

**For the attention of:** Transport for London including Commissioner Andy Byford and Director of Public Transport Service Planning Geoff Hobbs; Hertfordshire County Council and councillors; London Borough of Barnet and councillors; Mayor of London Sadiq Khan; Deputy Mayor of London for Transport Seb Dance; Rt Hon Oliver Dowden MP; Rt Hon Theresa Villiers MP; London Assembly Member for Barnet and Camden Anne Clarke

**Re:** re-establishing a bus service between Potters Bar and Barnet

Dear all,

We are writing to urge Transport for London and Hertfordshire County Council to work together to re-establish a bus route between Potters Bar and Barnet as a matter of urgency, and for our local MPs, London Assembly and Barnet council to continue efforts to bring this about. Since the removal of this vital bus link in April 2022, residents of Potters Bar, Hadley Highstone, High Barnet, New Barnet, South Mimms and London Colney have been severely negatively impacted. We have attached a large number of comments from affected individuals, and we would be grateful if you would read and consider all of these with a view to re-establishing a replacement route as soon as possible. Please also consider this letter alongside the petition <https://www.change.org/p/metro-line-bus-company-and-hertfordshire-council-to-ensure-they-don-t-axe-route-84-barnet-to-st-albans-bus-route> which has gained over 7600 signatures and many associated comments.

The comments we have collected are varied and highlight how severe the impact of the withdrawal of the bus route between Potters Bar and Barnet is. Recurring points include:

- Elderly, disabled and people with health conditions in particular unable to walk the very large distances required since the withdrawal of the previous route 84, and thus completely cut off from public transport for shopping, visiting family and other essential journeys.
- People are unable to access necessary patient appointments/visits and staff work at their local hospitals Barnet Hospital and Potters

Bar Community Hospital, the latter of which has no bus service at all now and where patients are referred to from Moorfields Eye Hospital.

- Children unable to get to and from school and college, or having very long and dangerous journeys there and back in the dark and being late.
- The impossibility or near impossibility of TfL's suggested 'alternative routes', especially for people with mobility problems who cannot manage the very difficult crossings between the suggested bus routes or the stairs at stations. The 'alternative routes' take up to two hours vs a previous journey of 20 minutes on the withdrawn 84.
- People in southern Potters Bar having no bus service at all within reasonable walking distance. People in Hadley Highstone, Hadley Green and northern High Barnet not having any regular bus service at all within reasonable walking distance, and no bus at all to their local station at High Barnet.
- People who cannot drive having to rely on expensive and unreliable taxis or lifts from family members, options that are by no means regularly available to the majority.
- Frustration and anger that at least six TfL bus routes run between Potters Bar bus Garage and Barnet via Hadley Highstone out-of-service for much of the day, yet not one route stops at the stops in-between. Thus people living in these areas have to suffer the congestion and pollution of these buses but receive none of the benefit.
- Metroline's claim that there was 'low demand' for their withdrawn 84 service being spurious because they provided an extremely unreliable service in the last years, and often waved people onto buses without making them pay or touch their passes.

With the planned expansion of the Ultra Low Emission Zone to include much of High Barnet and New Barnet from 2023, driving between Potters Bar and Barnet will be even less of an option than it already is (given the

many affected who cannot drive and the parking difficulties that already exist). Those Hadley Highstone/Hadley Green residents who are currently able to drive will as it stands also have no bus route and be forced to pay the charge to access their local station at High Barnet, which is not within walking distance. This shifts responsibility towards Transport for London to provide this vital bus link. We understand the Mayor of London has an ambition to provide a 'genuine alternative' to the car when making journeys at the edge of London to encourage modal shift, and wants to enhance and expand TfL's currently inconsistent provision of routes that cross the London boundary, in conjunction with ULEZ. Reinstating a route between Potters Bar and Barnet via Hadley Highstone should be a high priority in this regard.

We know that people's preference would be a reliable, frequent all-day Monday to Sunday route provided by TfL, but we are also aware that Hertfordshire County Council has recently been awarded £35 million in government funding to improve bus services. Therefore we are also asking TfL and Hertfordshire to work together and share responsibility for providing a bus service between Potters Bar and Barnet, if TfL is not willing to provide it alone. This works well for other cross-boundary routes, for example route 465 (Kingston-Dorking) where TfL contracts the service but also receives a financial contribution to the route from Surrey County Council. We see no reason that this cannot work equally well for a service between Barnet and Potters Bar. There are several options for a new route that we ask you to give serious and urgent consideration to:

- A completely new route running between Potters Bar and Barnet. The route should extend as far north in Potters Bar as possible including Church Road, going via Potters Bar station and at least all the way up to Furzefield Leisure Centre, as was the case with the withdrawn route 84. The route should coordinate at least some of the journeys with the new route 84 that is now running between Potters Bar and St Albans, to allow through travel that was possible on the old route 84. The route should stop at all stops on the A1000, including in Hadley Highstone on its way to High Barnet town centre and station.
- This new route then going via roads in Barnet that were removed from route 384 in 2020, to terminate for example at Cockfosters. As TfL is already aware, the community was firmly against the

diversion of the 384 and residents of these roads now have no bus service at all within reasonable walking distance. With the expansion of ULEZ, it is more important than ever that these residents also have a genuine alternative to cars or taxis, which people can ill afford in these times.

- The extension/adaptation of an existing TfL route to cover this journey: Route 383 (with an added Sunday service) could be extended to Potters Bar via Hadley Highstone and the A1000, and route 383 could also be diverted to serve some of the roads in Barnet removed from route 384. Two variations of route 234 could be created to combine frequencies on a shared section, e.g. Potters Bar-Barnet-Archway and Barnet-Highgate Village-Hampstead-Royal Free Hospital (Barnet Hospital and the Royal Free are now one trust, so people local to one often get referred to the other, but there is no direct bus between them). Other options to extend include: route 377 going via Cockfosters, the removed 384 roads and Hadley Highstone; adapting route 389 to be all-day service and run between Western Way and Potters Bar via Barnet, The Spires, with route 399 running separately; or extending route 326. TfL routes 234, 326 and 383 all previously ran between Barnet and Potters Bar over the years at one time or another in addition to the withdrawn route 84, but now there is no bus route at all covering this journey.
- A new semi-express service that would start at Potters Bar and serve all stops going south until Barnet Everyman Cinema, before continuing on a limited-stop basis via Finchley, Golders Green and central London. This would provide new links, support other TfL routes such as route 13, and encourage modal shift away from cars for journeys into central London.

We would also urge Transport for London and Hertfordshire County Council to hold and publicise a public meeting, where you can discuss with those affected how you are working together to reinstate a bus route between Potters Bar and Barnet, and collect feedback in developing your proposals. We look forward to receiving your response.

Yours sincerely,

Printed name

Signature

Address (if provided)