

Board meeting  
15.10.19



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**Secretariat memorandum**

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LTW609  
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**Hail and Ride bus services in London**

**1 Purpose of presentation**

- 1.1 To provide a summary presentation to members on London TravelWatch's research into Hail and Ride bus services in London.

**2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That members note the content of the presentation.
- 2.2 That members note the draft report included in the Board papers and suggest any additions to be included in the final report.

**3 Introduction to draft report**

- 3.1 All of London's buses meet strict accessibility requirements and the vast majority of bus services in London serve conventional bus stops. However, there is a substantial number of bus routes which operate as Hail and Ride. They serve roads on which passengers can hail the bus at any safe location on its route and alight where the driver can stop safely.
- 3.2 This report contains our research exploring the issues around Hail and Ride. We have particularly focussed on existing passengers of Hail and Ride services and those who could become passengers if Hail and Ride were to change to an accessible service.
- 3.3 The report explains that London TravelWatch want sections of Hail and Ride to be replaced by fixed bus stops in order to make all bus routes accessible for everyone.

**4 London TravelWatch priority**

- 4.1 The issues raised in this report reflect London TravelWatch's prioritisation criteria.

## **5 Equalities and inclusion implications**

- 5.1 This is a clear equalities issue as some passengers are unable to access bus services without accessible bus stops.

## **6 Legal powers**

- 6.1 Section 248 of the Greater London Authority Act 1999 places upon London TravelWatch (as the London Transport Users Committee) a duty to consider – and where it appears to the Committee to be desirable, to make recommendations with respect to - any matter affecting the functions of the Greater London Authority or Transport for London which relate to transport (other than of freight).

## **7 Financial implications**

- 7.1 None

DRAFT

## **Hail and Ride on London's bus services**

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## Foreword

Buses are the bedrock of London's public transport system, spreading to all corners of the capital and going to places where other forms of public transport do not. Over six million journeys are made in London by bus every day, across more than 650 routes, including some operating 24 hours a day,

Buses are the most accessible public transport choice for many, such as older people, disabled people and those travelling with young children, prams or buggies. All of London's buses meet strict accessibility requirements and 95 per cent of bus stops are wheelchair accessible.

However, whilst all buses are accessible to all passengers, bus routes which operate as Hail and Ride are not. London TravelWatch want Hail and Ride bus route sections to be replaced in order to make those routes more accessible.

This report contains our research exploring the issues around Hail and Ride, taking into account various different perspectives. As the official watchdog representing the interests of transport users in and around the capital, we have particularly focussed on existing passengers of Hail and Ride services and those who could become passengers if Hail and Ride were to change to an accessible service.

We hope that our findings contribute to the ongoing efforts to make London an accessible city for all bus passengers.

## 1. Introduction

Most bus services in London operate to fixed bus stops. To enable everyone to access London's bus services, a bus has to be able to pull in parallel to the kerb. It is only by enabling a bus to do this that it will be able to fully use the low floors, kneeling feature and wheelchair ramp. This makes getting on and off buses easier for older and disabled people and wheelchair users and for parents with buggies and young children.



*Left: Example of use of the wheelchair ramp at a bus stop.*

*Source: [TfL Accessible Travel in London guide](#)*

However, Hail and Ride bus routes can be hailed at any safe location along its route. Passengers simply wave the bus down on the street and the bus will pull in for them to board. Passengers can alight where the driver can stop safely. In their [Big Red Book](#) guidance manual for bus drivers <sup>1</sup>, Transport for London (TfL) state that drivers should 'Avoid grass verges, street corners and bends in the road where your view is limited or where you could block other road users'.

Hail and Ride bus routes operate in 25 London boroughs, particularly the outer London boroughs of Bexley, Bromley, Enfield, Redbridge, Sutton and Waltham Forest.

Hail and Ride routes usually utilise minor roads and narrow residential streets. Due largely to this, these routes are very popular with its passengers, particularly those with reduced mobility, as they offer a convenient and, for some passengers, effectively a door to door service. However, the use of Hail and Ride prevents full accessibility as the bus is forced to stop where it can, often not adjacent to the kerb, but instead on a grass verge or driveway.



*Left: Passenger waits on a grass verge to board Hail and Ride route S4 in Wallington*

<sup>1</sup> Big Red Book, 4<sup>th</sup> edition 2014

## 2. London TravelWatch's view

Currently, 95% of London's bus stops are fully accessible. An accessible stop is defined as having the kerb at an appropriate height so the bus ramp can deploy, waiting restrictions in place and no impediments to passengers getting on and off the bus. A full TfL definition of the requirements of an accessible bus stop can be found in section 3.

London TravelWatch has long advocated for fixed, and therefore accessible, bus stops to be introduced as a reasonable adjustment to make these services accessible to everyone. As far back as 2007, we stated in our response to TfL's consultation on bus stopping arrangements:

“We would like to support the conversion of Hail & Ride to fixed stops, in order to provide more accessible boarding and alighting”<sup>2</sup>

Dating back to the London Traffic Act 1924, the local highway authorities (the London boroughs) control the highway, and so although TfL decide on the locations of the bus route and the bus stops, the borough will need to give permission to give this effect.

We think that London boroughs should have a programme of introducing fixed bus stops but they are not doing so at any pace. We assert that certain London boroughs are acting unlawfully insofar as they are unwilling to make a reasonable adjustment of providing fixed bus stops on their streets where it is reasonable to do so. They are discriminating against those with a mobility impairment, particularly wheelchair users, who cannot access their local bus services.

Hail and Ride can also be confusing for visually impaired customers, those with learning difficulties or mobility restrictions, and anyone unfamiliar with the area, as there is no clear indication of where buses will and will not stop.

There are other benefits when introducing fixed bus stops. Stop posts would clearly indicate that a bus service is available as they allow TfL to use information frames containing timetable and other information when needed. It would also allow TfL to provide real time information to customers with mobile devices, more detailed information for journey planning and 'next stop' information on the buses. At busier locations, a fixed stop can also include a shelter with seating to better accommodate passengers and encourage usage.

Fixed bus stops are also preferable around schools to help alleviate local congestion at the start and end of the school day and to make it safer and easier for children/carers to board and alight.

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<sup>2</sup> London TravelWatch response to TfL consultation on bus stopping arrangements, July 2007

### 3. Legal opinion

London TravelWatch sought legal opinion to advise on whether local authorities are acting in breach of their obligations under the Equality Act 2010. The legal opinion concluded that:

In respect of the bus stops themselves: where authorities are failing to provide accessible bus stops, it is likely – though it will depend upon the individual circumstances of the case – that a disabled person affected will have the basis of a claim for a failure to make reasonable adjustments and/or indirect discrimination. The service provided is access via the pavement to a bus and/or the exercise of a highways function in permitting such access. The kerb/paving is a physical feature which places disabled people at a substantial disadvantage in their access to the service; alternatively, there is a provision criterion or practice that in order to use the service/benefit from the function a person must be able to step off the kerb (or any of the other ways in which disabled people are disadvantaged by the design). Reasonable adjustments would be to design in accordance with the standard that has been set out by TfL – a court is likely to admit this as evidence and to take it into account in determining what it is reasonable for a highways authority to have to do.

It is therefore my opinion that the issues raised by those instructing – both hail and ride and inaccessible bus stops – give rise to potential claims for breaches of the Equality Act 2010. A breach of the public sector equality duty can only be pursued by way of judicial review in the High Court, though its contents can be taken into account in considering breaches of the EqA in any other litigation. There may be other statutory provisions that could be considered in a judicial review (e.g. whether an authority had acted in a *Wednesbury* unreasonable manner; or it had complied with its other statutory duties in the GLAA).

### 4. Transport for London's approach

TfL is committed to upgrading Hail and Ride sections to fixed bus stops by funding the introduction of these stops. However, TfL also need the support of the local highway authority, which in every case is a London borough. As will be explored further in section 5, gaining the support of some (but by no means all) boroughs can be problematic.

