On the Buses – views from the queues.

A study of 'problematic' bus routes and how to make them better.

Foreword

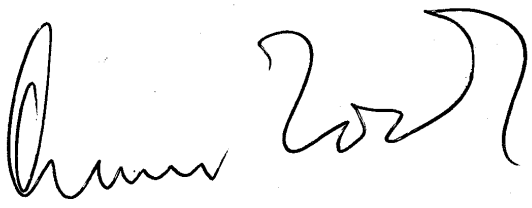
By Brian Cooke
Chair of the London Transport Users Committee

As Disraeli so nearly remarked, there are lies, damned lies and statistics - or bus Quality of Service Indices! The official statistics show that despite increasing traffic levels and a challenging operating environment, bus services in London have become much better. Indeed, it has been claimed that London's buses are 'Britain's most improved public service in recent years'. But such statistics do not always tell the complete story, and frequently they do not match individual passengers' day to day experiences of the buses they use.

Amongst the public at large, there is very little comprehension of how bus services are planned and operated, or of how their reliability can be compromised by seemingly random events. To the average person in the street (or on the Clapham omnibus), running buses is some kind of 'black art' where which only the initiated have any understanding of how the result is achieved. This is reflected in the frequent observation that buses appear to run in bunches – you can wait for ages and then three come at once.

In truth, managing bus services is both an art and a science. It is governed by scientific or 'hard' physical realities, such as vehicle technology, the driving times between places, and the stopping patterns. But it must take account of social science insights (into passengers' perceptions and expectations), as well as the artist's skills of presentation.

This report seeks to explore some of the theory and practice of bus service operation in lay people's terms, as well as to offer an understanding of the impact on the passenger when things go wrong, particularly in locations where there are no alternative services available. It does so by examining a selection of routes in London which have been reported to be 'problematic' or particularly 'poor performers', to discover whether their reputation is deserved – and, if so, what might be done to rectify matters.

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Contents

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1 Background and Executive Summary

1.1 In the past few years, the rapid expansion in the volume of bus services provided in London has been accompanied by a dramatic rise in the number of journeys made. At the same time, Transport for London's monitoring of service quality has shown a steady improvement in operational reliability on the road.

1.2 Despite this, Members of the London Assembly have reported that complaints about buses continue to feature prominently in their postbags. London Transport Users Committee therefore decided to look more closely at a sample of routes which were regarded as being particularly problematic – particularly some which have long solo sections in which they are not paralleled by any other services, so that any under-performance can have a disproportionately serious impact on passengers.

1.3 Members of the Assembly, together with the London borough councils, were invited to nominate routes, which they believed to merit such scrutiny. From the nominations received, three routes were chosen as case studies. Members of the travelling public were then recruited to compile travel diaries, recording their experiences in using these routes over a period of three weeks.

1.4 This study has thrown up a number of issues for which transport authorities and operators should take note, particularly surrounding 'soft' issues which have perhaps not had as much management time and effort devoted to them as they could. It has also shown that many problems lead to poor perception of the quality of bus services and are to an extent outside of the control of the operator, for example traffic congestion, poor parking of other vehicles on the kerbside, and lack of consideration by fellow passengers (litter and access to seating).

1.5 In relation to problems that are within the control of either the operator or Transport for London, the study finds that: -

1.5.1 Bus priority measures, such as those introduced as part of the London Bus Initiative, have resulted in better and more reliable bus services. In turn, this has contributed to greater satisfaction amongst passengers.

1.5.2 The attitude of bus staff towards passengers can have a significant effect on satisfaction with the service. An unreliable service will be either made or broken by the attitude and politeness of the staff.

1.5.3 Good communications are crucial to passengers, both while waiting at the bus stop, when boarding, during the journey, and whilst alighting.

1.5.4 Information, shelters and seating at bus stops are crucial - especially for passengers boarding on sections of route where services are less frequent.

1.5.5 Frequent changes of operator can have a negative effect, over time, on the public's perception of the efficiency and attractiveness of a bus service. At the meetings held with the Travel Diarists, there were frequent references on all three routes to changes of contractor, and how badly or well the routes were managed.

1.5.6 It is important to passengers that shelters and seats are clean and graffiti-free.

1.5.7 In localities with stable populations, long communal memories of past poor performance that may take a generation to put right. This will require special thought with regard to how bus services are marketed in these areas.

1.6 The report recommends that: -

- Transport for London should examine whether it is possible to give priority to buses on streets affected by road works.
- Transport for London should seek to maintain high levels of maintenance and cleanliness of bus stops and shelters.
- Transport for London and its operators should arrange for litter to be cleared from buses during the course of their working day.
- Transport for London and local authorities should review the availability of seats and shelters on 'hail and ride' sections of route, to address the needs of older or frailer people.
- Transport for London, the London Borough of Barnet and the Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust should review the highway and bus access arrangements at Barnet Hospital with a view to enhancing its' public transport, cycling and walking accessibility, including the feasibility of extending other bus services to the site which currently terminate in Barnet town centre.
- Transport for London, the London Borough of Wandsworth and the St George's Hospital NHS Trust should review the access arrangements for buses, cyclists and pedestrians, and the parking facilities, at St George's Hospital, Tooting and adjacent sites with a view to enhancing their public transport, cycling and walking accessibility, including the feasibility of extending or diverting other bus services to the sites which currently terminate at or pass Tooting Broadway. This should also include a review of the structure of the G1 service and its relationship with other services in the area it serves.
- Transport for London and the London Borough of Wandsworth should review the operation of the 'hail and ride' sections of route G1, looking in particular at parking enforcement, traffic calming measures, and the scope for additional 'gathering points' with information, seating and shelter, with a view to improving passenger waiting facilities on these sections of route.
- Transport for London should review the points at which routes 263 and G1 are monitored for the purpose of compiling Quality of Service Indices.
- Transport for London should explore the scope for more personalised 'niche' marketing of bus services in London, possibly by expanding the concept of Travel Planning to a wider community.

- Transport for London should investigate whether an additional marketing effort could be undertaken to promote off-bus ticket sales on routes that have a higher-than-average proportion of cash fares than others.

2 Study methodology

2.1 In selecting the routes chosen for detailed study, LTUC took into account

- the availability of alternative forms of transport
- the destinations served by the route (e.g. hospital, school, shopping centre, housing estate)
- whether the route provides the only bus service over part of its length – that is, whether it has a substantial solo section
- the frequency of the service
- the geographic spread of the routes within London.

2.2 The three routes finally selected were

123 Wood Green to Ilford
263 Barnet Hospital to Archway
G1 Streatham to Battersea

2.3 The travel diaries were compiled over a three-week period in October 2004, with the help of volunteer diarists. These were recruited by;-

(a) contact with major employers on the routes (such as hospitals' travel plan officers),
(b) advertisements in the local press, and
(c) direct approaches to users at bus stops.

Borough councils and Members of the London Assembly were asked to provide any local contacts willing to participate or to offer information on the routes concerned. Particular care was taken to recruit as wide a range of diarists as possible, to ensure that the results of the survey were not distorted by users with strongly-held views who might not be representative of passengers in general.

2.4 In addition, staff of LTUC undertook a number of random journeys on each route, to observe their operating characteristics and the type of problems they encountered. These observations were subsequently used to conduct a 'SWOT' analysis (that is, to identify Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats)[1].

[1] This is included in chapter four.

3 The Travel Diary results

3.1 A total of 61 diarists originally took part in the study, of these 11 used route 123, 20 used route 263, and 30 used route G1. This is obviously a relatively small sample, and so care has to be taken not to use the results out of context.

3.2 Diarists were asked first to complete a form telling us about themselves and their bus journeys the results of which are as follows.

3.3 ***Originating stops***

"Please give the name or location of the stop at which you usually board the route on your first trip of the day"

Route 123	Wood Green	1
	Lordship Lane	1
	Blackhorse Road to Wood Street / Forest Road	8
	Woodford	1
Route 263	Archway	1
	East Finchley High Road	13
	North Finchley	1
	Whetstone	2
	High Barnet	3
Route G1	Streatham Common	2
	Streatham	1
	Tooting Bec Common	3
	Church Lane	3
	Mitcham Road	2
	Tooting Broadway	2
	Burntwood Lane	3
	Wandsworth Common	4
	Nightingale Lane	2
	Clapham South	2
	Clapham Junction	3
	Battersea Shaftesbury Estate	3

3.4 LTUC officers and members approached passengers all along the line of the routes concerned. On the 123 there were many comments at the Ilford and Wood Green ends to the effect that the 123 was a good service and passengers were puzzled as to why we wished to study this service. The fact that passengers who were most interested in the survey were concentrated on the solo sections of route on all three services is an indication of the importance of the service to them, as they have no other alternative.

3.5 ***Information at originating stop***

"How would you describe the information given at the bus stop you board at on your first trip of the day?"

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Very good	36%	5%	17%	20%
Fairly good	36%	50%	26.5%	36%
Not very good	18%	20%	26.5%	23%
Not at all good		10%	10%	8.5%
No Information at bus stop	10%		3%	3%
I hail the bus as there is no formal stop			17%	8.5%
No answer		5%		1%

3.5.1 Analysis of the returns by bus stop and age shows that on route 123 those answering ‘not very good’ or ‘no information at bus stop’ were concentrated on the Forest Road solo section of route, and amongst people aged 25-54. On route 263 those answering ‘not very good’, ‘not at all good’ and ‘no information at bus stop’ were concentrated on the Highgate–East Finchley–North Finchley solo section of route, and amongst people aged 55-64 and over 65.The G1 was the only route to feature a ‘hail and ride’ section, with no formal bus stops in the Church Lane area of Tooting. Nevertheless, responses in the ‘not very good’, ‘not at all good’ and ‘no information at bus stop’ categories all came from the solo sections of route in Battersea and between Clapham South and Tooting, and amongst people aged 25–54 and 55-64.

