

Community Engagement

Proposed TfL Superloop bus service SL12: Gants Hill to Rainham via Romford

Suggested alternative route
serving St George's Health and
Wellbeing Hub, Hornchurch

May 2025

Community engagement

Under Section 221 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, Healthwatch Havering has a statutory duty to ascertain the views of health and social care services and to make them known to the commissioners and providers of those services so that they can be taken into account in the development, commissioning and delivery of services.

We do this in a variety of ways, such as surveys, interviews and focus groups.

We also participate, with other Healthwatch organisations across North East London, in the Community Insights System, which gathers views and comments on health and social care from people across the area.

Intelligence gained from Community Insights is used directly in, or to inform, many of the surveys and other public engagement events that we carry out.

The results of our community engagement are shared with Havering Council, NHS North East London, NHS and other provider organisations and Healthwatch England.

Superloop bus route SL12

Suggested alternative route:

Romford to Rainham via Hornchurch

Proposed TfL Superloop bus service SL12:

Romford to Rainham via Hornchurch and St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub

Introduction

While the proposed Superloop service SL12 is very welcome, we are proposing an alternative route for the section between Roneo Corner and South End Road, to go via Hornchurch Town Centre and the newly opened St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub ("St George's Hub").

In association with providing a service to St George's Hub, we hope that it will be possible to provide bus stops nearer to it than any of the current stops listed above, especially given that many of the people attending St George's Hub as patients are of limited mobility.

The SL12 route

The route as proposed runs from Gants Hill, Ilford to Rainham in South Havering. It will run along the A12 Eastern Avenue from Gants Hill to North Street, Romford (passing King George Hospital, Goodmayes); thence to Romford Town Centre and Romford Station, then via Queen's Hospital to Roneo Corner, Hornchurch.

As originally proposed, it would then run via Upper Rainham Road and Elm Park Avenue to Elm Park Town Centre, thence along Rosewood Avenue and Mungo Park Road to the junction of South End Road and Cherry Tree Lane, before continuing to Rainham Town Centre, and finally to the Ferry Lane Industrial area.

Alternative route – Roneo Corner to South End Road

We propose an alternative route between Roneo Corner and South End Road. The principal objective of the alternative route is to provide a bus service linking:

- King George Hospital, Goodmayes
- Queen's Hospital, Romford and
- the Rainham/Beam Park area

with St George's Hub. Our route would also simplify connections for people from the eastern part of Havering (Upminster and Cranham) to the SL12 service and to St George's Hub in particular.

Our alternative route would run as follows:

- Queen's Hospital, Romford – Roneo Corner –
Hornchurch Road (passing Harrow Lodge Park and

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Leisure Centre) – Abbs Cross Lane (following the current service 365)

- Abbs Cross Lane – Hornchurch Town Centre (following the current service 165)
- Hornchurch Town Centre – Station Lane – Hornchurch Station – Suttons Lane – **St George's Hub** – Airfield Way – South End Road (following the current services 252/256)
- South End Road to Rainham (following the current services 165/365/372).

St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub

St George's Hub opened in late 2024 and provides a range of health and care services under one roof.

As well as a GP practice, there are outpatient and mental health services and convenient access to a range of health care professionals as well as faster access to blood tests, MRI, X-Ray, CT and ultrasound scans. It is also a major centre for kidney dialysis.

A wide range of voluntary sector organisations support the patients, residents and health professionals operating from St George's Hub, as well as a team of 100 volunteers weekly who "meet and greet" patients and visitors on arrival.


Including St George's Hub on the SL12 route will provide these people with easy public transport access to help continue their vital duties to our communities.

More services will be available in the future, including a new Community Diagnostic Centre, avoiding the need for extra visits to local hospitals. There is also a community café.

St George's Hub operates 7 days a week and is used by a wide-reaching range of individuals from our communities.

St George's Hub was deliberately provided with limited car parking facilities in the expectation that patients and staff would arrive and leave by public transport rather than car. The car park is now regularly full, and its use is restricted to four hours, which is not always convenient for those undergoing treatment.