Nonetheless, TfL remains committed to working with the boroughs and having their support, rather than TfL prescribing programmes and allocating funding which may not be used. Proposal 54 of the [Mayor's Transport Strategy 2018](#) explains TfL's approach:

“The Mayor, through TfL and the boroughs, will improve bus accessibility by continuing to upgrade existing bus stops, including Hail and Ride route sections, so that they meet the wheelchair accessible standard, and ensuring that all new and amended bus stops will be wheelchair accessible as a minimum”.

TfL's view in their [Accessible bus stop design guidance](#)<sup>3</sup> is that the introduction of low-floor buses fitted with ramps for wheelchair access throughout London has led to a requirement for appropriate kerbside access at bus stops. Unless all stops along a bus route are equally accessible, the public transport network cannot be fully inclusive, as passengers may be unable to board or alight a bus at their desired location and reduce the potential benefits from operating low-floor buses.

The design guidance explains that:

“The Equalities Act (2010) places a duty on both public transport operators and highway authorities to provide reasonable adjustments so that disabled passengers are not disadvantaged. Providing access between a low-floor bus (fitted with ramps) and the footway is crucial to fulfilling these duties. It is also important to consider the needs of other disabled groups such as blind or cognitive impaired bus passengers, as well as those carrying heavy luggage and pushchairs”.

The design guidance also describes the requirements of an accessible bus stop:

‘A bus stop must meet the following criteria to be fully compliant as an accessible bus stop:

- Clearway in place – On borough roads a clearway is denoted by a thick solid yellow line (Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions (TSRGD) 1025.1), each bus stop should have one of these along the length of the bus stop cage. This, in conjunction with the relevant upright sign (TSRGD Schedule 7, Part 6, Clause 1), allows for the enforcement of the no stopping restrictions
- Kerb >100mm – In order for a bus to deploy its ramp safely the ideal range in terms of kerb height is 125-140 millimetres, however 100 millimetres is the minimum for it to be compliant
- Access free of impediments – A visual check of the area around the bus stop, including the surrounding pavement be undertaken, to ensure that the bus will be able to deploy its ramp so that wheelchair users and people with prams can access the ramp. This is important in preventing visually impaired people walking into obstacles when boarding and alighting the bus.

Example plans of proposed new fixed bus stops can be seen in Appendix 1.

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<sup>3</sup> Accessible bus stop design guidance, Revised edition 2017





*Left: Fixed bus stop on route 318 in Tottenham. This section of the route was converted from Hail and Ride in 2018. Note that the bus stop meets all of the criteria of an accessible bus stop listed above.*

*Right: Work to convert the Hail and Ride section on route B13 in Blackfen to fixed bus stops began in the first half of 2019. At the time of viewing, the clearway line, bus stop cage and correct kerb were all in place but the bus stop and flag were still to be added.*



*Left: In September 2019 route B13 was fully converted from Hail and Ride to fixed bus stops.*

## 5. The views of user and campaigning organisations

The **Royal National Institute of Blind People** (RNIB) is one of the UK's leading sight loss charities and the largest community of blind and partially sighted people.

We sought RNIB's view about the operation of Hail and Ride bus services from Hugh Huddy, Policy and Campaign Manager. He told us that:

"The issue with Hail and Ride bus service design is with the process of hailing the bus. It is an intrinsically visual process, from identifying at a distance that a bus service is coming, to checking the route number and whether the bus is in service etc. Some level of visual communication is also involved with the driver to acknowledge the pedestrian's request is accepted...[and]...seeing where the bus has pulled up, whether the pavement and kerb is obstructed with furniture and other obstacles then comes into play".

RNIB go on to explain that wishing to alight the bus:

"Involves accurate communication with the driver as to the precise location where the service will stop. People with visual impairment who may not be able to see the street to orientate themselves rely on very clear descriptions of the environment. Due to driver training, empathy and understanding which varies considerably between drivers, this process is in practice also variable. Being left on a street where one is not orientated can be quite a serious problem for an individual with sight loss".

RNIB therefore argue that:

"The providers of bus services and authorities should avoid Hail and ride service design which is inherently inaccessible to anyone with sight loss or sight impairment, and puts blind and partially sighted people who rely on local bus services more than other people, at a disadvantage and creates a barrier to them using the service. The provision of a fixed bus stop addresses all of these issues".

**Transport for All** is the organisation of disabled and older people dedicated to champion the rights of disabled and older people to travel with freedom and independence in London.

We sought the view about Hail and Ride bus services from Alan Benson, Chair of Transport for All and Deputy Chair of London TravelWatch. He told us that:

"Reliable, predictable bus services are vital outside central London where alternative modes such as train or tube may be unavailable. However, there are persistent pockets of routes which remain "Hail and Ride". Without fixed stops even basic services like live bus arrivals which are relied on simply don't work.

"For many, including those like me with access needs, these stops present bigger obstacles. Without fixed bus stops it can be very difficult to get close enough to the curb to use the ramp. How do those new to the area or with

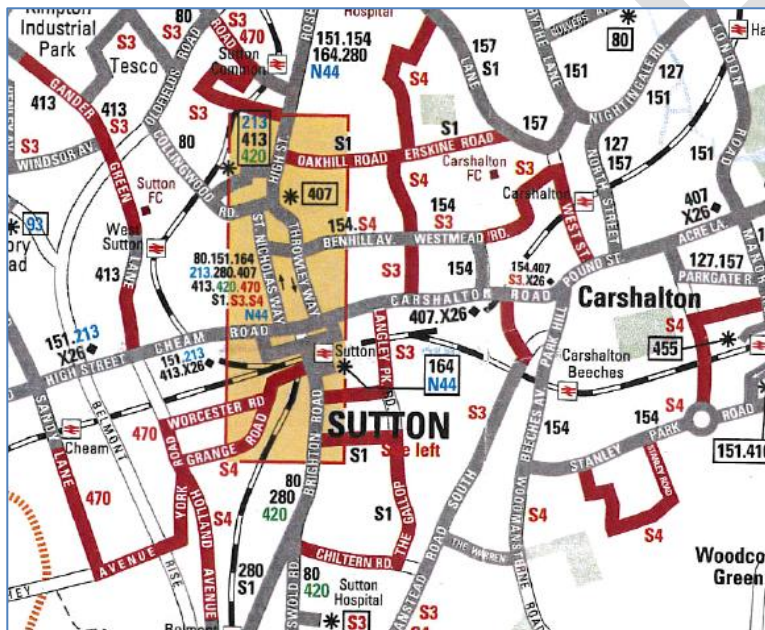
sight impairments know where to wait to catch a bus? On one night my bus was curtailed and all the passengers were left by the side of the road without any information, or any idea when the next bus would pass by. A frightening situation for some of the older passengers.

“These routes have played an important role over the years in establishing London’s world class bus service but they have reached the end of the road. The time has come to cast them to the dustbin of history and bring these routes up to the high standards of the rest of the Bus Network.”

## 6. London TravelWatch’s research

As of September 2019, we estimate that 81 Hail and Ride routes are in operation in London. They cover a total of 121 Hail and Ride sections across 623 roads.

These 81 routes account for 12% of the total network of 675 TfL bus routes. It should be remembered, though, that for the majority of these routes the Hail and Ride section only accounts for part of the route, with fixed bus stops the norm elsewhere. We estimate that 28 Hail and Ride routes operate with more than one Hail and Ride section and 11 routes operate with 3 or more sections.



Left – Extract from the London bus map showing buses operating in and around Sutton on roads with fixed bus stops (coloured in grey) and on the dense network of Hail and Ride roads (coloured in red)

During our research we have travelled on 43 of the Hail and Ride routes, along 407 Hail and Ride roads in 18 London boroughs (and Epping Forest District council, where a TfL service crosses the London borough of Redbridge boundary). A full list of the 43 routes travelled on can be found in Appendix 2.