3.5.2 On all three routes, the highest levels of satisfaction (‘very good' and 'fairly good’) were amongst passengers boarding on sections of route where there are alternative services. These results suggest that on solo sections the presentation of information may be more important than at locations where two or more alternative services are offered. Comprehension of this amongst 25 to 54 year olds may also be a cultural issue, in that older generations may be more conversant with the means to extract useful information.

Mrs D (Route 123) – *‘the efforts First Buses have made is in stark contrast to Arriva routes 275 and W16. These are both served by clapped out old vehicles with an unreliable services, and demoralised drivers’*

Mr P (Route 123) – *'the information at the stop is very clear but NOT related to performance'*

3.6 ***Availability of shelters***

"Is there a shelter to wait in?"

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Yes	91%	90%	67%	79%
No		10%	33%	20%
No Answer	9%			1%

3.7 The vast majority of stops used by the travel diarists were provided with shelters. As expected, the largest number of stops without shelters was on the 'hail and ride' parts of route G1. Those who answered no to this question had very high levels of dissatisfaction with the service overall and with other individual aspects of the service. This would suggest that provision of a shelter increases users satisfaction levels.

3.8 ***Seat availability***

"Is there a seat to sit on whilst waiting?"

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Yes	91%	90%	67%	79%
No		10%	33%	20%
No Answer	9%			1%

3.9 The answers to this were identical with those to the previous question, the largest number of stops without seating being on the 'hail and ride' parts of the G1. Those who answered no to this question had very high levels of dissatisfaction with the service overall and with other individual aspects of the service, suggesting that there may be some positive association of seat availability with other perceptions of service quality.

3.10 **Commentary on information, shelters and seating**

These results confirm that passengers attach a high value to the quality of the waiting environment at bus stops, perhaps more than is generally appreciated. It is noticeable that on the route where large stretches are not provided with these facilities (the G1), dissatisfaction overall increases. Providing them is particularly important on less frequent routes or those where there are few alternatives available in the event of service failure. This seems to vindicate London's Buses current strategy of investment in shelters and information provision.

Miss W (Route G1) – *'where I get on it is hail and ride, but it is only a short distance to where there is a seat'*

3.11 ***Accessing the stop***

"How do you usually get to this bus stop?"

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Walk	82%	65%	84%	77%
Cycle	0%	0%	0%	0%
Car	0%	11%	0%	3%
Train or Underground	0%	20%	10%	11%
Other bus	18%	4%	6%	9%

3.12 On all three routes the vast majority of users arrived at their stop on foot and it was clear that their use of the bus was usually part of a local journey. However, nearly a fifth of recorded journeys on route 123 had begun on another bus, while on routes 263 and G1 there was significant use of other modes to access the service.

3.12.1 In the case of the 263 and G1, the people concerned were employees at Barnet and St.George's Hospitals, and were using the routes as part of a cross-London journey to work. For these people, the poor punctuality and low frequency of the services were causes of dissatisfaction, because of the difficulty of ensuring connections with other public transport services or lifts by car.

3.12.2 The numbers of diarists using the G1 as part of a longer journey was surprising given the localised nature of the service. This suggests that attention to detail will produce better satisfaction across the public transport spectrum in the bigger arena.

3.13 ***Overall satisfaction***

"Generally how satisfied are you with the following aspects of the route?"

Route 123						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No answer
Punctuality	18%	37%	18%	27%	0%	0%
Frequency	18%	37%	9%	27%	0%	9%
Cleanliness	27%	37%	18%	18%	0%	0%
Politeness of driver	28%	28%	18%	18%	0%	9%
The route overall	18%	45%	9%	18%	0%	9%

3.14 The high level of reported satisfaction with this route is commendable. It reflects the comments made to LTUC's researchers at bus stops by passengers to the effect that the 123 was not a problem bus route, and that other routes merited attention instead. It has also benefited from significant investment by Transport for London in the form of bus priority measures provided as part of the London Bus Initiative.

> Mrs D (Route 123) – *'A few years ago the service (route 123) was pretty dreadful, both from personal experience and seeing what has happened at local stops. First Buses seem to have put genuine efforts to improve this service and it shows. There seems to be a complete fleet of new buses in use now and although sometimes you still see two buses together you don't tend to see the 'convoys' of old.'*

Route 263						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No answer
Punctuality	0%	25%	10%	40%	25%	0%
Frequency	0%	25%	10%	30%	30%	5%
Cleanliness	10%	65%	10%	10%	5%	0%
Politeness of driver	10%	45%	0%	25%	20%	0%
The route overall	0%	35%	20%	20%	25%	0%

3.15 Punctuality, frequency and politeness of the driver were the main areas of dissatisfaction recorded by the diarists, particularly by those concentrated on the East Finchley/Finchley High Road solo section. Cleanliness of the buses was rated much higher than on the other two routes surveyed.

Route G1						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No answer
Punctuality	7%	30%	3%	20%	40%	0%
Frequency	3%	20%	7%	30%	33%	3%
Cleanliness	13%	57%	3%	17%	7%	3%
Politeness of driver	24%	40%	3%	13%	13%	7%
The route overall	27%	27%	7%	16%	20%	3%

3.16 Punctuality and frequency were the principal areas of dissatisfaction amongst the diarists, with those using the solo and 'hail and ride' sections featuring heavily in this category. Unlike the other two routes studied, the GI has an advertised timetable, rather than simply a service frequency (such as eight buses an hour). This means that its users are expected to time their journeys more precisely than those on other routes that run more frequently do. Failure of buses to adhere to the timetable is therefore likely to increase the level of dissatisfaction, especially if passengers depend on this service being reliable in order to make connections with other public transport.

> Miss W (Route G1) – *'often it is cut out for no reason – this bus serves three hospitals and people have to rely on it.*

All routes surveyed						
	Very satisfied	Fairly satisfied	Neither	Fairly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	No answer
Punctuality	7%	30%	8%	26%	30%	0%
Frequency	5%	26%	8%	29%	28%	5%
Cleanliness	14%	57%	8%	15%	5%	1%
Politeness of driver	20%	39%	5%	18%	13%	5%
Overall	17%	33%	11%	17%	20%	3%

> Ms M (Route 263) – *'long wait of 20 minutes. People were standing on the lower deck making it difficult to get on and off the bus. There were lots and lots of seats upstairs'*

3.17 On all three routes, a common feature was that diarists aged 54 or under were much more dissatisfied with the politeness of the driver than older people. This may be a counter-intuitive observation, but may reflect the fact that people over 60 will in most cases be using a 'Freedom Pass' which with its 'Oyster' reader function reduces the need for contact with the driver to a minimum. But on the G1 route, which is heavily used by people with disabilities, there were many reports of buses being unable to pull into the kerb and of drivers being reluctant to use the 'kneeling' function unless asked.

3.18 ***Age of the travel diarists***

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
16-24	0%	10%	0%	3%
25-54	63%	55%	30%	44%
55-64	27%	10%	26%	22%
65+	10%	25%	44%	31%

3.19 ***Gender of the travel diarists***

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Male	37%	45%	50%	45%
Female	63%	55%	50%	55%

3.20 ***Do you consider yourself to have a mobility impairment that limits your ability to use public transport?***

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Yes	37%	10%	67%	43%
No	63%	90%	33%	57%

3.21 On routes 123 and G1 the majority of male diarists considered themselves to have a mobility impairment. Of these, most were aged over 65, but many were aged 25-54 and had high dissatisfaction levels with punctuality and frequency of service. Given typical male travel patterns for this age group, it may be that these diarists were involuntary users of the service, without access to alternative means of transport.

3.22 **Results from the travel diaries**

3.22.1 Diarists were all asked to complete their diaries for 21 days from the week commencing the 9th October 2004. Not all of those who returned the pre-questionnaire went on to complete the actual diaries. The total number of journeys surveyed was 742, of which 180 were on route 123, 212 were on route 263, and 350 were on route G1. The average number of journeys per diarist was 21.

3.23 **Range and scope of the journeys surveyed**

3.23.1 Route 123

The earliest journey was at 0700 and the latest at midnight. Journeys were made on all days of the week, and covered all parts of the route from Wood Green to Ilford. A substantial proportion either began or ended within the solo section between Blackhorse Road and Charlie Brown's roundabout.

3.23.2 Route 263

The earliest journey was at 0715 and the latest at 2246. They were made on all days of the week, and covered all parts of the route from Archway to Barnet Hospital. The spread of journeys along the route was reasonably even.

3.23.3 Route G1

The earliest journey reported was at 0827 and the latest at 2016. They were made on all days of the week, and covered all parts of the route from Streatham Common to the Shaftesbury Estate. This shorter spread of journey times probably reflects the much older age profile of the G1's users, and the fact that in the evening its frequency reduces to only one bus every 30 minutes. The spread of journeys along the route was reasonably even.

3.24 **Waiting times**

Diarists were asked to record how long they waited before the bus arrived, and the time it did so.

3.24.1 On route 123 the average length of wait was between 10 and 11 minutes for a service which has a scheduled average waiting time of 5 minutes in the daytime and 10 minutes in the evening. The longest waits were during the daytime, with 27 journeys recording waits of over 20 minutes (compared with only one such instance in the evening). All of these journeys involved an origin or destination within the solo section of route, so they could not be made on another bus. Ironically, the average waiting time was reduced by some very short evening waits. On three occasions, journeys had to be abandoned as no bus came and an alternative means of transport had to be sought. One of these involved an hour's fruitless wait during the daytime.

3.24.2 On route 263, the average wait experienced was 10 minutes, for a service that has a scheduled average waiting time of 5 minutes during the day and 6 minutes in the evening. The longest waiting times were during the daytime with 30 recorded instances of waits of over 20 minutes, compared with five instances in the evening. There was a substantial concentration of these long waits amongst journeys made wholly within the solo section of route. On two occasions journeys were abandoned as no bus came. The longest recorded wait was one of 45 minutes. In addition, four journeys were made on other bus services when they appeared before a 263 arrived – these were all in the Barnet Hospital–Whetstone section of route.

