

PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE QUESTIONS

Tuesday 5 December 2023

TfL

1. What investment plans are there for Elverson Road DLR station? The lights around the station have not been working for several months now (with concerns particularly around women's safety) and the paving stones around the station are uneven and prone to flooding. Flooding can also be seen after medium-heavy rain on the bridge over the station. Please can you share what maintenance and investment work is being carried out and/or planned for Elverson Road and what can be done about the localised flooding? (Councillor Huynh)

- *We have investigated the lighting at Elverson Road Station. All of the Station lighting is working; however, they found the lighting on the bridge has failed*
- *The London Borough of Lewisham is responsible for the lighting on the bridge. We are happy to bring this to the attention of LB Lewisham colleagues*
- *Although the Bridge is not our asset, we would be keen to collaborate with LB Lewisham on increasing customer security in the area. The Head of Security and Emergency Planning at KeolisAmey Docklands would like to extend an invitation to Lewisham to further discuss this issue*
- *There is currently no specific capital investment planned for the DLR Elverson Road premises, though this is subject to continuous review*
- *KeolisAmey Docklands maintenance officers carried out a site inspection at the specified areas. They reported that conditions did not reflect described those in the question.*

Josh Freestone to contact Councillor Huynh and put him in touch with KAD officer to clarify location of uneven and prone to flooding paving stones

2. This question is regarding Elverson Road DLR station. Elverson Road sits in LB Lewisham (though borders RB Greenwich) and has more than 500,000 passengers passing through it a year.
 - Lewisham Council is responsible for the bridge crossing the station. Please could you confirm which body is responsible for maintaining the station itself?
 - Please could you outline how Lewisham Council works with TfL or any other organisation to review the condition of both the station and bridge at regular intervals, given that it is unstaffed.
 - If the answer to question 1 is TfL, please could TfL outline any capital investment they intend to make within the next two years to improve the condition of the station. They should note that the paving stones need replacing near the exits and entrances of the station (where people regularly run for trains), as they're uneven and cause a trip hazard as well as flooding during periods of heavy rain.
 - Hopefully by December the lights will be fixed. If the lights aren't fixed, please could I ask:

- Could Lewisham Council please confirm when the lights over the bridge will be fixed, and if they need any involvement or investment from TfL to carry this out? (Resident- Rosamund Cox)

Please refer to response to question 1.

3. Can an update be provided from TfL on the expected starting and completion date of the pedestrian safety measures at the junction of Brownhill Road and Torridon Road. (Resident- Mark Morris)

- *The current proposed dates for construction are from February to April 2024. However, the timeline is subject to permits and the outcome of our internal investigation into the banned turns element of the scheme*
- *Due to feedback from the local community, and following conversations with the Metropolitan Police, TfL is currently carrying out an internal investigation into the banned turn elements of the scheme; this involves a variety of tests including modelling of the different options*
- *This investigation is due to be finalised within the next couple of weeks and the outcome of this will be communicated to local residents and LB Lewisham stakeholders*

4. What plans and funding does Transport for London have for improving cycle links to and across the London Borough of Lewisham, and for making cycling and scooting a safer and more pleasant prospect here? In particular, how will TFL ensure that the A21 receives protected cycle lanes, and when? (Councillor Royston)

- *TfL has a total of £120,000 for Cycleway Network Development [borough-led] funding for multiple projects to improve cycling safety and attractiveness in Lewisham.*
- *Since August 2023, Lewisham has identified several schemes submitted for Cycleway Network Development Funding [also referred to as Borough Cycling]. Schemes that have received future funding include:*
 - *Creekside Wayfinding £9k- cycleway signage along cycleway 10 arm from Creekside to Deptford Bridge station & Lewisham station DLR.*
 - *Folkestone Gardens £6k cycleway signage in cycleway 10 arm from Folkstone Gardens to Fordham Park*
 - *Elverson Road £20k creation of cycleway 18 from Elverson Rd station to Catford station, by upgrading the existing NCN21 (north of Catford) through Ladywell Fields.*
 - *Brockley Rd toucan £35k integrating a new crossing near Beecroft Rd. Construction due to start in January 2024.*
 - *Molesworth Street £20k creating an arm from Elmira St to Limes Grove to the proposed Cycleway 18, by integrating a cycle network route through Conmill Gardens, Molesworth St and its junction with Lewisham High Street.*
 - *New Cross Gate to Forest Hill £30k, creating a new north-south Cycleway. Stage 1 to Crofton Park section is due to be delivered in June 2023.*

