

## **Network Rail:**

TfL, Network Rail + Southeastern

- 1. Recently we re-launched the Lewisham Station User's Group (LSUG). Can you commit to attending all future LSUG meetings (quarterly) to ensure that residents views are taken into consideration whenever considering changes to scheduling or services at Lewisham? (Councillor Huynh)**

I can commit to making my best endeavours to attend (or, if that is not possible, to sending a deputy to attend) future LSUG meetings.

I cannot commit to ensuring Network Rail attendance at every quarterly session. You will appreciate that across the Southern Region (Wessex, Sussex and Kent routes) there are a substantial number of Rail User Groups and other representative groups of various kinds meeting at a variety of intervals. It is not practical to attend every event held by every group given the resource available in the team, particularly when meetings are held in the evenings.

Nevertheless, I can commit to attend future LSUG meetings, and I would welcome a conversation with you and the group about your objectives and terms of reference so that we can find an appropriate and sustainable level of engagement to make sure that your voices are heard.

Network Rail, Southern

- 2. Can the train operators responsible and Network Rail give information on the performance and any plans in relation direct services to London Bridge from New Cross Gate, Brockley, Honor Oak Park, Forest Hill & Sydenham? (Councillor Hall)**

The train operating company is best-placed to discuss service patterns on this line.

On performance, one specific way that we're focusing on performance and reliability on the Sussex route is through our 'Golden Corridors' plan. We developed the Golden Corridors plan to identify critical locations where we have a higher frequency service and therefore a huge impact when things go wrong.

The London Bridge to Anerley (via Sydenham) corridor is one of the five Golden Corridors that we have identified. Together, these account for up to 22% of delay minutes, while only covering 10% of the network, making these areas twice as problematic as the network average. That means we need to work twice as hard here. We've created new rules, things we know will impact passenger journeys, to make sure we go above and beyond in these areas, whether that's increased maintenance, targeting flooding hotspots or installing cameras to warn us of potential hazards before they occur.

Some of these rules include having no trespass and fatality incidents, cleaning up the railway, reducing wet beds and gaining appropriate access for work to take place.

The exciting thing about this project is that by really honing in on the Golden Corridors, we are reducing delay minutes and improving performance issues across the network – not just on the corridors themselves.

We're pleased that in Period 1 (01 – 28 April) we exceeded all of our performance targets for the Sussex Route, with 75.2% of trains arriving at station stops within 59 seconds of timetable. Our work in close collaboration with our partners at GTR and the other Train Operating Companies continues; for example, we have commenced a workshop to collectively prioritise critical switch & crossing points (the parts of the railway that move trains from one track to another) on the Sydenham corridor to better-manage our response to incidents so that we can continue to safely provide a high-performing railway on the crucial rail link along the Sydenham corridor into London Bridge.

Network Rail, South Eastern, Southern

**3. Are there any consultations to timetable changes planned for rail services affecting Lewisham borough? (Councillor Hall)**

Network Rail does not undertake consultations on timetable changes, which are a matter for the train operating companies.

All networks

**4. How are you working to improve the quality and amenities of stations across the borough and ensure they are adequate for an inner London Borough. Can you share with us future station improvement roadmaps? (Councillor Walsh)**

We do not hold future station improvement roadmaps, as future improvements will be dependent on the level of funding made available as part of our financial settlement. Our next five-year spending period commences in April 2024 and will run until April 2029. Total investment levels including for stations are being determined as part of the regulatory process and will be confirmed in due course.

We do have work at a number of stations in Lewisham to improve the quality of the stations and customer experience of using them. For example, we have funding for a canopy refurbishment at Lewisham and at Blackheath stations. We also have funding for a project to improve capacity at Lewisham station by relocating the DLR gateline.

Network Rail + TfL

- 5. Transport for the South East (TfSE) has recently published its aspirations to deliver 'Direct passenger rail services from London to Brighton via Tunbridge Wells and Uckfield'. Can you share with us (if any) any conversation with TfSE from yourselves, and the thinking for the portion of the line that runs from London Bridge to the South East, and whether there is scope for LB of Lewisham interchanges on this route. (Councillor Walsh)**

We have worked with Transport for the South East on their Strategic Investment Plan and we meet with them regularly. The proposals to reopen closed lines would need a strong business case to attract the large amount of necessary funding to progress. To date, there has been limited consideration of potential services and stopping patterns (there are existing services that terminate at Tunbridge Wells) and nothing specifically on connections in LB Lewisham.

- 6. Southeastern has recently reintroduced its peak-hours one-way system at Lewisham station, first introduced in 2018 but suspended during covid. Passenger numbers are building back towards the 10m+ entries and exits a year and 2.5m+ interchanges a year reported for each of the two years before covid, which triggered the need for the one-way system and made it even more clear that the station was no longer fit for purpose. Two costly feasibility studies have been undertaken (in 2017 and 2022) on user trends and options for a major upgrade of Lewisham station, but neither has been made public or acted on. Nearly 1,000 new homes and much new town centre retail/leisure space is due for completion close to the station in 2023 (Gateway Phase 2 and Tesco Conington Road). Hundreds more homes are also under construction in Kidbrooke, just two stops down the Bexleyheath line. (Public question)**

Lewisham has seen significant population growth which has increased footfall within the station, creating overcrowding and congestion during both the morning and evening peak periods.