As well as travelling on the bus routes, we also walked along many of their Hail and Ride roads to evaluate whether they were suitable for fixed bus stops and also to observe how the routes operated in practice, especially focussing on where passengers waited for the bus and how they were able to board and alight the buses.

We have contacted six London boroughs and met with them in person or received written responses on their approach to Hail and Ride bus routes. We have spoken

with passengers on buses and have received feedback from attendees at TfL's Access All Areas event and two resident groups who use Hail and Ride buses. We spoke to area managers of two bus companies operating Hail and Ride routes, one of which operates on a local basis and another with routes across London.

We also received completed survey responses from 144 Hail and Ride drivers operating 22 routes for the London-wide bus company. The questions and key responses for this survey can be found in Appendix 3.

We surveyed in person residents living either directly on, or close to, the Hail and Ride section of route S3 in Carshalton. This was to help us understand why and how the route is being used and why residents are not using the route. Full details of this work can be found in Appendices 4, 5 and 6.

We also produced an online survey on the London TravelWatch website to collect the opinions of users of Hail and Ride bus routes more generally. We have received 72 responses from passengers of 28 Hail and Ride routes. The questions and key responses for this survey can be found in Appendix 7.

## 7. Research findings

### Stopping points

As many routes running Hail and Ride sections are long established, passengers have learnt by experience to group together at a particular place. For instance, our interviews with passengers in Carshalton about their local route S3 revealed that most wait for their bus at a place also used by others.

Across Hail and Ride routes, this place is often at, or close to, a street corner, even if the kerb there is not dropped or level. This has become preferable by default on some roads due to the parking on both sides of the road. As well as these locations being inconvenient to some passenger's attempts to board or alight, stopping here can also be dangerous to other road users and cause delays to traffic.



*Left: A passenger with a buggy attempts to board the 192 bus in Roman Way, Enfield. This is a typical scene from our research, where several people wait at each end of a street. All of them are inadequately served by having no fixed bus stop. Here, there is no raised kerb and so a wheelchair ramp could not be deployed.*



*Right: Passengers board the 397 bus in Chingford Avenue, South Chingford. As passengers wait at the end of the street, the bus stops on double yellow lines and blocks the entrance to the road.*



*Left: Passengers wait on a verge before boarding the W11 bus in Millfield Avenue, Walthamstow. This is an example of the bus stopping beside an unsuitable surface for many passengers to board, especially in poor weather conditions.*

On other streets, particularly narrow ones, parked cars can force buses to stop for passengers in the middle of the road, such as we saw on several routes. This is far from ideal, as one user of route 315 put it:

“If there are parked cars or vans in inconvenient places then sometimes the driver has to stop in the middle of the street which always makes me feel unsafe if I have to alight with children”.



*Left: Parked cars on Bury Street in Edmonton force the passengers on this 192 bus to board and alight in the middle of the road. Instances such as this make Hail and Ride buses inaccessible for many users.*

Whilst regular passengers have learnt to know where to stand, so bus drivers have come to know where to look for passengers. Our research showed that bus drivers will try to find places to stop which are as safe as can be possible, and will find them for the majority of journeys (although a common response from the bus drivers we surveyed was that finding safe places to stop the bus was still a problem for them).

The consequence of this has led to what some passengers and one council called 'de facto' stopping points. However, these are not, of course, actual bus stops and can remain unsuitable – and even dangerous – places to wait. At busier locations, such as Winchmore Hill Green on route W9 and Walthamstow Village on route W12, drivers always stop the bus in the same place so it would be preferable to install a fixed bus stop in the nearest safe location.

Passengers who have just rung the bell to alight usually appreciate that drivers need to find a safe place to stop but do not always recognise that the driver needs to travel an appropriate distance to ensure that there is a gap from the previous stopping point. We observed some passengers becoming impatient when a driver does not stop the bus precisely where they want and may assume this is because the driver has ignored the bell. Some of the Hail and Ride bus drivers we surveyed told us about the problem of passenger's unrealistic expectations – and sometimes even abuse - because of situations such as this.

Similarly, passengers waiting to board a bus will often not stand at the same point, thus forcing the driver to stop twice in quick succession.

On routes with higher frequencies and higher passenger volumes, such as route 192 in Enfield and Edmonton and route 364 in Ilford and Seven Kings, we observed much more frequent stopping on Hail and Ride sections than on roads with fixed bus stops. These buses would often stop multiple times in a short distance.

On vehicles always allocated to routes which retain their Hail and Ride sections, we recommend a poster should be placed behind the drivers cab or an additional message added to the iBus tannoy briefly explaining where and how frequently drivers will stop the bus to allow passengers to alight. Of course, this problem does not exist on sections with fixed bus stops. The way to resolve it, as one survey respondent commented, is to "Put bus stops in, then everyone knows where they stand and passengers won't get that "tut" when they ring the bell'.

#### An inconsistent approach

Some roads are wide enough to easily accommodate fixed bus stops without causing congestion to other road users with sufficient pavement locations for stops such as routes K5 in Motspur Park and route 419 in north Barnes. It is therefore surprising that the conversion to fixed stops has not already happened in such locations.



*Left: Route 364 stops to pick up a passenger on its Hail and Ride section in Ilford. This road, typical of many on Hail and Ride routes, is wide enough for a fixed bus stop to be installed without affecting other road users and offers many locations with suitable kerb heights*

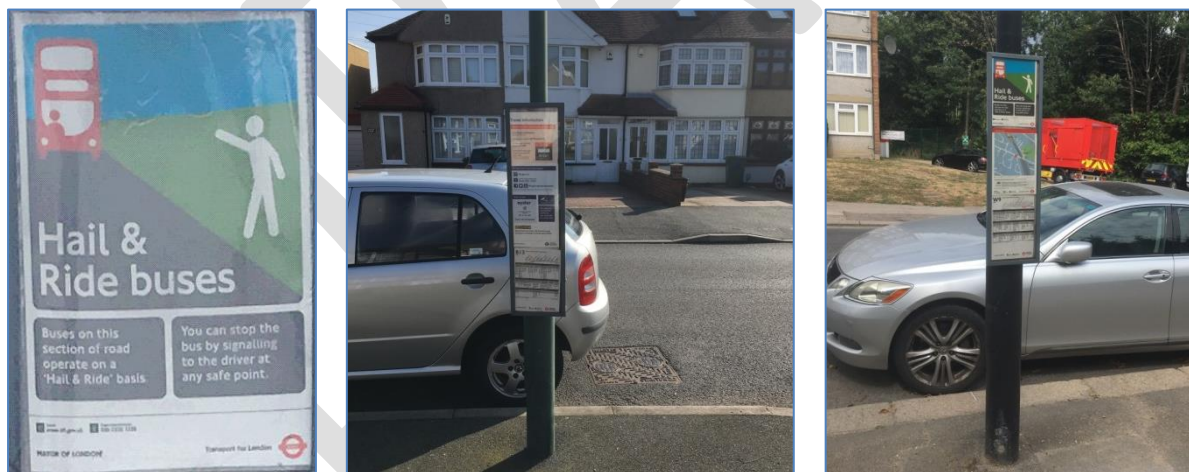
It is also unclear why a route may have fixed bus stops on some residential roads and yet similar roads remain as Hail and Ride, even within the same borough. For instance, fixed stops were introduced in Tottenham on route 318 in 2018 but there are none on the route's roads in South Tottenham and there is no proposal to change to fixed bus stops.

### Information posts

Some routes have information posts on their Hail and Ride sections. These are information frames which are attached to either existing infrastructure, such as a lamppost, or are a freestanding, shorter version of a fixed stop but without the bus stop flag.

Information posts provide space for a timetable and other information when needed, such as a notice about diversions or a location map. Often, these frames will also include guidance that buses on that section of road operate on a Hail & Ride basis and can be stopped by signalling to the driver at any safe point. In terms of the provision of information, these posts could be seen as a substitute for a fixed bus stop. One survey respondent on route 491 explained that they "usually wait at the Hail and Ride information point but it's good that the bus will stop anywhere by the kerb".

