

# MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIASION COMMITTEE

Thursday 4 October 2018 at 7pm

Present: Councillor Curran (Chair), Councillor Dacres

Apologies: Councillor Clarke, Councillor McGeevor

Also present: Councillor Hall, Simon Mouncey (TfL), Angeline Verrillo (Go Ahead), George Paterson (Southeastern), Larry Heyman (Thameslink), Phil Hutchinson (Head of Strategic Planning GTR), Syd Bolton (St John's Society), Michael Abrahams (Forest Hill Assembly), Geoffrey Thurley (The Ladywell Society)

## 1. Declarations of interest

No interests were declared

## 2. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting be amended to include concern expressed of lack of public transport provider representation at previous meetings.

## 3. Questions Regarding Rail Issues

The following responses were given to the questions provided:

- 3.1. *Response to Q1:* Southeastern can look to move the current smoking area away from the front entrance going, as long as it is a land that they own. Otherwise it would be the responsibility of Network Rail.
- 3.2. *Response to Q2:* St John's Station Car Park not a designated car park- although, on occasions it has been left open and used as a car park, it is actually a Network Rail access area. They have not, on occasion, been able to access the tracks for vital works because a car has been parked there, blocking their entrance, which is a major disruption. Network Rail will be ensuring that it is closed permanently.
- 3.3. There are no current update on planned maintenance programmes for St John's Station platform infrastructure. Regarding the pigeon prevention, work has started on the top of the buildings and will shortly begin in the pedestrian areas. The benches will be moved. Staff are also keeping on top of managing the area to prevent pigeons in that area. The public waiting room is currently not safe to reopen as the floor is

giving way and there is a huge construction work to be done on the platform underneath it- this will be capital expenditure work which will need approval before maintenance begins.

- 3.4. *Response to Q3:* there are no plans to open ticket offices outside current assigned hours. It is currently open at peak hours, based on passenger usage.
- 3.5. *Response to Q4:* the Access for All Scheme is a £300m scheme which the DfT is accepting bids for, so St John's can be included in that. Southeastern are encouraging people to advocate for their local station to receive some of the fund. The deadline is in November 2018.
- 3.6. *Response to Q5 and 8:* there were disruptions and stranding incidents in December 2017 and March 2018 have been addressed and identified as being caused by the same issue. Southeastern have published reports on these incidents. The reports were independently commissioned by Southeastern and Network Rail. The findings were that the providers made the decision to operate trains in the morning- the weather had escalated during the day. Because commuters had used services to come into London, providers committed to ensuring they could get back home in the evening. The conductor rail froze over and trains were unable to get power as the situation escalated rapidly. It was found that both Network Rail and Southeastern procedures need to be revised and as customers were receiving unacceptable conditions. Because of the reduced service, there were more commuters than the services could hold so trains were very crowded. Staff were unaware, initially, of the severity of the service and conditions. Communication can be managed more effectively in the future. In retrospect, the morning service should not have been run, so if there is a risk that trains cannot run in the evening, services will not run in the morning.

There will be an independent review of our command and control structures to prevent this from happening in the future. There will be bespoke training for operational staff including major incident scenario stimulations. They are exploring using ice-breaker machines in the future and examining engineering changes to extend the battery life of trains, as there was no power from the conductor rail so drivers were unable to make announcements, and packed carriages made it difficult for them to walk through the train to give passengers any information. Southeastern and NR will also be working with industry partners to improve communications among staff. Longer formations will be run in the event of a reduced service in such conditions.

- 3.7. *Response to Q6:* the trial at Lewisham station was initially on a bank holiday so the passenger numbers required for accurate testing were not

available. The next trial for the one way system will be 22 October for a week.

Brockley station also had a trial rerouting system on its platform which lasted 2 weeks. On day 2 of the trial there were suspended services unrelated to the trial, but caused some uproar. The results of the trial resulted in some suggestions to improve the service at Brockley station. The first suggestion was to move the coffee stall further down the platform. The second is to move the shelters back to create a wider platform and bigger shelters further down the platform so people are encouraged to wait there, as opposed to so close to the stairs of the platform. The decision was to not have rerouting at the station, but TfL are now looking at the cost of bigger shelters and discussing the lease with coffee vendors to consider the option of moving the stall.

- 3.8. *Response to Q7:* Submissions for Access for All can be made for Hither Green station and appears to be a very popular choice by submissions so far. The deadline is November 16th
- 3.9. *Response to Q9:* there are no plans for a zebra crossing but TfL will work with Lewisham to discuss issues and any possible plans going forward.
- 3.10. GTR attended the meeting to give an update on future timetable plans and performance. On Thameslink, in the last 4 week period the level of performance has increased- 84.6%. Regular routes of Thameslink and Southern achieve 90%, including the Catford Loop, and a 99% on metro routes since the complete change of the Southern timetable. Since 15 July, when the interim timetable was introduced, there have been no cancellations for any other reason other than disruptions, so they have been able to deliver certainty to customers. On 9 December the full May Monday-Friday timetable will be implemented. Thameslink are still training new drivers and are on track with their target.

Thameslink representatives offered an apology for the disruption and inconvenience customers experienced during the timetable change in May.

#### **4. Questions Regarding Bus Issues**

The following responses were given to the questions provided:

- 4.1. *Response to Q1:* the Central London Bus Review is an open consultation which has a closing date of 9 November 2018 for questions/comments to be submitted. Buses are a cause of congestion in central London, and are often running with little to no passengers on board- this issue is the

background cause for the review. Three bus routes affecting Lewisham are 53, 171 and 172. There will be a slight reduction in frequency and journey destinations will be changed to stop earlier. The £1.50 fare is inclusive of any number of buses within the hour. Should a bus truncate early or there are traffic delays then a passenger could possibly travel outside of that hour, so it is encouraged that this is submitted to the review as a concern. The way that TfL would handle such an issue would be to issue a refund rather than change the hopper system as this issue only effects 1% of passengers.

- 4.2. *Response to Q2:* the bus services have been redistributed- there was spread capacity on Brownhill Road and overcrowding on Sangley Road so the frequency of the services was switched to match demand.
- 4.3. *Response to Q3:* in July a temporary timetable was introduced, due to the public realm works around Grove Park station. The normal timetable will reconvene in early 2019.
- 4.4. The TfL representative added that there is a consultation about Overground ticket office closures which has a deadline of 11 October. Any comments will need to be submitted by this date. in the borough of Lewisham, this only effects Honor Oak Park station as it is below the “busy” threshold.

The meeting finished at 8:23pm