

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

Monday 4 February 2019 7pm

Present: Councillor Curran (Chair), Councillor Dacres, Simon Moss (Service Group Manager, Highways & Transport), Geoffrey Thurley (Ladywell Society), Richard Holland (Downham Assembly), Conrad Bunyen (Stagecoach Bus Group), Jackie Regan (Stagecoach Bus Group), George Paterson (Southeastern Railway), Simon Mouncey (TfL), Lewisham Station Rail Users Group

Apologies: Councillor Clarke, Councillor McGeevor

Also present: Councillor Hall, Councillor Jacq Paschoud, Councillor John Paschoud

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

Councillor Hall declared an interest as Chair of Unite Community Lewisham, Greenwich and Bexley

3. Questions Regarding Bus Issues

3.1. *Bus questions*

TfL responded to the question regarding bus issues:

“Thank you for your feedback on the Central London Bus Consultation, we are currently analysing the comments. We will be briefing Lewisham Council as soon as we have completed this and have our next steps. This will include looking at wider opportunities for the bus network in the south of the Borough including improved orbital connections”

Cllr Hall stated that he responded to this consultation on behalf of Unite regarding the bus routes 53, 171 and other outer borough routes. He asked when the analysis of the responses will be complete and will it be a decision made by the Deputy Mayor, TfL board or an officer.

Simon Mouncey responded that the Deputy Mayor is being briefed in February on the results of the consultation. TfL will recommend a way forward and the boroughs will be briefed once the Deputy Mayor has made a decision.

Councillor Hall reinforced that it is a great concern to the Council and local residents, especially early morning commuters into central London. The TfL representative confirmed that these points were raised in the Lewisham consultation response as well as others, and will be considered.

The Service Manager for Transport gave a brief overview of the consultation response:

TfL are interested in removing some services where there are a lot of services that are duplicated as the journey comes into Central London. The idea is to take out some of the capacity and spreading it further out of London, enhancing the networks, which could be deemed as an opportunity for local boroughs. LBL expressed concerns about some of the issues raised and requested reassurances on the impact of home journey times and the reliance of the hopper fare.

3.2. Stagecoach representative provided updates on some of their bus services: Buses are being diverted at particular junctions and roads, including Thurston Road, Coopers Lane and Walston Road, due to parking issues and required road amendments. The Service Manager agreed to take these issues back as the Council has a programme of minor road amendments which are prioritised considering transport and emergency services.

3.3. *Rail Questions*

3.4. In response to question 1, TfL stated:
“We fully support Lewisham's Vision for Rail and are committed to delivering the Bakerloo Line extension as set out in both the Mayor's Transport Strategy and London Plan. We are working through options with Lewisham Council for the extension. Upon completion of the current phase of the project later in the spring we will be able to update you”

The representative added, that the priority has been to secure the New Cross site, but in principle, TfL supports the extension.

The Council is increasing its efforts to lobby the work around the Bakerloo Line extension. A small team has been set up in the Regeneration and Place department to progress the matter.

3.5. TfL have received correspondence about the lack of shelter and distance at bus stops at Lewisham stations. The issue is being picked up by the Lewisham station Interchange Group. The development at Lewisham station was approved in 2008 and work began in 2013- it is understood that there will be no new investment for any changes to the road layout, stops and shelters, at least for another few years.

3.6. In response to question 2, Southeastern stated:

“The predominant cause of delays at Lewisham is the infrastructure; signalling, points and track circuits. There have been an unusually high number of issues in the first few weeks of 2019 and this has been identified as a priority area for the Joint Southeastern-Network Rail Performance Team. Track circuit failures in Lewisham accounted for a substantial amount of delays in January, and has been identified as a key issue not just for Lewisham, but the whole Southeastern network. Network Rail own and manage the rail infrastructure, so for a more detailed, technical explanation I would advise you contact them. I am aware that they

are undertaking significant work to improve and upgrade the infrastructure, to make it more reliable.