- *The CND schemes are borough-led and so for future proposals, TfL will need to work with LB Lewisham Strategic Transport and Highways team to drive those changes in the context of all their initiatives*
 - *TfL were informed that, moving forward, proposals should be informed by LB Lewisham's new Active Travel Strategy*
 - *The TfL Cycleway Network Development team is working with the LBL Strategic Transport team and other boroughs to deliver an alternative to A21 for north-south cycling journeys within Lewisham and beyond.*
 - *Cycleway 18, (C18) will be an extension of the Cycleway network connecting Greenwich, Lewisham, Bromley and Croydon. Within the borough, it will connect several transport hubs: Elverson Rd, Lewisham, Ladywell, Catford and Lower Sydenham.*
 - *The Cycleway will combine and upgrade NC21, Waterlink Way, and a series of residential streets. TfL and the Lewisham Strategic Transport team are working together to upgrade cycling infrastructures and improve junctions along this alignment to meet the Cycleway Quality Criteria. TfL's current funding allocation for this route within Lewisham amounts to £80,000 with potential additional funding in the next fiscal year.*
 - *In addition, schemes are initiated for arms connecting Cycleway 18 to Lewisham High Street and Sydenham station.*
5. Is there a timetable for phasing out diesel buses on the 122 and 197 (and P4?) routes? (Robert Macintosh, Forest Hill Society)
- *There are currently no plans to convert routes 122, 197 and P4 to zero-emission. However, this may be considered when the routes come round for re-tender.*
 - *TfL plans to convert the entire bus fleet to zero-emission by 2034.*

Southeastern

6. Question for Southeastern relating to the lack of opening of the ticket office at Lee Station, SE12. Whilst this in Lee Green ward it is well used by residents (including me) who reside in Grove Park. I have seen and been advised by residents that the office is often closed when it should be open and closes before the time indicated. I have seen people unable to get the ticket they want from the machine not being able to use the office to get that ticket and risk having to pay a penalty fare – one resident advised that had gone down during the day to the station to get a ticket for the next day, and as was a very early train thought the office would not be open then. Office was closed – he tried to use the machine, but as was quite a complicated ticket and has a senior rail pass, could not do so.
- When the weather is as we have recently experienced, not having the inside seating area is another issue – plus the toilet is locked due to ASB, and so if the office is closed you cannot access that facility either. (Councillor Moore)

-I have asked for further information from the local station team on this point and will relay this feedback to the relevant Director within Southeastern.

While we were consulting on proposed ticket office closures, we did not recruit vacant ticket office posts, as these positions could soon have become redundant.

As you know, Transport Focus and London TravelWatch published their response to the industry's ticket office proposals on 31 October. Subsequently the decision has been made that train operators, including Southeastern, should withdraw their proposals. This means that our ticket office proposals will not move forward.

Southeastern's plans were based on good faith consultation, and we respect the feedback London TravelWatch have made on our proposals, as well as their recognition that our proposals 'could be good for customers'. That aside, we are continuing to work towards a better, more reliable, and sustainable railway.

Following the end of the consultation and the decision not to close ticket offices, the Trade Unions are currently voting on Memorandums of Understanding with the Rail Delivery Group and we are currently considering our next steps in line with the rest of the industry.

Network Rail

7. The pedestrian bridge connecting the East and West sections of the Railway Children Walk (over the train lines between Grove Park and Hither Green stations) is currently closed for refurbishment, for the second several-month-long closure this year, with another one expected in early 2024. Can Network Rail please explain what works are planned, how much these cost, and what considerations were made to replacing the bridge with one that is fit for purpose for 21st century use, and if this is still a possibility? In particular:
- what considerations and consultations took place in relation to accessibility for users of the bridge with mobility issues, in wheelchairs, with buggies, cargo bikes etc?
 - what measures are being taken to ensure the safety and security of all users at all times of day and night? (Councillor Royston)

-I am sorry for the inconvenience and disruption that our necessary work to this footbridge is causing to the local community who use it. This £0.972m project is undertaking a significant refurbishment of the existing footbridge, with replacement of stair treads, handrails, flooring, and other interventions required to improve the condition of the footbridge and to ensure its safety for the public.

