

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 1 November 2022 at 7.00pm

Members Present:

In Person: Councillor James Royston (Chair), Councillor Edison Huynh (Vice-Chair), Councillor Louise Krupski
Virtually: N/A

NB: Those Councillors listed as joining virtually were not in attendance for the purposes of the meeting being quorate, any decisions taken, or to satisfy the requirements of s85 Local Government Act 1972.

Apologies: N/A

Officers Present: Paul Boulton (Head of Highways (Officer)) Claudette Minott (Committee Officer)

Also Present:

Councillors Representing Wards:

Councillor Hilary Moore (Ward: Grove Park), Councillor John Paschoud (Ward: Perry Vale), Councillor James Walsh (Ward: Rushey Green), Councillor Luke Warner (Ward: Blackheath),

Local Amenity Groups:

Malcolm Bacchus (Telegraph Hill Society), Nick Blomstrand (St John's Society), Michael Ellis (Heath Lane Neighbourhood Group and also representing Blackheath Society), Richard Holland (Downham Safe Neighbourhood Panel), Robert McIntosh (Forest Hill Society), Barry Milton (Sydenham Society), Geoffrey Thurley (Ladywell Society)

Transport Organisation Representatives:

Andrew Chillingworth (Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR)), Josh Freestone (Transport for London (TfL)), Nick Hill (Stagecoach London), Angeline Verrillo (GoAhead (Bexleyheath and Metro Bus | Bus Hubs))

Apologies: George Paterson (SouthEastern), Jack Wharton (Network Rail Southern)

Prior to the start of the committee meeting, the Committee Officer requested nominations for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Committee, for the municipal year 2022/23.

Councillor Krupski nominated and Councillor Huynh seconded the nomination to appoint Councillor Royston as Chair of the Committee, for the 2022/23 municipal year.

Councillor Royston nominated and Councillor Krupski seconded the nomination to appoint Councillor Roche as Vice-Chair of the Committee, for the 2022/23 municipal year.

The Committee unanimously agreed both appointments.

The Chair advised the Members and guests that all Councillors in attendance, who were not Members of the Committee, were speaking under Standing Orders.

1. Minutes

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Public Transport Liaison Committee meeting held on 20 January 2022 be agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared

3. Rail Questions

The questions submitted by Members, Councillors and guests were discussed.

The transport organisations provided written responses that were also considered by the Members. As well as the written responses provided, the transport representatives, local amenity groups, members and guests advised as follows:

Question 1: The TfL representative (Representative) stated that, he would refer any questions received at the meeting, back to the relevant parties within TfL for response.

Councillor Walsh advised that during his time as a Member of the Public Transport Liaison Committee (PTLC), he had to submit a Freedom of Information (Fol) request to TfL, in order to obtain the response currently under consideration. TfL subsequently refused Councillor Walsh's request on the basis that providing the data, may enable crime. Councillor Walsh detailed various breaches of the red route enforcement and the consequent impacts on his ward.

Councillor Walsh informed Members that there existed a contradiction between the public perception regarding the onus of responsibility for the public highway, between TfL and the local authority.

Members were advised by Councillor Walsh that the majority of routes going through wards were the responsibility of TfL.

Councillor Walsh described the impact of the lack of enforcement by TfL on local amenities and businesses.

Councillor Walsh requested that TfL provide a report regarding red route enforcement in time for the next scheduled PTLC meeting. Councillor Walsh stated the data information could be provided by ward, borough or TfL's own categorisation.

The Representative reiterated to the Committee that he would take all questions received from the meeting, back to the relevant parties at TfL. The Representative then advised Councillor Walsh and the Committee that in order to obtain the answer under consideration, he had contacted the TfL enforcement team. The TfL enforcement team advised the Representative that the data provided was available at borough level.

The Representative advised the Committee that by working in consultation with the local authority transport officers, it would be possible to delve further into the data and be more specific, with regard to pinpointing the red route enforcement locations of concern for Councillor Walsh.