However, crucially, there are no parking restrictions and cage markings around these stops. As can be seen below (*middle B13 in Blackfen prior to the conversion to fixed bus stops; and right, W9 in Enfield*), vehicles may park by the stop and so the location may remain inaccessible to some users, requiring the passenger to try and find a more accessible location or for the bus to stop some way from the kerb.



Even when the information post is not obstructed by vehicles, passengers often do not wait at, or even close to, the information post so the timetable and other details on the stop is not necessarily being utilised.

The rationale for installing information posts at their locations is unclear. We viewed instances where they were not placed in a location where a bus could easily pull up to the kerbside (on route E11 in Greenford) or were even clearly visible (one was placed under a tree well away from the roadside on route 192 in Edmonton).





*Left: Information post on route 379 in Antlers Hill, Chingford. Attempting to board here would be impossible for most passengers with accessibility issues.*

Further, information points can be found on the Hail and Ride sections of some routes (such as the G1 in Tooting and rural route R8 in Downe) but not at all on others (such as the 364 in Ilford and E5 in Southall). However, there appears to be no obvious reason for the discrepancy.

#### Is there a bus and will it stop for me?

At its most basic, as one survey respondent said, “I just assumed that if there’s no fixed bus stop, there isn’t a bus”. One resident who lives just off the route of the S3 in Carshalton admitted that they “only knew about the bus by seeing it”. A frequent user of Hail and Ride routes told us that:

“If I’m in getting on a bus in an unfamiliar area there is no way to be sure that I’m even on the bus route. So could waste a lot of time waiting in the wrong street or on the wrong side of the road”.

For routes with complicated Hail and Ride sections across many roads, we found that it could be difficult to be sure which roads were covered by buses.



*Above left and right: Passengers wait on street corners on the Hail and Ride section of route W4 between Bruce Grove and West Green. This Hail and Ride section serves nine roads but only five roads in both directions. This makes it difficult for passengers to both know which roads the bus serves and in which direction the buses are travelling*



Some survey respondents admitted their uncertainty about where – and even whether – the bus would stop for them to board. As a user of buses 192 and 491 in the Edmonton area said, “I would prefer fixed stops because I don't want to have to walk out between parked to wave down the driver as sometimes they don't see you”. A survey respondent who uses route 377 raised a “concern, some times, about being seen at night time when hailing [the] bus”.

#### Missing and inconsistent information

Even when passengers know that the bus they want to catch runs a Hail and Ride section, unless there is a bus stop or information post there is no way for timetable information to be provided. A route W6 passenger told us “yes [to having a fixed bus stop] because it's easier to find the frequency of the route at the bus stop” whilst a W5 passenger criticised Hail and Ride because there was “no way of finding out when the bus is due unlike fixed stops”.

By introducing fixed bus stops, TfL can provide real time information to customers with mobile devices, more detailed information for journey planning and ‘next stop’ information on the buses.

The ‘next stop’ information is particularly important as there is currently inconsistency in what is provided by the iBus information system when travelling on Hail and Ride sections. We observed instances where the iBus audio announced ‘Hail and Ride section starts here’ and then the individual roads as the journey progressed. On some routes, such as the H2 in Hampstead Garden Suburb or W5 in Haringey, the same information was simultaneously displayed on the screen.

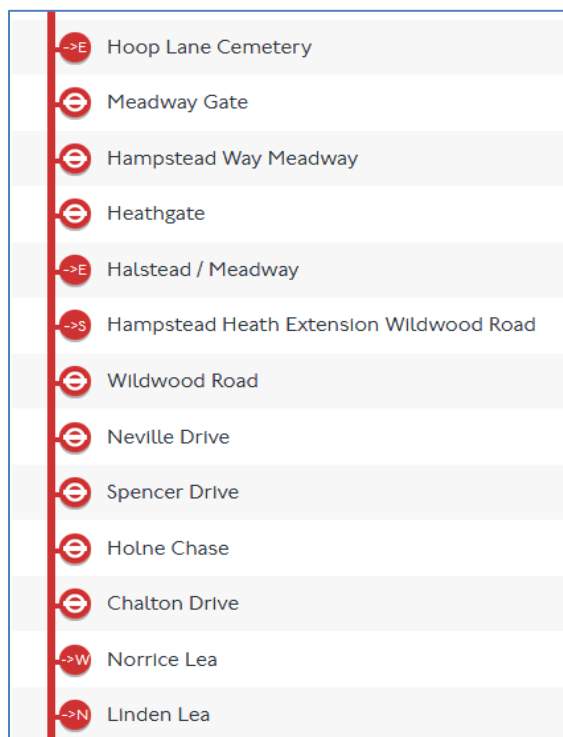
However, when travelling on other routes, such as the 326, 491, E11 and S1, the audio did not even announce that the bus was operating a Hail and Ride section. The information screen only displayed the location of the next fixed bus stop, which was usually some distance away.

The inconsistency of information provided on the bus is replicated on TfL's website. The website allows users to see the fixed bus stops for each route, with the option of viewing the arrival time of the next bus. Sometimes the Hail and Ride roads were also included although, in all instances viewed for this research, they were not specifically labelled as such. Variations we found included the list of Hail and Ride roads on route K1 showing the direction of travel, whilst the Hail and Ride roads on the H2 list some with the direction of travel and some without. However, the Hail and Ride sections of routes 326 and G1 are omitted entirely from the line of route information.

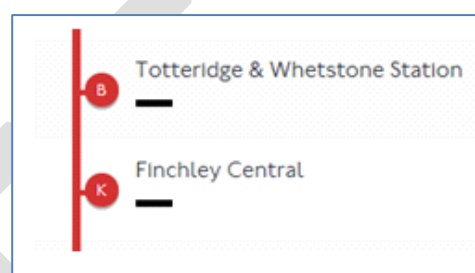
For each bus route, TfL's website should include all roads which operate as Hail and Ride. When the user selects any of those roads, a clear message should be provided stating that it is on a Hail and Ride section and advising passengers on how to board and alight buses on these roads.

Examples of how Hail and Ride routes are displayed on the TfL website.

Below left: Route H2 operates as Hail and Ride across all of the stops listed below but the information is shown inconsistently on the TfL website



Below right: Between route 326's fixed bus stops at Totteridge & Whetstone station and Finchley Central station listed on the TfL website, the route operates as Hail and Ride on seven roads across two sections. However, these roads are not shown in the information provided. There is also a fixed bus stop between the two sections; this, too, is missing.



TfL's Journey Planner also does not always take account of the existence of Hail and Ride sections. For example, route 397 operates as Hail and Ride along Forest Side in Chingford. However, when planning this route on Journey Planner it instead tells the passenger to walk to the closest flagged bus stop on the nearby main road to pick up the bus. When planning a journey to Bexleyheath from route B12's Hail and Ride section in Erith, Journey Planner directs the passenger away from there to a another road to pick up a different route or to the first fixed bus stop on the B12 route.

### Popularity of Hail and Ride

The popularity of Hail and Ride amongst most of its users is undeniable. The most common argument that we heard in its favour is its convenience. The pensioners forum who we spoke to said that "members prefer the convenience of the Hail and Ride system...as they could stop the bus at a convenient place, which was particularly useful for those with walking aids". A passenger who we spoke to whilst travelling on route S3 in Sutton said "I don't know what I'd do without Hail and Ride".

By replacing Hail and Ride sections with fixed bus stops, passengers, whether able bodied, elderly or disabled, would lose the ability to get on and off a service where they wished. This compares to the bus routes operating to conventional fixed bus stops where passengers may have to walk up to 400 metres to board a bus. Where the terrain can be difficult, such as hilly areas, it is also acknowledged that this can be of more significance than the actual walking distances to and from a bus stop. As

one survey respondent said, referencing an earlier proposal to introduce fixed bus stops on their local route, “the 315 goes up a steep hill and people didn’t want the extra walk uphill from a bus stop”.