As a publicly-owned and taxpayer-funded organisation Network Rail is required to exercise due care in its spending decisions, and in this instance the removal (or significant alteration) of a structurally sound bridge and replacement with a new one would not represent value for money for the taxpayer. Instead, based on the condition of the bridge and its assessed capacity the most appropriate intervention has been to undertake a full refurbishment. While our funding is constrained, we are always receptive to potential third-party investment in the railway including to improve footbridges.

A fully accessible replacement would be substantially more expensive. This is because for the gradient of ramps to be compliant with regulations, significant land purchase would be necessary on both sides together with additional support and foundations to account for the increased weight. On the western side, a ramp would also come close to residential properties (on the basis that it's unlikely that we would acquire land in the cemetery) which could result in objections from residents whose

homes and gardens would become overlooked by people using the ramp to access the footbridge. Installation of lift systems is meanwhile prohibitively expensive and typically only done in station environments, rather than in the public highway.

This is a significant refurbishment and so unfortunately, and in consultation with the local highways authority, the footbridge has had to close to allow this work to be undertaken. We always try to reduce these closures wherever it is possible to do so and we are aware of the inconvenience that these closures cause. However, it is important that we undertake these works to improve the condition of the footbridge and to ensure the safety of those using it.

As part of this refurbishment work we are retaining the open-style mesh on the sides of the footbridge (though this is being replaced with new material) as we know that solid panels on bridges of this type, creating enclosed spaces, can cause problems from a safety perspective due to reduced visibility/creating an 'alleyway'. We do not typically provide lighting on our structures of this kind, but we will always work with the local highways authority to support their discretionary use of powers under Section 97 of the Highways Act to provide lighting on these structures as part of the public highway.

8. Will Network Rail please provide the Bell Green Group with the maintenance record for the Southend Lane railway bridge? Please include details of all Bridge strikes since 1985, its remaining asset life, and next scheduled structural assessment to determine its remaining asset life. (BGNF)

-From 29/10/2007 we have attended this structure 75 times following a report of a bridge strike. We are not resourced to provide information on each individual incident over this period following this request, but more information (including historic records from before 29/10/2007) would be available under FOI. Similarly, we could release historic maintenance and assessment reports, but this would also need to be done under FOI.

The bridge is scheduled to have its next structural assessment in 2024. This will provide information on its condition and capability to support our structural engineers' decision-making over the appropriate intervention (if any) for the asset.

We don't generally record remaining asset life of structures, as that timespan is itself dependent on the decisions and interventions that our asset engineers make in future years. We therefore assess the condition of this bridge every ten years and determine what interventions (if any) would be appropriate to keep it operational.

Should a structural assessment show that the bridge requires extensive work, at that point we would consider the relative costs and benefits of replacing the bridge with a new structure compared to continued heavy maintenance or refurbishment.

Southeastern & Network Rail

9. Have feasibility studies been done to open the ramp on platform 4 in Lewisham Station – especially with increased use of Lewisham Station given the number of new developments going up on both sides of the station (including more to come from the Tesco side). Residents have been calling for a ramp either at the top or bottom of the ramp. If a ticket barrier is not possible, could a tap-in/out machine be added (with camera if necessary for repeat fare dodgers)? There are already multiple stations in

Lewisham which do not have barriers and simply rely on the touch in and out machines. (Councillor Huynh)

-The reason we are unable to put a gateline on this platform entrance (currently closed) is due to the narrowness of the entrance. Network Rail (who, as the infrastructure owner, carry out any structural work) does not own sufficient land on this side of the station to build and install gates.

The only solution would be the purchase of land, to create space where a gateline could be installed, and as mentioned, planning consents (not assuming any decision either way) would be required.

