides information of the buses location. Station masters can now predict the buses estimated time of arrival at any given point on its route. Although still in the initial phases of implementation, Mr. Boag stated this system would not be the saviour of buses running late against their published timetables. This is simply due to Traffic engineering. Mr. Boag asked the Committee to consider the traffic system at Euston Way and Marylebone way known as the Green Wave for car drivers. For bus drivers this is a particularly difficult part of London to negotiate due to the "stop – start" effect. Mr. Boag assured the Committee that TfL are actively working with the Borough's Traffic Engineers to resolve this.

5.10 In terms of Customer Services, Mr. Boag informed all members that all prospective drivers must attend and pass a six week BTec course which includes disability awareness, bus awareness and customer service. Drivers are also encouraged to have due consideration of all road users including cyclists. Mr. Boag stressed the role of the bus driver is not on par with a security guard despite undergoing extensive training in conflict resolution. If an altercation takes place on a bus, the driver, in some instances, may cal for help. It is the driver's responsibility to make sure buses are not overcrowded TfL also work with Safer Transport Team and the Police.

5.11 In terms of route specific issues, Mr. Boag discussed:

- **Route 42**. There have been numerous requests for this route to be extended from its present terminus at Denmark Hill, Sunray Avenue, to provide new links and to enable removal of the unsatisfactory bus stand in Sunray Avenue. TfL recognises the desire to improve bus links to the Dulwich Community Hospital in East Dulwich Grove for the benefit of local residents and those travelling from there to Kings College Hospital. In 2006 consideration was given to extending the route to East Dulwich, Goose Green via North Dulwich and East Dulwich Grove with buses standing in Spurling Road. Southwark Council was unwilling to introduce the necessary parking restrictions to facilitate this following opposition from residents, so the proposal was abandoned. There have been many calls for the route to continue further to Dog Kennel Hill, Sainsbury's where a new bus stand has been provided by the supermarket. However this would require two additional buses, compared to one for Spurling Road, to maintain the same service frequency. This virtually doubles the cost of the extension and means it does not meet our business case criteria. Reducing the frequency of the service to provide the extension without extra buses is not an option as the 42 is a busy route. The current position is that TfL can only review the case for an extension

to East Dulwich and Sainsbury's if evidence of additional demand is provided. We will also examine any other proposals for providing the links requested.

- **Route 343.** The main issue is the reliability and capacity of this route, particularly over the section between Peckham and Elephant & Castle. TfL is monitoring this service closely. We are aware that there have been a number of complaints and will be review the long term development of bus routes in the Southampton Way area in the light of the abandonment of Cross River tram scheme.

- **Rotherhithe and Bermondsey area routes - C10, 78, 188 & 381.** Additional buses are running on routes C10 & 381 during the closure of the East London Line and we are aware that the C10 is running close to capacity over much of its length. We have considered using longer single deck buses or double deck buses on the C10 but physical constraints currently prevent anything larger being used. Route 78 may be suitable for double deck vehicles and we will consider this option when the route is reviewed later this year to address complaints about crowding on this route. The Bermondsey Community Council requested improved links from the St James's Road area to Guy's Hospital and London Bridge. While the 381 provides this link it takes a circuitous route via the Rotherhithe peninsular.

6.0 Conclusion and recommendations

6.1

Appendix (i): Written Submission from Val Shawcross Assembly Member for Lambeth & Southwark

Valerie Shawcross AM
Assembly Member for Lambeth & Southwark

City Hall
The Queen's Walk
London SE1A 2AA
Switchboard: 020 7983 4000
Minicom: 020 7983 4458
Web: www.london.gov.uk

Our ref: VS/lbsscrutiny
Your ref:
Date: 28 January 2023

Cllr David Hubber
Chair
Scrutiny Sub Committee B
Southwark Council
Town Hall
Peckham Road
London SE5 8UB

Dear Cllr. Hubber

Bus Services in Southwark

I am sorry I can't be present to give evidence to your committee regarding bus services – a subject very dear to my heart.

