



Consultation about possible changes to route 23

Summary of responses

June 2009

Consultation Report

Possible changes to bus route 23

Contents

	Page
1. Overview	3
2. Background: about the scheme	4
3. About the consultation	6
4. Public responses	8
5. Stakeholder responses	11
Appendix	13

1. Overview

TfL and Royal Borough Kensington & Chelsea recently consulted stakeholders¹ and the public on possible changes to route 23 around Elgin Crescent, Colville Road and Ladbrooke Gardens. This report explains the background to the scheme, the consultation and summarises the responses. It will contribute towards decisions by TfL and the Council about whether to go ahead with the bus service changes and associated bus stop and traffic management works.

¹ (individuals such as MPs and GLA members, and organisations such as the councils; transport user groups; community, business and health representatives)

2. Background: about the scheme

2.1 Background

Some residents and the council suggested we consider changes to local bus routes, to continue to serve the community and help reduce traffic congestion. We considered the possibilities, taking into account bus users needs, and identified a possible change to route 23. This could reduce the number of buses on Elgin Crescent but introduce buses to Ladbroke Gardens. We wanted to understand wider local opinion before deciding whether a possible change to route 23 would be appropriate, so we ran a local consultation.

2.2 The bus service

The 23 currently runs along Elgin Crescent with routes 52 and 452. Between three services, around 27 buses run per hour in each direction (around 10 per hour on route 23, 7.5 on route 452 and 10 on route 52). The 23 is a 24-hour service, running half hourly through the night.

The 23 is different to the 52 and 452 in that it already runs along different roads (in a 'loop') depending on its direction of travel. It travels along Colville Terrace/Road towards Liverpool Street and along Kensington Park Road towards Westbourne Park (via Ladbroke Grove station). This is so it can serve Portobello Road market and because Colville Terrace is a one way street. Routes 52 and 452 both serve Kensington Park Road and Elgin Crescent in both directions.

2.3 Possible change

We could change the route 23 (towards Liverpool Street only*), to travel along Ladbroke Gardens and Westbourne Grove instead of Elgin Crescent and Colville Road. It would run from Ladbroke Grove, left into Ladbroke Gardens and ahead into Westbourne Grove.

This would mean the bus stop on the market side of Elgin Crescent, Colville Terrace and Colville Road would no longer be served by the 23. An alternative stop would be installed on Westbourne Grove.

*The 23 would still run along Kensington Park Road and Elgin Crescent towards Westbourne Park, because the junction of Ladbroke Gardens and Ladbroke Grove is difficult for buses to turn right out of, due to the steep brow of the hill and oncoming traffic.

2.4 Enabling works

The council would need to remove the pedestrian island in Ladbroke Gardens (at the junction with Ladbroke Grove) to allow buses to turn left from Ladbroke Grove into Ladbroke Gardens. TfL would fund this work. The works would not reduce the width of the pavement nor remove the bollards which are currently there. The pedestrian

island on Ladbroke Road would also remain (although the centre line of the road may need to be moved slightly).

The Council would also need to control parking to enable provision of a new bus stop on Westbourne Grove. A new pedestrian crossing facility would be installed. The new bus stop would not result in the loss of parking bays if the existing bus stop outside 228 Westbourne Grove were converted to Pay and Display Parking. This would be the subject of a separate consultation carried out by the Council.

3. About the consultation

The public and stakeholder consultation ran between 18 March 2009 and 1 May 2009. It was designed to enable TfL and the council to understand wider local opinion about possible changes to route 23.

Possible changes to the 23 were at formative stage, so we did not ask any specific questions in the consultation. We explained the position, the known possible effects and asked for general views and opinion about the issues.

3.1 The consultation objectives were:

- To give stakeholders and the public enough information to allow them to give informed responses;
- Gauge level of support and opinions about a possible change to route 23;
- Understand concerns and objections;
- Identify new issues;
- Allow stakeholders and public to make suggestions;
- Allow stakeholders and public to influence our final decision;
- Help TfL and the council consider public and stakeholder responses in decision making.

3.2 Consultation audience

We gave careful consideration to who was affected by our plans and how they may be affected before deciding who to consult. We focused the public consultation on all the roads directly affected, their residents and businesses. We also consulted wider stakeholders in neighbouring boroughs served by the route, London TravelWatch and the Police.