Mrs B (Route 263) – *'two buses came at once after a very cold wait (of 35 minutes at 5.55pm)'*

Mrs G (Route 263) – *'I was disgusted I had to wait such a long time – 40 minutes and then two came at once'*

3.24.3 On route G1 the average wait reported was between 10 and 11 minutes for a service which has a scheduled average waiting time of 10 minutes in the day and 15 minutes in the evening. The longest waits were during the daytime,

with 64 recorded instances of waits exceeding 20 minutes. These long waits were all for journeys within or to the solo sections of route. In twelve instances, bus trips had to be abandoned as no bus came and passengers had to walk to complete their journeys. The longest waits were of 45 minutes.

> Mrs K (Route G1) – *'two buses came together hence my 30 minute wait (Clapham Junction to Shaftesbury Estate)'*

3.25 **Travel times compared with "normal"**

Question 5 asked the diarists how their journey time compared to normal.

3.25.1 3.25.1 The 123 service showed the greatest variation, with only 62% of journeys being recorded as normal, 11% being shown as shorter and 24% longer. Diarists noted that these variations were often due to traffic congestion, road works or other factors outside the operator's control.

3.25.2 On the 263 the situation was slightly different, in that whereas 66% of journeys were recorded as being of a normal duration, 17% were shorter and 14% longer. The reasons for these variations would not be apparent to most of the diarists. The level of variation from the norm suggests that the 263 is vulnerable to random traffic events at the various centres along its route, and that this has a disproportionate impact on passengers travelling to or from the solo section.

3.25.3 In contrast, the G1 had a much higher incidence of journeys with a normal journey time (71%), only 9% being shorter and 9% longer. Passengers recorded traffic delays at Clapham Junction, St.George's Hospital and Streatham. However, the figures would suggest that the overall running times for the service are about right, and that some account has been taken of the need to allow for regular traffic delays[2].

3.26 **Cleanliness**

Question 6 asked diarists to rate the cleanliness of their bus, both inside and out.

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All routes
Very good	27%	17%	25%	23%
Fairly good	56%	72%	68%	66%
Not very good	14%	7%	3%	7%
Not at all good	2%	2%	0%	1%

> Mrs S (Route 123) – '*the bus seats upstairs was the most disgusting sight, it was covered in sick. I had to change my mind and find a seat on the lower deck'*

[2] Note after the close of the survey a new timetable was introduced on the 4th December 2004, which added extra time to complete the end to end journey.

3.26.1 Not surprisingly, on all the routes early morning journeys tended to be rated cleanest, whereas journeys after the school peak and in the early evening had the worst cleanliness records.

3.27 Ease of identifying vehicle

Question 7 asked diarists whether the bus was easy to identify as it came to the stop. Except in a very small number of cases (route 123 3%, route 263 3%, route G1 1%) all the diarists answered this question in the affirmative. On the small number of occasions when the bus was difficult to identify on route G1, this was due to defective destination blinds (paper notices in the windscreen used as a substitute). There was also one instance of a 263 bus displaying route 134 details.

3.28 Cleanliness of shelters and seats

In questions 8 and 9, diarists were asked to report their impressions of the cleanliness of shelters and their associated seats at the stops where they caught the bus. There was a high correlation in responses to the two questions.

3.28.1 On route 123, 71% of both shelters and seats were rated as clean. In only two cases was there no shelter or seat. The unclean shelters and seats were located exclusively along the solo section between Blackhorse Road and Charlie Brown's roundabout, with the diarists noting that those at stops on the North Circular Road were especially prone to vandalism and graffiti.

> Mrs D (Route 123) – *'someone had spilt a drink all over the shelter seat'*

3.28.2 On route 263, 79% of shelters and 88% of seats were rated as clean. At 5% of stops there was no shelter or seat available. The difference in the ratings for shelters and seats stems from two stops (one in each direction) at East Finchley Underground station. This is because the 263 stops have no shelter or seat, and are directly below the railway overbridge on which pigeons nest. The resulting mess makes passengers' waiting experience considerably more unpleasant, especially when a long wait occurs. It is recommended that action be taken to mitigate this situation (by means of anti-pigeon measures and additional shelters/seats).

> Mrs B (Route 263) – *'the 263 bus stop at East Finchley station, under a bridge, pigeon poo and very noisy traffic – this stop is the pits of the universe'*

3.28.3 On route G1 the situation is more complex, because 'hail and ride' is used on a number of sections. In this case the ratings for cleanliness were 59% at shelters and 71% at seats. But in 24% of instances diarists boarded at stops without shelters and in 19% without seats. The unclean reports related to two particular locations, at Tooting Broadway and Clapham Junction shopping centres. The "no shelter" and "no seating" reports referred to three particular stops, at St.George's Hospital, near to ASDA at Clapham Junction, and at Clapham South Underground station. The lack of these facilities here added to passengers' dissatisfaction, especially when excessive waits occurred.

Given the G1's greater share of older and more mobility impaired passengers, the availability of shelters and seats is a key issue to be addressed.

> Ms H (Route G1) – *'Aldrington Road shelter covered in graffiti and Tooting Broadway filthy with food from take aways'*.

3.29 **Availability of seats on board**

Question 10 asked diarists whether they had a seat on the bus for the whole of the journey.

3.29.1 On route 123, diarists did not get a seat for the whole or part of their journey for 31% of the time. These were mainly short journeys within the solo section of route between Blackhorse Road and Charlie Brown's roundabout. This problem seems to occur when buses are occupied by large numbers of longer-distance passengers. Effectively, they crowd out those making shorter trips, causing them understandable dissatisfaction.

3.29.2 On route 263, passengers did not get a seat for the whole or part of their journey on 8% of reported trips. This smaller proportion of such instances was confined to local journeys on the solo section of route around East Finchley, or when travelling from Archway in the early evening. The diarists experiencing this were people over 65, and references to conflict with buggies indicate that this is likely to be caused by a lack of capacity on the lower deck of the bus rather than overall. Such 'overcrowding' was often linked to a long gap in service, and was a major source of dissatisfaction amongst short distance riders.

> Mrs G (Route 263) – *'very crowded bus (at 1135), had to stand all the way'*

3.29.3 The G1 route had a very good record in this respect, with only 2% of journeys on which passengers had to stand for part or the whole of the way. These were confined to journeys between Tooting and Streatham, and may have been linked to gaps in service on routes 57 and 333.

3.30 **Ease of boarding and alighting**

Question 11 asked diarists how easy they found getting on and off the bus.

3.30.1 On route 123, diarist passengers found this difficult on 16% of occasions. A number attributed it to the inability of the bus to get close to the kerb, either because of physical constraints or because of a lack of skill on the part of the driver. Sometimes it was caused by passenger congestion at the exit door.

> Mr L (Route 123) – *'Lloyd Park eastbound stop is on outside of a bend, so buses cannot pull up with exit at kerb'*

3.30.2 The 263 had a better record, with diarists having difficulty in getting on or off the bus only 4% of the time. When this happened, it appeared to be for similar reasons to those encountered on the 123.

> Mrs G (Route 263) – *'it was difficult to get on the bus as it was too far away from the pavement.'*

3.30.3 Given the presence of 'hail and ride' sections on route G1, and its higher proportion of older and mobility impaired passengers, it was surprising that diarists reported difficulty in getting on and off on only 4% of their trips. But, when they did so, it was exclusively associated with journeys to or from the 'hail and ride' sections, in particular with an area with extensive parking problems around Bolingbroke Hospital. The ability and willingness of drivers to lower and raise the front suspension on the G1 buses was commented on favourably by a number of diarists, who felt it was especially praiseworthy in helping overcome this type of difficulty.

3.31 **Driver attitudes**

Question 12 asked the travel diarists to say whether they felt that the bus driver was polite and helpful to them and other passengers.

3.31.1 The 123 service had the worst reports of the three services surveyed, with incidents where the driver was seen to be rude or unhelpful occurring on 7% of journeys. These included missed stops, lack of communication when a bus broke down, buses being turned short (they were heavily bunched in one direction at the time), failure to pull into the kerb for a passenger with a disability, and refusing to give change for a £5 note.

> Mrs S (Route 123) – *'Lady with a pram had a £5 note for two £1 fares, but the driver said he had no change for her money. (Ridiculous)'*

> Mrs S (Route 123) – *'bus driver never stop for passengers in Wood Green outside BHS – so I had to walk to Turnpike Lane'*

> Mr L (Route 123) – *'rather a jerky ride. Driver failed to stop at one stop, though he had space to pick up the two people waiting'*

3.31.2 On the 263 the situation was by far the best with only 4 (1.7%) instances where the driver was seen to be rude or unhelpful. These were on the occasions where the diarist and other passengers were trapped in the centre exit door (2 occasions), failing to pull into the kerb for a passenger with a disability and driving with the front doors open with a near accident to one passenger.

3.31.2 The driver was seen to be rude or unhelpful during 5% of trips on route G1. These reports related to sharp braking, failing to account for traffic calming measures, playing loud music on a radio for the whole journey, talking to and being distracted by a friend, and failing to give proper information to an intending passenger (at St. George's Hospital, buses in both directions serve

the same stop, and the passenger wanted one in the opposite direction to that in which the bus was going). But, as already noted, G1 drivers received some praise for lowering the step at stops to help people with disabilities. This experience contradicted views formed during the initial surveys, and suggested -- as some diarists indicated -- that enhanced driver training, including disability awareness might be paying dividends.

3.32 **Overall satisfaction**

The final question asked diarists to rate their overall experience of the service provided on the day of travel.