I have received your list of questions – the majority of which are clearly for TfL to answer. As you will know, like you my role is to scrutinise services and many of the issues you have raised are ones I have also been looking into. I hope therefore that my thoughts on these issues will assist you in your work.

Punctuality, Reliability and Overcrowding

Punctuality, reliability and in particular overcrowding of bus services are subjects I hear a great deal about from my constituents. However, to be fair to Transport for London, the extent of these complaints has significantly reduced since I was first elected in 2000 – reflecting the enormous investment in increasing services and installing bus priority measures under the previous Mayor.

Other good news is that all London buses are now fitted with the iBus GPS tracking system. This means that TfL will soon be able to roll out more electronic "Countdown" boards at bus stops and that they will be far more reliable than the few boards already in operation which make use of dated technology. What is not as yet clear is how widespread the roll out will be and I would encourage the Committee to lobby for Southwark's bus stops to be well covered.

We have also seen a significant improvement in night bus services with many routes becoming 24 hour! However, I believe off peak evening services and weekend services on many routes are far too infrequent to meet demand from shoppers and people attending places of worship. As a result many people choose to drive and increasingly traffic congestion in some areas is worse at the weekends than it is in the morning peak!

Furthermore, there are still routes which suffer from poor performance or where capacity is insufficient to meet demand. Two particular routes I am currently campaigning on are the 343 and 78. My experience has been that although TfL are willing to investigate complaints, they are generally unwilling to make significant changes to routes mid-contract. With contracts lasting 5 to 7 years this can be extremely frustrating. The Committee may well wish to recommend that TfL take a more flexible approach.

Service coverage:
Another major concern with bus services is the planning of routes. The bus route map has grown in a piecemeal fashion over the last 100 years and reviews routes individually when their contract is running out rather than taking a holistic view of services in a particular area. This often means that TfL does not reflect changing demand – whether from increased population in certain areas or new destinations such as new health services or schools.

Furthermore, when assessing the merits of a proposal for a new or changed bus route TfL focuses very heavily on cost and likely revenue. In my view they place far too little emphasis on need particularly in areas like Southwark where buses are the only affordable transport option for many residents.

This focus on finances rather than passengers is also reflected in the way that TfL Buses choose to consult on bus routes. Consultation is restricted to "stakeholders" such as borough councils, Assembly Members and MPs. It would be a relatively simple matter to consult passengers – via posters at stops or on buses – yet TfL chooses not to do this, claiming that consulting elected representative is sufficient!

I would like to see the Mayor make a commitment to continue to enhance bus services, increasing the capacity and range of destinations particularly in the most deprived areas. I also believe there is a case for a wholesale review of bus routes in the light of today's demand.

Customer service and bus driver training & standards:
Whilst complaints about bus reliability have reduced over my time as an Assembly Member, I have also seen an increase in complaints about bus drivers and their driving skills. I very much welcome the introduction by TfL of "mystery travellers" and financial contract incentives and penalties for bad customer service and driving.

This is an issue that I am hoping, committee time permitting, to explore in more detail over the coming year via a London Assembly Transport Committee Scrutiny. I hope that you will feed any evidence you receive on this matter into that review.

Accessibility:
In theory 100% of London buses are now accessible. Certainly all vehicles are now fitted with ramps and spaces for wheelchair users. According to TfL no bus should leave the garage if the ramp is not in working order. Of course accessibility is not only about wheelchair users.

Many people, particularly older people, have impaired mobility which can make boarding buses difficult. Likewise people with pushchairs or shopping trolleys can struggle. So I welcome the fact that many London Buses are now "low floor" vehicles, which are far easier to board.

However, despite these improvements, I still receive complaints from disabled passengers that ramps are not working or drivers either can't or won't use them. Often the problem is that the bus is not close enough to the kerb to use the ramps.