The popularity of Hail and Ride amongst existing users was highlighted as part of the 2018 consultation in north London which proposed that route 384 be diverted away from several roads with Hail and Ride sections. The consultation response noted that the “biggest concern expressed with the proposals was that older people in New Barnet would be disproportionately impacted by the removal of the Hail and Ride sections in this area”.

However, our interviews with passengers in Carshalton revealed that, even amongst those who live on the Hail and Ride section of route S3, 46% who expressed an opinion would support the provision of a fixed bus stop with a timetable and a raised kerb on the route. This figure rose to 56% of those living close to – but not directly on – the route.

#### Local borough and resident considerations

There was no universal view on Hail and Ride from the councils to whom we spoke. Rather, any impetus to replace Hail and Ride with fixed bus stops was due to a combination of factors.

In some instances, there was a specific wish to improve accessibility. One council advised that they preferred fixed bus stops to Hail and Ride as they strongly supported work to make their local transport networks more accessible to all. Councils also wanted to be guided by feedback from operators about service reliability and any issues that operators had in finding safe places to stop their buses. Most of all, though, councils were relying on feedback from local residents and bus users about any issues and specific problems they faced with Hail and Ride.

It can be politically difficult for a council to press for fixed bus stops to replace Hail and Ride sections. This is often because the proposed conversion to bus stops can require the removal or reallocation of kerbside parking spaces. This has frequently caused residents concern and led to their objections. One borough admitted that proposals for fixed stops are opposed by their residents because of the impact on existing high parking stress levels.

In our previous research on Hail and Ride in 2009, we corresponded with London Borough of Waltham Forest, who decided not to progress the proposal to implement fixed stops on route 397 in Chingford due to the level of objections about a loss of kerbside parking. The Hail and Ride section remains in place a decade later. The bus service along those roads is thus still generally inaccessible to wheelchair users, visually impaired customers and those with learning difficulties or mobility restrictions.

Residents will also often object to proposals to place bus stops and shelters directly outside their homes due to a perceived loss of privacy, concerns about antisocial behaviour and noise from stopping buses. In one north London borough, there were several objections on those grounds to one of the proposed new bus stops replacing a Hail and Ride section. Unfortunately, this led TfL to pause the conversion of the

entire section until a resolution could be found on an alternative location due to its strict bus stop spacing criteria.

In one south London borough, the proposed conversion of one route from Hail and Ride to fixed bus stops led to a residents petition against the proposal, which included concerns about the proposed removal of the 'well utilised Hail and Ride system' and the impact that the new stops would have on nearby residents. In 2017 the council's Neighbourhood Committee refused to agree to the changes, instructing TfL to think again and produce a revised consultation, which is still awaited.

As has been shown, the popularity of Hail and Ride amongst its users means that attempts to remove Hail and Ride will probably lead to challenge and disagreement, combined with resistance by other users to attempt to restrict parking. TfL and local councils therefore need to take local residents with them on proposals to convert to fixed bus stops or schemes are more likely to be rejected. Even when the conversion to fixed bus stops is considered, there is a consensus that this had to be undertaken on a route by route basis otherwise it would not be accepted.

## **8. Conclusion and recommendations**

We argue that local authorities are discriminating against certain bus users by not providing, where they can, accessible bus stops funded by the strategic transport authority, despite having the legal powers to do so.

We recognise Hail and Ride's popularity amongst its existing users, which is unsurprising given the convenience provided by Hail and Ride. However, it should be remembered that the overwhelming majority of London's bus passengers already travel on routes which only have fixed bus stops. The conversion from Hail and Ride to fixed bus stops in appropriate and sensible locations is thus only equalising opportunity for everybody to access London's buses. And we contend that it is important to represent the unheard voices of those passengers who are currently unable or unwilling to use these Hail and Ride routes because of the obstacles they have experienced, or expect to experience, on them.

We would urge councils to prioritise working with TfL to ensure that as many Hail and Ride routes are converted to fixed bus stops as soon as is possible. We will continue to support TfL in their efforts to do this.

We acknowledge that conversions need to be undertaken on a route by route basis and that there are a very small number of roads where complete accessibility for bus stops will not be possible. However, we argue that the default position should be that fixed, and therefore accessible, bus stops should be introduced unless there are specific, critical reasons why they should not.

## **Appendices**

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**Appendix 2:** List of Hail and Ride bus routes travelled on to research this report

**Appendix 3:** Questions and key responses from survey of Hail and Ride bus drivers

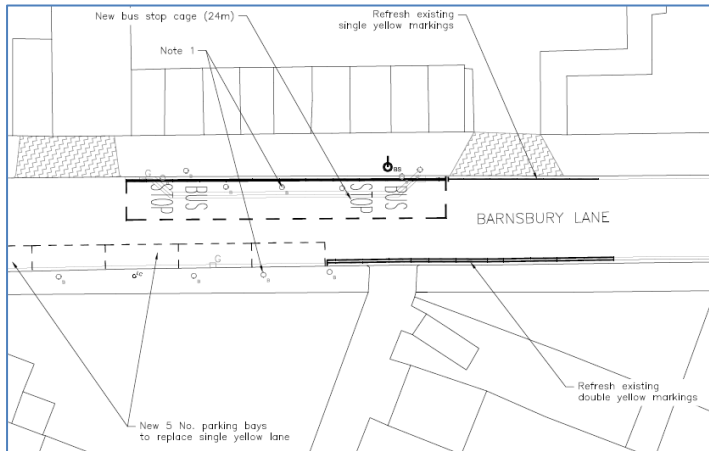
**Appendix 4:** Hail and Ride route S3 case study

**Appendix 5:** Hail and Ride route S3 passenger survey and local map

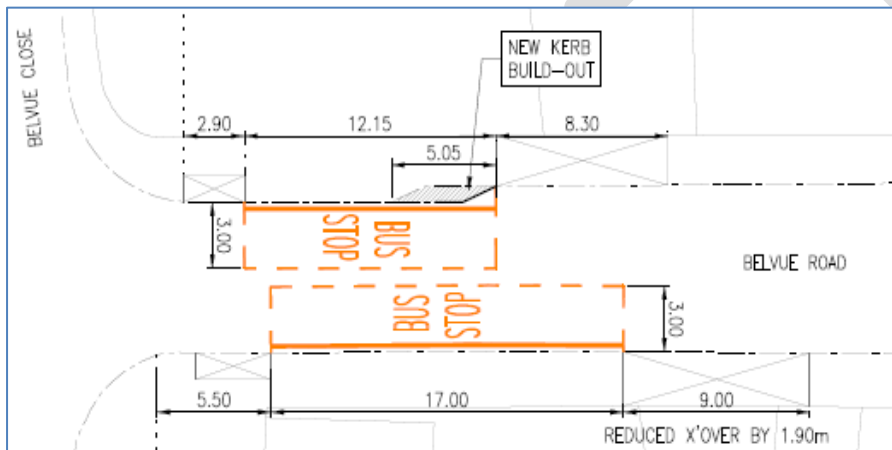
**Appendix 6:** Letter and map posted to properties on, or close to, the S3 route as part of the survey

**Appendix 7:** Hail and Ride bus routes online passenger survey

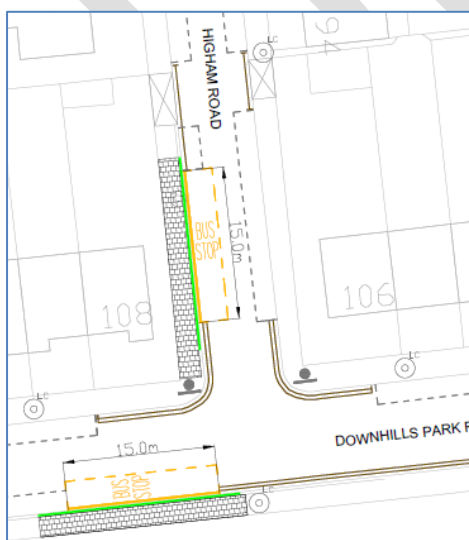
**Appendix 1: Example plans of proposed new fixed bus stops on existing Hail and Ride sections**