Based on previous experience, we estimate such a project would cost at least £2 million, which would need to be funded by Network Rail and which is why we believe it would be unfeasible.

However, in the past there have been schemes (such as at Swanley station) where upgrade work has been undertaken with local authorities contributing substantially to funding. We have also made contributions in the past, however this year we have no budget for any station enhancement work on our network.

I will provide further information on the tap in/ tap out suggestion at the meeting; but it would not be feasible, because it would negate the presence of gates on other entrances and make it ungated. This is at a time where users across our network are asking us to install gatelines at ungated stations to prevent fare evasion and anti-social behaviour. (SE)

-We are not able to open this ramp to platform 4 at present as the gradient of the slope is not compliant with accessibility regulations (it is too steep). Re-grading the ramp or installation of a lift would be required, which we are not currently funded to deliver. We are always receptive to potential third party investment in the railway and would welcome a discussion on this issue. (NR)

Southern

10. If Southern are not going to operate the 2 train slots that were cut, have further discussions taken place on the suggestion that these could be operated by TfL instead? Is there an alternative possibility that these could now allow for the addition of a stopping service on certain stations by Thameslink trains that would provide not only a connection to East Croydon, but also a connection to stations like Farringdon / Kings Cross and beyond?

(Background: In 2019 Forest Hill had over 5 million station entries and exits and was served by approximately 80 carriages each hour and we were already experiencing overcrowding so there was already talk of adding further trains to the station, including a potential Thameslink route. While the 2023 total entries are not yet known, they have likely grown substantially from the 3m that were registered in 2022, and yet total service is around 60 carriages per hour which is a service reduction of 25% for a purported 20% drop in passengers. In other words we have increased overcrowding.) (Robert McIntosh, Forest Hill Society)

-As part of the timetable introduced in September last year, we replaced the East Croydon to London Bridge via Forest Hill stopping service with a London Victoria to London Bridge via Forest Hill stopping service.

All railway services are ultimately set in part in response to the funding constraints resulting from greater levels of working from home post-pandemic. In the case of

Govia Thameslink Railway, demand is roughly stable at approximately 80% of pre-pandemic levels although given the impact of inflation and changes in passenger behaviour, income is lagging demand as is generally the case across all operators.

However, through marketing and efforts to drive passenger numbers such as the timetable changes delivered on our coastal routes this summer, we are making steady progress on reducing the gap between income and expenditure – we expect the gap to be approximately £150m in this financial year. As a comparative position in all UK rail, relative to size and passenger journeys, this is a reasonably positive position, but ultimately it means that additional services are only currently possible either through reallocating what is already in place from a resource perspective, or through additional wider taxpayer subsidy.

We know that passengers will always prefer more frequent trains, but the current two trains per hour service between London Bridge and London Victoria via Forest Hill does have enough capacity for the route, with services typically lightly loaded outside of peak times.

Looking to the future, we are anticipating and planning for a potential increase in demand on this and other routes, and this will also be supported by our efforts to reduce the gap on income and costs.

We are constantly evaluating demand, and it is great to see passenger numbers slowly increasing. As a result we are looking at options for additional services on this route, and across the network generally in the years ahead – although at present there is the funding constraint and more practical considerations about the availability of spare trains. Neither is insurmountable, but this does mean any change will not be immediate.

With regard to the specific query on London Overground, we have been working with them to discuss their thinking. We are also looking at the possibility of new and additional Southern services, one benefit being it will provide more space for customers given our trains are longer. However, at this point, it is clearly important all proposals are developed and considered further.

With regard to the query on Thameslink services, this is not under consideration given the wider structure of the network and how the track layout in the section is used to provide a mixture of local and longer distance journeys. We would however always support efforts to improve interchanges such as at Norwood Junction and this was part of the thinking in the current set-up of services through the section.

