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11<sup>th</sup> March 2024

Thank you for your letter following the Plenary meeting on 8 February, regarding bus services between Chingford and Waltham Abbey.

Buses are the most cost effective, accessible and available form of public transport in London, providing an easy and affordable way to travel around the city, and 95 per cent of Londoners live within 400 metres of a bus stop. We work hard to ensure that our bus network runs successfully, including ensuring that it is both resource and cost effective.

As London's transport authority, our priority is providing a comprehensive and reliable bus service across the whole of London, allocating services to areas based on customer demand with the resources we have. There are currently nine bus routes operating under contract to TfL between Greater London and Waltham Cross, Loughton or Debden for onward travel in Essex. These complement the public transport services outside London that are provided by commercial bus operators and local councils.

As you are aware, Chingford and Waltham Abbey were historically served by the 505 bus route that operated on a commercial basis between Harlow and Chingford. Due to inadequate passenger demand, the route was withdrawn by its operator, Arriva, in 2015. The Harlow to Waltham Abbey section of the route was taken over by a new operator, Trusty Bus, and this continues to operate at a reduced service, no longer running through Chingford.

We extended route 215 in 2017 from Yardley Lane Estate to Lee Valley Campsite all year, which connects to the southern end of Sewardstone Road, to better serve those in and around the London Borough of Waltham Forest. We have, on multiple occasions, investigated the potential to extend the route further north outside of Greater London, a three mile extension each way to Waltham Abbey. Our analysis shows that passenger usage would be relatively low, insufficient to justify the additional operating cost of £765,000 per annum at current frequencies.

This is because it would pass within 400 metres of just 3,200 additional residents, compared to 43,000 for the 215's current route which generates 3,000 trips per day. In order to justify this extension, we would need an additional 1,200 daily trips, highly unlikely given the relatively low population density between Lea Valley Campsite and Waltham Abbey. We have no plans therefore for an extension of this route, or the return of a route like the 505, to Waltham Abbey.

Additionally, it would be the responsibility of Essex County Council, as the transport authority for Waltham Abbey, to secure any new non-commercial services in the area which is wholly outside Greater London.

We understand the concerns raised by residents that travel between Chingford and Waltham Abbey requires an interchange for example between route 313 and route 279 or a train, but I hope that this information assures you and that our bus network planning is both logical and effective. We are committed to continually reviewing the bus network to ensure they are providing the best overall service to the community, within our limited budget.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andy Lord', with a stylized flourish at the end.

**Andy Lord**