Improved bus services would undoubtedly reduce the demand for car parking spaces and reduce patients' and staff anxiety that they would fall foul of the four-hour restriction.¹

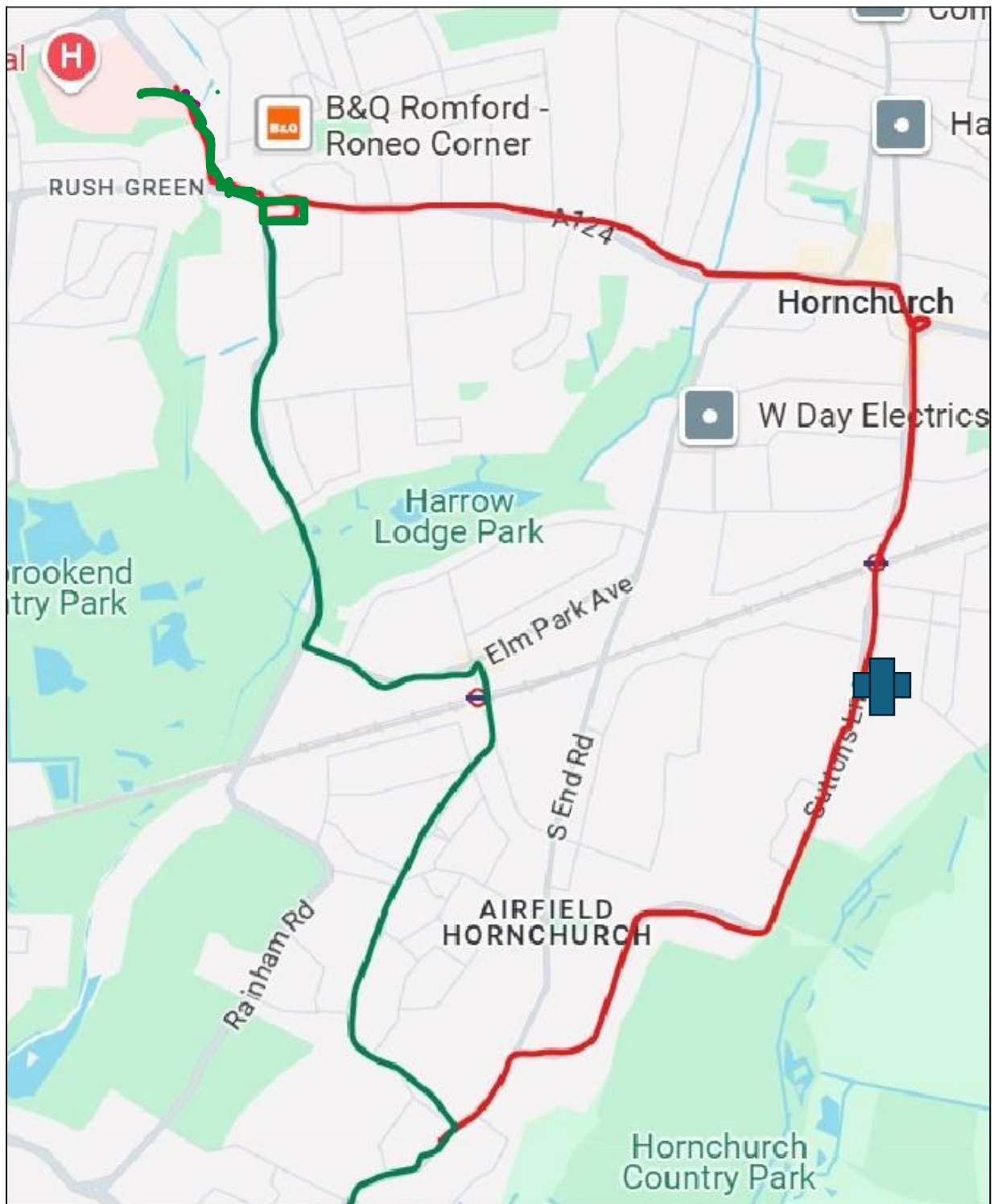
The map on the following page shows the currently proposed route (in green) and our alternative route (in red), with the location of the St George's Hub marked .

