



Department
for Transport

Caroline Lucas MP
House of Commons
London
SW1A 0AA

From the Minister of State
and Minister for London
Jo Johnson MP

Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
SW1P 4DR

Tel: 0300 330 3000
E-Mail: jo.johnson@dft.gov.uk

Web site: www.gov.uk/dft

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Dear Caroline

Thank you for your email of 8 May to Chris Grayling, about Govia Thameslink Railway's (GTR's) rail replacement bus services from Gatwick Airport station over the May Day bank holiday weekend. I am replying as Minister responsible for rail.

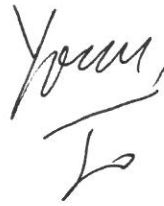
It may help if I begin by explaining that when there is planned engineering works on the rail network, the train operator must ensure that the alternative transport has sufficient capacity for the foreseeable levels of demand. The operator is also required to provide adequate publicity for the replacement transport.

In this instance, rail services between Gatwick Airport and Three Bridges were replaced by buses so that Network Rail could carry out infrastructure works on one of the busiest parts of the network. Network Rail often schedules infrastructure works for weekends and bank holidays as the rail network tends to be less busy at these times than on a normal weekday.

The hot weather experienced over the May Day bank holiday meant that there were more passengers trying to travel to the coast than GTR had prepared for meaning that queues built up of passengers waiting for the bus service.

I would like to reassure you that officials from the Department have raised this issue with GTR and have reiterated that the operator's replacement travel options in instances of planned disruption must be sufficient. We will continue to monitor this issue going forward.

Thank you again for your email and for passing on your concerns to us.
I hope this reply is helpful.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jo Johnson', with a stylized flourish at the end.

JO JOHNSON