	Route 123	Route 263	Route G1	All Routes
Very satisfied	34 %	31%	36%	34%
Fairly satisfied	51%	54%	50%	52%
Not very satisfied	9%	8%	7%	8%
Not at all satisfied	4%	6%	5%	5%

3.32.1 The result for the G1 probably reflects the proportion of older people who use this service (which goes our expectation that satisfaction levels would be much worse on this service), – many of whom commented on the importance of the G1 to their ability to get to shopping and health facilities, and for whom the lack of a bus service would be seriously detrimental to their well being. In some instances the older diarists on this route were giving high satisfaction ratings despite reporting at least one thing wrong with their journey experience.

Hail and Ride in action.

The G1 has a pivotal role in serving the needs of patients and staff at St.George's Hospital Tooting and this is the bus stop right outside the main entrance.

4. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats (SWOT)

4.1 The purpose of this chapter is to explore the possibilities for improving the routes studied and the threats to their performance. It is also intended to stimulate thought on the reasons for poor performance, and to suggest possible solutions to problems identified. We are keen that the diarists should see practical outcomes of benefit to users, rather than feeling that all they have contributed to is an academic exercise.

4.2 Route 123

This is a long inter-suburban service linking Wood Green with Ilford via Tottenham, Blackhorse Road, Walthamstow Forest Road, Woodford and Gants Hill. First London operates the service using 18 double deck low floor buses, from their depot at Rainham. A staff shuttle bus is required to take crews to and from the route at Ilford.

4.3 Strengths

The service links a number of suburban retail and employment centres such as Wood Green, Tottenham and Ilford, as well as providing important connections to the National Rail and London Underground networks at Turnpike Lane, Tottenham Hale, Blackhorse Road, Gants Hill and Ilford. As a result of its inclusion in Transport for London's London Bus Initiative, it has benefited from substantial investment (up to £1m) in bus priority measures (including items such as bus lanes, and priority at signalised junctions). In the two years to date (January 2005), 16 out of 41 planned schemes have been implemented, and progress with further schemes is likely in the near future.

4.3 Weaknesses

The service suffers from the fact that a substantial proportion of the route runs along the North Circular Road (A406 (T)), and connecting roads such as A1400 and the A503. These roads carry substantial flows of traffic. The A503 is the only road crossing the Lea Valley between Walthamstow and Tottenham. Under free-flowing conditions, the timetable can take account of the volumes of traffic. But any incident that impedes the free flow of traffic is likely to have an immediate and adverse effect on the reliability of the service, a consequence which is completely outwith the operators' control.

Spontaneous comments from passengers at bus stops and travel diarists indicated that 'bunching' is a problem at certain times of day, and that it is more prevalent in the eastbound than the westbound direction.

Mrs S (Route 123) – *'whenever there is a delay it is always very long and frustrating. Sometimes two or three buses coming along together partially empty'*

4.4 Opportunities

The 123 has an important role in providing direct inter-suburban links across north east London. This role could be substantially enhanced through appropriate bus priority measures of the kind already identified in the London Bus Initiative Programme. Additional measures are needed at, for example, Gants Hill roundabout (A12/A123/A1400 intersection). This is currently a free flow interchange with no traffic lights. Introducing signalling could give more priority to buses (it is served by eleven other routes as well).

Transport for London has recently announced that the operation of the 123 is to be transferred from First London to Arriva London North, using new double deck buses based at Tottenham. This garage is very close to the line of route. This will eliminate the need for staff to travel long distances before and after their duties on the 123.

4.5 Threats

The 123 use some of the busiest roads in London. Any increase in congestion on these roads will impact negatively on the operation and viability of the service. Remedying this is likely to require more drivers and vehicles for little or no return in terms of increased revenue or passenger numbers.

4.7 Route 263

This is a radial route linking Archway station (in inner London) to Barnet Hospital (close to the outer boundary of London), through Highgate, East and North Finchley, Whetstone and High Barnet.

4.8 Strengths

The route serves a number of important generators of passenger traffic, including Barnet and Whittington Hospitals and shopping areas such as Archway, North Finchley, Whetstone and Barnet. It connects with the Northern Line at Archway, Highgate, East Finchley and High Barnet. Two routes included in the London Bus Initiative (34 and 43) parallel parts of the route at its northern and southern ends.

4.9 Weaknesses

4.9.1 LTUC officers observed that there were often problems with inconsiderate parking at or near bus stops, especially in the section within the London Borough of Barnet between East Finchley and Barnet Hospital. There seemed to be little enforcement of parking controls in this area, and at places such as North Finchley this caused buses considerable difficulty in reaching the kerb. Consequently, passengers with mobility difficulties took much longer to board and alight than would have been necessary if the bus stop had been clear of offending vehicles. This was mentioned spontaneously by several travel diarists. This extra (and unpredictable) stopping time necessarily affects the ability of buses to maintain their schedules for the remainder of their journeys, with the consequent possibility of ‘bunching’ as

service intervals and loadings become progressively more unstable. This was mentioned by a large proportion of travel diarists as a problem.

Route 263 does battle with the traffic.

4.9.2 In terms of road layout, the 263's main weakness is the access road to and from Barnet Hospital (Wellhouse Lane), and its junction with Wood Street. This junction is not wide enough for the type of bus used on this service to negotiate without occupying part of the opposite half of the road. This road also serves the main hospital staff car park, with the consequence that at busy times such as the beginning and end of workers' shifts, it is almost impossible for buses to negotiate this junction safely. In practice, buses have to wait until other vehicles have cleared the junction to give them the space they need to manoeuvre. Again, these extra and unpredictable delays necessarily affect the ability of buses to maintain their schedules later in their journeys.

4.9.3 One of our diarists supplied us with us copious notes of his observations of the intervals between buses at East Finchley over a three-year period. The timing of the periods when buses appeared to operate at intervals different from those given in the public timetable seems to be related to times when the junction in Barnet is likely to be overloaded (because of a shift change, for example). But the reason for such delays would not be apparent to passengers waiting on East Finchley High Road. Passengers travelling between Barnet Church and North Finchley, or south of East Finchley, would almost certainly be picked up by alternative services. Because this congestion occurs in short intense phases, its impact may not be fully reflected in Transport for London's published quality of service indices.

4.9.4 Operation of the 263 has recently been moved from Holloway garage (near the Archway end of the route) to Potters Bar garage (which is some distance from the Barnet end of the route). This has the added disadvantage that out-of-service buses travelling to and from the garage also have to negotiate the hospital access junction mentioned.

4.9.5 Unprompted comments offered by passengers at bus stops and the travel diarists emphasised that the service does not seem to have a timetable which is robust enough to deal with the effects of roadworks or general traffic congestion.

4.10 Opportunities

The reliability of service 263 could be considerably enhanced if parking controls were better enforced, particularly over the section within in the London Borough of Barnet. Works to enhance the junction capacity at the Barnet Hospital access road (Wellhouse Lane) would have similarly positive effect on the reliability of other routes too. Such works might also allow the extension of additional routes to and from the hospital, such as services 34, 234, 326 and 383. Extending these routes would open up links to places within the hospital's catchment area which do not currently have direct bus connections, and could in turn encourage some people who currently drive to the hospital site to switch to using buses instead. This would also overcome some of the frustrations of diarists on the 263 who were 'reluctant' users of this service, because their local route to Barnet does not serve the hospital and they have to change to the 263 for the final mile or so of their journeys

4.10.1 In a similar vein, travel diarists spontaneously mentioned that the journeys made by out of service buses between Potters Bar garage and Barnet Hospital could usefully be run in service. This was a cause of dissatisfaction, especially amongst passengers making shorter journeys (such as to Barnet Church). There was also a request for a more frequent service between Barnet and Potters Bar, which would provide a link of sorts from Hadley Highstone to the hospital. This change may be possible for little or no extra operating cost. But before major changes are made, there is a case for Transport for London, the London Borough of Barnet, the Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust and Hertfordshire County Council undertaking a comprehensive review of the public transport accessibility of Barnet Hospital in general.

Mr R (Route 263) – *'it's always annoying when you just want go to Barnet (from Barnet Hospital) and the bus says its going back to the garage when you only want to go a few stops down the road and he's going there'*

4.11 Threats

As indicated, the reliability of the 263 is compromised by the traffic conditions on the roads over which it runs. But the London Borough of Barnet currently favours the allocation of space to general road traffic rather than giving precedence to public transport users. If this policy continues, the operator may find it increasingly difficult even to maintain the current level of reliability of this service.

4.12 Route G1

This is a local service that links a number of residential areas to local town centres at Clapham Junction, Tooting and Streatham, and to the hospitals and community care facilities at St.George's, Bolingbroke and Springfield. Most passenger journeys are relatively short, as journeys between the ends of the route can often be made more quickly by alternative (more frequent) bus and rail services.

4.13 Strengths

The G1's main strength is the local journey opportunities that it provides, which are not possible by any other public transport service. It also has a loyal and dedicated band of users, who greatly values it, and who regard it as their 'lifeline' to the outside world.

> Miss W (Route G1) – *'the G1 is literally my lifeline, I am disabled but my disability does not show…. some days I would not be able to get out if it wasn't for the G1, as it stops outside my house. It also takes me to the hospital and puts me right by the entrance*'

> Mrs K (Route G1) – *'This G1 bus route is very good as we live on the Shaftesbury Estate and I don't know what we'd do without it'*

4.14 Weaknesses

4.14.1 The G1 has a number of structural weaknesses. In part these comes from its history as a route designed (and originally subsidised by the NHS) to give access to St.George's Hospital and other NHS centres from areas not served by other buses. For this reason, the route does not necessarily follow Transport for London's' own guidelines for service planning which recommend that the service pattern for each route should be as simple as possible, and that the network must be reliable, with service design taking this explicitly into account[3].

4.14.2 The G1's route and timetable deviate from these principles in several important respects. First, it has different timing points at the Springfield centre at different times of the day. Second, it has a very complicated routeing within the Springfield and St. George's hospital complexes, which involves covering some roads twice in the same direction, making U-turns and reversing movements in the course of the journey, and negotiating various access ways within hospital premises that would not normally be considered suitable for bus operation. The entrance to the Springfield complex is very narrow, which severely restricts the ability of buses to enter and leave the complex easily. These factors may tempt drivers of late running buses to omit these sections of route altogether - as reported by travel diarists travelling to and from these locations. Maintaining the current routeing therefore requires a high level of discipline on the operators' part.

