

Merle Advertiser Oct 26th (St Albans and Marpenden)  
Letter to Editor

### \* Bus service reductions \*

I was very unhappy to discover that, from November 19, the 321 bus that I (and many of my neighbours) regularly use to travel into St Albans is being cut from every 20 minutes to every 30 minutes, with some gaps in the afternoon as long as 45 minutes.

Why is this being done? Is it because of falling passenger numbers? Is it because the bus company doesn't make enough profit?

No. It's being done because the grandees at County Hall have decided to have a new limited stop service to bolster-up the Heathrow express 724 (which can never run on time).

They are providing an extra bus per hour between Stevenage and Rickmansworth, and how are they managing this? By reducing the number of ordinary stopping buses.

This means that those 321 users who live near a bus stop that limited-stop buses do not observe (which is probably the majority) will have the same number of buses passing their stop but not so many of them will actually stop to pick people up.

In other words, the service is being speeded-up to try and attract people who currently do not use the bus service, at the expense of people who already do use it.

This malaise is obviously infectious because something similar is about to happen in the Barnet and Finchley areas, where the Mayor of London's new Superloop express services will cause a similar reduction in the number of ordinary buses which observe all stops.

However, seeing that it is London,

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\* even after the service reductions there will still be many more buses than there are on the 321! \*

While I applaud every effort to make buses more attractive to non-bus users, I do not see why this has to be to the detriment of existing bus users.

It is just one more indication that the people planning our public transport system do not use it themselves and have no sympathy for people who have difficulty walking further than their nearest bus stop.

In future, if I miss a 321, instead of waiting half an hour for the next one, I shall walk.

To be specific, I shall walk home and get the car out instead, and I don't think that is quite what the transport planners had in mind.

\*  
Simon Ayres  
St Albans