I'm glad to hear that the new "mystery traveller" contract incentive scheme includes marks for driver's use of the ramps and whether they have pulled in properly, but I am also aware that often the problems arise because drivers are simply not able to pull in properly.

There are two major causes of this. The first is bus stop congestion. A prime example of this is at the bus stops outside McDonalds at Camberwell Green. So many buses use these stops and they are so frequent that often buses are "double parked" when they stop to allow passengers on or off. Not only does this prevent wheelchair users from boarding and alighting, but it also makes it difficult for anyone with reduced mobility to get to their bus safely. The situation has improved a little following my campaign on this issue and the installation of new bus stands to the north of the junction, but there is still more to do at this and other congested areas which will require some significant investment and remodelling.

The second difficulty, more common on residential streets, is where parked cars prevent buses from pulling into the kerb. Here the most common solution is "build outs" where the pavement is extended out by the width of a parked car so the bus can pull up to the bus out allowing wheelchair users and people with impaired mobility to board more easily.

At present just 45% of London's bus stops are accessible and I find it very disappointing that TfL has committed to increase this to only 75% not 100% and that even this target is not expected to be reached until 2018!

Fares:

Although single cash fares are now £2, it is important to remember that the vast majority of London's bus passengers benefit from much better value season tickets and Oyster Pre-pay fares (£1). Also substantial numbers of people receive free bus travel (under 16s, under 18s in full time education, disabled people and over 60s) or discounted fares (if on income support, job seekers allowance or students).

So despite the inflation busting increases seen this year bus travel is still an economical transport choice – indeed this is one of the reasons why even in those parts of the borough which do benefit from good underground or rail services, buses are still the transport mode of choice for many people.

With TfL's budgets under pressure I am very concerned that the Mayor should not seek to solve his financial problems either by cutting services or increasing fares. I am also keen to explore new ideas on ticketing and the Transport Committee will be doing more work on this issue later this year.

Looking Forward

Whilst the previous Mayor of London was great supporter and frequent user of buses, the new Mayor has made it clear that he is more concerned about the outward appearance of vehicles than he is about the quality of service for passengers.

For instance, love them or loathe them, bendy buses are highly efficient vehicles to use on busy routes like the 12, 436 and 453. They are also far better for wheelchair users and people with pushchairs as they have wide doors, low floors and large open spaces these passengers can use. The replacement of bendy buses on route 38 with conventional double deckers (not new route masters) will cost £2.4m extra per year and require a significant increase in the number of vehicles on the route simply to maintain the same capacity. When the time comes for Bendy Buses to be removed from Southwark's routes the councillors would be well advised to keep a close eye on the proposals to ensure that the Mayor does not seek to cut costs by reducing the capacity on your routes!

I am also gravely concerned that the new TfL Business Plan proposes to real terms cuts in the level of bus subsidy and the ongoing KPMG led review of bus services. Under the leadership of TfL Board Member Steven Norris, there is a great deal of pressure for this review to find ways to reduce even further the overall level of bus subsidy. This could well mean reductions in bus services.

The results of this review should be published within the next few months and I hope the committee will join me in responding to the report. Sadly I believe there is a significant risk that in the coming years we will be fighting to keep the services we have now. I hope that Southwark councillors will join me in battling for our buses!

Yours sincerely

Valerie Shawcross AM
Labour Group Spokesperson for Transport

Appendix (ii): Written Submission from Andrew Boag - Consultation Manager, TfL Surface Transport

Transport for London

Bus service issues in London Borough of Southwark

Prepared by Andrew Boag, Consultation Manager, TfL Surface Transport, May 2009.

1. Introduction
This note summarises issues raised at London Borough of Southwark Scrutiny Sub Committee B on 13 May 2009, plus recent comments by Officers and Members.