4.14.2 Outside the hospital complexes the G1's route (especially on its solo sections) is dominated by roads which are the subject of numerous traffic calming measures, such as humps and chicanes, and which suffer serious problems from legally and illegally parked cars. This is especially true of the sections that are operated on a 'hail and ride' basis, where no fixed bus stops are provided. Comments about this were offered spontaneously by passengers at bus stops. Bus drivers s often have great difficulty in pulling up close to the kerb to allow passengers on and off, a source of concern to a number of the travel diarists. Consequently, the time taken to do this becomes greater than would normally be required, particularly because of the significant number of people with mobility difficulties who use this service. The presence of a 'hail and ride' section of route within an area with significant parking pressure adds to the difficulties faced in running this service. This is because of two factors resulting from the lack of definition of bus stops:

- Users will often board and alight at frequent and short intervals, resulting in extra time spent stopping. Well-defined, evenly spaced bus stops with guaranteed access to the kerb generally have much shorter 'dwell times'.
- Drivers of other vehicles' park at the most appropriate places for buses to stop (because these are not defined) without realising the problems that this will cause. This can result in increased 'dwell times' for buses, as they will often have to stop at places where cars are already parked or at inappropriate points such as road junctions. Their inability to pull into the kerb means that passengers with mobility difficulties take longer to get on or off the bus, and the risk of injury to them increases, because of the greater stepping height. This is particularly important on the G1, which is used by a significant number of such people.

Anonymous letter received by LTUC about the G1 – *'some customers treat the bus as a taxi service, and stop the bus outside their homes, so if you ring the bell at the next road junction, the drivers can get annoyed, because you did not get off at the last stop'*

These problems often vary in intensity from one journey to another, and do not arise uniformly on a day to day basis. This makes the operation of the service unpredictable and unstable.

4.15 Opportunities

Transport for London has recently received tenders to replace the existing contract for service G1. Given the structural problems of the route, it is recommended that a number of options be examined.

4.15.1 Casual observation suggests that very few passengers travel between points east of Tooting Broadway and west of St.George's Hospital. This suggests that the route could be split or reorganised to improve its reliability, possibly in combination with other services that serve Tooting or the hospital. Similar comments suggest that there may be very few journeys being made between points either side of Clapham Junction. This might allow the G1 between Clapham Junction and the Shaftesbury Estate to be replaced by an extension of another service.

4.15.2 Transport for London, St.George's Hospital NHS Trust and the London Borough of Wandsworth should make a comprehensive study of all traffic and travel movements, and of the availability and value of parking, within the Springfield and St.George's NHS sites. The study should include the feasibility of options for extending the catchment area of direct public transport links to and within the hospital sites where none exist at present. The G1 currently operates much unproductive mileage within these sites, This could be reduced if, for example, a direct bus-only link is provided between Springfield and St.George's Grove, leaving only a small section of Burntwood Lane and Aboyne Road unserved. Consideration should also be given to improving pedestrian and cycling links between the Springfield, St.George's Grove and St.George's hospital sites, particularly through the Garratt Lane Cemetery area, with special emphasis on reducing the fear of crime through better lighting, CCTV and improved lines of sight. The geographical distances involved are short compared with the pedestrian/cycling routes now available. Some journeys in this area may be being made by car or bus because of fear of crime, that could be easily made on foot or by bike in a more secure pedestrian or cycling environment.

Miss A (Route G1) – *'it would be very helpful if the G1 bus were allowed to stop within the Hospital grounds, outside the Atkinson Morley unit as it is a walk from the main entrance and the bus passes it already'*

4.15.3 A review of the 'hail and ride' sections of the route possibly by the addition of 'gathering and information points with seating' along these sections, may help mitigate some of the negative effects of the practice. For example a seat with an adjacent information post could be provided at the back of a footway.

Mr R (Route G1) – *'there is no information, shelter or seat where I get on as it is 'hail and ride', you don't know when the bus is likely to come if at all and there is nowhere to wait'*

4.15.4 The London Borough of Wandsworth and Transport for London should carry out a complete audit of parking and traffic calming measures along the line of the G1 route, with a view to enhancing priority for buses and the ease with which they can access bus stops. Spontaneous comments from passengers at bus stops (*'too many humps!'*) and from the travel diarists emphasised these points. This should include a review of signal phasing and access to, from and across roads such as the A205 (T), which form part of the Transport for London road network. The audit should also take into account the recent change in obligations for reasonable adjustment set out in the Disability Discrimination Act 1992.

4.16 Threats

In its present form the G1 is one of the most difficult bus routes in London to operate reliably, because of the sheer volume of variable and unpredictable factors which can 'hit' the timetable at any time. The ability of any operator taking up the new contract to meet the standards of reliability required will depend on whether measures are taken to control parking and to guarantee access to the kerb.

5 Nomination analysis

5.1 There were a total of 35 nominations for the study covering a wide range of routes from high frequency Central London routes to infrequent cross-boundary services from London into surrounding counties. Appendix B lists the routes nominated and reasons for accepting or declining the nomination.

5.2 The purpose of this section is to explore whether there any general lessons that can be drawn from the routes that were nominated for study by examination of their characteristics, in history and population patterns.

5.3 General conclusions from the nomination list.

5.3.1 There is a higher proportion of nominations from North London as opposed to South London. This may indicate something about the nature of travel patterns in these two distinct areas or differences in the culture of bus operations, which has led to higher proportion of complaints to councillors/assembly members. Nevertheless some important lessons can be learnt from the process.

5.3.2 One common factor is the large number of routes that either run along, close to or across the North Circular Road, especially in areas where significant road construction has taken place in the past 20 years[4]. This also applies to the M11 Link Road (services 158, 257 and W14). This might suggest that the construction phases, and possible traffic growth afterwards has had a significant effect on public perception of the reliability or otherwise of bus services in the area.

5.3.3 To counter this perception would require increased bus priority and improved passenger waiting environment measures along and around the North Circular Road and the M11 Link Road.

> Mrs D (Route 123) – *'I appreciate that the entire route is subject to the effects of problems on the North Circular Road, the M25 and the M11 and other roads'*

5.3.4 The Mayor has recently announced his support for a scheme in the Bounds Green area of the North Circular Road, with implementation by 2009. This will inevitably have a substantial effect on bus services in this area and on other parts of the North Circular both during and after the construction period.

5.3.5 As a matter of urgency therefore, LTUC would recommend that Transport for London should ensure that buses have priority when passing through the construction area and its immediate (and probably congested environs).

5.3.6 Routes which have experienced frequent changes of management or operator since the beginning or route tendering in 1984, (and deregulation of bus services outside of London in 1986) also feature highly in the nominations[5].

[4] (20 out of 35 services – the 18,25,34,66,92,112,123,129,158,182,183,187,232,257,263,266,444,487,C11 and W14).

[5] (21 out of 35 services – the 25,66,92,112,114,123,129,158,187,191,232,257,263,313,444,487,492,500,G1 and W14)

This would suggest that the frequency of such changes might have a long term debilitating effect on public perception of the efficiency, credibility and desirability of the bus service provided, unless the change is managed well in the public's perception.

> Mrs D (Route 123) – *'the efforts First Buses have made is in stark contrast to Arriva routes 275 and W16. These are both served by clapped out old vehicles with an unreliable services, and demoralised drivers'*

5.3.7 Adding to this there seems a further link of dissatisfaction with routes where in the historic past (pre 1984) the current solo section was served by a number of other services which have subsequently been withdrawn or curtailed. Several routes have long sections that were in the past duplicated by Green Line or Eastern National limited stop services.

5.3.8 Of those participating in the 'Travel Diary' part of the project, there were a number of examples of spontaneous references to services which had ceased to operate many years previously, an example being the 263 service where comparisons were made with old services such as the 17 and 104, with the 263 cast in a poorer light.

5.3.9 On services 123 and 263 the solo sections coincide with wards which according to the 2001 Census have a significant Jewish minority (Highgate, East Finchley, Woodhouse and Clayhall). This is also true to a lesser extent of other North London routes that were not selected for further study. It may be significant that there are no equivalent Jewish communities in South London.

5.3.10 It could be suggested that minority ethnic/faith groups have a stable population base that is not inclined to move away from its co-adherents, and therefore community 'memories' of poor service in the past will still be reflected in current day attitudes to buses. This would be in contrast to other areas with more fluid populations whose perceptions of bus services are not influenced by such 'memories'.

5.3.11 Discussion with Travel Diarists at the follow up meetings indicated many had lived in the same area for a substantial period of time (20 years plus). Alternatively, this could be a reflection of failure by the bus planning authorities to recognise or understand the needs and aspirations of older people and/or minority communities. The Green Line or Eastern National limited stop services noted above may not have been seen as part of the 'London Transport' network by the bus planning authorities, but were parts of the 'community's' transport network – which may not necessarily coincide with administrative boundaries such as the Greater London boundary. The impact of the loss of such links may have been greater than previously appreciated. Spontaneous and unsolicited comments from passengers at bus stops and the Travel Diarists seem to bear these comments out – one respondent said 'the 123 has always been bad ever since the Trolleybuses were taken off' – in 1960!

