

# Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM

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## **Central London bus services review**

I would like to respond to this consultation in my capacity as a Liberal Democrat Londonwide Assembly Member. Many of my comments are based on feedback I have received from councillors and members of the public in the last few weeks.

## **Publicity about the consultation**

In the last week a number of people have contacted me expressing the view that they have only recently heard about this consultation. Considering the significance of this review and the importance of bus travel to so many people I find it disappointing that the consultation has not been more actively publicised in the same manner as for example the consultation on the proposed extension of the Bakerloo Line.

## **Nature of review**

As with the London Assembly Transport Committee I believe this consultation falls short of a full and comprehensive review of bus services. While this consultation consists of widespread changes to bus routes, it does not allow Londoners to give views on how the network functions as a whole, or address levels of service in different parts of London.

A further concern I have about the overall review is that it is routed in overall policy of cutting London's bus mileage by seven per cent over the period of TfL's Business Plan. London's bus services should in fact be seeing an overall increase in bus mileage and if there were effective measures to tackle congestion, especially in central London, the demand for bus travel would also be increasing.

## **Outer London**

It is disappointing that TfL is not at the same time consulting on changes and possible planned growth in parts of Outer London. TfL's pledge that outer London bus capacity will be addressed in the next TfL Business Plan, due to be published in December, is not convincing. It is quite clear that TfL's next Business Plan will be at an advanced stage by the time this consultation ends, making it extremely difficult to see how TfL in practice will take Londoners' views on bus capacity into account.

## **Interchanges**

As someone who first championed a 1-hour bus ticket I fully accept that the Hopper ticket has made changing buses easier and more affordable for many people. However, we should not underestimate that changing buses can be challenging for some people, especially for older people and passengers with disabilities.

TfL's proposals for bus changes would be more acceptable if very clear guarantees were provided in relation to the following issues:

- The need to provide adequate shelter at bus stops
- The need to provide accurate, timely information – bus indicators must be provided at all stops where passengers are likely to be changing buses. TfL's current refusal to consider funding the provision of further countdown indicators needs to be revised.
- The need to limit walking distances between stops
- The need to ensure bus drivers inform passengers of how and where they should change buses for key destinations.

