

Proposed changes to buses in South-East London for the opening of the Elizabeth Line

Response to issues raised
August 2018

Consultation Summary

Background

Between 3 July 2017 and 17 September 2017, we consulted on proposals to reorganise bus services in West, South East and North East London to support the opening of the Elizabeth line. The proposals involved a combination of changing where some routes terminate, rerouting some routes, extending routes to maintain connections and introducing new routes. The proposals help to ensure that our bus services best meet passenger demand while continuing to provide an affordable and reliable network.

The introduction of the Hopper fare has allowed us to make changes to the bus network which would previously not have been as attractive, now that passengers using pay as you go can make as many bus journeys as they like within an hour of first touching in for the price of one fare.

We published detailed proposals on our website at <https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/buses/elizabeth-line/>. There we provided an overview of the scheme, along with maps showing the bus routes in question as they are now and how they would look if the proposals were implemented.

The route proposals are generally connected by area. Due to the scope of the proposals we presented the information in separate sections maintaining this grouped order, each with their own explanations and maps. The affected South East London routes were as follows:

- Woolwich and Abbey Wood routes 129, 161, 178, 180, 244, 291, 301, 469, 472 and B11

Conclusion and next steps

We received 2706 responses in total to the consultation about bus services in West, South East and North East London; 2664 were from members of the public and 42 were from stakeholders.

The table below shows the level of support and opposition for each route proposal for South East London as a proportion of those who responded to each of the questions:

Changes to route 161	920 responses	32 per cent support or strongly support 12 per cent oppose or strongly oppose
Changes to routes 178, 244 and 291	933 responses	62 per cent support or strongly support 9 per cent oppose or strongly oppose
Changes to route 180	927 responses	34 per cent support or strongly support 26 per cent oppose or strongly oppose
Changes to route 472	906 responses	45 per cent support or strongly support 9 per cent oppose or strongly oppose

Introduction of route 301	907 responses	63 per cent support or strongly support 4 per cent oppose or strongly oppose
Changes to route 469	900 responses	34 per cent support or strongly support 9 per cent oppose or strongly oppose
Changes to route B11	897 responses	30 per cent support or strongly support 10 per cent oppose or strongly oppose

After considering all of the responses to the South East London proposals, as well and based on expected changes to demand, we plan to proceed with the changes as consulted on for **routes 129, 161, 178, 291, 469, 472 and B11**:

We recognise that customers have raised concerns about some of the proposed changes to these routes, but the responses did not raise any issues that were not considered in the planning of the proposal.

We will also be implementing the changes to **route 180** and the introduction of **route 301**. However, following the consultation responses and further review, the changes to these routes will go ahead with the following alterations:

- **Route 180** will be run between Erith Quarry and North Greenwich, but will be rerouted between Charlton and North Greenwich via Bugsby's Way instead of via Peartree Way
- **Route 301** will be introduced between Bexleyheath and Greenwich. However it will use double deck buses and will run via Woolwich Road and New Road instead of via Knee Hill

We plan to introduce these changes in line with the phased opening of the Elizabeth line or in response to wider bus network changes, subject to any necessary changes to highway infrastructure being made by the relevant highway authorities. A full customer communications campaign will be implemented in advance of any changes to let people know new journey options and frequencies.

At this time, we are not planning to convert **route 244** to double deck operation. We will keep demand under review and if required we will introduce double deck buses on this route at a later date.

Response to issues commonly raised

Below are our responses to the key issues raised:

Route 301: Concern that Knee Hill is unsuitable for buses

Although Knee Hill is currently used by out of service buses, having carried out a route test we have concluded that it is not suitable for use by buses in service. The bus frequently had to stop to allow other vehicles to pass and as such, speed was very slow. We felt there was also a risk that there would be situations where vehicles were unable to pass each other.

We will therefore route the 301 via Woolwich Road and New Road, rather than via Knee Hill.

Route 301: Can the frequency of the route be increased or double deck buses used?

Double deck buses were used during the route test mentioned above, and it was agreed that the route via New Road is suitable for double deck vehicles so we now plan to use these buses on route 301. This will provide additional capacity on the route.

Route 472: concern about loss of links to Bentham Road, Thamesmead

Although Bentham Road will no longer be served by route 472, it will continue to be served by route 244 as well as new route 301. These will provide most of the direct links provided currently.