¹ The full planning reasoning for the restrictions on parking can be seen in Havering Council's report on the planning application at <https://democracy.havering.gov.uk/documents/s55959/SPC%20-%20HealthCare%20Wellbeing%20Hub%20P1039.21%20SJ2%20Final.pdf>, which accords with policies set by the Mayor of London.

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Map data © Google 2025

Bus services currently serving St George's Hub

Two current bus services serve St George's Hub directly:

- **252**, which runs from Collier Row to Hornchurch Town Centre via Romford Town Centre and Elm Park, and is a very circuitous route (the Elm Park portion of which would be followed by the currently proposed SL12 service), and
- **256**, which runs from Noak Hill/Harold Hill via Harold Wood and Hornchurch Town Centre to Miramar Way, near St George's Hub

Both services call at stops in Suttons Lane that are some distance from St George's Hub:

- Vaughan Avenue stop A (southbound) (252/256): c.140m distant
- Vaughan Avenue stop E (northbound) (252/256): c.160m distant
- St George's stop B (252 only): c.220m distant and
- Miramar Way stop C (252/256): c.410m distant

In every case, the distance from the bus stop to St George's Hub is inconvenient for people of restricted mobility.

Neither of these services provides bus links to Queen's Hospital, Romford (nor King George's Hospital, Goodmayes).

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Another bus service, **193**, passes near to St George's Hub but its nearest stop is in Vaughan Avenue, some 220m distant. The 193 goes to Queen's Hospital but by a circuitous route.

There is no bus route between St George's Hub and the Rainham and South Hornchurch areas (including the Beam Park major development area).

By contrast, the Elm Park area through which SL12 would be routed, is already served by bus services 165, 365 and 372, of which 165 and 365 also serve both Rainham and Romford (although the routes they follow are different); the 372 serves Rainham and terminates at Hornchurch Town Centre. Mungo Park Road can become congested at times, which would adversely affect the SL12 service's timekeeping. The alternative route is not, generally, congested; the main "pinch point" is a partially-pedestrianised area in Hornchurch Road between its junctions with Billet Lane and North Street, a distance of about 360 metres – but that is already used by existing buses without major difficulty.

Advantages of the alternative route

We consider that the advantages of the alternative route are that it would:

- 1 Serve Hornchurch Town Centre, a more populous area and major local town centre (when compared with Elm Park).

- 2 Serve Hornchurch Station rather than Elm Park Station (both served by District Line trains, and adjacent on that line).
Although fewer passengers use Hornchurch Station than Elm Park Station, the latter already has a better bus service. SL12 would improve public transport services for those travelling to and from Hornchurch Station by bus.

- 3 Serve the St George's Hub, a major health facility that serves a much wider area than its immediate locality with patients drawn from a wide area, including patients undergoing kidney dialysis.

The route as proposed would already serve King George Hospital, Goodmayes and Queen's Hospital, Romford, from both of which patients are likely to be referred to the St George's Hub; it is therefore logical that SL12 should also serve St George's Hub.

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- 4 Improve access to St George's Hub from the Rainham area (there is currently no direct bus route to it from Rainham). SL12 will pass the Beam Park major development area and thus provide a link between there and St George's Hub.
- 5 Provide a better service to Harrow Lodge Park and Leisure Centre, Hornchurch and Hornchurch Country Park. While the originally proposed route for SL12 passes both parks, our proposed route offers better access to them both (and the original route would not serve the Harrow Lodge Leisure Centre, to which people are directed for health and wellbeing activities).
- 6 By serving Hornchurch Town Centre, it will make it easier for residents from the eastern side of Havering, from Upminster and Cranham, to access St George's Hub as bus services from those areas run through the Town Centre on the way to Romford.
- 7 Reduce the use of cars by patients able to use a direct bus service to access St George's Hub, reducing unnecessary carbon emissions and supporting the move to public transport.

- 8 Support the objective of successive governments to bring care close to home.

The need for improved bus stop arrangements in Suttons Lane

Irrespective of whether the proposed alternative route for SL12 is accepted, there remains a need for improved bus stop arrangements in the vicinity of St George's Hub.