The existing infrastructure at the station is not suitable to cater for the number of passengers currently using the station. This has led to increased train dwell times for services calling at the station, impacting the overall performance of the route, as well as raising potential safety concerns.

Our works at Lewisham station will address safety and operational concerns due to congestion and crowding on platforms and improving passenger experience at the station. As a short-term intervention, we have secured funding to relocate the gateline on the DLR concourse that will help to mitigate against overcrowding. This project will also improve the passenger experience by installing digital wayfinding at the station and installing an additional waiting shelter on platform 4.

We do not currently have funding for other enhancements to Lewisham station.

Southeastern + Network Rail + Lewisham Council

**7. What is Southeastern doing, in concert with Network Rail and Lewisham Council, to urgently improve capacity, safety and comfort for existing and new rail users starting or interchanging on their journeys at Lewisham station? Who are the official leads at Southeastern (and at Network Rail and Lewisham Council) driving forward much needed upgrades to the station, rolling stock and services to meet user needs and legitimate demands? What are their names, roles, and contact details? Will they undertake to work together to push forward much needed improvements and to make regular public reports on initiatives and actual progress to improve the rail infrastructure and services for Lewisham rail users? (LSUG + Blackheath society)**

Lewisham has seen significant population growth which has increased footfall within the station, creating overcrowding and congestion during both the morning and evening peak periods.

The existing infrastructure at the station is not considered suitable to cater for the number of passengers currently using the station, leading to concerns over safety. This has also led to increased train dwell times for services calling at the station, impacting the overall performance of the route.

The works at Lewisham station will address safety and operational concerns due to congestion and crowding on platforms and improving passenger experience at the station.

As a short-term intervention, we have secured funding to relocate the gateline on the DLR concourse that will help to mitigate against overcrowding. This project will also improve the passenger experience by installing digital wayfinding at the station and installing an additional waiting shelter on platform 4.

We have also been engaged in significant work in the Lewisham area (but outside the station itself) to deliver more reliable journeys. Most of the current track and signalling systems in the Lewisham area were originally designed and installed in the 1960s and 1970s, which means this infrastructure is more prone to faults because of its age as well as obsolete designs.

Over half of Southeastern's daily train services pass through the Lewisham area on their way into London – so we're committed to **improving the infrastructure in this area**:

- 2020: replaced 2.5km of track in the St Johns area
- 2021: replaced key junctions at St Johns and Parks Bridge

- 2022: Christmas closure to fully rebuild the very complex junction north of the platforms at Lewisham Station (£10m strategic investment)
- 2023: 1300m rail renewal and crossing replacement between New Cross and Lewisham, and a further 2100m in 2024.

In total, between 2019-2024 we are investing £250 million in upgrading the track and signalling of the Lewisham area.

We will continue to work closely with our partners at Southeastern to deliver safe and punctual passenger journeys.

Network Rail:

- 8. Are there any plans to use the railways tunnels near Lewisham Station as commercial units (similar to Deptford Railway Station) e.g. mini coffee shops? If not, would there be openness to develop these sites? (Councillor Huynh)**

I am assuming that this relates to the railway arches under the platform at Rennell Street, to the south of the station, that are currently used as public realm? We do not have plans to utilise this space for commercial units at present, but we are always open to dialogue with potential promoters and funders of schemes to improve the use of railway assets where appropriate.

- 9. Can you give us a specific date as to when we can expect the lifts at Catford Station to be operational? (Councillor Walsh)**

The new lifts at Catford station came into public use on 29 May 2023. This has been a £3.7 million investment in the station, to improve accessibility by providing for lift access to and between all platforms.

We intend to hold an 'official' opening and ribbon-cutting ceremony towards the end of summer once snagging work has been completed, and local stakeholders including Lewisham Borough Council will be invited to participate in that event to officially inaugurate the new lifts. You can expect to receive an invitation shortly.

- 10. At a previous meeting (where Network Rail were not present) we asked the following question:  
Are there any plans to install lifts at Nunhead Station? (Nunhead Station is just in the Borough of Southwark but used by a significant number of residents in Telegraph Hill and Brockley in Lewisham.)  
The question was not answered. Can we have an answer please?  
(Telegraph Hill)**

We do not have plans currently to install lifts at Nunhead station.

In our spending period that runs between 2019-2024 approximately £350 million was allocated for the current round of the Access for All scheme, which delivers step-free access to and between stations through (in almost all cases) the provision of lifts.

We expect there will be another round of Access for All to run from 2024 – 2029, but whether this will occur and if so how much will be invested is a decision for the Department for Transport.

I can confirm that Nunhead station has been nominated for inclusion in a potential Access for All programme round that would run from 2024 – 2029. Whether the scheme receives funding will be determined by the Department for Transport, who undertake an exercise to rank and prioritise nominated schemes against the objectives of the fund and according to set criteria, in order to maximise the impact of the fund across the network. We are expecting an announcement on this in due course.

If Nunhead were to be selected to receive funding under this scheme, Network Rail would then be responsible for the design and delivery of the project.

**11. Can Network Rail please explain why, given the number of employees in their management teams, nobody was available to be briefed and to represent Network Rail at the last meeting of this committee? (Telegraph Hill)**

Network Rail was represented by the Senior Public Affairs Manager for the Southern Region at the last meeting of this committee, that took place on 09 March 2023.