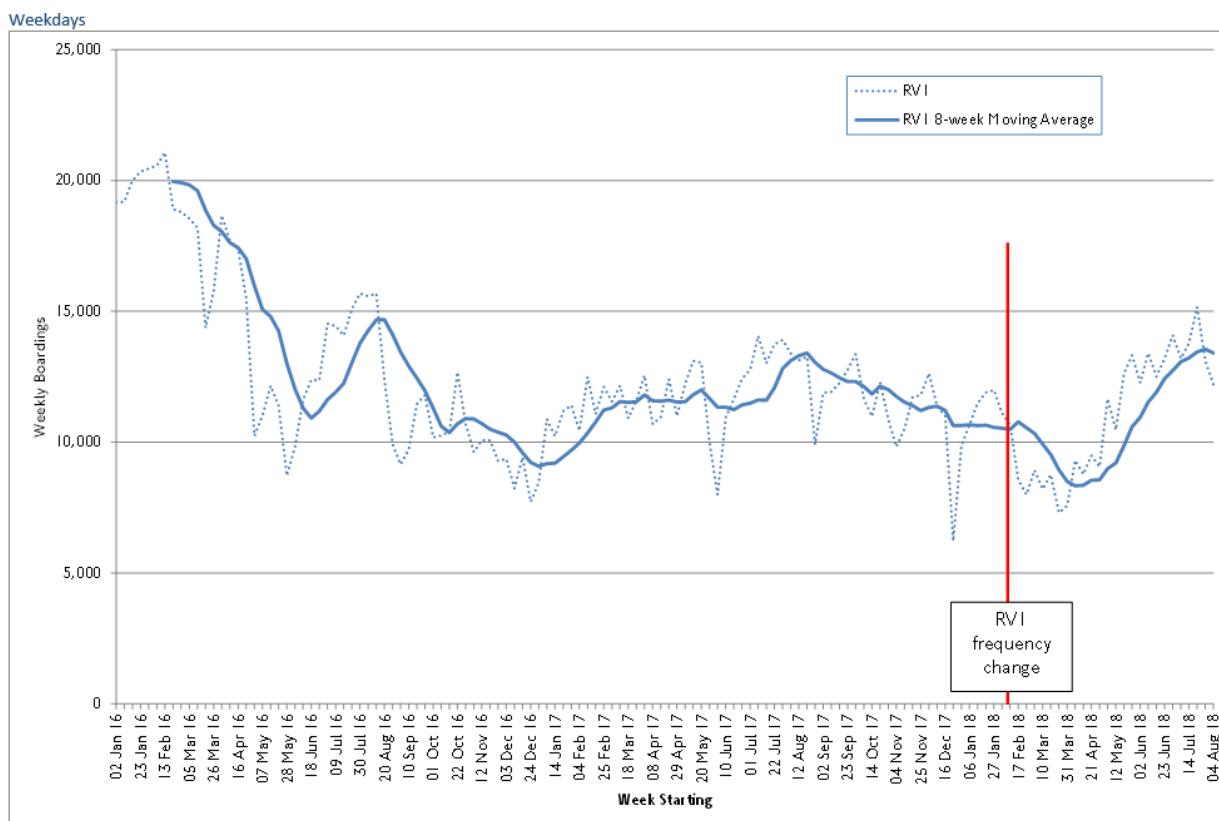
## **Specific bus routes**

I would like to comment on some specific changes.

### **RV1**

The previous 50 per cent reduction in this bus service in February 2018 was not consulted upon. It is highly disappointing that TfL is now bringing forward further proposals which do not involve any real engagement with the communities that this bus service serves.

While it is true that the RV1 bus service has seen some decline in usage, it should also be noted that there have been periods over the last decade when its usage has in fact increased. With road closures now no longer facing this bus route and with huge increases in housing expected in the Bankside area, there are in fact ample opportunities for usage to increase. Indeed it should be noted that the latest data that TfL have provided to me shows that there has in fact been an increase in bus usage in the last year, with bus usage during the week in particular seeing very strong growth over the Summer of this year.



It should also be noted that this is a bus service which could attract far greater usage from visitors and tourists to London, if it was marketed properly. If TfL devoted the same resources to marketing the RV1 as it does to the Emirates cable car the bus service would almost certainly see a significant increase in usage amongst tourists. I would more widely urge TfL to consider providing an App which enables tourists to decide which bus services are suitable for ensuring easy access to a number of London's most popular tourist attractions, enabling tourists to make much greater use of buses.

A further concern I have about the proposed changes to the RV1 is that I understand other nearby bus routes will not be served by zero emission buses. I believe the changes could in fact lead to some increases in air pollution.

#### 40 bus route

This is the only direct bus route between King's College Hospital and Guy's Hospital. These two hospitals are both part of King's Health Partners and the services of the hospitals are becoming more integrated. The transfer between both patients and staff is increasingly important, especially as trains no longer go direct from London Bridge to Denmark Hill.

I would urge special attention is given to these arguments and reconsideration given to the proposal to restructure the 40 bus route.

#### 48 bus route

I find the complete ending of this bus route very concerning and hard to justify as it would lead to the lost of an important north south link across the Thames.

Hackney has seen a range of frequency reductions across many routes over the year (42, 48, 106, 141, 236, 276, 279, 343 and Night Buses) along with the cutback of the 277 from Highbury to Dalston Junction.

I would highlight the consultation feedback that Hackney Council has already obtained on all the changes, which shows that many Hackney residents fear that less frequent buses will merely mean longer waiting times, missed meetings, and many people being late for work, or appointments at doctors or hospitals.

The disproportionate impact of TfL's proposed changes to bus routes to Hackney does need to be reconsidered.

### **271 night bus**

Withdrawing the night bus service from the main transport hub of Archway will cause great difficulties for passengers returning to Highgate Village. It will create difficulties for those working in Highgate Village to get down to Archway. I understand that there is large number of pubs in the village whose staff finish work after 11.45pm and who rely on bus services from the village to get home.

However if retaining the 271 night bus is ultimately not considered financially viable I would urge TfL to consider potentially cheaper alternatives:

Run the 210 as a night bus. As the 210 bus serves Golders Green and Finsbury Park tube stations TfL would be providing better connectivity to and from these busy stations.

Extend the 390 day and night service, so that it terminates at Highgate Village or East Finchley. This would connect with the orbital 102 bus service which again would improve bus connectivity at night.

I do hope careful consideration can be given to all of these issues raised in this consultation response.

Yours sincerely

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

**Caroline Pidgeon MBE AM**

Liberal Democrat Member of the London Assembly