

# Quicker bus journeys between Thamesmead and Bromley



## Proposals for a new express bus route SL3 Thamesmead and Bromley, part of the Superloop

Response to issues raised  
December 2023

# Consultation Summary

## Background

Between 21 July and 4 September 2023, we consulted on proposals for a new express stop bus service between Thamesmead and Bromley, called the SL3. This new service would be part of the Superloop, a network of express routes which would circle London and connect outer London town centres, hospitals, schools and transport hubs. The Superloop is a key part of the Mayor's commitment to improving the bus network in outer London.

We asked for feedback on whether the new Superloop service between Thamesmead and Bromley would be more convenient and make journeys quicker for customers. We also wanted to understand whether the stops we were proposing for the express service were the right ones.

We received 1,101 responses to the consultation; 1,091 from the public and 10 from stakeholder organisations.

## Response to issues commonly raised

We published the Consultation Report on 20 October 2023 which detailed who had responded to the consultation and what feedback we received.

Below are our responses to issues raised during the consultation. They have been grouped into themes.

## Proposals

Table 1 Response to issues raised on proposals

Number	Theme	Code	Issue	Response
1	Route suggestions	1.1	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Woolwich/Woolwich Station (for Elizabeth Line)	<p>Woolwich was a common request for the route to serve (see 1.14 below). This was partly related to the passenger attractions in Woolwich, such as the Elizabeth line, but also a view that it makes the Superloop more of a circle.</p> <p>Extending the SL3 to Woolwich would significantly increase operating costs and is not proposed at this time. However, the route will be kept under review and alternative routings can be considered again in future. Such reviews will also benefit from having direct experience of operating the proposed route.</p> <p>In the meantime, the SL3 will serve Abbey Wood station which is one stop on the Elizabeth line from Woolwich. From Woolwich the DLR will also provide connections to the SL2 at North Woolwich.</p>
		1.2	Suggestion to extend route to Petts Wood / Orpington / St Mary Cray	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route as well as take the service away from Chislehurst and make the route less direct. It is not intended to undertake these changes, but the route will be kept under regular review.
		1.3	Suggestion to reroute / route should start at Bromley South Station	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed. However, the route will be kept under review.
		1.4	Suggest a stop at Nuxley Road/Belvedere generally	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and is a more indirect route to Abbey Wood meaning slower journey times and higher operating costs. However, the route will be kept under review.
		1.5	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Erith / run via Belvedere	
		1.6	Suggest additional stop at Barnehurst Station / Barnehurst (general)	
		1.7	Suggest stop in Orpington/Orpington station	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route as well as take the service away from Chislehurst and make the route less direct. It is not intended to undertake these changes, but the route will be kept under regular review
		1.8	Suggestion to reroute / route should run via Knee Hill	This is a preferred routing for the SL3 but is currently considered unsuitable for bus operations. We will work with stakeholders to investigate whether highway changes can be made to make it suitable for buses in future. In the meantime, the SL3 will use New Road. New Road is considered preferable to other alternatives (see below) as it is the most direct routing.
		1.9	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Welling / Falconwood	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and mean Bexleyheath – a significant passenger destination – would no longer be served. Consequently, this suggestion has not been pursued.