2. General issues
a) Reliability and supervision. All bus services are monitored regularly by TfL. We produce quarterly Quality of Service Indicators (QSIs) which are published on the TfL website: www.tfl.gov.uk. The latest quarterly results show a further improvement in general reliability for high frequency routes in Southwark (those scheduled to run at least every 12 minutes) compared with the same period in the previous year. The IBus project which included the recent fitting of destination and next stop displays enables us to further improve the supervision of bus services by tracking the precise location of every bus. IBus displays can also advise passengers when buses are on diversion or have had to be curtailed short of their destination.

b) Driver training and behaviour. We are continually reviewing our driver training procedures. Driving standards are monitored by the bus operators and the Driving Standards Agency. Smoothness of ride, helpfulness of drivers and pulling into the kerb at bus stops are all included in our monitoring. Ramps must be checked each day before buses leave the garage to ensure they are in correct working order. We encourage wheelchair users to report any driver who fails to stop or to deploy the ramp when requested.

c) Fares
Average bus fares in London have fallen in real terms since 1999 and are now comparable with 1971 levels. Outside London, fares have risen by an average of 10% since 1999. Oyster cards offer particularly good value and have become very popular with fewer than 2% of passengers now paying cash on bus.

d) Vehicles
London has a modern bus fleet which easily meets the Government target for an average fleet wide age of less than 8 years. All 8,000 buses are low floor and wheelchair accessible, although this is not a legal requirement until 2016. Vehicle types on individual routes are normally reviewed every five years as contracts are renewed. New buses must meet Euro 4 or Euro 5 emission standards and trials with diesel electric hybrid buses (involving some buses on routes 141 & 360 in Southwark) are expected to lead to all new buses being this type by 2012.

3. Route specific issues
a) Route 42. There have been numerous requests for this route to be extended from its present terminus at Denmark Hill, Sunray Avenue, to provide new links and to enable removal of the unsatisfactory bus stand in Sunray Avenue. TfL recognises the desire to improve bus links to the Dulwich Community Hospital in East Dulwich Grove for the benefit of local residents and those travelling from there to Kings College Hospital.
In 2006 consideration was given to extending the route to East Dulwich, Goose Green via North Dulwich and East Dulwich Grove with buses standing in Spurling Road. Southwark Council was unwilling to introduce the necessary parking restrictions to facilitate this

following opposition from residents, so the proposal was abandoned. There have been many calls for the route to continue further to Dog Kennel Hill, Sainsbury's where a new bus stand has been provided by the supermarket. However this would require two additional buses, compared to one for Spurling Road, to maintain the same service frequency. This virtually doubles the cost of the extension and means it does not meet our business case criteria. Reducing the frequency of the service to provide the extension without extra buses is not an option as the 42 is a busy route.
The current position is that TfL can only review the case for an extension to East Dulwich and Sainsbury's if evidence of additional demand is provided. We will also examine any other proposals for providing the links requested.

b) Route 343. The main issue is the reliability and capacity of this route, particularly over the section between Peckham and Elephant & Castle. TfL is monitoring this service closely. We are aware that there have been a number of complaints and will be review the long term development of bus routes in the Southampton Way area in the light of the abandonment of Cross River tram scheme.

c) Rotherhithe and Bermondsey area routes - C10, 78, 188 & 381. Additional buses are running on routes C10 & 381 during the closure of the East London Line and we are aware that the C10 is running close to capacity over much of its length. We have considered using longer single deck buses or double deck buses on the C10 but physical constraints currently prevent anything larger being used. Route 78 may be suitable for double deck vehicles and we will consider this option when the route is reviewed later this year to address complaints about crowding on this route.
The Bermondsey Community Council requested improved links from the St James's Road area to Guy's Hospital and London Bridge. While the 381 provides this link it takes a circuitous route via the Rotherhithe peninsular.