In addition, routes 229 and 472 will continue to be within 400 metres of the majority of households and facilities in Bentham Road. We will investigate placing new bus stops on Central Way near the junction with Bentham Road and Thamesmere Drive, so that the northern end of Bentham Road would be within a short walk of bus stops served by route 472.

Route 472 and B11: concern about loss of access to Thamesmead town centre

Although route 472 will no longer serve Thamesmere Drive, routes 177, 229, 244 and 401 will continue to do so ensuring links are maintained for those in the Thamesmead area.

Similarly passengers who currently use route B11 to travel to Thamesmead town centre would also be able to interchange with routes 177, 229, 244 and 401, as well as extended route 472 and new route 301 to complete their journey.

As mentioned above, we will also look into providing bus stops on Central Way close to the junction with Bentham Road and Thamesmere Drive.

Route B11: concern about frequency reduction

With the introduction of route 301, capacity will be sufficient on all areas served by the current route of the B11. Many of the trips made by B11 will be able to be made by the 301 and will benefit from a significant increase in capacity. We will keep frequencies under review to ensure that capacity is sufficient.

Routes 244/291: concern that double deck buses are unsuitable for some of the roads used

We have successfully carried out route tests along both routes using double deck buses, which demonstrated that the roads were suitable for these vehicles. However, we will not be going ahead with the conversion of route 244 to double deck operation at this time. We will keep demand under review and if required we will introduce double deck buses on this route at a later date.

Route 469: concern about loss of links from Abbey Road/Gilbert Road

Route 229 will continue to provide sufficient capacity for passengers on Abbey Road and Gilbert Road. Passengers will be able to change bus without having to change stop at Abbey Wood for high frequency services to Woolwich town centre, Queen Elizabeth Hospital and other destinations.

Route 180: concern about broken trips (eg. between Woolwich/Charlton and Greenwich/Lewisham) and increased journey times to North Greenwich

The changes to route 180 will mean passengers would need to change buses to complete their journey. The majority of these trips are to and from Lewisham and Greenwich Town Centres for which there are high frequency interchange options available at Woolwich.

With regard to journey times, we proposed that buses on route 180 would follow the current route 161 routeing via Peartree Way between Charlton and North Greenwich. This is slightly slower than the 472 routeing via Bugsby's Way.

A further review of route 180 has shown that routeing the 180 via Bugsby's Way instead would affect a small number of journeys, but provide faster journey times for far more passengers. We therefore plan to go ahead with this routeing for route 180.

Route 180: concern about reduced capacity between Greenwich and Woolwich if the 180 no longer serves Lewisham

Changes to route 180 will mean that route 177 provides the direct link between Woolwich and Greenwich. However, the 177 has sufficient capacity for the level of demand on this corridor. We will continue to keep this under review.

Route 161: concern about access to Woolwich Arsenal station/Woolwich Elizabeth line station

The Royal Borough of Greenwich is introducing a 'super-crossing' across Beresford Street which will be key in providing access between Woolwich Arsenal station and the new Elizabeth line station, as well as improving pedestrian interchange in the town centre. Once the new crossing is in place, the left turn from Woolwich New Road into Beresford Street will be banned for all vehicles.

Consequently, route 161 has to be diverted towards North Greenwich to facilitate the introduction of the new crossing. We appreciate that rerouting the 161 via Wellington Street will mean it no longer have common stops with routes 177, 180 and 472 towards East and North Greenwich, and passengers will face an additional walk of around 100 metres to reach the north side of the town centre and the Elizabeth line station. However, any alternative routing (for example, via Vincent Road) would result in longer journey times for through passengers, and would not be cost effective as an additional vehicle would be required to maintain the current level of frequency.

Route 161: will there be additional bus stops on the new section of the route?

The route will serve existing bus stops on its new line of route, for example at The Woolwich Centre.

Request for a bus route between Abbey Wood and Welling

Routes 51 and 96 already provide a link from Welling to the Elizabeth line at Woolwich and a bus to Abbey Wood would not be significantly quicker, particularly as recently introduced bus priority measures on Plumstead Road have provided quicker and more reliable journeys on routes 51 and 96.

Request for an express bus route between Woolwich and Eltham/Mottingham

Route 161 provides links between Eltham, Mottingham and Woolwich. Demand is not expected to increase significantly on this route and there would not be sufficient demand to justify a limited stop express service. Passengers wanting to access many of the connections offered by the Elizabeth line are likely to

have a quicker journey using existing National Rail services at Eltham and Mottingham, even with the introduction of an express service.