



Response to London Buses
Consultations, routes 168 and 343
(Tranches 322 and 335)

London Buses references:

SOC/T322/Stage2/0210

MH/T335/Stage2/0110

<http://www.evolutionquarter.org>

Evolution Quarter Residents Association response to consultations – routes 168 and 343

The Evolution Quarter Residents Association is a residents group set up in October 2007 by a group of local people in Peckham. We represent around 300 homes in the area just south of Burgess Park, which were built as part of the recent £200million Peckham Programme regeneration scheme.

We have considered the consultation documents received recently, and respond as follows.

Route 343

We are pleased that London Buses have acknowledged that capacity problems exist on route 343. However, we do not feel the proposed solution, of two additional journeys running the length of the route in the morning peak, tackles the issue adequately, nor does it make efficient use of the resources available.

The two additional journeys may alleviate some of the problems experienced at that time of day in the North Peckham area. However, we believe that the level of service offered over this section will continue to be inadequate. Increasing route 343 as proposed will deliver a marginally more intensive service along the entire route. It appears that service levels over other sections of the route are already quite generous, and the proposed solution does not target resources on tackling the capacity problems which occur specifically in the North Peckham area.

We are surprised by the cost quoted for our previously-suggested shuttle bus. By our calculations, the figure quoted is in the region of £15-£20 per mile. This is far in excess of the £5-£6 per mile for recent tender awards for routes 63 and 363, published on TfL's website. However, if a shuttle bus is indeed this expensive to provide, we believe it must be possible to identify other, more cost-effective solutions to the capacity problems suffered on bus routes serving North Peckham, at costs more typical of those published for other recent tender awards in the local area.

North Peckham area

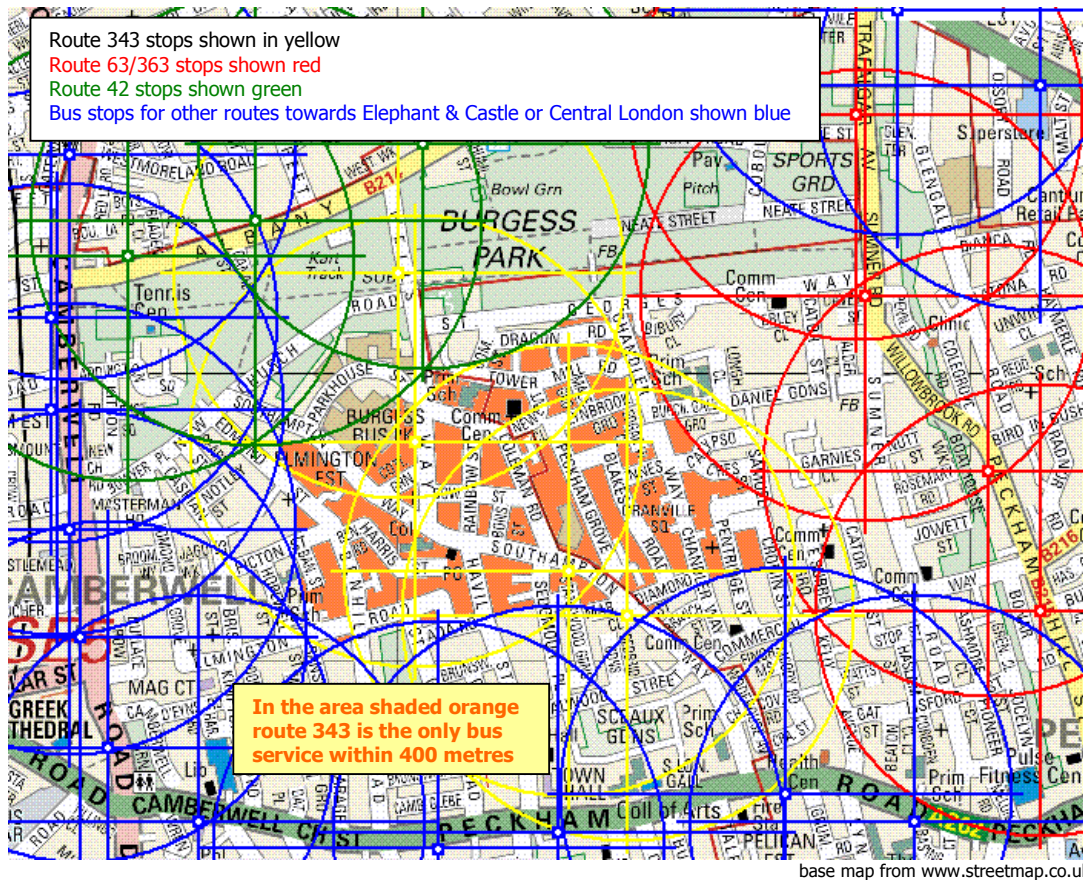
The North Peckham area is very densely populated. Urban regeneration over recent years has transformed the area with much new, high-density housing being built under the Peckham Programme. Despite the regeneration which has taken place over recent years, the North Peckham area is still home to pockets of deprivation. Good transport links are vital to this area, to provide local residents with access to jobs and services.

