

Date: 22 October 2015

Item: Christmas Day Bus Services

This paper will be considered in public

1 Summary

- 1.1 Following a request from the Panel, this paper examines the options for running a bus service on Christmas Day. There has been no public transport on this day in London for many years. Forecast demand is based on a survey of around 4,000 individuals.
- 1.2 A paper is included on Part 2 of the agenda, which contains exempt supplementary information. The information is exempt by virtue of paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 in that it contains information relating to the business affairs of TfL. Any discussion of that exempt information must take place after the press and public have been excluded from this meeting.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 **The Panel is asked to note the results of this preliminary examination of the case for a bus service on Christmas Day and that further work would be necessary to establish a robust business case including a more detailed analysis of likely costs.**

3 Background

- 3.1 The bus network in London operates throughout the year except Christmas Day. Services finish at around midnight on Christmas Eve and start again at normal Sunday times on Boxing Day.
- 3.2 Other cities in England and Wales also have no or very limited services on Christmas day. Many of them also have very reduced service on Boxing Day whereas in London a full Sunday service operates. This has been built up from a much more limited service in recent years, responding to the growth in shopping and other activities. Patronage on Boxing Day is around 3.2 million passengers, or about 80 per cent of typical Sunday usage.
- 3.3 Internationally, a number of cities operate a Christmas Day service reflecting higher levels of activity generally in many of them. Twelve of the 14 members of the International Bus Benchmarking Group run either a Sunday service or a special schedule which includes New York, Paris and Barcelona.

4 A Christmas Day Bus Service

Potential Demand

- 4.1 Demand of the order of 1.2 million to 1.3 million passengers has been forecast, for a full Sunday service operated on Christmas Day. This is based on a telephone survey of 1,000 people in January 2015 and an online survey in August 2015 with 3,890 responses.

Potential passenger category	Forecast demand (Jan 2015 survey)	Forecast demand (Aug 2015 survey)
(a) in London, made journey and would use bus instead	0.5m	0.8m
(b) in London, didn't make journey but would use bus if available	0.7m	0.5m
Total	1.2m	1.3m

Figure 1: Forecast Christmas day demand.

- 4.2 Detailed trip profiling from the August 2015 survey shows visits to friends or relatives would dominate trips on Christmas Day (>60 per cent). The figure below compares stated trip purposes for Christmas Day with the rest of the year.

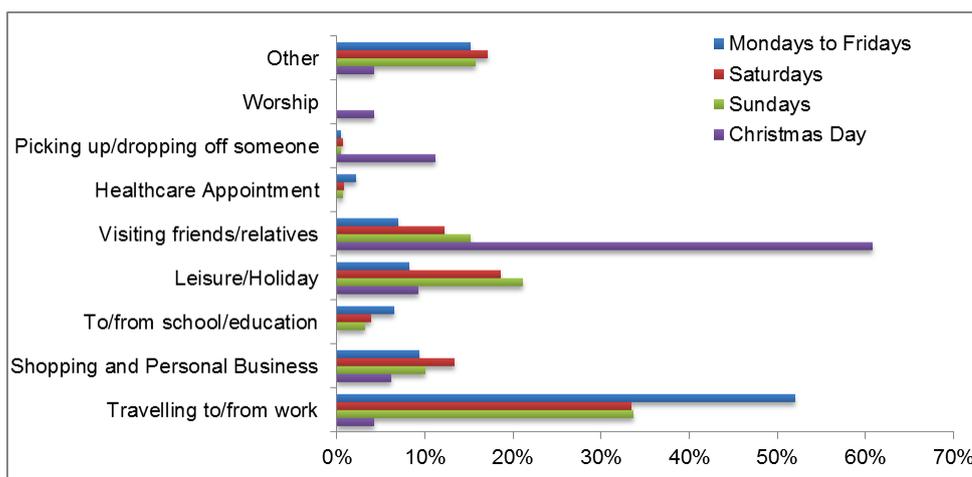


Figure 2: Forecast journey purpose on Christmas Day, compared to other days

Service Options

- 4.3 Three options for the size and scope of the network were selected for the current analysis:
- (a) Sunday Network – full network at Sunday service levels;
 - (b) Reduced Sunday – full network at lower frequencies than Sunday and
 - (c) Quarter Network – reduced network, operating around 25 per cent of routes compared to a Sunday.
- 4.4 In the Quarter Network option only a small proportion of routes would run, which may be difficult to publicise effectively. Estimated costs for each option presented above are presented in the paper on Part 2 of the agenda.

4.5 Benefit to net cost ratios are a standard means of evaluating bus service changes. Using cost estimates outlined in the paper on Part 2 of the agenda, and the demand forecasts above, the estimated benefit to net cost ratios of each option is shown below.

BENEFIT: NET COST RATIOS		Hours of operation		
		a. Full Day	b. 6am – Midnight	c. 9am – 9pm
Network Scope	1. Sunday Network	0.47 to 1	0.51 to 1	0.67 to 1
	2. Reduced Sunday	0.58 to 1	0.62 to 1	0.84 to 1
	3. Quarter Network	0.27 to 1	0.41 to 1	0.54 to 1

Figure 3: Benefit to net cost ratios of Christmas Day options

4.6 The standard requirement for investment is a benefit to net cost ratio of 2.0 to 1 or better¹. The estimated benefits would therefore fall short. Wider benefits of providing a service on Christmas day may however exist. Further work would therefore be necessary to establish a robust business case including a more detailed analysis of likely costs.

List of appendices to this paper:

A paper on Part 2 of the agenda contains exempt supplementary information.

List of Background Papers:

None

Contact Officer: Mike Weston, Director of Buses
 Number: 020 3054 0231
 Email: Mike.Weston@tfl.gov.uk

¹ Source TfL Business Service Planning Guidelines <http://content.tfl.gov.uk/bus-service-planning-guidelines.pdf>