		1.10	Suggest a cross-borough approach/ Superloop as single route/ much longer route	Making routes longer makes bus services more challenging to operate reliably. Our passengers regularly tell us that a reliable bus service is of very high importance to them. We are confident that the intended routing can be operated reliably and will regularly monitor service quality once introduced.
		1.11	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Bexley Village	<p>This was a common request. Following a route test, it was identified that the bus could not make a turning manoeuvre. Consequently, we will operate the route via Bexley Village southbound only but will not stop. This is because it remains our preference to route the SL3 via the Penhill Road alignment in both directions. This is because it is the most direct routing which will offer the most attractive journey time for passengers. This objective was very well received in the consultation feedback. We will work with stakeholders to investigate whether highway amendments can be made to allow the preferred routing in future. Therefore, we do not want to provide a stop in one direction only for what may only be a temporary period.</p> <p>In terms of the principle of routing via Bexley Village rather than Penhill Road, this was not preferred because it is considered slower and will therefore make the SL3 less attractive to future passengers. However, this can always be reviewed in future and with the benefit of operating experience.</p>
		1.12	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve the Queen Elizabeth Hospital	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.13	Suggest avoiding New Road	See 1.8
		1.14	Suggest route start and finish at Woolwich/Woolwich Ferry	See 1.1
		1.15	Suggest a stop at Abbey Wood station	The SL3 will serve Abbey Wood station
		1.16	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Shortlands Station	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.17	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Eltham	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and mean Bexleyheath – a significant passenger destination – would no longer be served. Consequently, this suggestion has not been pursued.
		1.18	Suggestion to reroute via Basildon Road / Bostall Hill	See 1.8
		1.19	Suggestion to extend route to end at Crayford	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and mean various passenger objectives e.g. Abbey Wood would no longer be served. Consequently, this suggestion has not been pursued.
		1.20	Suggest the route extends to connect with the tram in Beckenham	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.21	Suggestion for stops to be better spread along the route	The stops consulted on for the SL3 were broadly welcomed. We will of course keep the route under review to get the right balance between attractive journey times and ease of accessing the route.

	1.22	Suggestion to reroute via Ruxley Corner / North Cray Road	On balance we think it better for the route to provide access to the passenger destination of Sidcup rather than route to Bexleyheath via North Cray Road / Ruxley Corner.
	1.23	Suggestion to extend route to Princess Royal Hospital	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
	1.24	Suggest avoiding Penhill Road	A number of concerns were raised about traffic congestion on Penhill Road which would detract from the quality of the service. We think this routeing will nevertheless still be the most direct and therefore quickest for passengers. However, we will keep this under review. Following a route test, the SL3 will travel via Bexley Village southbound and not Penhill Road but it remains our aspiration to operate the route via Penhill Road in both directions if a highway solution can be found.
	1.25	Suggest the route should go via Mcleod road	See 1.8
	1.26	Suggest route should go to Charlton and Blackheath	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
	1.27	Suggest route should only stop at stations	The proposed stopping arrangements were broadly welcomed by respondents. These will be kept under review.
	1.28	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Footscray Lane via Cleeve Park School	This would mean not serving Sidcup which is considered a more significant passenger destination.
	1.29	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve Nuxley Village	See 1.4
	1.30	Suggestion to extend route to Dartford	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and mean various passenger objectives e.g. Abbey Wood would no longer be served. Consequently, this suggestion has not been pursued.
	1.31	Suggestion to reroute via Mottingham	This would represent a significant diversion from the original proposal and mean Bexleyheath – a significant passenger destination – would no longer be served. Consequently, this suggestion has not been pursued.
	1.32	Suggest route should pass through Bromley South and Bromley Common	See 1.3
	1.33	Suggest route serves Biggin Hill	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
	1.34	Suggest route stretches to Croydon	Route SL5 will provide onward connections from route SL3 to Croydon. It would be extremely challenging to operate reliably if operated as one route.
	1.35	Suggest route goes via Brampton Road	This would mean not serving Bexleyheath station which is considered a desirable passenger destination. It will serve the northern end of Brampton Road.
	1.36	Suggest an additional orbital routes	Noted
	1.37	Suggestion to route to schools during school hours	The route will serve a number of schools and can serve more by interchanging onto connecting bus routes.
	1.38	Suggestion to reroute / route should serve central Greenwich	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
	1.39	Suggest following the same route as the 269	The SL3 parallels much of the 269. Where it does not is because is where it is considered the SL3 can be more direct and therefore offer more attractive journey times to passengers.

