

Members Room



Councillor Linden Kemkaran
Leader of Kent County Council
County Hall
Maidstone
Kent
ME14 1XQ

Civic Offices
2 Watling Street
Bexleyheath
Kent DA6 7AT
020 8303 7777
www.bexley.gov.uk
Friday 12th June 2026

Dear Cllr Linden Kemkaran,

I am writing to you regarding reports that Kent County Council (KCC) decisions may affect Transport for London (TfL) services connecting the London Borough of Bexley to Darent Valley Hospital and the Bluewater Shopping Centre.

Following media reports and public discussions at Dartford Borough Council suggesting that the 96, 428 and 492 routes are under review, TfL has confirmed this is the case.

These services are at risk because KCC has requested a “significant” increase in the contribution that TfL pays to use the Fastrack busway between Darent Valley Hospital and Bluewater.

This situation is alarming. Thousands of Bexley residents receive treatment at Darent Valley Hospital and rely on TfL bus routes to travel to appointments or to visit sick family and friends.

Given the car parking pressures at the hospital, regular direct bus routes from Bexley are essential. Changing bus service in Dartford or elsewhere would add to patients’ and staff’s journey times. It would also mean paying two fares to complete the journey using bus services in Kent. No one wants to see sick and elderly residents stuck waiting on a bus or paying more to travel for medical treatment.

Safeguarding bus routes from Bexley to Kent supports the county’s economy. I do not need to remind you that many of the Bluewater Shopping Centre’s customers are Bexley residents, supporting jobs and businesses in Kent. These bus routes also help reduce the congestion caused by the shopping centre, which impacts Kent residents.

Bus services in London are heavily subsidised by the capital’s taxpayers. Kent makes no contribution to these services but benefits from them. I appreciate that Kent’s council taxpayers pay for the upkeep of the Fastrack busway, and it is right that TfL contributes towards it. But it mustn’t be so high as to make services unviable.

I urge you to consider these wider benefits and work constructively to secure the future of these bus routes, keeping Bexley and Dartford connected.

I have written separately to TfL to work with you on this matter to protect these routes.

I look forward to your reply.

Yours sincerely,

Cameron Smith
Deputy Leader of Bexley Council
Cabinet Member for Economic Growth and Infrastructure