3.3 Consultation leaflet

A consultation letter and map were distributed to premises on affected roads.

We also sent the leaflet to stakeholders including:

- MPs
- Council Leaders
- Ward Councillors
- Council groups
- Trader/business groups
- Resident groups
- Local community groups/societies
- Local charity organisations

People could respond by letter, telephone or email.

3.4 Meetings and site visits

Meetings and site visits informed the design of the possible changes to route 23. On 22 April 2009 TfL attended a public meeting at Kensington Town Hall chaired by Cllr Paget-Brown. Local Councillors and representatives of local residents groups were also present. Following the meeting, three petitions concerning the possible changes were presented to the council.

Notting Hill Residents presented a petition with 395 signatories opposing any alterations to route 23 saying that the alternative would be unsafe, polluting and provide a less useful service. 400 bus users signed a petition saying that they wished the stop on Elgin Crescent to remain open as it provided good access to local shops and amenities. Shop and small business owners in Elgin Crescent presented a petition of 144 signatures. They opposed the removal of the bus stop as it currently provided easy access for their customers.

3.5 Email

Members of the public could reply by email: customerservices@tfl-buses.co.uk or stengagement@tfl.gov.uk (the specific consultation email address).

3.6 Website

A page was set up on TfL's website containing the consultation letter and map.

3.7 Advertising: press

A press release went out into the local area to advertise the consultation.

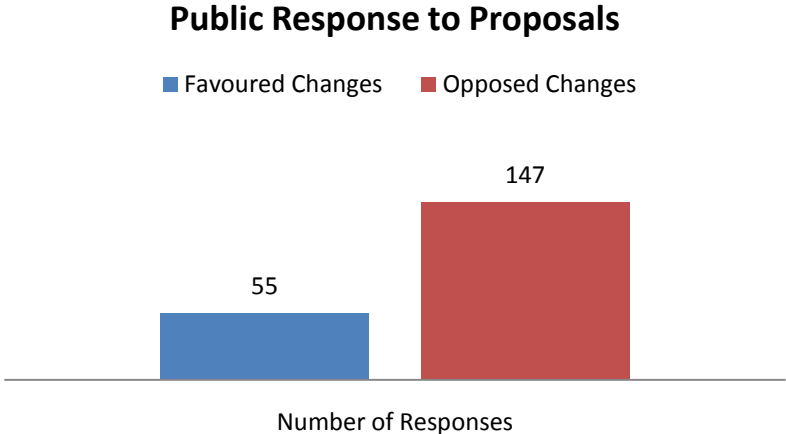
3.8 Languages & formats

A translation service to other languages was available on request, along with Braille, audio and large font.

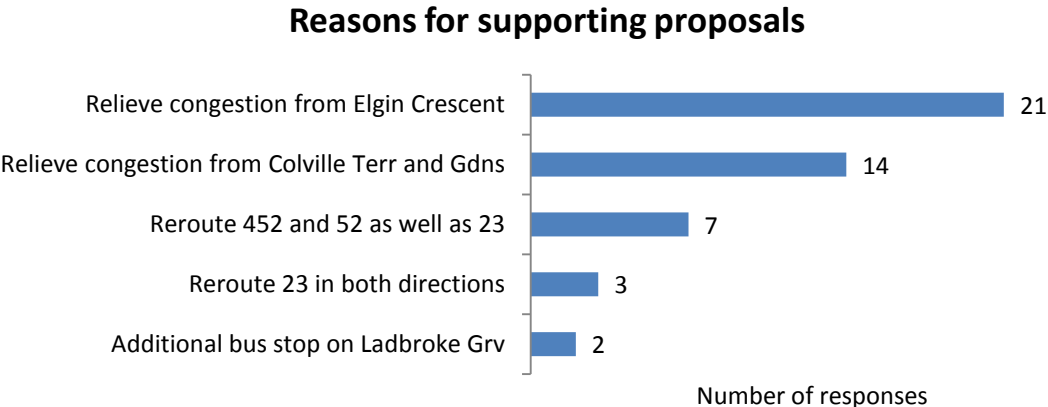
4. Public Responses

A total of 202 replies were received from individuals (and 9 written stakeholder responses which are summarised later in the report).

Of the individual responses, 55 (27%) were considered to be broadly in favour of the possible changes. 147 (73%) responses were considered to be opposed to the possible changes.