		1.40	Suggest route to Canary Wharf	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.41	Suggest link between Eltham and Woolwich	See 1.1 and 1.17
		1.42	Suggest route connects local hospitals	The route will serve Queen Mary's hospital
		1.43	Suggest route follows Blendon Road	This is our preferred routing but will only be possible if highway amendments can be undertaken to allow buses to access Blendon Road.
		1.44	Suggest route serves Lesnes Abbey	The SL3 will stop around 10 minutes walk from the Abbey.
		1.45	Suggest route avoids Bexleyheath as it is already well served	Bexleyheath is a significant passenger destination and therefore considered appropriate to serve.
		1.46	Suggest route should extend past Bromley North	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.47	Suggest to reroute along Hurst road	See 1.11 and 1.24
		1.48	Suggest route starts/ends at Catford Bus Garage	This would significantly increase the operating cost of the route and is not proposed
		1.49	Suggest avoiding Brampton Road	The SL3 will serve Bexleyheath station (Pickford Lane rather than Brampton Road) but will serve the northern end of Brampton Road as the most direct route towards Abbey Wood station.
		1.50	Suggest avoiding A206	See 1.8
		1.51	Suggest avoiding Widmore Road	Widmore Road is considered a suitable road for the operation of the SL3
		1.52	Suggest additional stop at Crayford	See 1.19
		1.53	Suggestion to route to schools during school hours	See 1.37
2	Suggested additional stops		Suggest additional stop between Bexleyheath and Sidcup (e.g. Penhill Road)	<p>This was a common request with Bexley Village and Albany Park being the most common places for a stop to be provided.</p> <p>Due to the outcome of a route test, it has become necessary to re-route buses southbound via Bexley Village. However, it remains our aspiration to have the route operate via Penhill Road in both directions if highway amendments can be made to allow safe bus operations. Consequently, the initial routing will mean a large section of route between Bexleyheath and Sidcup buses will be operating in one direction only (meaning a bus stop would only provide limited access to the SL3) and potentially only temporarily.</p> <p>It is not intended to provide stops at this time although this can be reviewed in future with the benefit of operating experience and a better understanding of the likelihood of a future routing change.</p> <p>Of note is that a large number of respondents thought the proposed number of stops was about right with a not insignificant minority of respondents thinking their should be fewer.</p>
		2.1		
		2.2	Suggest additional stop at Bexleyheath Clock Tower	This would require the SL3 to operate via the east side of the

		town centre which is less direct (and therefore slower) than operating via the west side of the town centre. The Clock Tower and town centre will be accessible from the Bexleyheath Library stop.
2.3	Suggest additional stop at Bromley South Station	See 1.3
2.4	Suggest additional stop at / near Albany Park station	This was a common request. The nearest place to stop for Albany Park station would be at the eastern end of Faraday Avenue. This would be a sub-optimal interchange being 600 – 700m from the station and shops. Nor is it an especially accessible walk route or obvious to passengers that this stop serves Albany Park station. Consequently, it is not intended to stop here at this time, but this can always be re-considered in future with the benefit of operating experience.
2.5	Suggest additional stop at Blendon / Penhill Road	See 2.1
2.6	Suggest additional stop at Hurst Road	See 2.1
2.7	Suggest an additional stop in Welling/Welling station	See 1.9
2.8	Suggest additional stop at Blackfen	See 2.1
2.9	Suggest additional stop between Abbey Wood and Bexleyheath Station (e.g. Brampton Road)	There is a balance to be struck between journey time and the bus stopping for passengers. Overall, we are confident we have the balance about right and this was the broad view of the consultation feedback. Although it is not proposed to stop at this location, stopping arrangements will be kept under review.
2.10	Suggest additional stop at Woolwich Road	See 1.1
2.11	Suggest additional stop at Bexley Station	See 2.1
2.12	Suggest additional stop at Pickford Lane / Long Lane	See 2.9
2.13	Suggest additional stop at Plumstead Station	See 1.1
2.14	Suggest additional stop at Upton Road	See 2.9
2.15	Suggest additional stop at Townley Grammar School	See 2.9
2.16	Suggest additional stop at Bexleyheath (general)	See 2.2 & 2.9
2.17	Preference for more stops (unspecified)	See 2.9
2.18	Suggest additional stop at New Road	See 2.9 (& 1.8)
2.19	Suggest additional stop at Chislehurst School for Girls	See 2.9
2.20	Suggest additional stop at Arbuthnot Lane	See 2.9
2.21	Suggest additional stop at Plaistow Lane	See 2.9
2.22	Suggest additional stop at Thamesmead/ Thamesmead Football Club	See 2.9
2.23	Suggest an additional stop at King Harold's Way	See 2.9
2.24	Suggest stop at Bedonwell Road / Streamway	See 1.4 – 1.6
2.25	Suggest additional stop at Widmore Green	See 2.9
2.26	Suggest additional stop at Western Way Belmarsh Prison	See 1.1
2.27	Suggest additional stop at Danson Park	See 2.9 (& 2.1)
2.28	Suggest additional stop at Eltham Crematorium	See 1.9
2.29	Suggest additional stop at Bexleyheath Bus Garage	See 2.2
2.30	Suggest additional stop at Mayplace Road East	See 1.4 – 1.6
2.31	Suggest additional stop at Pinnacle North Road	See 2.2
2.32	Suggest additional stop at Farringtons School	See 2.9
2.33	Suggest an additional stop on Wickham Lane	See 1.9