5.3.12 This evidence would suggest that there is a need for greater and more sophisticated marketing to communities of individuals. Considering the demographics of this audience, 'niche' or 'tailored' marketing, alongside the

use of specialised print media (magazines and newsletters) and radio/television stations that serve these communities, and the use of direct marketing on a door to door basis could be considered as a means of enhancing Transport for London's current marketing strategy. An example of the philosophy of this kind of marketing is embedded in this anecdotal quote about George Bush Senior: -

'Former U.S. president, George Bush Senior told the following story during a broadcast back in 1989...A young boy and an old man were walking along a beach. As they walked, the boy picked up each starfish he passed and threw them back into the sea. Confused, the old man asked him why. ``If I left them here,'' the boy said, ``they would dry up and die. I am saving their lives.'' ``But the beach goes on for miles and there are millions of starfish,'' the old man said. ``How can what you're doing make any difference?'' The boy looked at the starfish in his hand, threw it into the ocean, and answered, ``it makes a difference to this one.'''[6]

5.3.13 There may be scope to explore the concept of 'niche' or 'tailored' personal marketing within the context of the development of Travel Plans. This could be done for example by expanding the type of community served by a Travel Plan such as a single employer to dealing with a recognised social community (e.g. tennis club or a church congregation) where individuals could be persuaded to reflect on their travel choices as a function of their lifestyle and community social belief system. Outside of London there are a number of instances where a personalised approach has resulted in significant passenger growth[7]. In a dense urban market such as London, it would be very difficult to attribute growth to any one initiative in any areas where there are a multiplicity of routes and choices. However, a targeted campaign based on routes where there are significant solo sections would be much easier to put in place and to attribute the results to, e.g. door to door direct marketing.

[6]A recent example of such 'niche' or 'tailored' personal marketing is the 2004 American Presidential election campaign, where often communications are broken down to address the needs and aspirations (and prejudices?) of individuals. Electioneers have recognised that there are many individual constituencies that need to be brought together in a coalition, rather than seeing the USA as one homogenous mass. This involves the use of interest, lobby and community (including faith – based) groups. Current TfL/London Buses communication and marketing conventions are based on communicating to London as a whole, but with the facility of translation into other languages, giving out factual information, within a corporate styling. There is nothing inherently wrong with this approach, except that it does not recognise that there may be different sub-cultures within the English language speaking part of the community for whom a different approach may be more appropriate

[7] These include Trent/Barton with a series of initiatives in Derbyshire and Nottinghamshire, and most recently by Stagecoach in Hartlepool and on the Cambridge – Haverhill corridor where telemarketing amongst non-users has been very successful

6. **The planning and operational monitoring of bus services**.

6.1 Transport for London has a framework for planning bus services which sets out its vision for the network it sees necessary to serve the needs of London. The key features of this are comprehensiveness, frequency, simplicity and reliability.

6.2 In areas outside Greater London, responsibility for bus service planning is divided between commercial operators and local authorities where no commercial service is in operation.

6.3 LTUC has previously explored issues surrounding cross-boundary services in its report ‘Crossing the Border’. However, the complications which arise from the complexities of two types of regulation, most of which have no relevance to individual’s personal journeys can have a significant effect on whether the route is perceived as a ‘problematic’. It is of note that of the number of routes nominated as ‘problematic’ several are of a ‘cross-boundary’ nature e.g. 313, 492, 500. Lack of ‘ownership’ over the years for these services and uncertainty created by frequent changes of operator and/or service levels and fares have almost certainly impacted on the reliability or otherwise of these services to a greater degree than would have been the case for services wholly within London. Given that these services are effectively a special case it was felt that it was not appropriate to subject these services to detailed examination, as they would not be representative.

6.4 Leaving aside the administrative differences between London and other parts of the United Kingdom the principles of designing a bus service are universal.

6.5 **What factors make buses unreliable?**

Bus service delivery is essentially a mathematical equation with a number of factors that determine the reliability of the service.

6.6 **Timetable construction**

6.6.1 This is the cornerstone of a reliable bus service. If this is wrong and all other factors, even if they are delivered superlatively, will not make up for a fundamental error in this area. Timetables need to take account of where and when demand arises, and of when and where congestion on the road network is known to occur.

6.6.2 It is assumed that in a typical urban situation bus passengers will arrive at bus stops at a uniform rate, which can be accommodated by an even frequency of service. However, in reality demand may not be evenly spread. For example if a high-frequency bus route passes a railway station with a lower-frequency train service, it may experience peaks of demand when trains arrive. This can result in delays to the bus because of the longer times required for boarding when more passengers present themselves for travel. Other examples of this occur with large numbers of schoolchildren coming out at the end of the school day, or at the times of shift changes at factories or hospitals. This can cause a subsequent bus to catch up with the one in front, which will be progressively further delayed as it begins to pick up passengers who would otherwise have caught the following bus.

6.6.3 This results in the phenomenon known as 'bunching', which can also be caused or worsened by traffic congestion. Timetables need to reflect accurately the actual journey time that is required to complete a journey on a particular route. They also need to take account of the capabilities of the vehicles and staff employed.

Mr M (Route G1) – *'Journey took twice as long as normal today due to traffic jams in Latchmere Road. Not the fault of the bus company'*

6.7 **Staff**

6.7.1 Drivers will have varying skills and aptitudes, both for handling customers and driving safely. Familiarity with a route brings greater confidence and ability to keep to time. For frail or older people, the need for drivers to recognise their need to be seated before the bus moves off, or not to stand before it comes to a halt, is a major source of anxiety. Staff attitudes will have a significant effect on users' satisfaction with a service – a polite, friendly and good humoured driver can often make up for the inadequacies of a service hampered by traffic congestion, whereas a rude and unhelpful one can exacerbate the frustrations created by an unreliable service.

6.7.2 On the routes surveyed by the travel diarists, high levels satisfaction with driver politeness was reported on the 123 and G1. On route 263, however, a higher level of dissatisfaction at this aspect of the service was recorded in the initial survey of travel diarists' views undertaken before the survey began. Passengers at bus stops also mentioned this in spontaneous comments, comparing service 263 unfavourably with service 382. This may reveal as much about the culture of the areas served as it does about the communities from which the driving staff are drawn. For example a service may serve a predominately middle class clientele, but be operated by people from a working class background with different cultural expectations of the level of service to be provided.

6.7.3 However the findings of the diary exercise then contradicted this initial view. Users of the 263 recorded the highest level of satisfaction with this aspect of the service, with over 97% of journeys reported as having a polite and helpful driver. On the remaining journeys, which were not satisfactory, the causes of this were not necessarily of a serious disciplinary nature.

6.7.4 The results for the 123 and the G1 similarly showed high levels of satisfaction on (respectively) 88% and 90% of journeys surveyed. These results suggest that isolated instances of poor or misinterpreted behaviour tend to colour passengers' perceptions of operating staff - and bus services in general - out of all proportion to the frequency of the occasion. However, it is interesting to note from the results for the G1 that passengers also appreciate good practice and friendly, helpful staff. These qualities will often make or break the situation if, for example, traffic conditions create a gap in service. The words 'I am sorry we're late' are not expensive, but can have immeasurable value in this respect.

Ms Hughes (Route G1) – *'Ticket machine was not working. This driver most accommodating and smiled'*

Mr L (Route 123) – *'Several people at the stop already. They had had an even longer wait than I had, (20 minutes at 1655 on a Sunday). When bus arrived the driver announced it was terminating, though it had Ilford on the front. I asked why but he would give no reason. Next bus arrived 4 minutes later. I failed to get on (as it was full) and decided to walk instead'*

6.8 It was beyond the scope of this study to consider the complex issues that driver behaviour and passenger interaction raises. But they are to be the subject of a separate investigation initiated by the London Assembly, to which Transport for London and the London Transport Users Committee have been invited to contribute.

6.9 **Vehicles**

The type of vehicle used on a route will affect the ability of the operator to deliver an effective service, as well as the passengers' perception of it. Transport for London has put much effort into optimising vehicle design for the ease of use by passengers, and has invested significant sums in recent years (through contract payments to its operators) in new and improved vehicles. Indeed, all three routes surveyed are run with modern accessible low floor buses. The vast majority of diarists (even those who recorded that they had a mobility impairment) reported that they had no difficulty in getting on or off the bus on any of the routes, or recognising the bus when it approached the stop. This suggests that the design and layout of buses in London are broadly right, and that the investment that has been made in this is bringing dividends. However, at the follow up meetings held with the diarists on all three routes, it became apparent that the internal layout of the buses used caused significant problems for some elderly people.

Mr L (Route G1) – *'the tip-up seats in the wheelchair area are too low and it is difficult to hold on'*

6.10 Good accessibility and signage are not necessarily the only factors that will affect passengers' perception of a bus service. Other factors may come into play, such as mechanical and electrical reliability, quality of handling by the driver, cleanliness, graffiti, the ability of the driver to communicate with passengers, and the suitability of the highway network. Not all of these factors will necessarily be important on all journeys, but they can become critical when something goes wrong.

6.11 **Vehicle reliability is of paramount importance.**

It is not realistic to expect that no breakdowns will happen, but operators should aim to minimise such events. In the 1970s and early 1980s, London Transport (as it then was) lost many passengers because of the poor reliability of the new buses of that era. In some cases this resulted in the permanent loss of a whole generation of potential bus users, as they switched to other forms of transport. Where disruption does occur for this reason, effective communication by the driver with passengers on board, and with his/her control centre, can be vitally important in maintaining passengers' confidence. It is then critical that the problem can be fixed swiftly to minimise inconvenience and distress, either by a rapid diagnosis and repair or (usually) by providing a replacement[8]. Of course, breakdowns do not only affect those already on board the bus but those waiting further along the route or for its return journey. In such circumstances, effective communication with the operator's control centre is essential, in order to be able to communicate the problem to intending passengers. Passengers already on the bus can see the situation at first hand, but those waiting elsewhere will have no knowledge of it or of whether the bus is coming at all, unless there is some other means of informing them of the situation.

[8] A recent example noted by LTUC staff of good practice was that of an Oxford Tube coach which broke down near Notting Hill with a broken drive belt. Passengers were given the choice of either transferring to a following vehicle, or a meal at an adjacent restaurant while the bus was being repaired. This action probably cost the operator more than the value of fares collected for that particular journey but generated considerable goodwill which is likely to be repaid in continued use of the service by the passengers affected, rather than switching to another mode or operator. This example may not be exactly applicable to local bus operation in London, but it shows the principle of what could be achieved.