The Representative advised Members and guests that in regard to the red route enforcement in the context of the A21 walking and cycling scheme, TfL were aware of the issues highlighted, which had been flagged to the enforcement team and a response was pending.

The Representative also informed Councillor Walsh and Members that he would bring Councillor Walsh's request for a red route enforcement report, back to the relevant TfL team.

Councillor Paschoud supported Councillor Walsh's submitted questions and advised Members that persistent breaches of the red route enforcement were not just an issue for Councillor Walsh's ward.

Councillor Paschoud noted the impacts on his own ward and that the TfL's website 'Streets' provided inadequate means by which residents could contact TfL to report issues.

The Committee were advised by Councillor Paschoud that he believed the TfL red route enforcement data should be public information and he too would be interested in viewing the data held by TfL.

The Representative advised Councillor Paschoud and the Committee that he was aware the issues raised and had been escalated to the relevant TfL teams for response.

Councillor Paschoud and the Members were advised by the Representative that the concerns raised by Councillor Paschoud regarding the TfL 'Streets' website, would be relayed back to the relevant teams for response.

Councillor Krupski stated that LBL were legally required to produce a report annually, detailing civil enforcement and enquired whether TfL were legally obligated to do the same for the purposes of scrutiny. If so, how was the data information organised and how would it be accessible?

The Representative advised Members that he would return Councillor Krupski's questions to TfL's enforcement or operation teams for response, which would be provided from TfL directly to Councillor Krupski.

Question 2: The Chair noted the transport organisation Southeastern were not present at the meeting.

Councillor Moore noted disappointment that the transport organisation had not attended the meeting to answer questions directly and provided the Committee with examples of the impact of issues affecting the Cannon Street from Lee service and its' other connecting services.

Councillor Walsh supported Councillor Moore's statement and added that it was problematic that Southeastern had not attended the committee meeting, particularly as many of their services cuts were negatively affecting South-East London. Councillor Walsh also informed the Committee that the Southeastern service was now controlled now by the government and noted that changes implemented by Southeastern were announced in September 2021 and implemented in December 2021. Members were informed by Councillor Walsh that the organisation's strategy was not brought to ward Councillors attention, himself included. In addition Councillor Walsh believed there had been no real consultation on the matter. As such there was an urgent requirement that a strong message from the Committee be sent to Southeastern to insist that representatives of the organisation meet with the local authority and Councillors representing affected LBL wards.

Councillor Krupski advised the Committee that she would send a personal request for Southeastern to meet with the Councillors of affected LBL wards and the local authority.

The Chair confirmed that when apologies were sent, Southeastern did offer to meet with the Chair and Councillors of LBL wards affected. The Chair also advised that the meeting would be held in private.

Councillor Paschoud commented there were no reasons why a meeting with the organisation should be held in private. Therefore another meeting with Southeastern should be organised and held in public.

The Chair agreed that the meeting could be held in public and noted that the next PTLC meeting was scheduled for the 8 December 2022.

Question 3: The Sydenham Society (Representative) addressed Members and provided a supporting statement to support the question submitted to the Committee.

The Representative brought the Committees attention to the issue of the steep, narrow stairwells at Norwood Junction Station, with examples of the impacts and dangers experienced by users of the station.

The Representative advised the station and its issues should be prioritised for redevelopment.

Govia Thamelink (Representative) advised that soon there would be an announcement from the organisation, regarding stations that were due to be redeveloped.

The Representative noted that particular station was also a London over ground station and speculated whether TfL may also have pending initiatives that included the redevelopment of Norwood Junction station.

The Chair called the TfL (Representative) to respond.

The Representative advised that he would not be able to comment, but would take the Govia Thamelink query back to TfL colleagues for response.

Question 4: The Chair advised the Committee that the Telegraph Society had asked several questions directed to several transport organisations: Southern Rail, Southeastern, Network Rail, LBL and TfL. The Chair outlined the questions and Members and guests were directed to the written responses received and published in the meeting's agenda.

The Telegraph Society (Representative) addressed the Committee and provided a supporting statement to support the questions submitted to the Committee.