Further new housing currently being built in Southampton Way, where a development of a further 195 homes is due for completion in late 2010/early 2011. Redevelopment is continuing on Sumner Road, while a new school is due to open in Daniel Gardens, off Sumner Road, later in 2010. These developments are likely to add even more pressure onto local bus services.

Existing transport links

Although we are within Zone 2, the area suffers from very poor access to any rail-based transport services. The nearest rail stations, Peckham Rye and Denmark Hill, are almost a mile away whilst the nearest Underground stations (at Oval, Kennington and Elephant & Castle) are over a mile distant. We are therefore dependent on bus services to fulfil our local transport needs.

We understand that TfL's guideline is for residential properties to be within 400 metres of a bus service. For many residents in our area, route 343 is the only bus service within this distance. The map overleaf plots the bus stops on route 343 and other local routes, and shows the area where route 343 is the only bus service within 400 metres.



Although our neighbourhood is less than 3 miles from both Charing Cross and the Bank of England, our local bus route doesn't reach Central London, instead keeping to the south side of the Thames to terminate at City Hall.

There are direct bus links into Central London from Sumner Road/Trafalgar Avenue, Old Kent Road, Peckham Road and Camberwell Road/Walworth Road. Of these, the nearest (the Sumner Road/Trafalgar Avenue corridor) also suffers regularly from overcrowding. Buses leaving passengers behind at the St Georges Way stop is a regular occurrence, with some buses already full from preceding stops not letting any passengers board here. The problem becomes steadily more acute at subsequent stops up to Elephant & Castle. This is particularly noticeable on route 63 where passengers wishing to travel beyond Elephant & Castle are without alternative direct bus routes.

We are aware that a number of local residents walk some distance to alternative bus stops further afield, just to be able to get on a bus. We do not believe this is acceptable, and demonstrates a lack of adequate bus services within 400 metres of our neighbourhood.

Cross River Tram

The proposed Cross River Tram, for which there was a strong business case, would have provided a high-capacity direct link from North Peckham to Waterloo, Aldwych, Holborn, Bloomsbury and Euston. However, the tram scheme is no longer being progressed. Alternatives to take the place of the proposed Cross River Tram are urgently needed. TfL's website clearly states that TfL's Business Plan will deliver a number of transport improvements to communities along the route of the Cross River Tram.

Route 168

We are extremely dismayed to note that London Buses do not support a suggestion from London Travelwatch, to extend route 168 to serve the North Peckham. This appears particularly perverse, since route 168 serves the same corridor as the proposed Cross River Tram (CRT) through Central London, thus providing many of the same links from North Peckham which would have been provided by the tram but without the infrastructure costs. We would urge London Buses to reconsider this decision, both to provide the planned links denied to us by the abandonment of CRT and also to relieve overcrowding on local bus routes.

Evidence

During February 2010 we carried out our own observations of northbound bus loadings on three mornings, one each at the Southampton Way Estate (route 343), Cottage Green (route 343) and St Georges Way (routes 63 and 363) stops. These revealed very heavy usage, particularly at the Southampton Way and St Georges Way stops with well over 100 passengers boarding buses at each of these stops in the space of an hour (08:00-08:59).

In some observations, buses left passengers behind at these stops (in some cases not permitting any passengers to board at all), some others were full on departure while many others left with standing loads. There was therefore little spare capacity to take on further passengers at subsequent stops towards Elephant & Castle.

We noted that the Wells Way (Cottage Green) stop was noticeably less busy than Southampton Way Estate or St Georges Way. We suggest this could be because regular commuters have given up using it, opting instead to walk further afield to less-convenient stops just to have a reasonable chance of being able to get onto a bus. We believe an analysis of data from Oyster may show cards which are registered to local addresses being used to start travel-to-work journeys on routes which are further away than the 343.