		2.34	Suggest an additional stop on Carlyle Road, between Central Way and roundabout	The SL3 will serve this location
		2.35	Suggest an additional stop at Northumberland Heath	See 1.4 – 1.6
		2.36	Suggest additional stop between Chislehurst and A20 for school access	See 2.9
		2.37	Suggest additional stops at underground stations	There are no Underground stations in the vicinity of the SL3
		2.38	Suggest additional stop at corner of Avery Hill Road and Half Way Street	See 1.9
		2.39	Suggest additional stop at Joydens Wood	See 1.22
		2.40	Suggest additional stop at Dartford	See 1.30
		2.41	Suggest more stops (general)	See 2.9
		2.42	Suggest stop at Dryhill Road	See 2.24
		2.43	Suggest a stop at Widmore road	See 2.9
		2.44	Suggest additional stop along Bromley High Street	See 2.9
		2.45	Suggest additional stop at Hurstmere School	See 2.9
		2.46	Suggest additional stop at the Mall Elmfield Road	See 1.3
		2.47	Suggest additional stop at Bexley War Memorial / Bexley (general)	See 2.1
3	Removing stops / requests for fewer stops	3.1	Suggest removing stop at Lion Road	<p>We are confident that we have got the balance right between providing access to the SL3 by serving bus stops and providing attractive journey times by not stopping. This was broadly the feedback received from the consultation too.</p> <p>However, we will be able to keep the service under review and the option will remain open to adjusting stopping arrangements in future.</p> <p>Going forward we will work with stakeholders to identify whether highway amendments can be made to make the route even more direct. Should this become possible, this would also prompt a review of stopping arrangements.</p>
		3.2	Suggest removing stop at Chislehurst War Memorial	
		3.3	Suggest removing stop at Bexleyheath Library	
		3.4	Preference for fewer stops e.g. in Sidcup, Bexleyheath	
		3.5	Suggest removing stop at Widmore Road / Kentish Way	
		3.6	Suggest removing stop at Carlyle Road / Crossway	
		3.7	Preference for fewer stops (unspecified)	
		3.8	Suggest removing one of the three Bexleyheath stops (non-specific)	
		3.9	Suggest fewer stops	
		3.10	Suggest removing stop at Bexleyheath Station	
		3.11	Suggest removing stop at Florence Road	
		3.12	Suggest removing stop at Chislehurst Station	
4	Connections, frequency and journey times	4.1	Concern about connections to / interactions with other bus routes, e.g. B11	Noted
		4.2	Concern about reduction in frequency on other routes e.g. 229, 269, 301	There are no plans to reduce frequencies
		4.3	Suggestion to increase frequency / operating hours	We are confident that the high frequency being offered for much of the day will be sufficient to be both attractive to passengers and to meet peak demand. However this will kept under review. The route will operate from early in the morning to late at night 7 days a week. It is not proposed to convert the route to 24 hour at this point but this will be kept under review.
		4.4	Suggest link to other Superloop services e.g. SL2, SL5	Noted.
		4.5	Focus on improving / adding more local routes over long-distance express services	The bus network is kept under regular review
		4.6	Suggest the stops focus on key interchange locations (general)	Noted. Bus stopping arrangements will be kept under review.
		4.7	Suggest the route should connect the Elizabeth Line/Abbey Wood to Sidcup/Bexleyheath	The SL3 will meet this suggestion
		4.8	Concern about impact of reduction in frequency of certain buses e.g. will lead to overcrowding of other routes	The bus network is kept under regular review to ensure it is meeting passenger demand
		4.9	Suggestion to ensure Superloop routes have interchange e.g. SL3/5 at Bromley South/ North, SL2/3 crossing Thames	Interchange will be possible with the SL5. Interchange will not be possible with the SL2 due to the river but interchange can be made by using the Elizabeth line and the DLR.