The Representative advised the Committee of the deterioration of the New Cross service over time, noting cuts, longer journey times and timetable changes as examples.

The Representative made reference to the issue of loading being low after the pandemic, as the cited reason for service cuts by the transport organisation. The Representative stated in contradiction when he investigated further TfL advised that loading on the underground was high and TfL stated were in talks with the transport organisation to see if they would increase their services. Southern Rail advised TfL there were guarantees they would increase services. The Representative described passenger behaviour that reflected the issue.

The Representative stated there appeared to be a stalemate on the matter, due to lack of communication between Southern Rail and TfL to find a solution to the problem. The Representative advised Members that the passenger capacity between the over ground and underground service providers should be shared.

The TfL representative (Representative) advised that passenger loading was now 70-75% of what it was pre-pandemic. However, fares revenue was substantially lower since passengers were travelling at off-peak times or working from home, therefore no longer buying season tickets.

The Representative outlined the mitigation measures with the organisations resources to resolve the issues cited by the Telegraph Society, such as an increase in services where there was higher peak time demand, such as London Bridge to Victoria peak time services, where 8 carriage train formats were used, instead of the previous 5 carriage format.

The Representative advised the Committee that he would take the concerns regarding service under crowding and overcrowding back to the relevant TfL team/s for response.

The Chair noted Southeastern and Network Rail were not present to expand on their responses to the questions received from the Telegraph Society. The Chair invited comment or questions. None were received.

The Chair directed Members and guests to the written responses from both transport organisations and noted where no direct responses had been provided.

Councillor Walsh gave thanks for the accessibility improvements made at Catford Station, then enquired whether the transport organisations had studied the cumulative effects of the cuts of services and modelling based on the findings. Councillor Walsh advised the Committee it would be important for the transport organisations to do so and to ensure communications were open between themselves on their findings, in order to avoid commuter disruption.

The Chair supported Councillor Walsh's comments.

Councillor Walsh also enquired whether there would be any changes to the Catford Loop Line.

The Govia Thameslink representative (Representative) advised that he was certain that transport organisations would liaise with each other, when planning services.

The Representative assured Members that he would take Councillor Walsh's query regarding cumulative effects of services cuts back to Govia Thameslink colleagues/teams for further investigation.

The Representative advised the Committee there would be no changes to the timetable in December 2022, for the Catford Loop Line due to be published soon.

The Chair advised the Committee of the questions received from the Telegraph Society that were directed to TfL, with guidance on where the written responses could be found on the agenda.

The Chair invited comment and or questions.

The Telegraph Hill Society (Representative) advised the Members of the information provided by TfL was inconsistent across the service and not consistently available in various locations within a station i.e. timetables for connecting services not available across a station.

The representative for TfL advised that they would refer the comment from the Telegraph Hill Society back to the TfL colleagues responsible for timetable information and request a personal response.

Question 5: The Chair advised the Committee of his questions submitted in his capacity as Councillor representing his ward: Catford South. The Chair detailed the questions and where responses were or were not directly answered by the relevant transport organisation/s. It was noted one of his questions was similar to another Councillors and would be addressed later on in the meeting.

The Chair confirmed he had no comments or questions to the written responses received to his questions.

Councillor Krupski commented that in regard to the Chair's question that related to plans for A21 improvements, she had circulated a report on the A21 improvement scheme and had been involved in a walk-through of the A21 scheme. Councillor Krupski noted that the written response in the agenda stated a decision on the future of the scheme response could be expected by spring 2023.

The Committee were advised by Councillor Krupski, that she and Councillor Walsh were most concerned by the deterioration of the A21 scheme advising that if the scheme were to stay in place until spring 2023, then proper maintenance would be required.

The Chair supported Councillor Krupski's comment.

The TfL representative (Representative) acknowledged Councillor Krupski's report regarding the A21 scheme and noted the responses made to the report by various stakeholders.

The Representative also noted the discussion that took place with Councillor Krupski, Councillor Walsh and himself, with regard to the required improvements for the A21 scheme.

