

TfL Explains

David Goudge, Customer Service Adviser at TfL, explains the contentious issues concerning the buses and no-right-turn in an email to local residents.

Received 2/2/16.

Thank you once again for your email ... regarding the scheme for the Archway Gyratory. We at Transport for London (TfL) have noted your comments. Our planners have given consideration to your particular concerns, and I am pleased to convey their conclusions.

Please be assured that most careful study was given by our planners to the preferred routes through the area for each mode of transport. This includes the route that has been chosen for cyclists travelling to and from Highgate Hill (B519). I acknowledge that the planned route shall entail taking the two-way cycle route through what will otherwise be a pedestrian only area (the southern end of Highgate Hill, beside the entrance to the Underground station). However, please note that the cycle route will be demarcated, and that pedestrians will be able to cross the cycle route almost directly on their desired path between the Underground station and the bus-stops for northbound services.

I have noted your additional, various concerns over the proposal to close the pedestrian subway beneath Archway Road near to Despard Road, over the arrangements for terminating buses, and over the right turn from St. John's Way. Please allow me to address these matters in turn.

With regard to subways, while some people are happy to continue using them, a growing number of people feel unsafe and are concerned about anti-social or criminal behaviour. They would prefer a surface crossing. We are currently reviewing subways across our road network, and our planners have developed a programme for replacing many of them. The Archway scheme provides an opportunity to replace the subway at Despard Road with a signalised level crossing, and to introduce an off-carriageway cycle track.

The benefits of replacing subways with surface level crossings are wide ranging, and relate to accessibility, crime, and convenience. Subways can be inaccessible to disabled people, due either to the presence of steps, or to a combination of poor lighting, absence of handrails, length of ramps, or general lack of maintenance. Subways can cause pedestrian detours and lengthen journeys on foot. These factors can result in some pedestrians seeking other routes to cross, or can deter people from walking.

Additionally, the design of subways precludes any natural surveillance, and this can act as a precursor to crime problems or fear of crime. Both outcomes can in turn reduce the number of journeys on foot. Subways provide a point of shelter which can result in anti-social and / or criminal behaviour, as well as a point for collecting wind-

borne rubbish. Again, these factors make them unattractive to use.

The financial cost of replacement of a subway can be expensive, but it should be borne in mind that crossings can be cheaper and easier to maintain than subways.

We will replace the subway at Despard Road with a new signalised pedestrian crossing which will operate concurrently with the bus U-turn manoeuvre, maximising green man signal time for pedestrians. General traffic will be held on a red signal while both pedestrians and the bus U-turn receive a green signal.

The U-turn facility has been thoroughly assessed to make sure there is sufficient space for buses to perform a U-turn while ensuring the safety of pedestrians. A distance of 22 metres has been provided between the stop line from where buses will make the U-turn manoeuvre and the new pedestrian crossing.

Details of the subway proposal were included in the 2014 Archway consultation, and some respondents chose to comment on them:

https://consultations.tfl.gov.uk/betterjunctions/archway-junction/user_uploads/tfl-archway-consultation-report. *[Please note: this link is broken, as it is in the original email]*

In respect of the bus terminal proposals, please note that the closure of the south-western arm of the Gyratory (Lower Highgate Hill) and the associated road layout changes - including changing Vorley Road to become one-way clockwise - means that manoeuvres which are currently made would no longer be possible. Some buses could not access the bus stands on Vorley Road, while others would be required to access it by taking a much longer route, thus delaying journey times. The relocation of the bus stands is therefore intrinsically linked to the redevelopment of the Gyratory.

Relocation of the bus stands also supports the London Borough of Islington's aspiration to build affordable housing and community facilities on the council owned site.

As you are probably aware, currently seven bus routes (4, 17, 41, 143, 390, C11, and W5) terminate at Archway. All use a site on Vorley Road to stand vehicles. Due to the road layout changes it has been necessary to move these bus stands to the following on street locations:

On Archway Road:

- three routes (17, 143 and 390) would be accommodated on Archway Road northbound;
- three routes (4, C11 and W5) would be accommodated on Archway Road southbound;
- each stand would be 79 metres in length and provide space for up to six buses to stand.

On MacDonald Road:

- one route (41) would stand on MacDonald Road near the Leisure Centre, providing space for up to three buses to stand.

The number of buses at one time on each of the stands will vary, but up to six buses would be permitted to park on each stand at any given time. It is expected that around 50 buses will use the bus stands over a period of an hour, with approximately half the buses using the stand on the northbound side of Archway Road and the remainder using the southbound side to stand.

Alternative locations for the proposed bus stands on Archway Road have been investigated. It is not possible to locate the stand closer to the Underground station / island as there would not be enough space for standing the buses on the southbound side. It is also not possible to locate the bus stand closer to the bridge, as this would cause too much delay and too much empty running for buses.

The six bus routes that are proposed to stand on Archway Road would turn around by making a U-turn at a new set of traffic signals. General traffic will be held on a red signal while both pedestrians and the bus U-turn receive a green signal.

These traffic signals will be co-ordinated with the other traffic signals around the gyratory, so that buses would turn around at the appropriate time, enabling the traffic along Archway Road to move as smoothly as possible.

Bus lanes would continue to be provided on Archway Road alongside the bus stands in both directions.

Please note that no passengers will alight or board at the bus stands on Archway Road. The first and last bus stops for these terminating bus routes will be located at the bus stops near the Underground station. Once buses make their last stop and drop off all passengers, they will continue and shall stand empty at their designated bus stand with their engines turned off.

With regard to the prohibition of the right hand turn from St. John's Way southbound towards Highgate Hill or Archway Road northbound, our planners took into account the following considerations. They gave extensive investigation into allowing the right turn from St John's Way into Archway Road. Despite multiple calculations, the right turn could not be accommodated in the design without significant impact to all users, including substantial journey time increases for general traffic and buses on St. John's Way and Holloway Road. We anticipate this in itself may encourage motorists to look for alternative routes through local streets, creating traffic displacement. We have consequently restricted this movement.

The main issue with accommodating the right turn is a lack of space. In the present design it would encroach on northbound and southbound movements. All of the options investigated - including allowing the right turn only for buses - either do not meet acceptable design standards or impact the journey times and safety of multiple users including pedestrians, buses, and traffic. Designing a flexible layout has also been investigated, including options which do not take into account the space

constraints such as location of building lines and the boundary wall of the park. However, these still do not resolve the performance and safety impacts as a result of allowing the right turn.

The right turn from St John's Way is the lightest movement at the junction, with traffic counts showing that an average of just below two vehicles per minute currently make the right turn in the busiest morning peak hour and one vehicle per minute in the busiest evening peak hour. For comparison, the traffic flow on Archway Road in one direction (southbound) in the morning peak is approximately 14 vehicles per minute.

The majority of this traffic goes to Highgate Hill, although some goes to Archway Road. It is not possible to determine exactly how much of this traffic would re-route or use borough-controlled roads as alternative routes to Highgate Hill or Archway Road. These two vehicles per minute in the morning peak (or one in the evening peak) could choose from a number of routes: via Vorley Road, via Hazellville Road and Hornsey Lane, via Hornsey Road and Hornsey Lane or via Cressida Road. Each of the four routes is therefore likely to take a share of the two (or one) vehicles per minute. Alternatively, some of this traffic might choose routes further away, by-passing the area altogether.