Southern and TfL

11. What data exists for passenger route choices between Forest Hill and central London stations? Is it possible to identify what percentage of Forest Hill/Honor Oak Park > London Bridge morning users do not also return LB > FH and instead use Canada Water > Forest Hill/Honor Oak Park? Could this data be used to demonstrate a latent demand for more frequent and reliable trains from London Bridge?
(Background: Members report that they take the train from Forest Hill to London Bridge in the morning because they can more easily control their times but for return

journeys, they avoid London Bridge because they fear missing a train and waiting 30+ minutes, and therefore return via the Overground.) (Robert Macintosh, Forest Hill Society)

-We hold data for train loadings between individual stops on every service. For example, the busiest train on this route is the 07:50 from Victoria to London Bridge, which calls at Forest Hill at 08:28. This service will usually be at 80%+ occupancy on Tuesdays between New Cross Gate and London Bridge. On other days of the week, this service is less busy.

We are happy to look at other trains if we are given dates and times of particular trains, but current figures do not suggest there is an immediate need to increase the level of service. That is not to say however, as per the previous answer that we are not planning on the basis of demand as it may look in 2025 and beyond.

With regards to the query on route choices, a half-hourly service will have some effect on passenger behaviour, although this is not an unusual frequency comparatively.

It is important to note that while more connectivity to London Bridge will be popular, it should not be assumed that it will result in much of a transfer of passengers from the East London Line given the zonal system and the new impact of the Elizabeth Line.

To explain, generally in terms of route choices there are other important factors at play such as the shift of London's economic centre to the east of the City, the Elizabeth Line and the zonal fare structure – which all things equal, will mean a journey via the East London Line to the City of London will usually be about half the price, especially if a customer walks the final section, whether across London Bridge or through Aldgate.

To the extent that customers are price sensitive, TfL's zonal structure means that for example a journey from Forest Hill to the east of the City of London (e.g Leadenhall area) or towards Canary Wharf is both more expensive and offers relatively minor journey time savings if routed via London Bridge, hence customers can to some extent be expected to travel via the East London Line, all things being equal.

For destinations to the west of London Bridge such as Soho and Covent Garden, connectivity into the Elizabeth Line via Tottenham Court Road has to some extent displaced what could a few years ago have been a London Bridge and Jubilee Line journey in terms of journey time.

Similarly, for Jubilee Line journeys such as towards Southwark, the much quicker interchange time at Canada Water between Underground and rail services due to the platform layouts means it is a significantly faster overall route than changing at London Bridge, even considering the additional time spent on the Jubilee Line.

As a result, while more connectivity to London Bridge will be popular, it should not be assumed that it will result in much of a transfer from the East London Line given the zonal system, interchanges and the new impact of the Elizabeth Line relative to pre 2020. (Southern)

-Unfortunately, we do not have ready access to passenger route data as our standard demand datasets do not enable individual journeys to be tracked through the system, as they focus on aggregated volumes of journeys. Individual journeys can be tracked by the gatelines at London Bridge and Forest Hill but there is no definite way of knowing the route they take between the two stations, as trips interchanging to Canada Water do not pass through a gateline. (TfL)

Southeastern, Network Rail & LBL

12. Please will representatives of Southeastern, Network Rail, and Lewisham Highways agree a date for their walkabouts of Bell Green? A Bell Green Neighbourhood Forum representative is available to show any parties around issues in the Lower Sydenham Station area in the early evening on 5th December, ahead of the evening's Public Transport Liaison Committee meeting. Please can you confirm if you are available? (BGNF)

-A representative from the stakeholder team and the station manager will attend. (SE)

-A Network Rail representative will join the Bell Green Neighbourhood Forum for a walkabout of the area in the early evening of 5th December, ahead of the Public Transport Liaison Committee meeting. (NR)

13. Given Lower Sydenham Station is not on the list to have investment funded via the Access for All to replace the station footbridge to allow for lift access to each platform for cross-platform interchange, which will avoid a 850m detour via Southend Lane, a potential solution could be to provide development funds towards this proposal. Will Lewisham Planning welcome this and work towards this potential funding route with Southeastern and Network Rail, ready for negotiations with forthcoming development to contribute to this opportunity. (BGNF)

-We are always receptive to potential third party investment in the railway and would welcome further engagement with Lewisham Borough Council on this matter. (NR)

Southeastern, Network Rail & TfL

14. Given the extremely poor accessibility and connectivity of Lower Sydenham Station, it is common ground that capital works are needed. However, funding is currently unavailable. We proposed two minor mitigations for this situation, and want to help expedite the decision process.