The Representative also noted the various consultation and engagement events held by TfL with regard to the A21 scheme, noting consultation feedback received exceeded 1,000 responses that related to the same concerns raised by Councillor Krupski.

The Representative assured the Committee that the concerns raised had been noted.

The Chair gave an overview of the next set of questions received by the Committee that were submitted by Councillor Luke Warner, representing his ward Blackheath and addressed to Southeastern.

The Chair informed Members that responses were received from Southeastern Railway for all of the questions submitted by Councillor Warner. The Chair provided guidance to the Committee where the responses could be found on the meeting's agenda.

The Chair reminded the Committee that Southeastern were not present at the meeting.

Councillor Warner thanked the Committee for his invitation, the Blackheath Society who were also involved in the campaign established with regard to the Blackheath station service cuts and also advised of his strong disappointment at the non-attendance of Southeastern throughout his address to the Committee.

Councillor Warner provided background information to the situation with regard to proposed service cuts at Blackheath Station, noting that residents were not properly consulted prior to the proposals and it was clear the proposed changes would be implemented. Members were advised by the Councillor that the result of the changes meant an important service line would be discontinued, whilst an off peak service line would be the alternative service promoted by Southeastern.

Councillor Warner described the impacts that the local community would experience, in light of the service changes proposed for Blackheath station.

Councillor Warner advised the Committee that he had several follow up questions, which related to: public consultation, future demand projections, service development and mobility issues - with concerns regarding the ease of switching platforms, considering thousands of people were expected to move into the ward, over the next few years.

Councillor Warner informed Members when he visited Blackheath station, the information offer he observed, was inadequate, noting residents needed up-to-date information and informed staff. Members were advised that the lack of consultation and up-to-date information provision had led to him receiving complaints from many concerned local residents and businesses.

Councillor Warner described to Members, the demographics of the service users, who would be most negatively impacted by the service changes and cuts.

Councillor Warner then asked the following questions:

- How far had Southeastern considered the service developments to meet the future rise in demand projections?
- How would the ease of mobility under these circumstance be improved?
- What methodology had been used as part of the future demand projections provided by Southeastern?
- Would there be future plans to amend the methodology to address any spikes in demand or issues raised by service users going forward?
- When would Southeastern be updating service users with updated printed timetables?
- What lessons had Southeastern learned with regard to consultation with members of society, in order to reflect the diverse backgrounds and financial means of its service users?

Councillor Warner requested that Southeastern provided written responses as soon as possible and suggested that Southeastern should also attend the PTLC meetings, to directly address public concerns.

The Chair assured Councillor Warner, his questions presented at the Committee meeting, would be sent to Southeastern for written responses and an urgent meeting with the transport organisation would be requested, noting the next scheduled meeting 8 December 2022 might be too late for receiving Southeastern responses.

Councillor Walsh supported Councillor Warner's address and advised Members that the situation described by Councillor Warner also reflected the situation of many other train stations across the LBL.

Councillor Walsh provided timetable information and examples of other train stations that showed service changes and cuts, off peak and on peak.

Members were advised that most of the services affected were those in the South East and their replacement options, were not adequate solutions to lost services. Councillor Walsh advised the Committee, it was vital that the local community quickly were alerted to the service changes.

The Vice-Chair supported Councillor Warner and Councillor Walsh's comments and referred to Southeastern's response provided on page 16 of the meeting agenda, to Councillor Warner's second question and enquired when the December 2022 timetable, as referenced by Southeastern in their response, would be re-evaluated and whether Southeastern's response could come back to the Committee for discussion.

There were no comments or questions from Members or guests.

The Chair outlined the next 2 questions which were addressed to Govia/TfL, that were submitted to the Committee by Councillor Chris Best (Labour), representing the Sydenham ward. The Chair advised the Members where the responses could be found on the meeting's agenda.

The Chair gave apologies on behalf of Councillor Best, who was unable to attend the Committee meeting, due to other council business.

The Chair invited questions or comments. None were received.

