

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIASON COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 13 June 2023 at 7pm

Present, in person: Councillor Huynh (Vice-Chair), Councillor Krupski

Also present: Councillor Bell, George Paterson (Southeastern), Scott Brightswell (Southeastern), Dave Davidson (Network Rail), William Knighton (Network Rail), Andrew Chillingsworth (Govia Thameslink, Southern), Josh Freestone (TfL)

In attendance virtually: Councillor Royston (Chair), Councillor Warner, Adams Seamus, Nick Hill (Stagecoach), Angeline Verillo (Go Ahead)

1. Minutes

Minutes of the last meeting were agreed as an accurate record.

As a matter arising, Councillor Krupski asked the TfL representative about a previous question she asked on the enforcement on the A21 to which she was assured a response.

It was responded that a multi-agency meeting that was organised prior, Councillor Walsh had attended and was given a response to the question, but he will send the data to both Councillor Walsh and Councillor Krupski separately.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

3. Transport Questions

3.1. Residents, Members and local groups had submitted questions to transport representatives, who had provided written responses to the questions (appendix).

3.2. Southeastern gave an illustrative presentation, giving further context to their responses and detailing their plans to improve the service. The following was highlighted in their presentation:

3.2.1. In November 2022, SE invited expressions of interest from the rolling stock supply market to provide options for new or cascaded/existing trains on the network. SE are drafting the desired train specification

3.2.2. Southeastern and the DfT are considering a range of options, including: Modern rolling stock which is already built and operational and that is fit for the future; Potentially new rolling stock; Improving the current fleet of Networker trains. An online survey for stakeholders is running until 27 June.

3.2.3. Network Rail, working with Southeastern, are currently delivering several targeted upgrades to Lewisham station: A new security gate

and waiting shelter has been installed on platform; Improve signage and wayfinding; re-signing all station directional signage to ease movement of people during busy periods by end of July; relocating the gate line on platform 1 to the DLR concourse which will increase crowd flow capacity through the gate line and address safety and operational concerns due to congestion and crowding on the platform by March 2024; and refurbishing the toilets at Lewisham

- 3.2.4. SE are working to balance the needs of stakeholders: customers, colleagues and taxpayers. They are a public sector (not for dividend) company, and they operate on a taxpayer subsidy of circa £1m per day. This is driven, in part, by a revenue shortfall of circa £250m per annum versus 2019/20. The Elizabeth Line success removes £20m in revenue (to Mar 24)
 - 3.2.5. Usage of the service in 2023 is still significantly lower than pre-pandemic levels but has been increasing slowly since the start of 2023 with journeys between Oct-Dec 22 at 28.7 million and Jan-Mar 23 at 29.4 million. Demand not yet stabilised –SE continue to monitor and adapt where needed.
 - 3.2.6. SE are running 2.3% fewer trains since April 2022. Some train operators have made larger reductions in services to match demand, while others have made corresponding increases. Since Dec 2022 SE have added services where needed and where funding is available.
 - 3.2.7. Passenger forecasting since Covid has been continued challenge and is continually being reviewed.
 - 3.2.8. Funding/subsidy approval is required for additional services. Having a scalable/simple timetable is a key enabler to adding services
 - 3.2.9. Since January, demand has increased. SE have already introduced extra services in Jan and Feb and added more in May. In total there will be 179 additional trains per week in May 23 compared to Dec 22.
 - 3.2.10. There are 29 additional trains every weekday, Monday to Friday. 34 additional trains on Saturdays. In addition, every weekday 25 of SE trains will have more carriages than before, to provide extra capacity on some of our busiest services including on the Sidcup line.
 - 3.2.11. The changes introduced so far have led to fewer complaints about crowding from customers using the BXH and SID lines.
 - 3.2.12. In terms of reliability, SE was 3rd best operator nationally in May for second period running. Cancellations were at 1.5% compared to industry average 2.7%. In April cancellations were at 1.1% compared to industry average of 3.1%. This was SE's lowest level of cancellations in 6 years. Punctuality is now also above industry average.
- 3.3. Councillor Bell asked SE if the DfT had instructed them to cut the timetables after Govia lost their contract or was it a decision SE made themselves. SE responded that there was no relevance to the loss of the Govia franchise, and that it was around effectively the spending review targets that had been set.
 - 3.4. After SE's presentation, the following was discussed, in supplementary to the written responses provided by the transport networks:
 - 3.5. Question 1: no supplementary question was asked.

