



INDEPENDENT ALLIANCE in KENT (IAK)

41 Maidstone Rd, Borough Green, Kent 01732 882880

Baroness Vere, Westminster

18 July 2022

KENT COUNTY COUNCIL BUS SUBSIDY CUTS

Dear Lady Vere

You are likely aware of the desperate situation facing Kent school children as a result of the withdrawal of 139 bus routes across the county. This is as a direct result of Kent County Council's (KCC) unjustified decision to cut its bus funding. The impact on Kent children's education cannot be exaggerated. In particular insufficient regard has been paid to those children who have passed the Kent Test and would, but for the reduction in bus funding, have been able to attend Grammar schools. This is particularly the case with girls education. I note your previous role, before joining government, in education

The West of Kent is the worst affected, with the withdrawal of multiple school bus routes, transport links to secondary schools in West Kent has been decimated by Kent County Councils decision

So many secondary schools are in excess of three miles, so little bus service provision has been forthcoming from KCC that I cannot see how KCC's school can meet its transport obligations under the Education Act. After email exchanges with David Brazier, KCC's Cabinet Member for Transport we are still yet to see any evidence of how it intends to meet these obligations.

It is also my understanding that when these subsidy cuts were put to Transport Committee Members and subsequently voted on, Members were deliberately not made fully aware of the potential impact on local communities. Indeed, at this point, the KCC Officers had not even begun to engage in discussions with bus operators, to understand the consequences of the decision.

I understand that KCC is to receive a bus improvement services grant to the tune of £35m. Given Kent's school children - who have been through enough disruption these last few years - are now paying a heavy price for KCC's poor fiscal planning and decision-making, I would question whether KCC's council leaders are fit to properly allocate such a sum. I would therefore urge you to suspend allocation of these funds until the bus chaos of KCC's making, has been demonstrably addressed.

The foregoing is clear evidence that Kent County Council are not a competent Local Transport Authority and I hereby invite you to reconsider the decision to award then £35 million pounds of Bus Service Improvement

Grants, until they can demonstrate that they are able to get a grip on the current chaos, which masquerades as a Local Bus Policy.

I look forward to your response,

Best wishes,

Cllrs Mike Taylor Tim Shaw Wendy Palmer Scott Millener Sue Butterfill
Independent Alliance (Kent)

