



Councillor Aidan Williams
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cc: Bowdon Councillors

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Dear Mr Williams,

Bus services failing our rural community

We would like to request a meeting with relevant individuals at Trafford BC, TfGM and from the Bee Network, to discuss bus services to Dunham and Warburton.

Each of Dunham and Warburton parish councils have previously contacted TfGM, our ward Councillors, yourself as a Bee Network Committee representative for Trafford BC and the Mayor's office to request changes to the current bus services, but we have failed to receive a satisfactory response.

It is of course disappointing to learn that no additional funds will be available for expanding the current bus schedule until the Bee Network is fully established – however it is inexplicable that our request for ZERO COST changes, have been similarly dismissed.

We should like to discuss:

- 1) changing the scheduled times of the hourly 280 minibuses by approximately 30 mins such that it will be possible for Warburton and Dunham residents to get to Lymm via the CAT5, without having to wait the best part of an hour for a connection; and
- 2) changing the route of the 280 to loop around Warburton instead of Partington (as Partington is already serviced by both the CAT5 and the 247).

We are a rural community in Trafford, but despite paying the same Council tax, our public transport services are woefully inadequate compared with the urban provision within the same borough.

We welcome the Bee Network's pledged "*integrated transport network that is run in the interests of, and accountable to, our communities*" and hope that, once this is rolled out in Trafford, more usage data will be available to facilitate better planning. We also understand the complexity of being on the edge of Greater Manchester, abutting other borough councils with their own transport priorities.

One of our concerns is that, despite the improvements that the Bee Network should bring, the residents of Warburton and Dunham will continue to be at the whim of private enterprises such as Warrington's Own Buses. The CAT5 route has changed multiple times over the last few years and the timetable is not synchronized at all with the only TfGM bus available to our community – the 280 minibuses. By firstly adapting the 280 route and timings, and then in the future improving the frequency of our bus service, TfGM will help mitigate the route restrictions impacting the CAT5 and increase the useability of this service by ensuring workable connection times and ultimately additional availability outside peak hours and on a Sunday.

It is widely accepted that improving public transport increases the demand for it and that the consequential increase in passenger numbers will in turn have a positive impact on the environment; road safety and maintenance; the mental and physical health of individuals; and ultimately the economic success of the Bee Network itself.

As Andy Burnham has acknowledged:

- we need reliable public transport to get our workers to work and our children to school;
- we need it to ease congestion on the roads and to give back, to both enterprise and family life, precious time which is currently wasted;
- we need to combat isolation and loneliness by giving people the opportunity to engage in social activities;
- we need to acknowledge the impact on our planet's climate and air quality of too many cars and take positive steps to a greener future;

the list goes on, but in essence the buses are the backbone of the public transport system and for Dunham and Warburton, absolutely critical in ensuring our community is integrated with our surrounding towns.

It is not right for Dunham, Warburton and other rural communities in Greater Manchester to be disadvantaged because we are less densely populated, particularly when it is more likely that amenities are not within walking distance (or considering the lack of useable pavements, within safe walking distance). Rural residents need to travel in order to shop and attend health appointments; for work, study and leisure opportunities; and to be able to access the wider transport networks.

We should be grateful if you will agree to a meeting, to take place before the end of November, so we may engage in an open dialogue and find ways to resolve the current issues.

With thanks and kind regards

on behalf of Warburton Parish Council and Dunham Parish Council

Contacts

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