*Above – K1 in Tolworth*



*Above – E10 in Northolt*



*Above – W4 in Tottenham*

**Appendix 2:** List of Hail and Ride bus routes travelled on to research this report

<b>Route</b>	<b>Route destination points</b>	<b>Location of Hail and Ride sections travelled on</b>
184	Barnet – Turnpike Lane	Alexandra Palace
192	Enfield Town - Tottenham Hale	Bush Hill Park, Edmonton
226	Golders Green - Ealing Broadway	Hanger Lane
230	Wood Green - Upper Walthamstow	Upper Walthamstow
233	Eltham - Swanley	Sidcup
315	Balham - Norwood	Streatham, West Norwood
318	Stamford Hill – North Middlesex Hospital	Stamford Hill
322	Clapham Common – Crystal Palace	West Norwood
326	Barnet – Brent Cross Shopping Centre	West Finchley, Woodside Park
352	Bromley North – Lower Sydenham	Park Langley
364	Ilford – Dagenham East	Ilford, Seven Kings, Dagenham
366	Beckton – Redbridge	Redbridge
377	Oakwood – Ponders End	Bush Hill Park
379	Chingford – Yardley Lane Estate	Yardley Lane Estate
384	Barnet - Cockfosters	New Barnet, Cockfosters
395	Harrow – Greenford	Northolt, Greenford
397	Crooked Billet – Debden	Chingford
419	Hammersmith – Richmond	North Barnes
462	Grange Hill – Ilford	Grange Hill, Barkingside, Gants Hill
463	Pollards Hill – Coulsdon South	Woodmansterne
B11	Bexleyheath – Thamesmead	East Wickham

<b>Route</b>	<b>Route destination points</b>	<b>Location of Hail and Ride sections travelled on</b>
B12	Joydens Wood – Erith	Erith
B13	New Eltham – Bexleyheath	Blackfen, Bexleyheath
B14	Bexleyheath – Orpington	Blendon, Albany Park, Sidcup
E5	Perivale – Toplocks	Southall
E10	Ealing Broadway – Northolt	Northolt
E11	Ealing Common – Greenford	Ealing Common, Greenford
G1	Battersea – Streatham	Tooting, Streatham
H2	Golders Green – Hampstead Garden Suburb	Hampstead Garden Suburb
K1	Kingston – New Malden	Tolworth
K5	Ham – Morden	Motspur Park, Morden
R3	Princess Royal University Hospital - Orpington	Southborough
R4	Princess Royal University Hospital – Paul’s Cray Hill	Orpington
R8	Orpington – Biggin Hill	Downe, Biggin Hill
S1	Banstead – Lavender Fields	Sutton, St. Helier
S3	Malden Manor – Belmont	Malden Manor, Worcester Park, North Cheam, Sutton, Carshalton
S4	St. Helier – Roundshaw	Woodcote Green, Wallington, Belmont, Sutton
W4	Ferry Lane Estate – Oakthorpe Park	Bruce Grove, West Green
W5	Archway – Harringay	Crouch End, Harringay
W9	Southgate – Chase Farm Hospital	Southgate, Winchmore Hill, Grange Park, Chase Side
W11	Chingford Hall Estate – Walthamstow Central	Higham Hill
W12	Coppermill Lane – Wanstead	St James Street, Walthamstow Village, Wanstead
W15	Cogan Avenue Estate – Hackney	Cogan Avenue Estate



**Appendix 3: Survey questions and key responses from Hail and Ride bus drivers (144 responses)**

**1. Which route(s) with a Hail and Ride section do you drive regularly?**

22 routes across London were provided

**2. What problems, if any, do you experience when driving on Hail and Ride route sections?**

Key issues raised were:

Mobility issues for passengers boarding/alighting  
Safety for stopping the bus  
Passenger's unrealistic expectations  
Passenger abuse  
Impact on service reliability

**3. What feedback, negative or positive, do you receive from passengers who use Hail and Ride services?**

Key comments given:

'Its confusing why cant you stop where I want you to' is the most frequent conversation

Less able or elderly passengers are very thankful when we are able to stop near to their desired alight point. But when we can not stop near to there desired destination these same passengers become quite confrontational and quite oblivious to the safety that we have to follow is for their benefit and ours.

Appreciated by most. Especially those with limited mobility and residing a fair distance from established bus routes

Regular passengers are happy because they know where we can pick them up but also because we drop them of in front of their houses (most of the time).

Passengers that don't travel so often on this route might press the bell late or they might wait for the bus in an inappropriate place so creating an inconvenience for them.

**4. Do people who are not currently passengers ask for information about the bus route(s)?**

Yes - 68 responses (52%)  
No - 63 responses (48%)

**5. Do you drive on any roads with Hail and Ride sections that you think would benefit from having fixed bus stops? If yes, please name the roads**

Roads on 16 specific routes were mentioned

**6. Are there any improvements that you would make to Hail and Ride route sections?**

66 respondents (47%) specifically suggested introducing fixed bus stops.

Other key improvements raised were:

Include information about the concept of the service on I bus announcements. In addition "We are now on a hail and ride section of service. Please request a safe stopping place by ringing the bell just before the location" Generally the next official bus stop is shown on I Bus display. This then often results in bell ringing for that location rather than a Hail and Ride request which causes confusion regarding passengers request.

Advertise, with posters in the bus, how to use the hail and ride service.

Have passing areas

Better road markings as residents park cars on road corners which makes life very difficult for drivers.

Put in parking restrictions in some problem locations to aid the driver serving the kerbside.



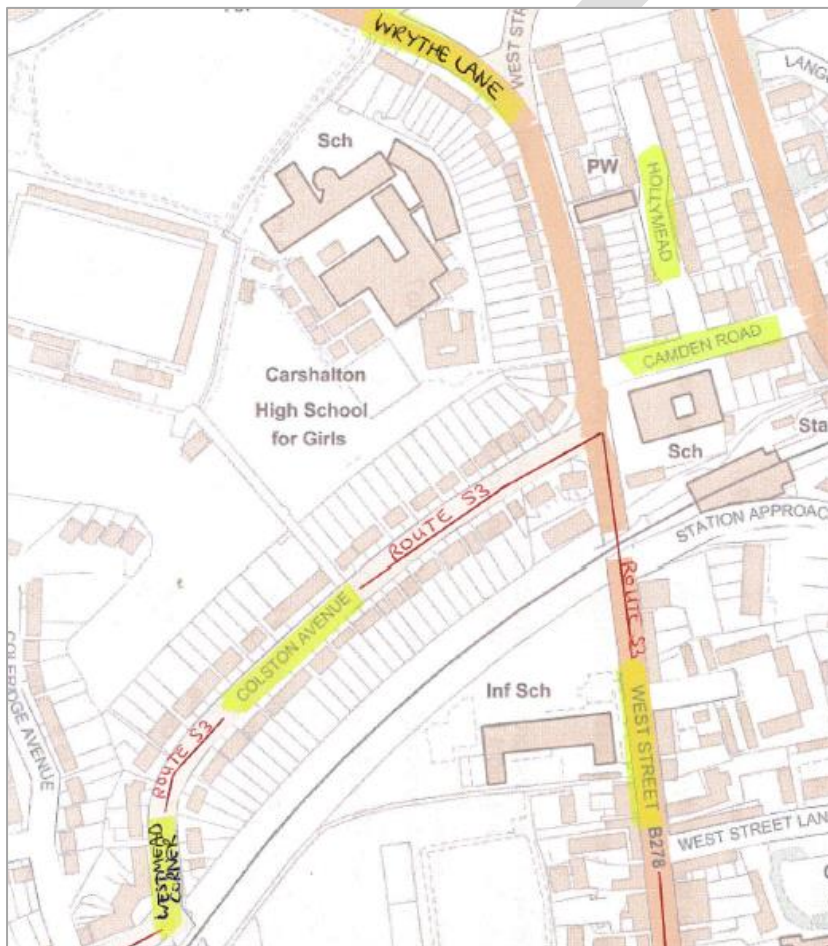
#### Appendix 4: Hail and Ride route S3 case study

Route S3 runs between Malden Manor and Belmont via Sutton town centre and serves 22 roads operating Hail and Ride.