Appendix (iii): Member Responses

Routes C10, 47, 188[1]

The ward councillors for Riverside, Rotherhithe and Surrey Docks would like to convey to TfL a number of points on the C10, 47 and 188 routes so we'd be grateful if you could include them in the borough's response to the stakeholder consultation on this tranche. I think the bottom line on all of these routes is that the population all along them, including in Lewisham and Greenwich, has increased rapidly over the last 3-4 years so capacity is already an issue in peak hours. Also, with the nature of employment in London being so varied, many more people are starting work early. Currently before 7am the service frequency on all these routes is poor. We would ideally like to see an increased frequency on all these routes in peak time, as well as before 7am. We would also like to see TfL take into account future development in planning route capacity and frequency, rather than reacting to developments. For example, a quick look at the Mayor's housing targets for London boroughs and Southwark's planning documents should be enough to realise that our three wards will need more buses up front over the next five years. The increased population is also an issue for the night bus versions of these services.

Route P5

P5 bus route through my ward is very unreliable and people want more at peak times

Route 12

To go to the heart of the matter, the fundamental problem with the bus services is that each individual bus is on its own putative timetable. The result of this is most of the operational problems that people complain about. If I talk about route 12 it is only because I am most familiar with it. I know that nearly all routes have the same problem. Traffic conditions mean that buses catch up with each other. It is not unusual for five 12's to go up Barry Road in less than five minutes. After a suitable break all five buses come down the road together because they are all trying to catch up with their timetable. The theory of individual timetables is of course that the bus will be in a certain place when the driver's shift finishes. This frequently doesn't happen and so the journeys have to be shortened, giving rise to another of the commonest complaints. At a time when many driver's shifts are finishing it is possible e.g. to stand at the Town Hall stop while three or four 12s are only going as far as Peckham. Occasionally the opposite is true and a particular bus will be on a go-slow because the driver is early and sits for several minutes at each bus stop regardless of whether anyone wants to get on or off – another source of extreme frustration. Recently there have been recorded messages telling passengers that the bus is being held at this stop to even out the running. A few days ago this happened on a bus during the morning rush hour and the driver very quickly moved on rather than be lynched by the passengers on their way to work! This arrangement gives rise then to three of the commonest complaints i.e. bunching followed by a long delay, short journeys and dawdling. Shifts just have to be more flexible – perhaps shorter but with more scope for alteration according to circumstances.

Route P12

Two complaints about this service really - one is the frequency, particularly around school drop off and collection times as the bus serves the very popular St Francis Cabrini Primary School and many local parents prefer to take the bus than to drive, but find the P12 service unreliable and overcrowded. The second complaint is speeding on Ivydale Road -something

[1] Part of the TfL 2010-2011 Bus Service Review Programme

we have taken up repeatedly with TfL but with no success. I hope that the proposed pinch points for Ivydale Road will resolve this.

Route 42

A proposed re routing to pass Dulwich Hospital and terminate at Sainsbury. Dog Kennel Hill has been sitting with TfL for some time. Sainsbury's has the empty bus stand for the 42 which needs a proper place to terminate with facilities.

The sub-committee should take evidence from Barbara Selby and/or Village ward Councillors about the efforts to get the route 42 bus extended further into Village, East Dulwich and South Camberwell wards. The generally poor bus services in Village and College wards should also be addressed.

Residents in the centre of Nunhead (around Evelina Road) would like to have links from the centre to New Cross in the east and to Dulwich Hospital in the west. It is particularly noted that now Dulwich Hospital is the centre for so many health services the hospital really needs better transport links.

Extending the 42 bus service to East Dulwich Sainsburys

The 42 – very infrequent and often crowded – need to increase frequency both weekdays and weekends.