4.1 In favour of the proposal



* In the consultation, TfL did not ask for answers to specific questions. Totals are not indicative of all respondents opinions on separate issues but represent the number of occasions that an issue was mentioned in consultation responses.

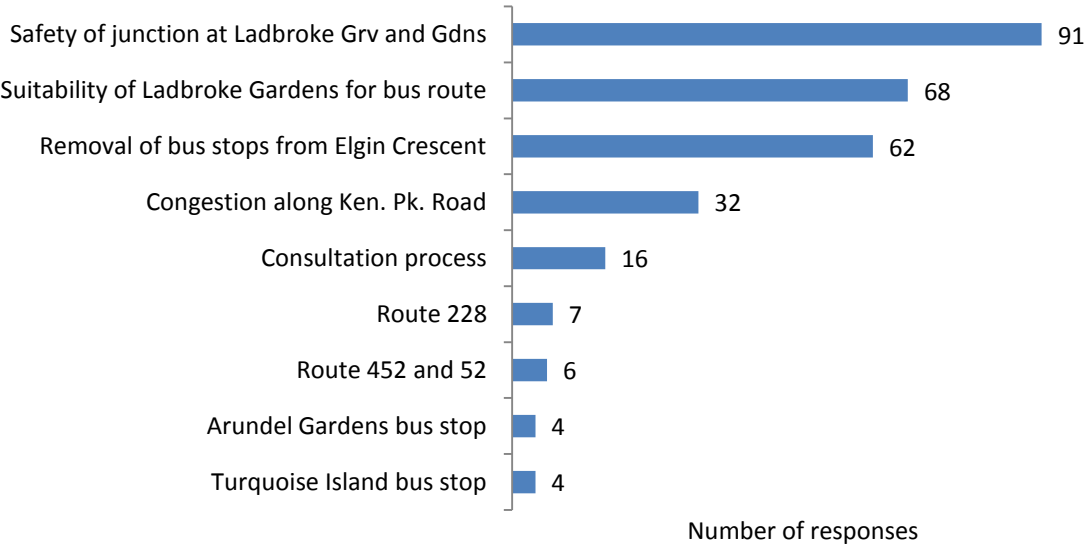
The most common reason given for supporting the proposed change to the route was that the respondent favoured having fewer buses running along Elgin Crescent (21 responses). People stated that Elgin Crescent currently had a high number of buses running along it and that this, in their opinion, caused congestion and pollution. They consider any reduction of buses on the road to be a great benefit. Some respondents requested that routes 52 and 452 be moved as well (7 responses). They considered that it would be a positive step to have all three routes follow the split routing and would help diffuse congestion in the area.

Other respondents approved of the changes as they removed the 23 from the junction of Colville Terrace and Colville Gardens (14 responses). Buses are considered to have difficulty turning at that point and cause traffic to build up as a result. Some commented about noise and vibration caused by buses, including those running at night.

Other issues raised were a desire to see route 23 diverted in both directions (3 responses) and the addition of another stop for route 228 on Ladbroke Grove (2 responses).

4.2 Against the proposal

Reasons for opposing proposals



* In the consultation, TfL did not ask for answers to specific questions. Totals are not indicative of all respondents opinions on separate issues but represent the number of occasions that an issue was mentioned in consultation responses.

A number of reasons were given by respondents as to why they were opposed to the change to the route. The most prevalent issue was safety at the junction of Ladbroke Grove and Ladbroke Gardens (91 responses). Many people considered that it had a poor accident history and noted that a traffic island had been installed specifically to address safety concerns. Removal of the island would make it more difficult to cross at that point. The issue is exacerbated by the fact that the junction is close to the brow of a hill. This is considered to reduce driver visibility and would therefore be an unsuitable place to have a bus turning.

The second most common issue concerned the suitability of Ladbroke Gardens to accommodate a bus route (68 responses). At present, residents consider the road to be quiet and residential. According to many, the addition of a bus route to the road would create noise and air pollution, increase congestion and damage the fabric of the buildings themselves due to excessive vibrations.

A number of responses opposed the possible removal of the bus stop by the junction of Elgin Crescent and Portobello Road (62 responses). The stop is considered to provide access to shops and amenities on Portobello Road for both residents and tourists. The removal would, in some opinions, be considered to have a detrimental impact on businesses in the area.