6.12 **Ease of handling by the driver.**

Modern buses have incorporated many advances in technology, which have made them easier to drive. This has not only made drivers' working conditions easier but has enabled the workforce to be diversified to include people who might not previously have been physically capable of doing the job. But the need to provide accessibility for people with disabilities (amongst other things) has meant that buses have become longer and wider (as have other motor vehicles). In parts of the network, this may compromise vehicle manoeuvrability where road and kerb space is at a premium, and may be especially difficult where buses have two or three doors, which all need to be positioned next to the kerb. Wider and longer buses may also encounter greater difficulties in heavy traffic or where there is inconsiderate parking. These factors can add to the number of random events that can affect the reliability of a bus service.

6.13 **Cleanliness.**

A clean bus indicates a valued asset and by extension a valued customer. The operator's ability and willingness to keep such a space in a clean and presentable (and therefore saleable) condition will impact on passengers' desire to make a repeat purchase. Although it is passengers who leave litter, the travel diary results show that many passengers do not like to travel in a 'tip' which is not of their own making. So a regular and consistent regime of litter clearance and cleaning is likely to be a worthwhile investment. In other parts of Britain, bus operators have found it worthwhile to employ cleaners at major bus terminals, removing litter and mess during layover periods between journeys. This may be worth considering for terminal points in London.

6.14 Graffiti can be regarded in a similar way to lack of cleanliness. The presence of graffiti or other evidence of vandalism can often give the impression of an unloved and uncared for environment that is seen as threatening by the passenger. Swift removal and repair deters further attacks and provides reassurance.

6.15 **Communications between the driver and passengers.**

Transport is generally a form of derived demand, and most people travel primarily to fulfil some other need. But the means of travel can add to or subtract from the pleasure of the journey. Part of the pleasure of travelling by bus can come from the possibility of social interaction with other passengers or with the driver. This seems to be particularly important on routes that cater mainly for local journeys. Several of the diarists on the G1 seemed to indicate that this was important in their usage of the bus as part of their day out. For some older people living on their own and not working, the bus driver may be the only person that they speak to during the day. For some bus drivers, interaction with passengers can increase job satisfaction. In London all one-person-operated buses are fitted with an assault screen to protect the driver from attack. But this screen does limit the ability of the driver and passengers to communicate and interact. Consideration could be given to modifying such screens to facilitate this on routes - such as the G1 - which have a 'community' feel to them, say by making them removable to reduce the 'barrier' effect.

6.16 **Road conditions and the suitability of the highway network.**

These can make or break the reliability of any bus service. They can be permanent features – such as road layout and the ability of buses to pull close to the kerb. Or they may be temporary – such as localised traffic congestion of the kind that occurs at Barnet Hospital on the 263, or weather conditions like snow or ice. If permanent problems cannot be designed out of the road network, allowance can be made for them in the bus schedule. Temporary problems are far more difficult to plan for, though their impact can be mitigated - for example, by ensuring that in conditions of snow and ice bus routes are treated as a priority (including roads to and from bus depots).

Miss L (Route G1) – *'Bus journey was much shorter today due to school holidays'*

6.17 **Passenger usage & characteristics.**

The age and agility of passengers using a service will affect the length of time needed for picking up and setting down at bus stops. The use of low floor buses without steps makes access easier and reduces the boarding time of less agile and mobility impaired people. Using buses with high floors and multiple steps at the entrances and exits incurs time penalties because they are more difficult – if not impossible -for mobility impaired people to board.

6.18 **Fares & ticketing.**

The fare structure can determine how quickly the driver can process the entry of passengers to the vehicle. A simple structure with a high level of off-bus ticket sales will reduce the entry/recognition time. Routes with a higher proportion of cash sales will take longer (and are likely to be those with more casual users). In London the simplified fare structure and the introduction of off-bus ticketing has reduced the impact of this variable to a minimum. However, in terms of getting the message across to passengers about the benefits and savings of off-bus ticketing, Transport for London are

recommended to investigate whether an additional marketing effort should be considered on those routes which have a higher proportion of cash fares than others and to research possible reasons why this might be so, and route specific recommendations for changing these patterns. On cross boundary routes this might involve participation in other authorities off-bus ticketing schemes for example, if there is demand for onward travel.

6.19 **Relationship with other services.**

As already mentioned in relation to timetable and route construction, variations in demand can be caused by interaction with other services, such as train arrivals at a station. Another example is that of an infrequent service joining the route of a frequent one. If the infrequent service is scheduled to run a few minutes in front of a journey on the high frequency service, this could result in passengers for the urban service catching the infrequent service and slowing it down, while allowing the following frequent bus to run faster with the possibility that it will catch up with the previous vehicle on the route. Careful planning of services will minimise this effect[9].

6.20 **Monitoring of the operation of bus services.**

Since 1977, Transport for London and its predecessors have developed a sophisticated system for monitoring the performance of their routes, known as Quality of Service Indicators (QSIs). This is the most sophisticated and extensive system of bus service monitoring found anywhere in Britain. There are 400 monitoring points spread across Greater London, to allow 16% of the entire operation (that is all bus routes) to be surveyed on a sample basis in each quarter year. The data collector's record the time at which buses leave the stop and this is then compared with the scheduled departure times or planned service frequencies. The number and location of monitoring points is chosen to allow staff to record the maximum number of buses in any period of observation. The number of monitoring points can varies from route to route, and does not take account of whether particular sections run solo or are paralleled by other services.

6.21. On the routes studied the monitoring points are:

Route 123 (direction Wood Green to Ilford)
Wood Green High Road, Tottenham Hale and Gants Hill roundabout

Route 123 (direction Ilford to Wood Green)
Ilford High Road, Ilford station and Tottenham Swan

Route 263 (direction Archway to Barnet Hospital)
Archway station only

Route 263 (direction Barnet Hospital to Archway)
Barnet Church, North Finchley Tally Ho Corner and Archway station

[9] an example of good practice, in this field was the integration of London Buses service 166 with the Epsom Buses route 598 (Epsom to Croydon) between Chipstead Valley and Croydon. There may be other areas where similar schemes will be possible

Route G1 (direction Streatham to Shaftesbury Estate)
Streatham St Leonard's Church and Tooting Broadway

Route G1 (direction Shaftesbury Estate to Streatham)
Tooting Broadway only

6.22 London Buses generally reviews these points when services are retendered. On route 123 the monitoring points are of a typical number (three each way) and reasonably spread across the route. But routes 263 and G1 each have three in one direction but only one in the other. The spread of monitoring points may not give an accurate picture of reliability as experienced by passengers along the entire length of the route, especially on the solo sections. London Buses is recommended to consider whether introducing additional monitoring points would give a better picture of what is happening along the whole route. In particular, to meet local concern, a point at East Finchley should be considered.

Sometimes the traffic just seems to melt away.

7. Summary of recommendations

7.1 Transport for London should examine whether it is possible to give priority to buses on streets affected by road works.

7.2 Transport for London should seek to maintain high levels of maintenance and cleanliness of bus stops and shelters.

7.3 Transport for London and its operators should arrange for litter to be cleared from buses during the course of their working day.

7.4 Transport for London and local authorities should review the availability of seats and shelters on 'hail and ride' sections of route, to address the needs of older or frailer people.

7.5 Transport for London, the London Borough of Barnet and the Barnet and Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust should review the highway and bus access arrangements at Barnet Hospital with a view to enhancing its' public transport, cycling and walking accessibility, including the feasibility of extending other bus services to the site which currently terminate in Barnet town centre.

7.6 Transport for London, the London Borough of Wandsworth and the St George's Hospital NHS Trust should review the access arrangements for buses, cyclists and pedestrians, and the parking facilities, at St George's Hospital, Tooting and adjacent sites with a view to enhancing their public transport, cycling and walking accessibility, including the feasibility of extending or diverting other bus services to the sites which currently terminate at or pass Tooting Broadway. This should also include a review of the structure of the G1 service and its relationship with other services in the area it serves (see paragraphs 4.15.1 and 4.15.2).

7.7 Transport for London and the London Borough of Wandsworth should review the operation of the 'hail and ride' sections of route G1, looking in particular at parking enforcement, traffic calming measures, and the scope for additional 'gathering points' with information, seating and shelter, with a view to improving passenger waiting facilities on these sections of route (see paragraphs 4.15.3 and 4.15.4).

7.8 Transport for London should review the points at which routes 263 and G1 are monitored for the purpose of compiling Quality of Service Indices.

7.9 Transport for London should explore the scope for more personalised 'niche' marketing of bus services in London, possibly by expanding the concept of Travel Planning to a wider community.

7.10 Transport for London should investigate whether an additional marketing effort could be undertaken to promote off-bus ticket sales on routes that have a higher-than-average proportion of cash fares than others.

Appendix A.

Copy of letter sent to London Assembly members and Chief Executives of London boroughs.

Dear

Re: Poor performing bus routes

The London Transport Users Committee (LTUC) is planning to target some of the poor performing bus routes operating throughout London which have a particularly severe impact on passengers. While performance statistics are very useful and enable Transport for London and local authorities to target the worst performing bus routes, statistics can not always be relied upon to target and prioritise improvements. Some poor performing routes are sometimes not picked up by the statistics, depending on how the data is collected. Of particular concern to LTUC is the fact that the impact of poor performing bus services can vary widely and does not always relate directly to service performance statistics. A poor performing bus service, that has a considerable negative impact on passengers, might not appear to be such a bad performer when its performance statistics are compared to the those of other bus routes.

The impact on passengers of a poor performing bus service may depend on several factors. For example, the impact may be more severe for bus routes, which are not serviced by alternatives such as tube or rail, or may depend on how many bus services service the same road/area. LTUC intends to identify and investigate poor performing bus services that appear to have a particularly severe and negative impact on passengers. We are therefore writing to ask you if you have identified such bus services in your area where you believe action needs to be taken.