When granted planning permission, St George's Hub was deliberately provided with limited car parking facilities in the expectation that patients and staff attending there would arrive and leave by bus. As noted above, however, none of the current bus stops are near to it – the closest is 110 metres away and the furthest are 220 metres, distances which are difficult for people of limited mobility to negotiate – which entirely defeats the object of limiting the provision of limited car parking facilities at St George's Hub in favour of public transport.

There is, therefore, need for a bus stop in the immediate vicinity of St George's Hub.

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Support for this proposal

This proposal is supported by the following officials, organisations and groups:

Ms Julia Lopez, MP (Hornchurch & Upminster Parliamentary Constituency)

Councillor Gillian Ford, Deputy Leader of Havering Member and Cabinet Member for Adults and Wellbeing

Barking, Havering and Redbridge University Hospitals Trust (BHRUT) (the provider of services at King George Hospital, Queen's Hospital and St George's Hub)

Havering Integrated Care and Social Prescribing Network

Havering Integrated Patient Carer Experience Partnership

Havering Volunteer Centre

Healthwatch Redbridge

Hylands Tennis Club

Outer North East London Health Overview & Scrutiny Committee

St George's Health and Wellbeing Hub Management Board

We have also consulted patients and staff at St George's Hub during a visit there on 29 April 2025, all of whom supported our proposal.

What is Healthwatch Havering?

Healthwatch Havering is the local consumer champion for both health and social care in the London Borough of Havering. Our aim is to give local citizens and communities a stronger voice to influence and challenge how health and social care services are provided for all individuals locally.

We are an independent organisation, established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and employ our own staff and involve lay people/volunteers so that we can become the influential and effective voice of the public./

Healthwatch Havering is a Community Interest Company Limited by Guarantee, managed by three part-time directors, including the Chairman and the Company Secretary, supported by two part-time staff, and by volunteers, both from professional health and social care backgrounds and lay people who have an interest in health or social care issues.

Why is this important to you and your family and friends?

Healthwatch England is the national organisation which enables the collective views of the people who use NHS and social services to influence national policy, advice and guidance.

Healthwatch Havering is your voice, enabling you on behalf of yourself, your family and your friends to ensure views and concerns about the local health and social services are understood.

Your contribution is vital in helping to build a picture of where services are doing well and where they need to be improved. This will help and support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, NHS Services and contractors, and the Local Authority to make sure their services really are designed to meet citizens' needs.

*'You make a living by what you get,
but you make a life by what you give.'*

Winston Churchill

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Participation in Healthwatch Havering

Local people who have time to spare are welcome to join us as volunteers. We need both people who work in health or social care services, and those who are simply interested in getting the best possible health and social care services for the people of Havering.

Our aim is to develop wide, comprehensive and inclusive involvement in Healthwatch Havering, to allow every individual and organisation of the Havering Community to have a role and a voice at a level they feel appropriate to their personal circumstances.

Members

This is the key working role. For some, this role will provide an opportunity to help improve an area of health and social care where they, their families or friends have experienced problems or difficulties. Very often a life experience has encouraged people to think about giving something back to the local community or simply personal circumstances now allow individuals to have time to develop themselves. This role will enable people to extend their networks, and can help prepare for college, university or a change in the working life. There is no need for any prior experience in health or social care for this role.

The role provides the face-to-face contact with the community, listening, helping, signposting, providing advice. It also is part of ensuring the most isolated people within our community have a voice.

Healthwatch Havering Friends' Network

Join our Friends' Network for regular updates and other information about health and social care in Havering and North East London. It cost nothing to join and there is no ongoing commitment.

To find out more, visit our website at

<https://www.healthwatchhaverling.co.uk/advice-and-information/2022-06-06/our-friends-network-archive>

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Healthwatch Havering is the operating name of

Havering Healthwatch C.I.C

A community interest company limited by guarantee

Registered in England and Wales

No. 08416383

Registered Office:

Queen's Court, 9-17 Eastern Road, Romford RM1 3NH

Telephone: 01708 303300



Call us on 01708 303 300



email enquiries@healthwatchhavering.co.uk



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