In addition to the general suitability of Ladbrooke Gardens as a bus route, respondents were concerned about the level of congestion at the junction of Kensington Park Road and Westbourne Grove (32 responses). Many consider the spot to already suffer from high noise and vibration levels and refer to buses struggling to pass each other and causing extensive congestion.

We received complaints that the consultation process was unsatisfactory (16 responses). Individuals complained that TfL had not contacted them directly, that they had been informed about the proposals at too late a stage and that the consultation should have been held over a wider geographical area.

Other issues raised included that route 228 was under-used (7 responses), routes 52 and 452 (6 responses), that Turquoise Island is unsuitable for a bus stop (4 responses), and also opposition to the proposed stop at Arundel Gardens (4 responses).

5. Stakeholder Responses

As well as individual responses, we invited responses from a number of stakeholders.

These included individuals such as MPs and GLA members, and organisations such as local councils, transport user groups and community, business or health representatives.

5.1 Local Government

5.1a Malcolm Rifkind MP (Kensington & Chelsea)

The MP raised concerns brought to him by his constituents. It is feared that the removal of the pedestrian island at the junction of Ladbrooke Grove and Ladbrooke Gardens would greatly increase the risk of accidents, particularly since the spot has reduced visibility due to being at the brow of a hill. He added that Elgin Crescent is currently listed as a 'B' road and is therefore more suitable to having a bus route running along it.

5.1b Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea

The Borough noted the strength of opinion from local residents for and against the proposal. They wished to wait until the totality of public opinion could be understood, and alternative suggestions investigated before making any further comment.

5.1c Westminster City Council

The Council had no comment on the proposal.

5.2 Interest and Residents Groups

5.2a London Travel Watch

London Travel Watch fully supported the possible changes.

5.2b Elgin Crescent Residents' Association

In their submission, the Elgin Crescent Residents' Association outlined their support for the proposed change to route 23 but also requested TfL to consider further changes that would address congestion along Elgin Crescent. The response included a petition. It also included a detailed rebuttal of criticisms of the possible changes to route 23 raised by other residents groups. They specifically made reference to issues raised by others, such as safety at the junction of Ladbrooke Gardens and Ladbrooke Grove; congestion at the junctions of Westbourne Grove and Kensington Park Road; additional pollution and congestion on Ladbrooke Gardens; and the possible removal of the route 23 bus stop on the eastern end of Elgin Crescent.

They concluded by arguing that, while there is a historical precedent of Elgin Crescent having bus routes run along it, this should not make a general reassessment of the suitability of roads in the wider area invalid.

5.2c Ladbroke Association

The Ladbroke Association objected to the possible changes for a number of reasons. They argued that bus routes in the area should be kept on existing 'B' routes, such as Elgin Crescent, and away from streets with listed buildings likely to be damaged by vibrations caused by buses running along them. They supported the views of local shop owners who said that rerouting the 23 bus would result in a loss of trade for them. Finally, they reiterated the view that the loss of the pedestrian island at the junction of Ladbroke Gardens and Ladbroke Grove would greatly increase the risk of accidents.

5.2d Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group

The Notting Hill Gate Improvements Group opposed the possible changes due to the impact they could have on the area surrounding Turquoise Island. They believe the island itself is currently an open and green space that would be spoiled if a bus stop were to be placed on it. In their view, the section of road along Westbourne Grove is already very crowded with cars attempting to access shops, and adding buses would increase congestion. In addition the loss of car parking spaces would harm shops in the area and remove custom. Finally, they are aware that the area is soon to lose further car spaces to facilitate the installation of stands for TfL's Cycle Hire Scheme further exacerbating current traffic and parking issues.

5.2e Portobello Road Antique Association

The Association said that they believed the proposals would make little difference to the antique market but that it would have a detrimental effect on other parts of the market as it would require customers to walk further with their shopping. They also felt that congestion issues on Elgin Crescent had been exaggerated, except at the junction with Portobello Road on Saturdays. They added that they believed the proposals would exacerbate serious existing congestion problems at the junction of Portobello Road and Westbourne Grove.

Appendix

1. Street List

Colville Road
Colville Terrace
Elgin Crescent
Kensington Park Road
Ladbroke Gardens
Ladbroke Grove
Lonsdale Mews
Lonsdale Road
Stanley Crescent
Stanley Gardens
Westbourne Grove
Westbourne Grove Mews