This decision has not been progressed. Southeastern has revenue concerns that need to be agreed with the DfT. Given the station's inaccessibility and its isolated position, realigning ticket prices to match nearby stations could increase passenger numbers. In order to progress this decision:

- Please can Southeastern quantify its projected losses

We're a not for dividend public sector train company and rely on a taxpayer subsidy of approximately £1m a day to operate. Our revenue gap in FY 2023-24 is £330m.

The success of the Elizabeth line – the busiest line in the UK - has contributed to this revenue shortfall. (SE)

- Please can the DfT state any revenue concerns and any other points of objection?
- Please can all parties identify all other stakeholders who need to be involved, and request a statement of their position? (BGNF)

-If the Train Operator wishes to change the zone of a station it needs to get the approval of all London Train Operators, TfL and the DfT.

Southeastern is unable to make fares-related changes in the Metro area unilaterally – this requires agreement from all the above stakeholders.

Income from travelcards (which most passengers will be using when they tap in and tap out at Lower Sydenham) is split across all London train operators, so there would be a revenue loss for all London operators, not just Southeastern.

While we cannot speak for the other stakeholders involved, Southeastern would not support this change at this time. This is because it is a priority for Southeastern to increase revenue and reduce taxpayer subsidy and, in our view, there is not a compelling business case to support a change of zone in this instance. (SE)

- *Lower Sydenham is managed by Southeastern who also provide all the train services calling there. The DfT is the contracting authority. As such all questions relating to station improvement works, fares zoning and other matters should be answered by these parties rather than TfL.*

We do not have any direct interest in the station but would expect to be consulted on changes relating to the fare zones and anything that affects our services e.g. the location of any bus stops outside the station. (TfL)

Southeastern and TfL

15. What Alternative Accessible Transport provision is available to disabled passengers using Lower Sydenham Station? As the station is inaccessible, Southeastern is supposed to provide support to disabled passengers under the ORR (Office of Rail & Road) regulations. I attach a letter from a resident, describing the obstacles to her accessing the station. How can you help her please? (BGNF)

If alternative transport is required this will normally be a taxi which can be arranged to take you to the nearest or most convenient, accessible, and staffed station to complete your journey, where possible, by train.

We'll take your individual requirements into consideration as well as the journey time, accessibility of trains and stations used and staffing of those stations to best adapt to your requirements. If a taxi is required for replacement of a train service, we will ensure it is accessible to you.

This will be provided at no extra charge; however, you do need to hold or, at the earliest opportunity, buy an appropriate ticket for your entire journey. Tickets can be bought on our app, website or once at your destination. Wherever possible we'll do what we can to give you an alternative that most resembles the experience of those who do not require assistance. (SE)

-We do not have any direct interest in the station but would expect to be consulted on changes relating to the fare zones and anything that affects our services e.g. the location of any bus stops outside the station. (TfL)

TfL and Stagecoach

16. Many thanks to TfL for converting the 450 bus route to fully electric. It is very successful, being quiet and clean, and so is much appreciated. Are there plans to install recharging points at the Stagecoach Bus Garage in Kangley Bridge Road, home of the bus routes 181 and 356, to allow for the conversion of 181 and 356 to EV? (BGNF)

-With reference to the Kangley Bridge site, the option to use Electric vehicles will be submitted as and when the tenders come up for award. The decision is then one made by TfL, if the route is awarded with new electric vehicles, we then start the process.

The process of procuring the vehicles, securing a power upgrade if needed then starts post award. This is then followed by any civils work required to increase the power to site if needed. The final part is to fit the charging infrastructure within the site prior to taking delivery of the vehicles, this process takes on average about 12 months. (Stagecoach)

-Currently there no plans to install infrastructure to charge electric buses at Kangley Bridge depot nor any confirmed plans to convert routes 181 & 356 to Zero Emission at tailpipe buses. There does however remain a target, subject to government funding, to have all buses operating on TfL network being Zero emission at Tailpipe by the end of 2034. (TfL)