To help us understand how a sample Hail and Ride route was being used and, as importantly, why residents are not using the route, we surveyed in person residents living either directly on, or close to, the S3's Hail and Ride section in Carshalton.

We received 145 responses from residents, out of 189 properties on these roads. This equates to 78% of the properties and 94% of those that were willing to engage with the survey.

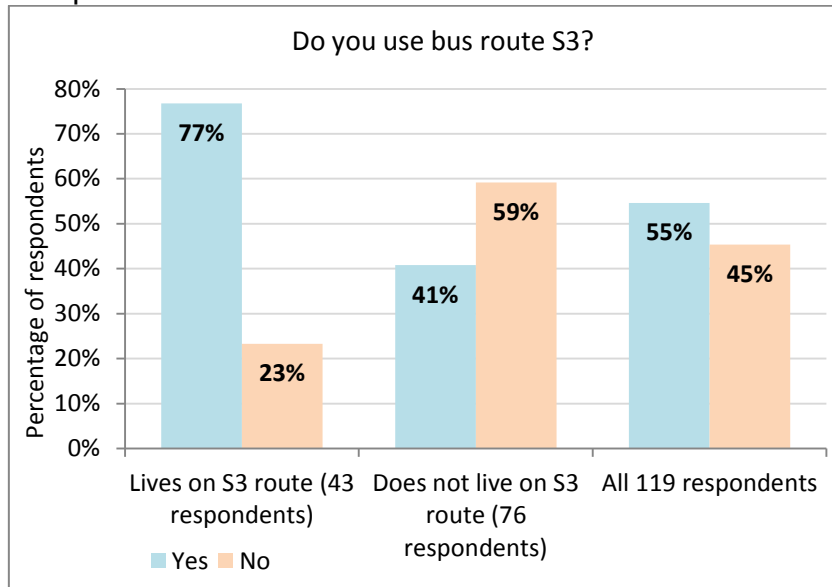
The map below shows the location for the interviews. The road names **highlighted** are those on which the survey was undertaken. The red line shows the route of the S3.



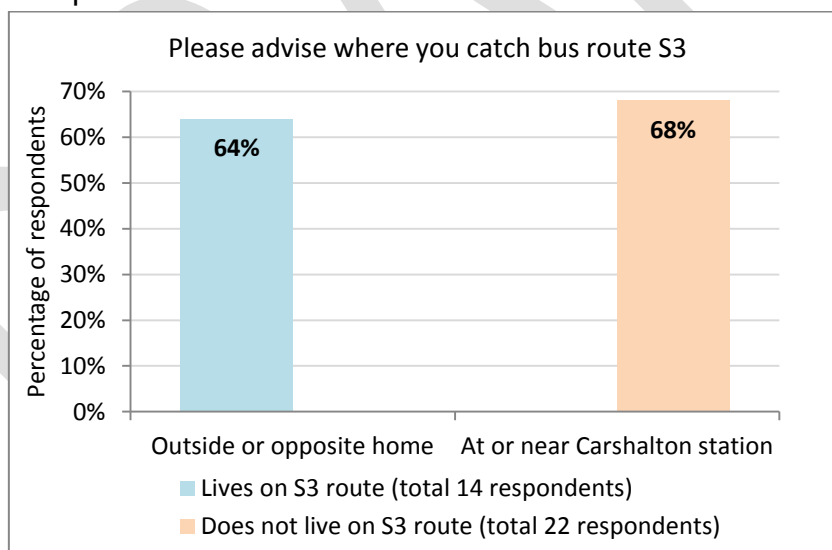
Details of the survey material we used for each interview can be found in Appendices 5 and 6.

Graphs 1 and 2 below shows that passengers who live directly on the S3 route are more likely to use the service and usually group together near their homes when waiting for the bus. The graphs also show that passengers living off the route are less likely to know where the bus goes and mostly choose the same place to board (by the nearby railway station).

Graph 1

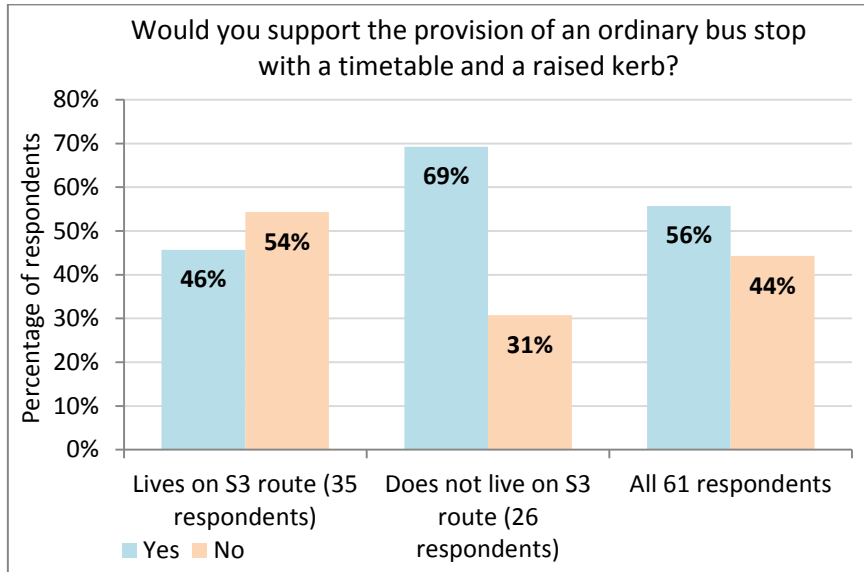


Graph 2



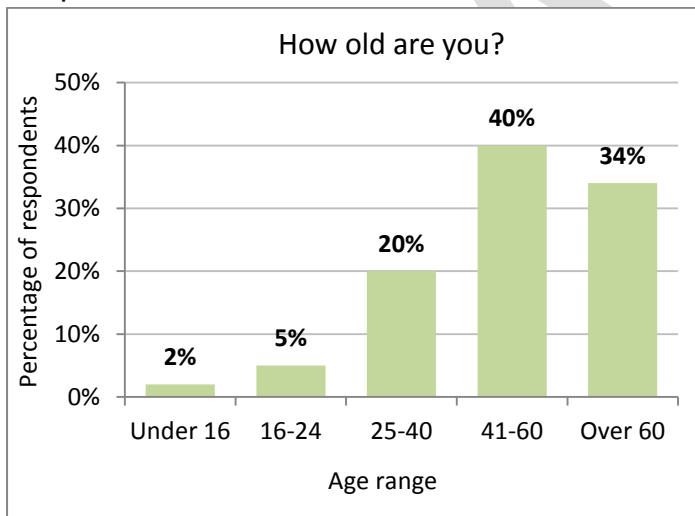
Graph 3 below shows that there is passenger support for fixed bus stops with a timetable and raised kerb, even amongst those who use and like Hail and Ride.

Graph 3

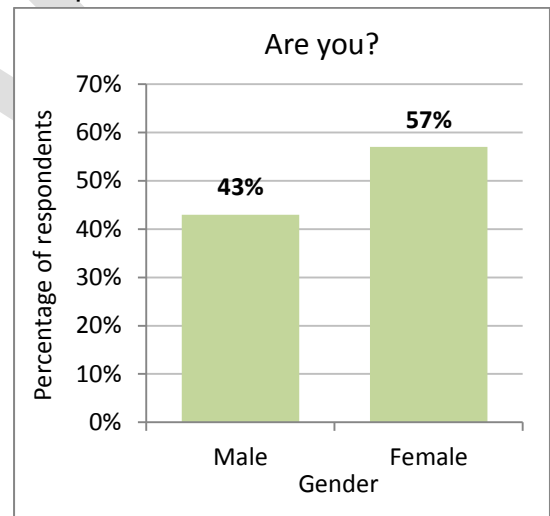


The demographic information from survey respondents in Graphs 4-6 below shows that almost three-quarters of respondents are aged 41 or over, there were more females than males and approximately one in six respondents have a disability.