The Chair outlined the last rail related question received that was submitted by Councillor Oana Olaru (Labour), Representing: Downham and was addressed to Govia/TfL. The Chair advised the Committee where the responses could be found on the meeting's agenda.

The Chair gave apologies on behalf of Councillor Olaru, who was unable to attend the Committee meeting, due to other council business.

4. Bus Questions

The questions submitted by Members, Councillors and guests were discussed.

The transport organisations provided written responses that were also considered by the Committee. As well as the written responses provided, the transport representatives, local amenity groups, members and guests advised as follows:

The Chair outlined the 2 bus related questions received that were addressed to Stagecoach and Transport for London and were submitted by Councillor Hilary Moore (Labour), representing the Grove Park ward.

Question 1: Councillor Moore expanded on her question and discussed the negative impacts on residents who had to use a temporary 261 bus stop that was placed on Burnt Ash Road, parallel in location to the 261 bus stop on Baring Road that was out of use due to Thames Water works. Councillor Moore noted the negative travel impacts experienced by service users using the temporary route, particularly for those with mobility issues. Members were informed by Councillor Moore that in some instances, due to accessibility concerns, some services users had discontinued their use of the 261 route. Councillor Moore informed Members that the information circulated by Thames Water to local residents regarding the water works and the expected impact on the 261 bus route was scant and inaccurate.

Council Moore advised the Committee that the temporary bus route was not workable and suggested a 'hail and ride' service would be more appropriate. The Members were advised by Councillor Moore since future Thames Water works were possible, adequate consultation between the service provider, LBL and residents should be in place, when alternative temporary routes were to be planned.

Councillor Krupski acknowledged Councillor Moore's concerns and advised that they were noted. Councillor Moore was assured by Councillor Krupski that when Thames Water works resumed in the future, LBL would be more proactive in engaging with TfL and ensuring adequate numbers of temporary bus stops were installed along the 261 route.

Councillor Krupski enquired if TfL would be able to install a 'hail and ride' service along the 261 route, in the instance that in the future Thames Water recommence works along Baring Road.

The TfL representative (Representative) advised Councillor Moore that he was not in a position to comment on the temporary 261 bus route in place

during the Thames Work works and he would relay her comments back to the TfL bus operations team.

The Representative acknowledged the concerns raised with regard to consultation and engagement with the local community, regarding the 261 bus route service changes and advised he would relay the concerns back to the TfL bus operations team.

The Representative also advised that he was not in a position to comment on the possibility of 'hail and ride' services and would refer the suggestion back to his TfL bus operations team for response.

The Stagecoach representative (Representative) acknowledged Councillor Moores concerns and assured the Committee lessons were learned and that in partnership with TfL both organisations would investigate how best to accommodate 261 service users, going forward whenever works were underway.

No further comments or questions were presented to the Committee, with regard to route 273.

Question 2: The Chair detailed 2 questions received that were addressed to Southern Rail and Transport for London, that were submitted by the Telegraph Hill Society. The Chair advised the Committee where the responses could be found on the meeting's agenda.

The Telegraph Society (Representative) addressed the Committee and provided examples of the negative impact on service users, noting in particular service users with disabilities.

The Representative stated that it was not clear to him why bus drivers were comfortable with passengers on the bus they operated when it was in motion, but uncomfortable with passengers on the bus, when it was stationary.

Members were advised by the Representative that further investigation revealed the service providers' company stance allowed bus drivers the choice to keep passengers outside of the bus they operated, when it was not in service.

The Representative suggested the service providers should have policy that provided that passengers be allowed by bus drivers to sit on buses that were getting ready to go into service, unless the bus driver could provide a specific reason why a passenger should not be allowed onto the bus prior to it going into service.

The TfL representative (Representative) advised he was not in a position to provide a comment and noted the concerns raised by the Telegraph Society regarding vulnerable service users.

The Representative advised that he was not in a position to comment on the policy in relation to the situation described by the Telegraph Society.

However, the Representative assured the Telegraph Society and the Committee that the concerns raised would be brought back to the TfL bus operations team for response.

