Consultation on the proposed withdrawal of the heritage bus service on route 9

Responses to the main issues raised
May 2014
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TfL response to the main issues raised
Set out below, are the main points put to us during the consultation and our response to these.

Our proposals
Transport for London (TfL) recently consulted stakeholders and the public about proposed changes to bus route 9. The consultation ran from 23 January 2014 to 7 March 2014.

Route 9 operates between Hammersmith and Aldwych approximately every 6 minutes Monday to Saturday daytimes and every 10 minutes during the evenings and on Sundays.

The heritage service operates between Kensington High Street and Trafalgar Square using Routemaster buses. These buses run daily, every 20 minutes, between 0930 and 1830.

We have proposed to withdraw the heritage service on route 9 because usage is limited and relatively expensive to operate.

This document lists the main issues we identified and includes our responses.

Main issues raised and TfL’s response
These buses are iconic and a part of our heritage. They are also a popular tourist attraction. Keep this valuable service. Heritage Routemasters will continue to be used on route 15, providing a supplementary service to tourist areas such as the Tower of London; the main service on route 9 is now operated with New Routemaster buses.

The traditional Routemaster is better (it is more comfortable and has the ease of hopping on and off) than the New Routemaster. Passengers are able to hop on and hop off the New Routemaster buses used on Route 9 during the day on Mondays to Fridays when there is a Passenger Assistant on board.

Transfer these buses to another route.
 Those vehicles that are in best condition will be transferred to operate on route 15.

Consider advertising / sponsorship to support the service.
Only limited income is available through advertising; we are also not aware of any significant opportunities through sponsorship to significantly reduce the cost of operation on a sustained basis.

Find savings elsewhere.
With continued growth on the network, we believe that the subsidy of over £1m for the Heritage Routemasters on route 9 is better spent elsewhere. The Heritage Routemasters will be retained on route 15.
Run a reduced service, e.g. at week-ends only or just two buses an hour. Running Heritage Routemaster on route 9 at weekends only will still require the vehicles to be retained, thereby significantly reducing the potential savings from the scheme. Reducing the frequency to just 2 buses an hour would not result in a proportional reduction in costs and, in addition, would not be an attractive offering for users. Heritage Routemaster will be retained on route 15 on a daily basis, running every 15 minutes.