Our observations are summarised below, with detailed logs contained in Appendix 2.

Stop	Southampton Way Estate	Cottage Green	St Georges Way
Route(s)	343	343	63 / 363
Date	Tues 09 Feb 10	Weds 10 Feb 10	Thurs 11 Feb 10
Length of time observed	76 minutes	75 minutes	97 minutes
Number of buses observed	12	11	32
Total passengers boarding	160	73	217
Passengers boarding 08:00-08:59	141	37	129

We have not yet been able to carry out similar observations in the evening peak.

Suggestions to provide adequate bus services to the North Peckham area

Despite the promise in TfL's Business Plan of transport improvements along the route of the Cross River Tram, the consultations for routes 168 and 343 show little evidence of that promise being fulfilled as yet.

While we are disappointed that the suggestions we have previously put forward have been rejected, we believe there are nevertheless a number of viable solutions to the transport problems which exist in North Peckham. Our ideas are discussed in the following paragraphs. We believe that London Buses should evaluate them, and adopt at least one of them.

Extension of route 168 features in several of our suggestions. Should London Buses maintain that route 168 cannot be used to deliver the much-needed extra capacity to North Peckham, proper consideration must be given to bus routes along the Walworth Road/Camberwell Road corridor as an alternative. We note that our previous suggestions, to divert either route 12 or route 171, have been rejected. We believe that other alternatives should therefore be explored.

We recognise that London Buses currently faces funding constraints, making it more difficult to justify incurring expenditure on service increases. In several cases, we believe that it may be possible to offset some of the costs of our suggestions. With a second route serving the Southampton Way area to take the pressure off the 343, it may be necessary to consider a marginal reduction in the frequency of route 343.

Were frequencies on route 343 to be trimmed, this would reduce service levels through Aylesbury and Heygate Estates. However, significant regeneration work is starting through the Aylesbury Area Action Plan and the Elephant & Castle Regeneration Project. These schemes will ultimately increase population in these areas as new housing becomes ready for occupation. In the shorter term, however, the regeneration work is resulting in residents being moved away from these areas. Bus service provision would need to be reviewed further as new housing becomes ready.

We fully acknowledge that any service reduction at other points along the route may not be popular with affected users. We understand, however, that current service levels offered along other parts of the 343 route are quite generous. We believe there may be some scope to reduce frequencies slightly while continuing to provide adequate capacity at an attractive frequency. A marginal reduction would deliver a peak frequency of 7 or 8 buses per hour (i.e. a bus scheduled about every 8 minutes) along the whole route, while releasing resources to be targeted at the area where route 343 is under the most severe pressure.

Suggestion 1: Route 168

A very simple solution would be to extend route 168 via Albany Road, Wells Way, Southampton Way, continuing to Peckham to terminate. This would relieve overcrowding in the Southampton Way and Wells Way area, and deliver a direct link between Southampton Way and Central London more-or-less following the route which had been proposed for Cross River Tram. With an additional 9 buses per hour through North Peckham on route 168, there might be scope to offset some of the additional costs by marginally reducing the service on route 343.

Although this solution would tackle the issues of crowding and lack of Central London link on the Southampton Way corridor, it would be unlikely to address the overcrowding experienced on routes 63 and 363.

Peak buses per hour (current)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			9		9
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Peak buses per hour (suggested)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		9	7-8		16-17
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Change	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		+ 9	- 1-2		+ 7-8
Trafalgar Avenue corridor					(none)

Suggestion 2: Routes 168 and 363

As an alternative to extending the 168 through the Southampton Way area, we suggest diverting route 363 via Peckham Road, Southampton Way, Wells Way and Albany Road to rejoin its present route at Tesco. Route 168 could be extended to Peckham via Trafalgar Avenue, to replace route 363 over this section. Since route 168 operates more frequently than the 363, this suggestion would increase capacity and tackle the overcrowding problems over both corridors. The costs might be offset, in part, by a minor reduction in the frequency of route 343.

Although this suggestion would result in slightly longer journey times on route 363, we believe this would be less than 5 minutes per journey. It would not, however, improve links into Central London from the Southampton Way corridor.