No comment or questions were presented to Committee with regard to the 2nd question submitted to the Committee by the Telegraph Society.

The Chair advised Members that the Committee had also received a set of questions from a member of the public, which were added to the agenda. Members were advised by the Chair that the questions were resubmitted because the scheduled June 2022 PTLC meeting, that had been cancelled. The Chair outlined the details of the resubmitted questions. The Chair

The Chair sought guidance from the Lead Officer as to whether they should take the questions to the relevant transport organisations for response. The Lead Officer present advised that he would take the questions to the relevant transport organisation and report back to Committee on the progress of the relevant transport organisation resolving the issues raised by the questions.

The member of public (Guest) who re-submitted the questions intended for consideration at the cancelled PTLC June 2022 meeting addressed the Committee.

The Guest stated that they were pleased to witness the PTLC meeting taking place and stressed the importance that the meetings be held more frequently than they had been in the past.

The Guest noted the next PTLC meeting was scheduled for December 2022 and enquired when the questions for transport organisations should be submitted.

The Chair and Members confirmed that questions should be submitted to transport organisations 3 weeks prior to the scheduled PTLC meeting. Councillor Krupski advised that the meetings should be scheduled for the municipal year and transport organisations made aware of the meetings, in order to increase the likelihood of attendance.

Councillor Krupski advised of her disappointment that Network Rail had not attended and noted the historically poor record of Network Rail attendance to PTLC meeting and offered to write to transport organisations to stress the importance of their physical attendance to the scheduled PTLC meetings.

The Guest also requested that representatives who can provide answers to policy questions and concerns that are raised, be invited to the PTLC going forward, as it was disappointing to hear from representatives who were not able to make statements on behalf of their organisations.

No comment or questions were received by the Guest from the Committee or others in attendance.

Councillor Paschoud suggested that LBL could seek to compare its records with other London borough councils, to ascertain whether they had

experienced a better participation history with Network Rail at their committee meetings equivalent to LBLs PTLC committee meetings.

Councillor Krupski advised Councillor Paschoud she would consult with her technical colleagues who could investigate.

The Chair instructed the Lead Officer to do follow up research on the success rate other LB councils had experienced of Network Rail attending their equivalent PTLC meetings.

The Lead Officer acknowledged that Councillor Krupski would follow up on the matter with her peers and the Lead Officer would follow up with their peer officers in the industry.

A representative from a Blackheath Society sub-committee (Representative) addressed the Committee.

The Representative described a LB Greenwich event that he had attended and noted that the managing director for Southeastern had attended.

The Committee were informed by the Representative that the meeting was attended by the public, who were able to express their views.

The Representative advised Members that the concerns raised were not just regulated to the Blackheath service changes, but also two other railway line routes that ran through areas such as Dartford, Woolwich and Bexleyheath.

The Representative described the consultation, leafletting and regulatory procedures that would be conducted by the society.

Members were informed of proposals that were of concern to the society that were due to take place in December 2022.

The Representative discussed the issue of timetables and the obligations of the transport organisations to ensure they were published in good time.

The Representative advised that it would be important to have a public meeting that involved Southeastern and TfL, as this would encourage other transport organisations to attend.

The Sydenham Society (Representative) addressed Members and discussed the Transport Strategy and Local Implementation Plan (Plan).

The Representative advised the Committee that the Plan was not fit for purpose and gave a number of examples to illustrate his viewpoint.

The Committee were advised by the Representative that the goals set out in the Plan were no longer workable under the current circumstances.

The Representative informed the Committee that the Plan needed to be rewritten to suit the current economic climate.

The Chair moved the meeting into the next item and enquired if there were any comments to those put forward by the Sydenham Society with regard to the Transport Strategy and Local Implementation Plan (Plan).

Councillor Krupski acknowledged the Sydenham Society's concerns raised under Item 4 and advised that at present within the LBL there were capacity issues due to the extensive cuts experienced and that the Plan would require amendment.

The meeting ended at 8.44pm