

MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE

PRESENT: Councillor Royston, Councillor Huynh, and Councillor Krupski

Also Present: William Knighton (Network Rail), Josh Freestone (TfL), Andrew Chillingsworth (GTR), Nick Hill (Stagecoach) and Angeline Verillo (Go Ahead)

In attendance virtually: Councillor Curran

1. Minutes

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

2. Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared

3. Responses from the cancelled meeting on 8 December 2022

The responses from the cancelled meeting were included in the agenda and tabled at the meeting.

It was noted that there were questions from the Telegraph Hill Society that had not been received by transport providers and therefore not answered. It was agreed that the questions would be resubmitted and should be answered at the next meeting.

Councillor Krupski stated that as a Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Action she is also a ward councillor for Rushey Green and therefore particularly interested in what is quite poor enforcement of the A21. She stated that the data TfL provided over a 3-year period, in response to Councillor Walsh's question on the enforcement of red routes, becomes meaningless as the data is not divided into annual segments so there is no clear pattern of activity. The TfL representative stated that the access of this data has been tricky, but he said he would take this away and communicate with both Councillors Krupski and Walsh with a continuous update.

4. Transport Questions

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

The Chair noted that Southeastern were absent from the meeting and therefore unable to respond to the questions asked.

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:

Questions to Network Rail

Question 1

In relation to the long-term site for Lower Sydenham: The Bell Green Neighbourhood Forum (BGNF) representative asked Network Rail and TfL their perspective on what can be safeguarded to ensure a network rail or Bakerloo Line station so that the land cannot be used for anything else. The NR representative responded that he understands the importance of transport connectivity in this part of the borough; NR can only deliver what they are funded to do and are not at present funded to deliver a station on this line. As a publicly funded body, public finances must be managed in a sensible way so in terms of incurring any costs, NR would need to be working with funding partners. If LBL had an interest in this and wanted to discuss on NR or adjacent land, NR could engage in the appropriate way. Based on the strategies and policies for the area, this discussion would need to be led by the Council.

The TfL representative echoed NR's response. He stated that at the moment it is not in TfL's current business plan and funding deal with the government.

Question 2/3

The BGNF representative also highlighted that the station is totally inaccessible and requires step-free access and has narrow pathways leading to the bridge. She highlighted that the walk can be unsafe at night as well as lack of buses that head to the station. NR responded that they own, maintain, and operate the rail infrastructure and the train company lease the station from NR; NR is funded by the government to maintain the asset and in some instances are funded to improve it- at the current time they are not funded to deliver improvements at the station. He stated that there is an established process through which parties can work with them on station improvements i.e., local authorities or developers. Step-free access would be NR's responsibility but its not something they are funded to do. If NR are approached by a potential investor for a new station, they would first have to consider moving or improving the existing station, particularly improving the area around it. He concluded by saying NR have a duty to engage with LBL and potential funders where there might be interest in delivering those sorts of funds.

Southeastern questions:

Southeastern provided some written responses to the questions submitted to them. Given their absence, the Committee discussed the responses briefly.

The Blackheath Society representatives stated that they had consulted with Blackheath residents, and it was found that the current timetable fails to meet the needs of passengers. They said they do not understand why Southeastern has not engaged with residents and users; the issues include overcrowding, excessive journey times and accessibility for customers wanting to go to Charing Cross. It was asked that Southeastern provide evidence for the demand of the diversion of trains from Charing Cross to Cannon Street.

Councillor Huynh announced that there will be a meeting on April 4th at St Anne's Church pertaining to Lewisham Station which Southeastern and Network rail have committed to attending.

The Telegraph Hill Society representative stated that there also used to be a through route from New Cross to Charing Cross on the Southern rail when that was stopped for the rebuilding of London Bridge Station and it was assured that the service would be reinstated but it has not yet happened. He asked that this is considered as soon as possible.

Questions to TfL

Question 1

The TfL representative said he has passed the question on to relevant colleagues and will get back to BGNF on it.

Councillor Krupski asked about TfL's announcement that there will be some investments in bus routes in outer London and if this would reach as far as some of the more southern areas of the Borough or if they could be considered to help build a sustainable transport plan. The TfL said he would pass this on to the relevant colleagues for consideration.

Question 3

The TfL representative noted the suggestion of a 24-hour bus plan for the 202. He stated that colleagues were willing to investigate this.

Question 4

Route 450 has been identified to be converted later in the year, but there are currently no specific plans for the other routes mentioned.

Question 6

The TfL representative responded that they would not be able to arrange APR cameras to monitor the problem, but TfL engineers are looking to arrange a

site visit and will provide a concrete date and time to the Committee for when that will be.

Councillor Krupski asked if TfL were able to have a direct conversation with Sainsbury's about the matter to possibly make some suggestions. The TfL representative said that he is not sure if that is TfL's role but is aware that the consideration has come up in discussion. The Committee will be made aware if this is possible.

5. AOB

The following supplementary question was submitted:

Kidbrooke Park Road bridge is on the A2213 and links directly to the A2 in Greenwich borough. The imposition of the temporary 7.5T weight limit on the bridge pushes HGVs through Blackheath village, Lee Road and other routes within Lewisham causing congestion, pollution, and road safety concerns through inappropriate routes within Lewisham. Network Rail have confirmed the repair work has been carried out so there should be no reason to delay removing the ban.

Now that Network Rail have confirmed that the bridge on Kidbrooke Park Road in Kidbrooke is structurally sound when will TfL be lifting the 7.5T weight restriction on the bridge?

The TfL representative responded that the conversation is being had between the Council and TfL colleagues and the Committee will have a response when a conclusion has been reached.

He then gave an update on the South-Circular Rd to improve Catford Town Centre:

He said that the road would move to a new position to the south of Laurence House. The Council will be working with TfL to provide a better experience for pedestrians and road users- this is part of a wider framework to improve the centre. The consultation materials are being finalised and once signed off there will be a concrete date provided for the consultation launch. Key stakeholders will be consulted, and briefings will be offered to groups around the borough.

The Chair asked what safety works will be made for cyclists and pedestrians- the TfL representative said he will note the consideration and update LBL officers.

The Telegraph Hill Society asked why passengers are not allowed to board the buses in cold weather prior to the scheduled departure. It was responded by the present Stagecoach bus operators that there are sometimes health and safety checks and measures that are done during this period. TfL stated that the issue can be raised again to provide more of a sufficient answer.