Peak buses per hour (current)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			9		9
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Peak buses per hour (suggested)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			7-8	6	13-14
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13	9			21-22

Change	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			- 1-2	+ 6	+ 4-5
Trafalgar Avenue corridor		+ 9		- 6	+ 3

Suggestion 3: Routes 168, 343 and 363

A further suggestion combines parts of Suggestions 1 and 2, to increase capacity over both the Southampton Way and Trafalgar Avenue corridors while also introducing a direct link between Southampton Way and Central London.

Route 168 would be extended as in suggestion 1, from Old Kent Road to Peckham via Albany Road, Wells Way and Southampton Way. In order to redistribute some of the capacity increase to the Trafalgar Avenue corridor, routes 343 and 363 could be swapped north of Peckham. Route 363 would take over the existing 343 route to City Hall via Southampton Way, Thurlow Street, Elephant & Castle and London Bridge. Route 343 would then run via Trafalgar Avenue, Old Kent Road and New Kent Road to terminate at Elephant & Castle, retaining its current frequency to improve capacity over the Trafalgar Avenue and Old Kent Road corridor.

This suggestion would achieve improved service levels to the Southampton Way, Trafalgar Avenue and Old Kent Road corridors, while providing a direct link from Southampton Way to Central London along the Cross River Tram alignment. It would, however, result in fewer buses serving Thurlow Street, Rodney Road and north of Elephant & Castle to London Bridge and City Hall.

Peak buses per hour (current)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			9		9
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Peak buses per hour (suggested)	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		9		6	15
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13		9		21-22

Change	63	168	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		+ 9	- 9	+ 6	+ 6
Trafalgar Avenue corridor			+ 9	- 6	+ 3

Suggestion 4: Route 148

Route 148 currently terminates at Camberwell Green from the north, and we feel there is potential to reroute this service without disrupting a high number of existing journeys. We believe that there are two alternative routes which London Buses should evaluate:

- From Camberwell Road, via Albany Road, Wells Way and Southampton Way
- From Camberwell Road via Bowyer Place, New Church Road and Southampton Way

Beyond Southampton Way, route 148 could run either to its existing terminus at Camberwell Green or alternatively to Peckham.

Of the two routeings we have suggested, the Albany Road and Wells Way option would serve the North Peckham area more effectively. The Bowyer Place/New Church Road routeing might cause less disruption to existing travel patterns, although it would introduce buses to roads which are currently not served by bus.

Although this suggestion would not tackle the overcrowding problems on the Trafalgar Avenue corridor, it would provide relief to route 343 along Southampton Way, as well as introducing direct links to Westminster, Victoria and beyond from North Peckham.

Peak buses per hour (current)	63	148	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			9		9
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Peak buses per hour (suggested)	63	148	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		9	7-8		16-17
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Change	63	148	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		+ 9	- 1-2		+ 7-8
Trafalgar Avenue corridor					(none)

Suggestion 5: Route 12

Suggestion 4 could alternatively be applied to part of the service on route 12, which currently operates to a very high frequency using bendy buses. We assume that the bendy buses will be replaced by conventional double-deckers when the next contract for route 12 commences in Autumn 2011, and note that where conversions from bendy bus to conventional buses have already been announced or implemented, these have been accompanied by significant increases in frequency. We therefore assume that route 12 would need to operate even more frequently than at present when its bendy buses are replaced, to maintain capacity. We believe this presents an opportunity to improve transport provision in the North Peckham area.

We would suggest that, as an alternative to increasing the frequency on route 12, London Buses should consider introducing a new route which would parallel route 12 between Central London and the northern stretch of Camberwell Road. The new route could then run via either Albany Road and Wells Way or Bowyer Place and New Church Road, then Southampton Way to rejoin route 12 at Peckham Road. This would maintain capacity levels over much of route 12, except around Camberwell Green where numerous other bus routes are available. We believe that double-deck buses at existing frequencies may provide adequate capacity over section of route 12 south of Peckham. There would therefore be scope for London Buses to consider an alternative southern terminus for our suggested new route rather than necessarily running to Dulwich.

Although this suggestion would not address the capacity issues on the Trafalgar Avenue corridor, it would tackle the overcrowding along Southampton Way as well as giving North Peckham a direct link into the West End.

Should this suggestion be adopted, we note that the changes to route 12 are not expected until late 2011. We would therefore press for an interim solution as soon as possible, introducing at least the Elephant & Castle to Peckham leg of the new route or temporarily providing extra buses over route 343 between these points, to tackle the existing, long-standing overcrowding issues in the Southampton Way area.

