

MAYOR OF LONDON

Emma Best AM

C/o Nikoleta.Kemp@london.gov.uk

Our ref: MGLA120224-6403

Date: 26 July 2024

Dear Emma,

Thank you for the petition on transport services in the Waltham Abbey area. I am sorry for the delay in responding.

I am committed to enhancing the bus network across London, and Transport for London (TfL) has ambitious growth plans for bus connections in outer London. The Superloop network is adding more than six million bus kilometres each year to outer London's bus network. Across the whole network, TfL is aiming for seven million more bus kilometres a year across London in 2024/25 and four per cent growth in the outer London network over the business plan period. Following my re-election as Mayor of London and building on the successes of Superloop, TfL is also looking at options for Superloop 2 to enhance the network in outer London further.

I am also committed to ensuring that buses remain the most cost-effective, accessible and available form of public transport in London, providing an easy and affordable way to travel around the city. Over 96 per cent of Londoners live within 400 metres of a bus stop. In 2016, I introduced the 'Hopper' fare, which offers unlimited bus and tram travel within an hour for the price of a single fare, making bus travel even more affordable to Londoners. I know TfL prioritises providing a comprehensive and reliable bus service across the whole of London.

Chingford and Waltham Abbey were historically served by the route 505 bus, which operated on a private-sector commercial basis, rather than being run by TfL, between Harlow and Chingford. Due to low passenger demand, the route was withdrawn by its operator, Arriva, in 2015.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.

TfL 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.

On multiple occasions, TfL has investigated the potential to extend the route further north outside of Greater London, a three-mile extension each way to Waltham Abbey. Analysis shows that passenger usage would be relatively low, and 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.

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To justify this extension financially, TfL would need an additional 1,200 daily trips, which is presently unlikely given the relatively low population density between Lea Valley Campsite and Waltham Abbey. I understand TfL has no plans, therefore, for an extension of this route, or the return of a route like the 505 to Waltham Abbey.

Any new services that sit wholly outside of Greater London would be the responsibility of Essex County Council, the transport authority for Waltham Abbey. This would apply to services between Waltham Abbey and Loughton tube station and between Waltham Abbey and Enfield.

I understand residents' concerns that travelling between Chingford and Waltham Abbey requires an interchange, for example, between route 313 and route 279 or a train, and I want to assure you that TfL keeps the network under continuous review to ensure that it provides the connections that Londoners need.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Sadiq Khan', with a small '2' written below the 'h'.

Sadiq Khan
Mayor of London