



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

Baroness Vere of Norbiton  
Parliamentary Under Secretary of State  
Department for Transport  
Great Minster House  
33 Horseferry Road  
LONDON  
SW1P 4DR

20 June 2022

Dear Baroness Vere

I'm writing to you on this occasion following a recent meeting I had with Cllr Mike Rouse, Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Highways and Transport on Worcestershire County Council.

As you will know, bus operators are facing significant challenges and as a result they are having to make tough decisions about the services they provide. This is happening here in Redditch.

A significant factor in all of this is passenger numbers. We may be emerging from the pandemic, but its impact on passenger confidence to travel on buses remains. Just 50% of concessionary pass holders in Worcestershire are using the buses compared to pre-pandemic levels.

As my constituents rightly expect, I'm working closely with Cllr Rouse, as well as local bus operators, to do everything I can to help.

I must add that local bus operators are grateful for the support they have received from Government, with one operator telling me this Government has supported the bus sector more than any other in the past 36 years.

Worcestershire County Council is doing everything it can to safeguard bus travel services across our County, and I thank Cllr Rouse for his hard-work and commitment to this mission.

Following my recent meeting with Cllr Rouse, there are a number of asks that I said I would put directly to you. The three asks are:

Launch a nationwide marketing campaign to promote bus travel and its benefits, and to consider gearing these campaigns towards more rural areas like Worcestershire rather than focusing them on urban areas where demand is already sufficient. This will help to undo some of the reduction in demand following the impact of the pandemic.

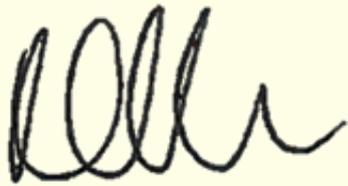
Implement a ticket sale or other similar measure to encourage people to try the bus for localised tourism opportunities, or simply to reduce the cost of bus travel at a time when people are facing a cost-of-living crisis. This has been done for train travel, but not for buses.

Remove restrictions for concessionary passholder travel so that they can be used before 09:30am during the working week. This will stimulate demand amongst the remaining 50% of passholders who are yet to return to travel on the buses.

I would also be keen to arrange a meeting with yourself and Cllr Rouse as soon as possible to discuss this situation further.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Kind regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rachel Maclean', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Rachel Maclean MP**