Peak buses per hour (current)	63	new	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor			9		9
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Peak buses per hour (suggested)	63	new	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		6-8	7-8		13-16
Trafalgar Avenue corridor	12-13			6	18-19

Change	63	new	343	363	Overall
Southampton Way corridor		+ 6-8	- 1-2		+ 4-7
Trafalgar Avenue corridor					(none)

Other alternatives

In the event that none of our ideas are deemed feasible, we believe London Buses has a duty to find and implement an alternative solution, to ensure that there is capacity available on the buses at the times that passengers need to travel from (and to) North Peckham. This might, for example, involve extending a route which currently terminates at Peckham to run to Elephant & Castle, or vice versa, or further increasing frequencies on route 343 and 63/363.

Appendix 1 – incident log

Reproduced below is a log, provided by one of our members, of difficulties experienced on route 343 in recent months. She usually walks to Peckham Road to increase her chances of being able to board a bus when it arrives:

5 Oct 09 (bus - BX55 KNJ)

8.38am boarded on Southampton way. Approx 30 queueing at least 20 minutes. Approx 15 allowed/able to board. Driver told those on board there was at least a 20 minute wait for the next bus.

Approx 20 at Sedgmore Place. Approx 5 allowed board.

Approx 5 people waiting in Wells Way – none allowed board

Original route to City Hall. Terminated Southwark Police Station – told of change at Elephant and Castle.

6 Oct 09 – boarded 8.20am with approximately 25 on Southampton Way. Standing room only to Elephant and Castle – couldn't see off bus to tell if people were not allowed on.

8 Oct 09 – Peckham Rd. Boarded 343 after 11 minute wait at 8.32am. Approx 25 people boarded.

Southampton Way – 5 boarded through back of bus, approx 20 waiting. Bus overloaded.

Stopped engine – “requested” people disembark through back doors.

No pickup at Sedgemore Place – approx 15 waiting.

Fyi – I had left home at 8.10 to get bus. I was as far as Wells Way at 8.57

10 Oct Sat 7pm. No notice of 343 start of route, at City Hall not being used. Approx 6 people waiting for a bus (personally over 20 minutes – gave up and got taxi)..discovered after no bus due to arrive/depart from that stop.

19 Oct 09 - 7.20am boarded Peckham Road. By the time the bus was in the Ailesbury – 7.35, so full, it couldn't accept approx 20 people waiting to board.

16 Nov 09 - 8.25am Boarded Peckham Road, standing by driver.

Let approx 5 board on Southampton Way.

Sedgmore Place - back door open – several pushed in here.

Countless children in seats (One children's bus service locally in the morning an option? – this is a very regular occurrence between 8 and 9am)

Completely packed bus – standing in awkward position for entire journey (to Elephant and Castle)

17 Nov 09 evening - returning from City to Peckham - Overheard woman who disembarked on Southampton Way telling friend she goes back 3 stops on the 343 in the morning in order to board one going into town as it's so overloaded.

18 Nov 09. 8.10am at Peckham Road bus stop. 32 minutes passed. Eventually boarded a 12 , no 343's?

30 Nov 8.37 boarded Peckham Road. Several not allowed to board. Stopped people from boarding at all subsequent bus stops – left approx 15 at Southampton Way, left approx 15 at Sedgmore Place.

12 Dec 09 –Sat 8pm. Southampton Way 12 people all waiting 25+ minutes. Called TFL to query. Told of delays but couldn't tell me when the next bus was due as she does not have this info available (ie the countdown info). Lodged complaint over phone. Received standard practice letter – sorry for problems with service, etc.

2nd week of January 2010. Approx 8.30am – 343 at Southampton Way stop, seconds after the bus before it. Someone commented on how nice it was to get on a relatively empty bus just because the previous one had picked up large numbers. Driver took exception and shouted at – “I must not drive within sight of another bus. I must leave 3 or 4 stops between myself and the next bus”. He put on “ held to regulate service” announcement and sat for approx 2 minutes, then drove.

(Probably the safest bus journey I’ve been on for this route as driver slowly took corners and slowly drove to each stop)

27 Jan 10 – boarded 8.45am Peckham Road. Bus absolutely rammed. Driver helpless to stop people boarding, so many waiting so long. People sitting in package area on bus, standing all over stairs and upstairs. Bus swayed for entire journey to Elephant and Castle.

