



MP Ellie Reeves

Labour Member of Parliament for Lewisham West & Penge

We are very fortunate to have such fantastic local services in our area but sadly they have been impacted heavily by the pandemic. I have been doing everything possible to fight for them and ensure that high standards are maintained.

One of the biggest disruptions has been the cuts to our train services. During the first lockdown the 'loop line' between London Bridge and Victoria was cut and is yet to be restored. In November 2021 I met with key officials at Southern to urge them return our service back to normal.

They confirmed in the meeting that the plan was to reintroduce the service on the 4th January. However, this did not happen and in fact the East Croydon to London Bridge service has also been cut. This means that at the time of writing there are no weekday trains direct from Penge West and Anerley to London Bridge. This has caused huge and unacceptable disruption for many constituents, and I met with the train operator again in January to ask them to sort this out.

Southern informed me that staff absences caused by covid had led to the cuts in service. I have been assured that from 21st February there will be two trains an hour, seven days a week, at our stations to London Bridge. However, staff absence will need to fall below 12% before the loop line can be restored and is therefore likely to take longer. We rely on our transport links in SE20 and I will continue to do everything I can to ensure our service is restored to the level it was pre pandemic.

In better news, after a tireless campaign driven by our wonderful local community, in November the Mayor of London committed to funding the renovations for the 50m pool and diving pool at the Crystal Palace National Sport Centre.

These pools have been closed since March 2020, denying local swimmers their usual routine, and preventing the next generation of elite swimmers who use the pools for training. Young people at the fantastic Crystal Palace diving club have also been forced to travel miles out of London in order to train. Given the importance of the pools to our community I have been lobbying the Mayor for some time to commit the funding needed, so I am delighted by this news.

Finally, one of our services most impacted by the pandemic has been our schools. They have done a brilliant job over the past few years in incredibly challenging circumstances. But I know that many schools are currently having to teach with windows open in the bitter cold of the winter, so in Parliament I have been arguing for air purifiers to be made available for all schools.

I have been delighted that as we come out of the pandemic I have once again been able to visit the schools in our constituency. This is one part of my job I really missed during Covid restrictions, and I think it's incredibly important to be able meet with pupils and answer their questions about politics and Parliament. I have done lots of school visits over the past couple of months and look forward to doing more throughout the year.

So, whilst we have faced many challenges over the last few years, I will continue to fight for our public services and to ensure that our area continues to be a fantastic place to live and work.

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