- 3.6. Question 2: Councillor Bell asked Southern if the taxpayer subsidy used to fund services has been reduced since the network has reduced its train services. Southern responded that the services to London Victoria and London Bridge were increased. Carriages have increased on the lines via Tulse Hill and East Croydon. Southern are matching supply to where demand was highest, the representative stated.
- 3.7. Question 3: Alan Hall asked Network Rail about the timetable change process and why there is no consultation. They responded that they are required to advertise changes 12 weeks in advance of implementation. Train operators would consult on timetable changes and part of the would include working with Network Rail around the expected reliability and punctuality improvements, for example. Alan Hall suggested a draft is published and that there is a soft consultation, before the timetables are finalised.
- 3.8. Question 4: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.9. Question 5: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.10. Question 6: The Lewisham Station User Group representative stated it appears the Council along with rail providers have stopped all work that began pre-pandemic to improve services at Lewisham station and the work towards the goal of the station becoming a major hub for users. He also asked that the results of the feasibility study that was conducted prior be shared. Councillor Krupski responded that herself and the Councillors in Lewisham Central are invested in this, although the Council would only be a coordinating partner. she stated that she will work with the Interim Director of Public Realm and the Head of Highways and Transport on the matter.
- 3.11. Network Rail added that there is currently no funding to do anymore work than the temporary work but are going into their next control period. They will look into what plans there are for Lewisham long term and will be attending this forum in the future so will bring back any relevant information as well as any feasibility studies.
- 3.12. Question 7: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.13. Question 8: Councillor Bell expressed concern that the answers to the questions around cut services are not being responded to accurately. The Southern representative said he will consult with those with specialised knowledge and come back with information regarding the changes.
- 3.14. Question 9: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.15. Question 10: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.16. Question 11: it was asked why there cannot be a transfer of service on the weekends from termination at Cannon Street to termination at Charing Cross, as this could be done at no extra cost and would cut down on crowding at Lewisham Station on Platform 1. SE responded that this kind of change would

affect the structure of the timetable in the wider area than Lewisham. It is key that this structure exists so services can be added or extended as needed. If the structure is changed it will have impacts on other stakeholder groups. SE will not make structural changes so significant without consulting, so are continuing to evaluate passenger numbers and how they are traveling.

- 3.17. Question 12: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.18. Question 13: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.19. Question 14: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.20. Question 15: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.21. Question 16: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.22. Question 17: the representative from Network Rail made an amendment to the written response to the questions stating that Nunhead station had been put forward for consideration for funding, which is incorrect. Bellingham station, however, has.
- 3.23. Question 18: no supplementary questions were asked.
- 3.24. Question 19- 27: TfL stated that they are working on providing written responses to the questions submitted by the committee and will share them. They asked for 3 weeks to respond to question in the future as they are currently short-staffed. Councillor Krupski stated that perhaps a senior representative attends the meeting who can respond to follow-up questions is necessary to better help the Council's relationship with TfL.
- 3.25. Question 28: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.26. Question 29: Councillor Bell asked if taxpayer subsidiaries had been reduced since Southern's service had been reduced. Southern responded that hopefully services can be restored as soon as possible but it is dependent on passenger numbers and where the key demand is.
- 3.27. Question 30: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.28. Question 31: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.29. Question 32: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.30. Question 33: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.31. Question 34: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.32. Question 35: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.33. Question 36: no supplementary question was asked.

- 3.34. Question 37: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.35. Question 38: no supplementary question was asked.
- 3.36. Question 39: the Bell Green Neighbourhood Forum representative asked what traffic counts were agreed with the developers in the Bell Green area to form part of the transport impact assessment. He also invited interested councillors, Highways officers, TfL and Southeastern to the Bell Green area to view some of the transport related issues in the area on 30th September. The Head of Highways and Transport responded that he would respond directly to Bell Green with a response to their question and will send a representative to the meeting.

4. AOB

- 4.1. The Vice-Chair asked Southeastern on behalf of a resident if there is any updates on Deptford station lifts on platform 2 being out of service, to which they responded that they are not aware of any.
- 4.2. The Vice-Chair asked TfL on behalf of a resident, "Cycling north on Lewisham High Street towards Lewisham station, just opposite the police station. At the north bound traffic lights into the junction there are three lanes, one for left (west) and two for straight ahead (north). The centre lane has a cycle box ahead of vehicles. The trouble is that cars and lorries use both left and centre lanes to go left (often with those using the centre lane speeding around so as to overtake vehicles in the correct, left lane). This leaves cyclists who are stationary and are waiting on the longer red light in the centre lane at risk of being hit. I have had a number of close scrapes here and am always relieved when a bus heading north ends up behind me at the lights since that provides some level of protection from the otherwise fast flowing traffic – in the wrong lane – turning left." TfL responded that they would take the question back and respond directly.
- 4.3. Councillor Bell asked if there are there any plans to increase the services on the London Overground between West Croydon and Crystal Palace. TfL responded that they would take the question back and respond directly.
- 4.4. It was asked if Lower Sydenham station could be rezoned from zone 4 to zone 3 when it is very close to zone 3 areas. Southeastern responded that there are revenue implications to this and many transport providers would be involved, but the question will be taken away and responded to.