

SOUTHWARK COUNCIL

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

WEDNESDAY 13 JULY 2022

LATE QUESTION

1. QUESTION TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL FROM COUNCILLOR VICTOR CHAMBERLAIN

The bus cuts proposed by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, and Transport for London (TfL) will hit the poorest and most vulnerable first and hardest. At the most recent mayor's question time, the Mayor of London admitted the cuts would have "a serious impact for many Londoners, particularly the poorest ones," and at overview and scrutiny committee Councillor Rose admitted they would make Southwark less safe. After the consistent disregard shown to South London by the Mayor of London, will the council commit to holding public meetings across Southwark in order to ensure as many residents as possible understand the impact of the cuts and have their voices heard?

RESPONSE FROM THE CABINET MEMBER FOR PARKS, STREETS AND CLEAN AIR

It is vital to understand that the funding situation that TfL are in is a situation created by the Conservative government.

TfL is functionally experiencing the same situation that local authorities across the country have faced since 2010, when they were forced to make cuts to their services because successive Liberal Democrat and Conservative governments made deliberate decisions to actively underfund them.

We are working very closely with the Mayor of London and TfL to ensure the voices of our residents are heard, and that the impact of these cuts are mitigated, reduced and spread across the entire capital.

The reality is that Grant Shapps, the Secretary of State for Transport, is currently the person best placed to stop these cuts. That is where I would suggest councillors direct their criticism rather than attempting to score political points against Sadiq Khan and the Labour Party, as we demonstrate that we are the only party with a plan to rebuild this country after 12 years of damage done to it by the Liberal Democrats and your former coalition partners, the Conservatives.

Residents' voices are vital in making the case for keeping our bus services. So far our campaign has been led by residents, for residents. Residents understand very clearly the position the Government has forced upon London and the Mayor.

Thousands of people have signed a number of local petitions, including the Save Southwark Buses petition, either online or at one of many local stalls that councillors have provided in recent weeks. Southwark councillors have my sincere thanks in all the work they have done to raise awareness, engage with people on this and encourage participation in the TfL consultation. This engagement work continues for the remainder of the consultation process and beyond.

We have launched a very straightforward page on the council website to help residents understand the impact of the cuts in their local area. We are helping residents have their voice heard by encouraging them to take part in the TfL consultation, and we will of course look to engage as many residents as possible, including those who are not comfortable with using technology, to ensure that everyone is able to make their views known.