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Dear David

BUS PRIORITY MEASURES: TUNBRIDGE WELLS

Further to our conversation I find it very concerning that the Tunbridge Wells Joint Transport Board are giving consideration to withdrawing the southbound bus priority measure on the A26 in St John's Road outside our depot, and the northbound bus priority measure leading up to the A26/Speldhurst Road junction.

Bus services in Tunbridge Wells are financially fragile as we, and other operators, struggle in the face of high car ownership and severe traffic congestion in parts of the network.

Bus priority measures are most effective when implemented on a corridor and much has been achieved on the A26 between Tunbridge Wells and Tonbridge on what is an important transport corridor.

There are no other measures in Tunbridge Wells that attempt to assist public transport in providing a realistic alternative to the car. The current measures have, undoubtedly, improved the reliability of bus services although they are still affected on an unpredictable basis because the measures do not cover the whole length of the A26.

Most of the secondary level schools are on or very close to the A26 and these have a high flow of students travelling on buses. Ensuring these can be provided efficiently and reliably is instrumental in encouraging parents not to do the 'school run' thereby minimising peak period congestion on this very busy corridor. The planned trials of free student transport next year makes the current

measures even more important and, arguably, should create a desire to introduce further priorities to maximise the benefit.

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I sincerely hope the members will recognise that taking such a step is unnecessary and that a long term view of creating infrastructure that enables public transport to be perceived as a viable alternative to the car is what is needed.

Yours sincerely

Malcolm Spalding
Commercial Manager