



Routes 38/N38, 507 and 521

Summary of consultation

December 2008

Routes 38/N38, 507 and 521: summary of responses to consultation

1. Introduction

This document summarises responses received to a consultation carried out in September and October 2008.

2. Proposed changes

Routes 38, 507 and 521 are currently operated with articulated (bendy) buses. They have been retendered as part of bus tendering tranches 273 and 276.

- For routes 507 and 521 conversion to shorter single-deck buses at appropriate frequencies was proposed. Costs were also sought for bendy bus operation. A new weekend service was proposed for route 507.
- For route 38, conversion to double-deck at appropriate frequencies was proposed. Costs were also sought for bendy bus operation. Night bus route N38 would continue to run with double-decks, with a more frequent service at weekends between Piccadilly and Walthamstow.

Consultation with stakeholders took place in the usual way. A letter containing the proposed changes to bus type and frequency was sent to key stakeholders including councils, GLA members, MPs, Police, London TravelWatch and other transport & community groups.

Stakeholders could respond to the consultation by post, telephone or email to a dedicated “Stakeholder Engagement” address. London TravelWatch discussed the consultation as an agenda item at their board meeting. There were also responses from individuals which were also taken into account.

There were 53 responses in total – 22 from the following stakeholders.

- City of Westminster
- London Borough of (LB) Hackney
- LB Camden
- City of London
- LB Hackney Councillors Laing, Kennedy, Krishna, Stops and Webb
- LB Lambeth Councillor Malley
- London TravelWatch
- London Assembly members Valerie Shawcross, Jennette Arnold & Jenny Jones
- Emily Thornberry MP
- Guy’s & St Thomas Hospitals NHS Trust
- Police
- Clapham Transport Users Group
- In & Around Covent Garden
- Islington Living Streets
- Islington Transport Aware
- The Westminster Society

There were 31 responses from individuals, following coverage of the proposals in the press and other media.

3. Overview

Tables 1 and 2 summarise the responses.

Table 1: MPs, Assembly Members, Councillors and London TravelWatch

Cllr LB Hackney	Supports withdrawal of articulated buses from route 38 on grounds of congestion, seating provision and reduced fraud.
Cllr LB Hackney	Prefers articulated buses for route 38 on grounds of speed, accessibility and passenger preference.
Cllr LB Lambeth	Opposes conversion of routes 507 and 521 to 12m single-deck on grounds of capacity, boarding rates and congestion at terminals.
Cllr LB Hackney	Supports withdrawal of articulated buses from route 38 on grounds of accessibility, congestion and as a cyclist.
Cllr LB Hackney	Considers that articulated buses on route 38 offer better capacity and accessibility, and faster journeys.
Cllr LB Hackney	Opposes conversion of route 38 due to the greater capacity and accessibility of articulated buses, and on cost grounds.
MP	Requests further information on the proposals.
GLA Member	Concerned about environment, accessibility, congestion and cost if route 38 is converted to double-deck.
GLA Member	Opposed to the replacement of articulated buses on grounds of environment, congestion, cost and precedent.
GLA Member	Opposed to the replacement of articulated buses on grounds of environment, congestion and cost.
London TravelWatch	Oppose withdrawal of articos on grounds of capacity, accessibility, manoeuvrability, passenger feedback and cost. Consider that articulated buses offer better capacity in areas on route 38 unserved by the tube. Support increased frequency on N38 and weekend service on route 507.

Table 2: Borough officers, groups, Police and individuals

City of Westminster	Support conversion of route 38 to double-deck operation. Oppose conversion of routes 507 and 521 to 70-capacity single-deck operation.
City of London (re route 38 bus priority project)	Considers that double-deck buses on route 38, will reduce overall benefits to passengers.
City of London (re route 521)	Considers that articulated buses on route 521 are more cost-effective and require less terminal capacity.
LB Camden	Opposes conversion of route 38 and 521 for capacity and congestion reasons.
LB Hackney	Officer response. Concerned about withdrawal of articulated buses on grounds of congestion, boarding times and capacity. Particular concerns regarding Hackney town centre and Clapton terminal. Wishes to see retention of roadside ticket machines and revisions to the crew-change point.
Islington Transport Aware	Supports conversion of route 38 to double-deck on grounds of congestion, seating and road safety. Favours rear-door boarding and conductors at peak times. Considers conversion of routes 507/521 less important but still with some benefits.
Living Streets - Islington branch	A selection of Living Streets' member comments, generally supporting withdrawal of articulated buses.
Covent Garden Business Forum	Supports conversion of route 38 to double-deck on grounds of congestion.
Clapham Transport Users Group	Supports conversion of route 38 to double-deck. Considers that articulated buses are suited to routes 507 and 521.
Guys and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	Would be opposed to any loss of speed, capacity and accessibility if routes 507 and 521 converted to 12m single-deck. Supports weekend service on route 507.
The Westminster Society	Supports double-decks on route 38 for traffic reasons. Requests retention of offbus ticketing in central London. Supports weekend service on route 507.
Metropolitan Police	Police have no comments to make on these proposals.
Responses from individuals	Route 38: seventeen responses in favour of withdrawing articulated buses, ten opposed and two neutral. Two general responses in favour of withdrawing articulated buses.