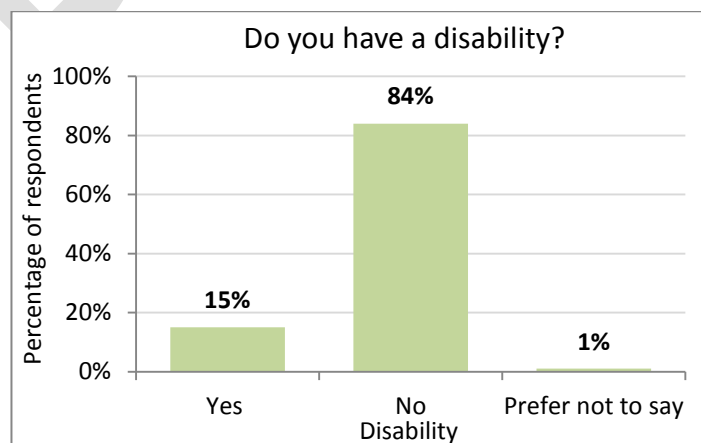
Graph 4



Graph 5



Graph 6



**Appendix 5:** Hail and Ride route S3 passenger survey and local map



Hello my name is

I work for a public body, London TravelWatch. We represent bus passengers. Can I ask you a few questions about your local bus service, particularly the S3. This will take less than 5 minutes. **Please note: There is no proposal to change bus service S3. This work is unrelated to the proposal for an on-demand bus service in Sutton.**

1. Are you a bus user? *If No go to Q10*
2. Do you use bus S3? *If No go to Q10*
3. Can you tell me where you catch the S3? – *show map*
4. Can you tell me where you normally travel to?
5. Is catching the bus straightforward for you? If it is not straightforward, why not?
6. Is the place you wait for the bus used by others?
7. Can you tell me where you get off on your return? – *show map*
8. Is the bus able to stop easily where you want and can you get off easily?
9. Would you support the provision an ordinary bus stop with a timetable and a raised kerb. If yes, where might it be situated? – *can show on map*

**Non user questions**

10. Can you tell me where you would catch the S3 if you needed to?
11. Can you tell me where the S3 goes?

**Personal information** - We would like to ask some questions about you to monitor how representative the responses are, if you are happy to provide the answers:

12. Are you: Male  Female
13. How old are you? Under 16  16-24  25-40   
41-60  Over 60
14. Do you have a disability? Yes  No
15. Do you have access to a car? Yes  No
16. Please provide your postcode:

Thank you for completing this survey

**Appendix 6:** Letter and map posted to properties on, or close to, the S3 route as part of the survey



Europoint  
5-11 Lavington Street  
London  
SE1 0NZ

Dear Resident,

### **Hail and Ride bus services**

We called today on behalf of London TravelWatch, the public body that represents transport users in London.

We are undertaking some work to understand the issues of 'Hail and Ride' bus services. These are buses that have no conventional bus stop and passengers request that the bus stops from the side of the road. We have called at your property because the S3 bus serves nearby streets.

**Please note: There is no proposal to change bus service S3. This work is unrelated to the proposal for an on-demand bus service in Sutton.**

If you were at home and answered our questions this letter is just to say thank you. If you were not at home when we called we will call again, but in the mean time you could help us by undertaking a very short survey about your local bus service. Please do participate whether or not you use bus S3 **via the 'Have your say on Hail and Ride bus routes' news story on our website home page.**

If you have any questions please contact us at London TravelWatch at the address above, by phone on 0203 176 2999 (ask for Trevor) or email:

[Trevor.Rosenberg@LondonTravelWatch.org.UK](mailto:Trevor.Rosenberg@LondonTravelWatch.org.UK)

You can find more about us on our website: [www.LondonTravelWatch.Org.UK](http://www.LondonTravelWatch.Org.UK)

Thank you for your participation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "V Stops".

Vincent Stops  
London TravelWatch

## Appendix 7: Hail and Ride bus routes online passenger survey (72 responses)



### Hail and Ride bus routes passenger survey

London TravelWatch, the statutory watchdog representing transport users in and around London, wants all of London's bus services to be fully accessible.

We have worked hard to get fixed stops to be accessible and are really pleased that 95% now are. However, we are now looking to improve the accessibility of 'Hail and Ride' services.

Hail and Ride bus services are those which can be hailed at any safe location along its route. We are currently researching Hail and Ride services in our work with Transport for London to consider the conversion of some of these route sections to fixed, accessible bus stops. Your responses to the questions below will be a valuable part of our evidence gathering.

#### 1. How frequently do you use Hail and Ride bus routes?

5 or more times a week	15	20%
2 to 4 times a week	19	26%
Once a week	9	13%
2 to 3 times a month	14	19%
Less frequently	15	20%

#### 2. Which Hail and Ride routes do you use most often?

28 routes across London were provided, with most responses for routes 315, 322 and W5

#### 3. Is there anything you particularly like about using Hail and Ride routes?

Most frequent comments:

Convenience/flexibility	47	70%
Nothing liked	9	13%
Friendliness of drivers	5	7%
Frequency of service	3	4%



**4. Is there anything you particularly dislike about using Hail and Ride routes?**

Most frequent comments:

Nothing liked	19	<b>28%</b>
Uncertainty about where or whether buses will stop on a route	9	<b>13%</b>
Bus didn't stop where wanted	6	<b>9%</b>
No way of knowing when the next bus is due	4	<b>6%</b>
Bus didn't stop at all	3	<b>4%</b>
Bus runs too infrequently	3	<b>4%</b>
Bus can stop multiple times in a small distance	2	<b>3%</b>
Bus stopped in an inappropriate/inaccessible place	2	<b>3%</b>

**5. Would you prefer there to be fixed stops where you board/alight the bus rather than Hail and Ride? If yes, why?**

Yes - 23 (37% of all respondents)

No - 40 (63% of all respondents)

Of those respondents answering yes, key comments were;

Makes it clear that a bus route operates and know where it will stop	7
Can check/know when the bus is due	5
Make it easier to get on and off the buses	3

**6. Have you ever had a bad experience when using a Hail and Ride route, such as when boarding or alighting? If yes, please explain what happened**

Most frequent comments:

No bad experience	38	<b>66%</b>
Bus didn't stop where wanted	8	<b>13%</b>
Bus stopped in an inappropriate/inaccessible place	4	<b>6%</b>
Bus didn't stop at all	2	<b>3%</b>
Driver rudeness	2	<b>3%</b>

**7. Thinking about the last journey you made on a Hail and Ride bus route, please tell us whether or not it was satisfactory**

Satisfactory – 64 (95%)

Not satisfactory – 3 (5%)

**8. If you have any other comments about using Hail and Ride bus routes, please provide them below**

Most frequent comments:

Support Hail and Ride routes	4
Positive comments about hail and ride drivers	4
Negative comments about hail and ride drivers	2
Don't know when the bus is coming	2
Hail and Ride is useful as disabled	2

Please tell us a bit more about yourself so we can monitor how representative the responses are

**9. Are you:**

Male – 34 (51% of all respondents)

Female – 31 (46% of all respondents)

**10. How old are you?**

Over 60	31	49%
41-60	18	28%
25-40	13	20%
16-24	1	1.5%
Prefer not to say	1	1.5%

**11. Do you consider yourself to be:**

White	55	82%
Prefer not to say	5	7%
Mixed/multiple ethnic groups	3	4%
Black/African/Caribbean/Black British	2	3%
Other ethnic group	2	3%

**12. Do you have a disability?**

No	45	69%
Prefer not to say	6	9%
Yes	14	22%