		4.10	Suggest bus stops are paired opposite each other	Noted.
5	Existing buses / roads / infrastructure	5.1	Concern the route will increase traffic/congestion	As a component of wider transport policy, improving the bus provision can serve to reduce traffic and associated congestion.
		5.2	Concern about congestion delaying journeys / particular roads causing delays	We will work with stakeholders to investigate additional bus priority including the prospect of more direct routeings in future. Service performance will be monitored as with all our bus routes.
		5.3	Suggestion for dedicated bus lanes or bus priority measures	Noted
		5.4	Concern that buses are slow/ unreliable	See 5.2
		5.5	Concern about current lack of bus lanes	See 5.2
		5.6	Concern about poor design / layout/ cleanliness/ maintenance of existing buses	We work closely with operators and manufacturers to ensure buses are meeting passenger needs and are well turned out and maintained.
		5.7	Concern about existing bus infrastructure e.g bus stops	Noted.
		5.8	Suggest non-skid floors on buses for manual wheelchair users	Noted.
		5.9	Suggest that road conditions be improved before adding new routes	See 5.1
		5.10	Suggestion to improve bus stops safety	Noted
		5.11	Suggestion to widen roads to alleviate congestion	Noted
6	General suggestions	6.1	Suggestion for Superloop night buses	The route will operate from early in the morning to late at night 7 days a week. It is not proposed to convert the route to 24 hour at this point but this will be kept under review.
		6.2	Suggestion to use New Routemasters/ electric vehicles - improving design/ accessibility of buses	Noted
		6.3	Suggestion to create space for luggage on superloop buses	Noted
		6.4	Suggest unique bus branding/colours to reduce confusion	Superloop buses will have a different branding to the rest of the bus network
7	General concerns / opposition	7.1	Concern scheme provides no additional benefit / route already served well by buses	We are confident the SL3 will be an attractive offer to bus passengers
		7.2	Concern the route will not be used / lack of demand	We are confident the SL3 will be an attractive offer to bus passengers but demand will be monitored
		7.3	Suggest the scheme is a "waste of money"/ unnecessary	We think the SL3 will be an important and useful addition to the bus network that will help to meet many TfL policy objectives
		7.4	Concern that route/fewer stops discourages / disadvantages disabled users	Noted. See 2.9.
		7.5	Concern about pollution	As a component of wider transport policy, improving the bus provision can serve to reduce pollution, especially from traffic. All buses will be ULEZ compliant and over time will be converted to zero emission at the tailpipe.
		7.6	Concern that time saving benefits are negligible	See 5.2
		7.7	Concern that scheme will lead to more antisocial behaviour	We do not anticipate this to be the case

