

TRANSPORT FOR LONDON**MEMORANDUM TO THE BUS SERVICES MEETING**

SUBMITTED BY: [REDACTED]
SUBJECT: ROUTE 15 HERITAGE SERVICE
DATE: 7 DECEMBER 2018

INTRODUCTION

1. BSM 523 approved the proposal to reduce the operation of the heritage service on route 15 (15H) to summer weekend and Bank Holidays only; engagement on this proposal has now concluded.

BACKGROUND

2. The heritage service on route 15 (Route 15H) is a seven day a week service, operated by Stagecoach East London along Route 15 between Tower Gateway and Trafalgar Square three times per hour daily, between 9:30am and 6:30pm. The route uses five buses weekdays and four at weekends. It is staffed by 12 drivers and 12 Customer Assistants (Conductors).
3. In recent years ridership has fallen significantly.
4. Route 15H is the only part of our bus operation which does not allow step-free access. Improving London's air quality is a major priority for the Mayor of London. While they will be exempt due to their age, the Routemasters used on Route 15H do not meet Euro VI standards for Ultra Low Emissions Zone. The main advantage of Route 15H is as a tourist bus.

PROPOSAL

5. On 7 November we wrote to interested stakeholders, asking them to feedback to us by 21 November on our proposal to reduce the operation of 15H to bank holidays and summer weekends (end of March to end of September) each year (Appendix one).
6. Route 15H costs approximately £1.2M to run currently. If the proposed changes were implemented, the route will cost around £400k to operate, giving a net savings of £800k which we will be able to reinvest into our network. These proposals change staffing requirements to part-time rather than full-time.
7. Route 15H operates along the Fleet Street to Strand corridor. As part of this proposal, we have reviewed customer demand and are confident that this can be

met by other existing services including routes 11, 15 and 26 (which use accessible hybrid buses).

SHARING OUR PROPOSALS & RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

8. Most of the feedback received was from heritage societies, or individuals interested in this area. They expressed concerns about the reduction in visibility of a London icon and tourist attraction. As London's transport authority we have a clear mandate and requirement to provide Londoners with a safe, integrated, accessible, clean, efficient and economic transport service. Operating and marketing a tourist bus is outside our mandate.
9. We believe that London's transport history is best protected by the London Transport Museum (LTM) – of which we are the single largest supporter, providing both grant funding and essential services such as finance, payroll and HR at no charge to the LTM. The LTM owns the mandate to educate the public about the history of transport in London through the provision, operation and maintenance of a transport museum for the public benefit. As such, at the LTM visitors can view and learn about the evolution of omnibus travel in London.
10. Feedback on our proposals from both the London Borough of Tower Hamlets and City of Westminster was positive. Both boroughs expressed their beliefs that the reduction in service will contribute to a reduction in congestion and emissions in central London.
11. Three other key themes emerged in the feedback:

- The belief that our step-free access concerns were unwarranted

The feedback we received from stakeholders was that customers who are unable to use the Routemaster due to accessibility needs can easily wait for an accessible Route 15 hybrid bus, however, we disagree. Route 15H runs on a subsidy of c£9.00 compared to 23p across the broader network. Making London accessible is a key part of ensuring that 'London is Open' investing this large subsidy in this non-accessible service is at odds with this ambition. Reducing the service as per our proposals will reduce this subsidy and will allow us to reinvest back into our wider network.

- Noting that the Routemasters, due to their age, will be exempt from complying to ULEZ

While this is true we believe that as the authority enforcing ULEZ we should be working to ensure as much of our fleet meets the Euro VI standard. The Mayor has made improving air quality in London a key priority in his efforts to improve the health and life quality for all Londoners and has committed to all new buses to be zero emission from 2025. We believe that by reducing the

frequency of this underused service we will improve emissions while helping to reduce congestion caused by buses along some of London’s busiest roads.

- Customers are confused about how to pay their fare on the Routemaster

Payment for travel is through the on-board conductor and as per all TfL bus services cash is not accepted. Payment can be made via Oyster cards or by presenting a travelcard that includes bus travel. Bank or credit card payments are not accepted as this route does not have facilities to process these payments.

12. A number of people asked for further information about ridership – we have included it in appendix two.
13. Additionally, several people asked what our plans are for the Routemaster fleet, which we own. We are currently reviewing the fleet, however no decisions have been made at this time.

CONCLUSION

14. Having reviewed the feedback from stakeholders, we have concluded that there is not a viable case to maintain a full year seven day a week service.

RECOMMENDATION

15. The Bus Services Meeting is asked to APPROVE the recommendation that a Director of London Bus Services Ltd, having considered the contents of this paper and BSM 523 item 5d (Route 15 Heritage Service) document; and other material considerations, decides to proceed with the proposed change to run Heritage Routemasters on Route 15 on Bank Holidays and summer weekends (end of March to end of September) only.

16. These changes are expected to take place on 30 March 2019.

APPRAISAL SUMMARY

Estimated

APPENDIX ONE – STAKEHOLDER EMAIL & DISTRIBUTION LIST

On 7 November we shared the below email with stakeholders from the tourist and heritage industry:

Dear all

We are looking at making changes to the route 15 heritage (15H) bus service and would like to hear your views, as it is a popular service with visitors to London.

Currently, the 15H operates between Tower Gateway and Trafalgar Square daily between 9:30am and 6:30pm. Other buses that cover this route include the 11 and 26, as well as the main route 15 service.

We are proposing to reduce the 15H service to run during summer weekends and bank holidays only.

This is due to a number of factors, including fewer people using the service on weekdays and the vehicle does not allow step-free access.

*Please let us know if you have any thoughts on these proposals. Grateful if you could send any comments to consultations@tfl.gov.uk by **Wednesday 21 November**, marking **Route 15 heritage** in the subject field.*

Best wishes

Shared with:

Northbank BID
 Bee London
 City of London Culture Mile
 King's College
 St Paul's Cathedral
 Tower of London/Historic Royal Palaces
 VisitBritain
 Association of Leading Visitor Attractions
 Heritage bus groups
 London Transport Museum Friends
 London Bus Museum
 London Bus Company
 London TravelWatch
 Routemaster Association
 London Omnibus Traction Society
 London Borough of Tower Hamlets
 City of London
 City of Westminster

APPENDIX TWO – RIDERSHIP & CAPACITY INFORMATION

There is a noticeable decrease in ridership on Route 15H. In February 2018 boardings per weekday had reduced to 300 daily, which rose slightly to 450 daily on weekends. This compares with 850 weekday and 1,000 daily weekend boardings in 2015.

The average net cost (subsidy) per customer on the service is £9.00. This compares to the average net cost of 48p on the main Route 15 and 23p on the network as a whole.

APPENDIX THREE - PRESENT AND PROPOSED STRUCTURE SUMMARY

	AM Peak	Mid day	PM Peak	Eve	AM Peak	Mid day	PM Peak	Eve
<u>Route 15 (Heritage)</u>		All year			Summer weekends only (including bank holidays)			
<i>MF</i>								
Tower Gateway, Goodmans Yard - Trafalgar Square, Northumberland Avenue	-	3	3	-	-	-	-	-
<i>Sat</i>								
Tower Gateway, Goodmans Yard - Trafalgar Square, Northumberland Avenue	-	3	3	-	-	3	3	-
<i>Sun</i>								
Tower Gateway, Goodmans Yard - Trafalgar Square, Northumberland Avenue	-	3	3	-	-	3	3	-
<i>Toilets available at both termini</i>								