In addition, because Lewisham is a cross-roads for the railway in the South East, and we have such a busy network, a small issue has a significant knock-on impact, which is why the Joint Performance Team is focusing on this part of the network.”

The Southeastern representative added that members of the Lewisham Station User Group saw a presentation from Network Rail last week about the infrastructure work they are doing, so over the next few years it should become a more reliable network. An issue that contributes to the delays is the cross-rail system at Lewisham which can have a knock-on impact.

- 3.7.** GTR provided a graph which explained their response to question 3 (appended)
Councillor Hall requested that LBL continue to apply pressure to ensure the level of performance promised is met.

- 3.8.** TfL responded to question 4 stating the following:
“When fully open all 41 stations on the Elizabeth line will be step-free from street to platform. All of the 10 new central London stations – Paddington to Abbey Wood – plus Heathrow will also have level access from platform to trains. Passengers who need assistance will benefit from the same turn-up-and-go service on the Tube, London Overground and TfL Rail with the assurance that all stations will be staffed from first to last train

Because of the different types of trains that already run along the western and eastern sections of the route, including freight trains, it’s not possible to provide level boarding at all stations outside central London. To alleviate this we have station staff on hand with boarding ramps between the platform and train. Work is taking place to improve accessibility including new lifts and footbridges at all the existing stations in both the east and the west and there are various accessible connection options such as buses and the DLR”

Councillor Hall added that the former Young Mayor has proposed in a petition that full level access across the Elizabeth Line stations is fulfilled- only 13 of 41 stations will have level access for disabled users. As a brand new line, TfL should be aiming for the greatest amount of step-access that is possible, considering engineering.

The TfL representative responded that in existing stations, there is historical reason as to why platform heights are different for the different services serving those platforms. The engineering solution is, where access from platform to street is a problem, there could be lifts or ramps put in place- for new stations, a street to train connection commitment. Where there is no engineering solution, the platform will be staffed, from the first to the last train with a ramp that people can use.

- 3.9.** Southeastern responded to question 5:

“The predominant cause of delays at Lewisham is the infrastructure; signalling, points and track circuits. There have been an unusually high number of issues in the first few weeks of 2019 and this has been identified as a priority area for the Joint Southeastern-Network Rail Performance Team. Track circuit failures in Lewisham accounted for a substantial amount of delays in January, and has been identified as a key issue not just for Lewisham, but the whole Southeastern network. Network Rail own and manage the rail infrastructure, so for a more detailed, technical explanation I would advise you contact them. I am aware that they are undertaking significant work to improve and upgrade the infrastructure, to make it more reliable.

In addition, because Lewisham is a cross-roads for the railway in the South East, and we have such a busy network, a small issue has a significant knock-on impact, which is why the Joint Performance Team is focusing on this part of the network.”

The Southeastern rep added that 3 days’ notice is given before station skipping is implemented and a different timetable is provided.

3.10. TfL gave the following response to question 6:

“We are aware of the local campaign but we aren’t able to consider any requests for changes to station zoning at the moment. The Mayor is committed to the fare freeze and so changes which reduce fares at individual stations cannot be afforded. The existing zonal map has its roots in the 1980s. It sought to place stations into concentric zones fitting into the geography of London rather than distance from the centre. Any re-zoning would require renegotiating contracts with the operators which would take a long time and in the current financial climate would not be affordable”

3.11. Southeastern gave the following response to question 7:

“I can confirm it is categorically untrue that we are planning to close any stations and is prohibited under our franchise contract. We are investigating with On Trak to see why one of their staff would have said this. The role of On Trak agency staff is to provide additional customer-focused staff to help prevent trespass incidents and suicide on our network. We have employed them since July 2018 and they will remain in post until the end of the franchise.

They are posted at 8 stations locations where trespass and suicide is a particular issue and they are on duty between 06:00 and 22:00. If passengers and residents have been told something different either by Southeastern staff, or On Trak agency staff, I urge them to contact me so I can ensure this is fully investigated.”

Southeastern also confirmed that they would not have the authority to close down St Johns station.

The meeting finished at 7.55pm