Route 78[2]

The 78 route is extremely important as one of only two routes serving the central shopping area (Evelina Road) of Nunhead. It is also highly valued by residents living in the Dundas Road area as it is the only bus coming into that residential area. There are a very large number of elderly and disabled people living in that area as there are a number of sheltered housing units as well as social rented housing purpose built for disabled people. There would be an enormous outcry if the route ceased to serve these residential streets. That said there are significant problems with the route. A particular problem for Nunhead residents is that vehicles are frequently turned around at Peckham Rye and therefore Nunhead residents do not receive the full advertised service frequency - this is clearly picked up in the % kms operated performance stats. The route also suffers from chronic overcrowding in the core section of the route which makes it difficult for residents trying to come home to Nunhead when they are often unable to board the first bus in peak hours. This could be alleviated by providing additional capacity either on the 78 or an alternative route in the core area serving Peckham, Bermondsey and the City. I also note that the vehicles used on this route are very old and are not the greatest capacity single deckers. I would like to see more modern buses on the route and the use of the slightly longer single deckers would also help reduce the overcrowding. There has been a suggestion from some residents that 78 could be extended to New Cross (i.e. continuing up St Mary's Rd, turning right on Queens Rd then down to New Cross). Residents have complained that none of the services through Nunhead provides a quick link up to Queens Rd or New Cross where they can access high frequency rail services and Sainsbury's at New Cross. That said I would not support this proposal if it meant that the 78 ceased to serve the St Mary's Road / Dundas Road area.

The number 78 used to run from Dulwich Plough to Shoreditch but for some years now has run from Nunhead and has been changed to a single decker because of passing under a low bridge – at least that is the explanation given. This service is chronically overcrowded

[2] As footnote 1

most of the time including in the middle of the morning and afternoon. Sometimes it is like a Japanese train - almost requiring someone on the pavement to push the passengers in. We have made this a campaign issue in Focuses – the route runs along Grange Road – in response to complaints as well as my own experience and the frequency has in theory been increased, although no-one I have spoken to has noticed any difference. If they can't put double deckers on the route, the only answer is to increase the frequency. After about 6 in the evening you have to be prepared to wait 20 minutes and be thankful if it is any fewer. Admittedly the fact that it goes over Tower Bridge sometimes creates difficulties resulting on occasions a large proportion of the buses being in the same part of the route. This is about the only issue in the ward which in my experience comes anywhere near housing issues. Many people in the newer housing work in the City and this is their obvious route to work.

Route 171

The current 171 bus route could make a short diversion so that it travels north along Southampton Way OR Peckham Hill Street. If the former route is chosen, it could follow the 343 route as far as Wells Way, but then turn left down Albany Rd and right onto the Walworth Road, re-joining its old route. This way we would finally have a means of public transport direct into Central London (the 343, 63 and 363 do not go direct into Central London, the 363 terminates at Elephant & Castle). The number 12 bus would continue to get people from Peckham to Camberwell Green and the Elephant, so there are already other routes covering this short deviation to the existing route. Another option would be for the 171 to go down Peckham Hill Street and turn left along St George's Way (flanking the south side of Burgess Park). It could then re-join the Walworth Rd in the same way (via Wells Way and Albany Rd). It is incredible that no buses currently service St George's Way which is a very long street and has a high density of population. It would pass the bottom of Chandler Way and still be of huge benefit to all our members. This seems like a minimal change that would make a maximum difference to many people's lives.

Route 343[3]

This bus provides a vital link - this time for people living in the south of Nunhead. That said residents do complaint that the buses frequently speed down Ivydale Road and when these double decker hit the speed bumps it is extremely noisy. On one occasion a 343 crashed into a parked car and residents fear that someone will be hurt. I hope that the proposed pinch points for Ivydale Road will resolve this.

I get a fair few complaints about this service, in terms of timetabling and the bunching of services, poor adherence to safety issues on the part of drivers who seem to think it acceptable to drive at break-neck speeds and a lack of understanding on the part of TfL as to when to timetable services to meet the busiest periods. There seems a surplus of 343s at quiet times and wholly insufficient services at peak hours.

Route 434

Access to Sainsbury's on Dog Kennel Hill is a long walk from bus stops on the hill into the shop if people have mobility problems. I have proposed that the 434 which goes from Camberwell and down to Goose Green and is a small bus goes into Sainsbury's so that more people can get into the store from the top of the hill. Presently only the P13 is using the bus stop provided by the store and this bus does not cover the top of the hill from Camberwell.