## Quality of consultation

Table 2 Response to issues raised on the quality of the consultation

Number	Theme	Code	Issue	Response								
1	Survey	1.1	Concern the survey/questions restricts the comments/feedback people can offer	The consultation survey questions were designed to understand how respondents used our services now, would use the proposed express service in the future and asked for their thoughts on the proposals via a free text box. We do not consider there was any restriction as to how people commented, and this is reflected in the feedback we have received								
			1.2	Concern about difficulties with opening survey / account set up	Registration is now required to respond online to our consultations to enable us to notify people of the outcome of the project or provide an update and allow us to notify people about other projects that may be of interest to them. It also helps us to ensure that people adhere to our community guidelines, underpinning a safe, constructive environment for everyone using 'Have your say'. This includes optional questions about demographics so that we can understand whether a particular group who may be impacted by our proposals is not responding, or is responding with specific concerns we need to address.  While registration is required when someone is using the consultation portal to respond through the online questionnaire for the first time, as detailed above, it was also possible for responses to be submitted by email and post. A FREEPOST address was provided, and no postage charges applied. In addition, a telephone line was made available for people to talk to us in person.							
				1.3	Concern about quality / lack of maps in the survey	We provided links within the survey questions back to our proposals and to the maps.  We will however take this feedback on board to understand how we can improve our surveys and the experience of our customers.						
					1.4	Concern about accessibility of survey for people without access to technology/older people	We provide a phone service and an option to send out hardcopies of the survey and consultation material to take account of those who are digitally excluded					
						1.5	Concern that survey questions are too leading	See 1.1				
							1.6	Concern about wording of questions/assumptions made by questions	See 1.1			
								1.7	Concern about long / repetitive questions e.g. demographics, postcode	See 1.2		
									1.8	Suggestion to allow option for responding on behalf of someone else	Due to the need to register this can't be done online. People can email their response though so this would be an option.	
										1.9	Suggestion to have survey questions on different pages	Feedback noted for further internal discussion
											1.10	Suggestion to have a progress bar throughout survey
2	Information in consultation	2.1										Concern about the lack of information / detail (e.g. exact location of bus stops, frequency, timings)

				therefore could not share this information.
		2.2	Concern about typo(s) / error(s) in the consultation material	Consultation was proofread and checked. Thanks for your feedback on this
		2.3	Concern about poor planning / research	See 5.1
		2.4	Concern about lack of rationale in materials	We provided a background section on the consultation to explain the rationale
		2.5	Suggestion for consultation to be more interactive e.g. interactive maps for route	See 1.10
3	Promoting the consultation		Concern about lack of advertising to raise awareness of consultation / to the wider area	We want our consultations to be fully accessible to anyone that wants to take part. We publicised the consultation in a variety of digital and non-digital ways; this is outlined in the Consultation Report.
		3.1		
		3.2	Concern about lack of advertising of non-digital response methods	See 3.1
4	General comments about consultation		Concern that responses will not be listened to / undemocratic	When developing consultations, we follow best practice guidelines to ensure our activities are legally compliant, open, and honest.  We hold public consultations while our proposals are at a formative stage, and in advance of a final decision being made as to how we may proceed.  Through consultation we seek to listen to respondents and to understand the reasons why they may view proposals positively or negatively. The feedback we receive through consultation is used as part of our decision-making process.
		4.1		
		4.2	Concern that consultation specifically is a waste of money	See 4.1
		4.3	Would like to see the outcome of the consultation results	The report was published on 20 October 2023
		4.4	Unsatisfied with the quality of the consultation (general)	See 4.1
5	Other comments (non-consultation)	5.1	Suggest the scheme is a "waste of money" / "money making"	For our response to issues raised about the proposals please see the 'Proposals' section of this document.
		5.2	Concern about disruption to other routes	See 5.2
		5.3	Concern about safety	See 5.2