

SL7 Bus Specification	
Summary of approach	
Objectives:	The SL7 service is part of the recently launched 'Superloop' network, which aims to improve connections between outer London and transport hubs. The contract is due to be re-tendered in 2025 and therefore TfL are looking to inform the renewal of the SL7 service to ensure bus specifications meet customer needs. This research was commissioned to understand who and how the service is being used to help inform decision around future vehicles for this route.
Methodology:	5-minute face-to-face intercept interviews on the SL7, with surveys conducted on via tablet. Interviews took place across the entire route, and were conducted in shifts between 7am-1pm and 1pm-7pm.
Sample:	n = 252 Due to the nature of face-to-face interviews, demographic quotas were not set, however interviewees were asked to speak to a broad range of people
Fieldwork Dates:	18th to 22nd December, 2023
Summary	
Overall summary: The SL7 route offers a dual purpose for customers, servicing holiday makers and commuters.	
Whilst customers show a clear preference for a double-decker style bus, there is a desire to better utilise the space aboard the SL7, however there isn't a one size fits all approach. Some desire grouped seats, whilst others prefer individual seats or tube-style seats – reflecting the diverse customer base using this service.	
Most customers aren't using luggage racks for luggage storage, however there is significant appetite for this to be improved, suggesting that space on the racks may be limited or barriers to use may exist. Many are travelling with luggage, but this is not limited to just suitcases and so consideration needs to be given towards how to offer accessible luggage racks for a range of luggage types. Despite a large number of customers travelling with luggage, there is still an overwhelming preference for a double-decker style bus.	
Access to travel information is important to customers, especially given that many are catching flights from Heathrow or travelling to their workplace, making that customers see travel timing as key information alongside knowing about disruptions both at Heathrow and on other modes of transport, and information about other modes of transport available.	
Travel behaviour: Customers are using the SL7 for a variety of purposes; the largest proportion are commuting or travelling for work within the UK (58%), whilst almost a quarter are using the SL7 for leisure (24%) but this is predominantly made up of going on or returning from holiday (22%) and visiting friends/family (14%).	
Heathrow Airport is a key destination for the route, with 53% of those interviewed travelling to/from Heathrow. Those travelling to and from Heathrow are accessing flights (24%) but 29% are going to and from Heathrow for other reasons.	
Bus specification: The majority of customers are travelling on their own (80%), and when travelling with other people it is most likely to be with 1 other person (15%) or 2-3 other people at most (5%). Those travelling for Leisure are more likely to be travelling with others (57%) than those travelling for non-leisure purposes (9%).	
Customers are often travelling on the SL7 with luggage, with 42% travelling on the SL7 with some form of luggage, particularly those travelling for leisure purposes (93%), who are significantly more likely to be travelling with larger suitcases which cannot be taken as cabin baggage (10% vs 2% travelling for non-leisure purposes). Luggage is most likely to be a small backpack/bag/handbag (21%) or a small suitcase (21%). Given the smaller nature to luggage carried on the SL7, few are using designated luggage spaces to store this; most customers keep their luggage close to them, with 45% keeping it on their lap, and 36% keeping it on the floor beneath their feet. Most of those travelling with suitcases are likely to keep it in the aisle (23%) or in the designated wheelchair/pushchair space (16%), with few actually using the designated luggage rack (9%).	
There is a clear preference for double-decker buses amongst customers interviewed on the SL7 (95%), with few choosing a bendy-bus (4%) or single-decker bus (1%) over this option. Preference for a double-decker bus is reflected in general seating habits, with a mixture of preference amongst customers for sitting downstairs (40%) and upstairs (28%). Most also prefer to sit whilst on the service (55%), with females more likely to prefer this (72% compared to 47% for males) as well as those travelling with others (73% vs 51% for those travelling alone). For those who do have a preferred area of the bus to sit or stand, most choose that area due to habit with 28% saying 'it is where they usually sit/stand' or for ease, with 19% saying 'it is easier to get on/off' and 15% selecting that it's 'easier to find a seat'. Few choose a specific location to be near their luggage (9%) or to be in one of the priority seats (1%).	
When it comes to seating options, a mixture of seating formats will help best meet the needs of different customer groups. There is clear interest in groups of 4 seats facing each other (25%) particularly amongst those travelling with others (35% vs 2% for those travelling alone). 1 in 5 also have interest in pairs of 2 seats facing each other (18%) and single seats not next to anyone else (19%). There is some interest in seats running sideways along the bus (16%), with significantly strong interest in this option amongst those travelling with suitcases (26% vs 13% for those travelling without luggage).	
Additional features: Desire for additional features largely revolves around improved seating, with 71% desiring 'more comfortable seating' and 43% looking for 'more seats'. Despite lack of usage of luggage racks, 43% would like 'improvements to luggage racks', potentially to help increase usability given that few are currently using the luggage racks for storage. 'Wireless charging points' and 'live travel information' are ways to further boost the experience of customers with 26% and 59% selecting these as something they would like on the SL7 respectively, however few show interest in 'rear doors' (12%).	
Travel information: There is a clear desire for greater travel information on the SL7; this should be focussed around 2 key areas. The first is information about other travel routes with 92% of customers expressing interest in this information, with this more specifically relating to 'any major disruptions or important travel information at Heathrow' (60%), 'what other modes of public transport available to connect to at the next stop' (54%), and 'travel information on other modes of public transport, eg. Tube, rail' (53%). A second area of information is also desired around information about the route (87%); the majority expressed interest in information on 'estimated journey time to next stop' (60%) and 'a live tracker of where we are on the route' (59%).	