[3] As footnote 1

Route 484[4]

Nunhead residents have repeatedly asked for this route to actually go into Dog Kennel Hill East Dulwich and use the new bus stand.

General Comments

Another major problem is the culture of drivers. For about 70% of them, I would say, their main aspiration is to avoid a confrontation with anyone at all costs. The only exception generally is with people who are trying to avoid paying when in extremis they will switch the engine off and basically let the other passengers deal with the offender. One or two recent examples will illustrate. Recently on a 78 there were for a short period 7 prams on board. Three were in the space allocated for them or wheelchairs, three were blocking the aisle and one was blocking the door – a situation which was drastically unsatisfactory and indeed dangerous. The last 4 should not have been allowed on. People were climbing over seats to get off. Throughout the driver just gazed straight in front of him as if nothing was happening. Often far too many prams are let on presumably because the drivers don't want a confrontation with the parent pushing the pram. Interestingly, in my experience female drivers are more strict with mothers and prams! Again recently late at night a young couple got on a 12 and immediately plonked their feet on the seats in front of them and started swigging wine from a screw top bottle, passing it between them. This was quite close to the driver who could not have failed to see what was going on. Any moment I expected him to say 'Please take your feet off the seats and put the alcohol away.' A hope which turned out to be vain. On another occasion on a packed bus an older couple were drinking while standing right next to the driver and the front door. They were pouring beer from a large bottle into a plastic cup. The woman was so drunk she could hardly stand up. Once again the driver looked steadfastly in front of him. Do drivers get any guidelines on letting obviously and seriously drunk people on their bus? There are some heroic drivers who do try to control anti-social or dangerous behaviour on their bus but they are few and far between. The tactic of switching the engine off is almost always successful and is only available to the driver. The majority however behave as if their job is to drive a vehicle round a fixed route as if it were empty and have, if possible, nothing to do with those intruders – the passengers. I could say a lot more on this topic but that should suffice.

A constant source of frustration is diversions. Often the first you know about it is when the bus actually turns off its usual route. There is no indication of where the diversion is going to go, how long it will be and no consistency about whether the bus is going to stop during the diversion and how often. Some drivers get very shirty when asked these very understandable questions by passengers – as if they ought to know. Some buses now have this new announcement system which will suddenly say: "This bus is on diversion. Please listen for further announcements." On no occasion have I ever heard any further announcement despite the fact that on many buses now there is a microphone enabling the driver to talk to the passengers without turning round and shouting. Most drivers seem to have a pathological aversion to using it and it obviously hasn't formed part of their training. All drivers should be trained in the use of the microphone – both when to use it and how. On the rare occasions when they do, they sound like prison camp guards e.g. "This bus is now only going to Trafalgar Square. Get off if you want Oxford Circus" Recently I was on a 149 to Liverpool Street and after the stop before the station the driver suddenly turned left and didn't stop again for at least 10 minutes. When he did I had no idea where I was – presumably somewhere in the middle of Hackney. He obviously thought everyone knew there were road works outside the station. This happens in Southwark too. The other day I was on a bus which took one of the frequent diversions around Rye Lane – OK for me because I'm used to it but very confusing for several of the other passengers. Again the driver showed no concern about them.

[4] As footnote 1

Members of Scrutiny Sub – Committee B:

Councillor David Hubber (Chair)
Councillor Althea Smith (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Paul Bates
Councillor Denise Capstick
Councillor Jenny Jones
Councillor Alison McGovern
Councillor Tayo Situ
Councillor Lorraine Zuleta

The full minutes of the meetings held on this subject, together with a number of presentations that were made to the committee are available on the council website www.southwark.gov.uk *or directly from the Scrutiny Team, Southwark Town Hall, Peckham Road, SE5 8UB or email us at* scrutiny@southwark.gov.uk