Based on a preliminary data gathering exercise, LTUC is seeking to shortlist and target about half a dozen services across London. These routes will be investigated in more detail, involving the gathering of further evidence, a public meeting involving affected passengers and interested stakeholders, and the development of recommendations for the operator and regulator. If you would like to nominate certain services, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,

Sarah Keay- Bright
Assistant Director – Policy Development

Appendix B. List of routes nominated for study and analysis against criteria for further work.

Route	Points served	Solo section?	Comment	Accepted?
4	Archway – Holloway – Finsbury Park – Islington – Barbican – Waterloo	Yes – but relatively short in residential streets between Archway and Holloway Road.	Some alternative Bus and Tube services by different routes.	No – solo section is relatively short. Recent timetable revision.
8	Victoria – Green Park – Oxford Circus – Holborn – Bank – Shoreditch – Old Ford – Bow	Yes – between Green Park and Oxford Street and around Old Ford	Solo sections also served by Tube and Rail (Bow area). Previous long solo section now served by new route 388.	No – major changes since nominations invited including service 388 introduction and replacement of Routemaster buses on service 8 with new low floor OPO vehicles
10	Hammersmith – Kensington – Oxford Circus – Euston – Kings Cross	No	Service reorganised since nominations invited. The previous solo section north of Kings Cross to Archway is now part of a separate service.	No – the reorganisation into 2 separate services (10 and 390) has dramatically increased reliability
18	Sudbury – Wembley – Harlesden – Harrow Road – Baker Street – Euston	Yes – between Edgware Road and Wembley	Euston/Kensal Rise – Wembley solo section also served by Tube and Rail	No – service recently converted to low-floor bendy bus operation
25	Oxford Circus – Holborn – Bank – Aldgate – Stratford – Ilford	Yes – between Bank and Aldgate, Whitechapel and Bow	Whitechapel to Bow solo section also served by Tube. Service has changed operators.	No – service recently converted to low-floor articulated pay before you board operation and operator changed.
34	Barnet – Palmers Green – Edmonton – Walthamstow	Yes – Hall Lane to Crooked Billet	Solo section is very short and on North Circular	No – solo section is atypical
46	Farringdon – Kings Cross – Camden Town – Hampstead Heath – Swiss Cottage – Warwick Avenue	Yes – short sections around Hampstead and Camden	Solo sections also served by Tube and other buses by different routes	No – solo sections too short
66	Romford – Newbury Park – Gants Hill – Leytonstone	Yes – between Whalebone Lane and Little Heath	Service 296 duplicates much of the 66. The 66 has at retender changed operators several times	No – service recently retendered and now operated by a different company
92	Ealing Hospital – Greenford – Wembley – St.Raphaels Estate	Yes – two short sections around Sudbury	Service 92 has changed operator at retender several times	No – solo sections relatively short and some alternative routes by bus
98	Willesden – Kilburn – Oxford Circus – Holborn	Yes – Willesden to Kilburn	Solo section also served by Tube	No – service recently retendered and converted to low floor OPO

Route	Points served	Solo section?	Comment	Accepted?
112	Ealing Broadway – Hanger Lane – Neasden – Brent Cross	Yes – Long section along North Circular Road between Hanger Lane and Brent Cross	Very few alternatives to this route. Service has changed operator at retender.	No – service recently retendered and changed operator
114	Mill Hill – Queensbury – Harrow – Ruislip	Yes – almost entire route except for short sections around Harrow and Ruislip	Route has changed operator several times. Some alternatives on Western solo section by tube.	No – recent timetable change and introduction of Quality Incentive Contract
123	Wood Green – Tottenham – Forest Road – Woodford – Gants Hill - Ilford	Yes – long section from Blackhorse Road to Claybury	Long orbital service with very few alternatives. Covers part of the North Circular Road. Service has changed operator several times.	**Yes – also noted for high user satisfaction levels and QSI's**
129	Claybury Broadway – Barkingside – Ilford – Becontree Heath	Yes – short section to Claybury Broadway	Service has changed operator several times.	No – service recently reorganised by combination with services 128 and 150.
139	Waterloo – Trafalgar Square – Oxford Circus – Baker Street – St.Johns Wood – West Hampstead	No	Service operates in combination with route 189. Many alternative services	No – service recently upgraded to double deck operation and extended to Waterloo
158	Stratford – Leyton – Blackhorse Road – Chingford Mount	Yes – short section between Blackhorse Road and Billet Road	Service has experienced some changes of management	No – service to be shortly upgraded to QIC contract and solo section relatively short
182	Brent Cross – Neasden – Wembley – Sudbury – Harrow – Oxhey Lane	Yes – Sudbury to Harrow and around Oxhey Lane	Some alternatives by tube and rail	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives
183	Golders Green – Hendon – Kingsbury – Harrow – Pinner	Yes – two short sections Kingsbury to Kenton Lane, and Headstone Lane to Pinner	Western solo section has alternative tube links	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives
187	Park Royal – Harlesden – Queens Park – St.Johns Wood – Swiss Cottage	Yes – short section Kensal Rise to Scrubs Lane	Some alternatives by tube and rail. Service has changed operator several times	No – solo section relatively short
191	Brimsdown – Carterhatch – Enfield – Ponders End – Edmonton	Yes – solo sections interspersed along entire length	Most parts of the route are connected to other parts by more direct bus and rail alternatives. Service has changed operator several times	No – service is very convoluted with alternatives available

Route	Points served	Solo section?	Comment	Accepted?
232	St.Raphaels Estate – Neasden – Brent Cross – Finchley – Palmers Green – Wood Green	Yes – almost entire length except Arnos Grove – Wood Green	Very few alternatives to this route. Service has changed operator several times	No – route 123 considered more typical of routes serving an orbital road.
257	Stratford – Leytonstone - Leyton	Yes – two short sections	Some alternatives by tube available. Service has had some changes of management	No – solo sections very restricted
263	Archway – East Finchley – North Finchley – Barnet	Yes – East Finchley – North Finchley	Some alternatives by tube and other buses. Service has changed operator several times	**Yes – long solo section on radial route**
266	Hammersmith – Acton – Willesden – Brent Cross	Yes – Ravenscourt Park – Uxbridge Road and Acton – Willesden Junction	Some alternatives by tube and rail.	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives
313	Chingford – Ponders End – Enfield – Chase Farm Hospital – Potters Bar	Yes – for most of length except around Chingford, Enfield and Potters Bar	Very few alternatives to this route. Service has changed operator several times	No – service runs beyond GLA area where different regulatory regime applies.
444	Chingford – Chingford Hatch – Edmonton – Turnpike Lane	Yes – some short sections	Some alternative bus services. Service has experienced some changes of management	No – solo sections relatively short
487	South Harrow – Sudbury – Alperton – Central Middlesex Hospital – Willesden Junction	Yes – Northolt Park to Sudbury Hill	Some alternatives by tube available. Service has experienced some changes of management	No – solo sections relatively short
492	Sidcup – North Cray – Bexley – Bexleyheath – Dartford - Bluewater	Yes – some long sections: Foots Cray to Bexley, Bexleyheath to Crayford	Very few alternatives to this route. Service has changed operator several times.	No – service runs beyond GLA area where different regulatory regime applies.
493	Richmond – Barnes – Roehampton – Wimbledon - Tooting	Yes – Putney Heath to Wimbledon	This is a relatively new orbital suburban service. Some alternatives, but solo section unserved by other services. Very low QSI and CSS figures	Yes – but withdrawn from study following discussions with TfL as measures to be introduced to reduce unreliability – several changes of route and a new timetable

Route	Points served	Solo section?	Comment	Accepted?
500	Romford – Collier Row – Stapleford Abbotts – Abridge – Epping – Harlow – (Old Harlow)	Yes – long section mainly outside Greater London area between Chase Cross and Epping	Very few alternatives to this route. Service is largely a commercial operation and has a long history of management change, and turnover of operators for the tendered evening and Sunday parts of the service. In 1994 was trial route for first generation low floor buses	No – service runs beyond GLA area where different regulatory regime applies – see comments column adjacent. Solo section in Greater London (Stapleford Abbotts to Chase Cross) is at the end of a long route at the furthest point from operators base.
C11	Archway – Hampstead Heath – Cricklewood – Brent Cross	Yes – for most of route, provides orbital suburban links	Some alternatives by rail	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives
D6	Hackney Central – Bethnal Green – Mile End – Limehouse – Crossharbour	No	Many alternative bus and DLR services	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives
G1	Shaftesbury Estate – Clapham Junction – Wandsworth Common – Tooting – Streatham – Norbury	Yes – for most of route	Many alternative services for end to end journeys but not for solo sections of route. Service has changed operator several times.	**Yes – service has history of very poor reliability**.
W14	Leyton – Leytonstone – Wanstead – South Woodford	Yes – but very short sections	Alternative services available by tube. Service has experienced some changes of management	No – solo sections relatively short and with alternatives

Appendix C

Credits and Acknowledgements

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Questionnaire design and production: **London Buses (Transport for London)**

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London Transport Users' Committee is grateful for the help provided during the course of this research by London Buses (Transport for London) and the London Boroughs of Waltham Forest and Wandsworth and of course the diarists themselves.

Commissioned and published by

London Transport Users Committee, 6 Middle Street, London, EC1A 7JA

February 2005

ISBN 0-9545124-5-6

For additional (and/or **LARGE** print) copies of this report please contact **Publications** at LTUC

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London Transport Users Committee

Speaking for transport users in and around London

LTUC is the official watchdog for transport users in and around London.

The Committee's role is to:

- Investigate suggestions and complaints from users who are dissatisfied with the response received from the service provider;
- Conduct independent research and produce publications on issues affecting transport users;
- Maintain a regular dialogue with operators on differing aspects of their services;
- Assess the impact and make recommendations if proposals are made for the closure of a railway line or a station.

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