

# MAYOR OF LONDON

Email: [julia.lopez.mp@parliament.uk](mailto:julia.lopez.mp@parliament.uk)

**Date:** 21 August 2024

Dear Julia,

Thank you for taking the time to write to the Mayor regarding route 347. As Deputy Mayor for Transport, I have been asked to reply on his behalf.

I can confirm that a decision was made on 14 August 2024 by the Directors of London Bus Services Ltd (LBSL) to withdraw route 347 from service as proposed in Transport for London's (TfL) consultation 'Harold Wood and Upminster – proposed changes to bus routes 346, 347 and 497.'

As you know, route 347 runs from Romford to Ockendon via Harold Wood and Upminster four times per day in each direction, Monday to Saturdays. On 9 March 2024, TfL extended the service of route 346 between Harold Wood and Upminster, increasing the frequency to 50 services per day on this corridor.

I appreciate the time you have taken to collect feedback from your constituents throughout the consultation process and beyond to ensure their views were considered during this decision-making process. I understand that the additional feedback you provided following notice from TfL's Government Relations team of the proposed decision was of a similar nature to that collected during the consultation process, and I want to assure you that these views have been considered during this process.

TfL is committed to delivering a comprehensive and fit-for-purpose bus network to all Londoners. Of the 33 London boroughs, the London Borough of Havering ranks eleventh for bus service kilometres per capita, and sixth amongst outer London boroughs. Since 2019, service volume in the London Borough of Havering has risen by three per cent. This includes improvements made with the introduction from 9 March 2024 of a Sunday service and the increase in frequency of the evening service for route 346.

# MAYOR OF LONDON

The impact of the removal of route 347 on residents, including those on the Cathedral Estate and those who live between Winchester Avenue and Fen Lane, was well considered. Our latest survey data undertaken in April 2024 recorded 90 daily trips on the route, compared with 127 trips in April 2023 and 192 trips in March 2018. Of those 90 trips, all but 21 have a direct alternative bus route from the same stop or a short walking distance. Of the remaining 21 trips, 19 of these travel to and from the Cathedral Estate and the two others use the bus stops that serve the eastern end of St Mary's Lane and Clay Tye Road. Impacted residents of the Cathedral Estate will be within 600m of stops on Front Lane which are served by the 346. Route 248 can also be accessed if customers travel to a bus stop a short distance further. For the other two trips, Clay Tye Road will continue to be served by route 269 which is operated on behalf of Essex County Council in partnership with Thurrock Council. Route 269 connects these customers with Brentwood, Ockendon and Grays. Upminster and Romford can always be accessed using this service via an interchange with route 370, which is set to see an increase in its frequency.

Retaining route 347 as it currently operates would require a subsidy of equivalent to £10 per trip compared to an average subsidy of 39p across the TfL bus network. These alternative travel options, therefore, provide a balance between ensuring an accessible route for those travelling to and from these locations and delivering a cost-effective transport network.

TfL runs robust and legally compliant consultations using a variety of promotional and marketing channels to reach out to and raise awareness of our consultations with communities, residents and stakeholders likely to be impacted by the proposals. Consultation with the public and stakeholders is an essential part of its decision-making process which helps TfL in the development of its transport policies, projects and schemes. The 'Harold Wood and Upminster – proposed changes to bus routes 346, 347 and 497' consultation which was open between 6 March 2023 and 16 April 2023 and received 869 responses. Following this, a consultation report was published on 10 January 2024. As detailed in the report, as part of the consultation process, TfL carried out extensive communication with the public and other stakeholders via 115,483 emails, publicity posters at 150 bus stops, a postal delivery of 14,500 leaflets with a further 800 leaflets handed out at Harold Wood rail station.

A variety of detailed feedback was received, and this was published as part of the consultation report along with TfL's Response to the Issues Raised (RTIR). The report stated that a decision had yet to be reached on the future of route 347, and that the route would continue to operate until further notice while it remained under review. The report's RTIR section was an accurate reflection of this position. Following the review, and now that a decision about route 347 has been reached, an updated version of the report's RTIR section will be published to address remaining issues raised in relation to route 347.

# MAYOR OF LONDON

TfL recognises that London is constantly changing and keeps its bus network under continuous review, evolving it to ensure that services reflect changing usage and deliver value for money while providing a comprehensive and attractive network. Should developments like the proposed data centre, new homes and new hockey facilities progress in the future, TfL will consider the needs of customers looking to travel to and from these locations.

As outlined in the Mayor's manifesto, the Mayor is committed to delivering Superloop 2. The Mayor is working with TfL to identify timelines and will share updates with local stakeholders on the proposed scheme's progression when information becomes available.

Yours sincerely,



**Seb Dance**  
Deputy Mayor for Transport