Positive responses to the proposals were on the grounds of improved road safety, reduced fraud and extra seating (for route 38). Negative responses were on the ground of reduced accessibility, impact on the environment, increased congestion and value for money. Suggestions were made for retention of 100% off-bus ticketing, use of conductors and changes to driver changeover points.

The majority of stakeholder responses were against the proposals to replace the bendy buses with either single or double deck buses. However, some stakeholders acknowledged that community views are mixed.

Responses from London boroughs included concerns about the likely impact of extra buses on the existing infrastructure, as standing and stopping facilities were likely to be strained or not able to facilitate the levels of frequency increase proposed. One London Borough welcomed the proposal to convert route 38 (see section 4). Stakeholders asked for extra information on the ticketing to be used. If other vehicle types were to be used, it was suggested that boarding be allowed through more than one set of doors.

London TravelWatch discussed the consultation at their board meeting on 23rd September. Their response concludes that bendy buses offer advantages in terms of accessibility, manoeuvrability, loading and dwell time at stops.

Both London TravelWatch and GLA members suggested that it was inappropriate to make decisions on the future of these routes without consulting the users directly. London TravelWatch asked if attitudinal surveys had been conducted.

4. Route-specific comments

Many respondents commented on all three routes. This section reports route-specific comments. Views already summarised in the preceding sections are not repeated.

Routes 38/N38

Table 3 shows the distribution of responses which had specific reference to conversion of route 38 to double-deck.

Table 3: summary of responses specific to route 38 conversion

Type of Respondent	Broadly in favour	Broadly opposed	Neutral or Other
MP, Assembly Member or Councillor	2	5	2
London TravelWatch	0	1	0
Borough Officer	1	3	0
Groups	5	0	0
Police	0	0	1
Individuals	19	10	2

There were mixed views from Assembly Members and councillors, with the majority opposed. Both those in favour and those opposed cited the importance of route 38 in providing key links to areas without easy access to parallel rail services.

Most of the public responses were regarding route 38. These responses will largely have been prompted by the media coverage of the proposals. The majority of the individual responses were in favour of the conversion. Jennette Arnold AM conducted a survey amongst 116 users of route 38. Of those expressing a preference, 53% were in favour of the conversion and 47% were opposed.

The City of Westminster were in favour of conversion as they consider it will reduce pressure on road space. LB Camden and the City of London were in favour of retaining bendy buses, particularly considering the route's high patronage. LB Hackney acknowledged that there was a mix of views but their response was largely about the drawbacks of conversion. The City of London also responded in respect of the route 38 bus priority project, with concerns

about the impact of conversion on journey times. Suggestions were made for offbus ticketing to be retained if the route was converted.

The proposal to increase the weekend service on route N38 was supported by London TravelWatch.

Routes 507 and 521

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses which had specific reference to conversion of route 507 and 521 to shorter single-decks.

Table 4: summary of responses specific to routes 507 & 521 conversion

Type of Respondent	Broadly in favour	Broadly opposed	Neutral or Other
MP, Assembly Member or Councillor	0	3	0
London TravelWatch	0	1	0
Borough Officer	0	4	0
Groups	1	2	1
Police	0	0	1
Individuals	2	0	0

Those who were opposed to the conversion considered that bendy buses were better-suited to these routes' primary function of distributing commuters from main rail stations. They were concerned about increased bus and passenger congestion at the rail stations. There was some concern that shorter, rigid single-decks would be less manoeuvrable. Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Trust were concerned that conversion might reduce accessibility for the vulnerable.

The proposed weekend service on route 507 was welcomed by Guy's & St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust and by London TravelWatch.