29 Jan 10 – boarded 8.35am Peckham Road. Approx 30 waiting to board on Southampton Way – approx 20 left standing. Sedgemore Place – 10+ waiting for pick up, unable to fit on bus. Bus completely overloaded.

4 Feb 10 – 8.40am boarded Peckham Road, personally - approx 6 minutes wait. Engines turned off on Southampton Way, approx 30 people waiting to board. Driver shouting – passengers shouting. Bus overloaded. Refused approx 20 passengers. Sedgmore Place – refused approx 10 passengers

22 Feb 8.25am Southampton Way - 38 people standing at the bus stop!!!! Turned around and walked up to Peckham Road, no sign of a 343 while walking, ie 6/7 minutes more. Ran and jumped on the 171, so didn't see the countdown.

Appendix 2 – loading observations, February 2010

Tuesday 9th February 2010

Route 343 - Southampton Way Estate (stop D)

Weather: cold, dry

Arrived at stop: 07:48

Buses observed					
Time	Number of passengers boarded	Number of buggies boarded	Estimated load on departure	Number of passengers left behind	Notes
07:51	15		50%		
08:01	23		75%		
08:01	1		25%		
08:10	30		FULL	1	
08:16	14		75%		
08:19	11		50%		
08:31	24		75%		
08:39	12		75%		
08:43	5		75%		
08:52	15		75%		
08:56	6	1	25%		Bus arrived 08:52, waited for time
09:04	4		75%		
	Total		Average		
all	160		65%		
08:00-08:59	141		65%		

(Estimated load % rounded to the nearest 25%)



08:01 – more than 20 people board



08:09 – queue



08:10 – 30 people board one bus

Wednesday 10th February 2010
Route 343 - Wells Way, Cottage Green stop
 Weather: cold, one snow flurry otherwise dry

Arrived at stop: 07:47

Buses observed					
Time	Number of passengers boarded	Number of buggies boarded	Estimated load on departure	Number of passengers left behind	Notes
07:52	13		95%		
07:59	7		80%		
08:09	NONE		FULL	8	
08:10	10		50%		
08:22	5		80%		
08:22	0		70%		
08:36	3 (see note)		FULL	6	Front doors not opened. 3 passengers boarded through centre doors
08:52	6		FULL		
08:52	12		80%		
08:53	1		50%		
09:02	16		85%		
	Total		Average		
all	73		81%		
08:00-08:59	37		79%		

(Estimated load % rounded to the nearest 5%)



08:09 – bus passes full without stopping



08:36 – bus full, passengers left behind



08:50 – queue.
 People left behind at 08:36 are still waiting



08:52 – first of two buses arrives

Thursday 11th February 2010

Routes 63 and 363 - Sumner Road, St Georges Way stop

Weather: cold, dry

Arrived at stop: 07:42

Buses observed						
Time	Route	Number of passengers boarded	Number of buggies boarded	Estimated load on departure	Number of passengers left behind	Notes
07:42	63	4		40%		
07:43	363	0		20%		
07:52	63	7		FULL		
07:53	63	18		90%		
07:53	363	5		25%		
08:01	63	14		FULL		
08:01	63	15		90%		
08:12	363	7		FULL		
08:12	63	NONE		FULL		
08:14	363	10		FULL		
08:15	63	1		90%		
08:22	63	NONE		FULL		
08:23	363	12		80%		
08:24	63	4		75%		
08:27	63	9		FULL		
08:28	63	0		40%		
08:37	363	12		FULL		
08:38	63	6	1	FULL		
08:39	63	11		80%		
08:41	363	4		80%		
08:42	63	0		70%		
08:55	63	14		FULL	3	
08:57	63	10		95%		
09:00	63	5		80%		
09:05	363	7		70%		
09:05	63	4		50%		
09:07	363	3	1	25%		(double buggy)
09:08	63	1		15%		
09:17	63	22		FULL	3	
09:18	363	5		70%		
09:19	363	3		10%		
09:19	63	4		25%		
	Route	Total		Average		
all	both	217		73%		
	63	149		78%		
	363	68		62%		
08:00 to 08:59	both	129		89%		
	63	84		88%		
	363	45		92%		

(Estimated load % rounded to the nearest 5%)



07:52
crowds wanting to board



08:55
not everyone is going to
get on



09:17
again, not everyone is
going to get on