

Public Transport Liaison Committee Meeting- QUESTIONS

13 June 2023

Hybrid Questions

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)

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)

Train performance for period 2 (30 April -27 May) was 85.6% (<1 minute late), 94.6% (<5 mins late), cancellations 0.7%. We have no current plans to change the existing service pattern, but services are constantly under review in line with changing patterns of demand.

Network Rail, South Eastern, Southern

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

Our Stakeholder team regularly hold webinars to discuss timetable changes prior to these taking place. Please let us know if you wish to be notified of these events and we will add you to our mailing list.

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)

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)
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)

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)

TfL + Thameslink (Southern)

8. At a previous meeting, the written response of South Rail to our question on the re-establishment of a service to East Croydon was that did not have any plans to restore the service and sought to justify that by providing journeys into Crystal Palace, Clapham Junction and Victoria. There is no

demand for trains to Crystal as this is served by the TfL service. For the northern section (including New Cross Gate and Brockley) there are faster services to Clapham Junction and Victoria either via central London or via TfL. There is no direct route any longer to East Croydon as neither Southern nor TfL services call there. Can we have statistics showing (a) how many passengers now have to change at Norwood Junction compared with those who would, if the previous service was re-introduced, need to change at Crystal Palace for Clapham Junction and Victoria? (Telegraph Hill)

In September 2022, we replaced the East Croydon to London Bridge stopping service with the London Victoria to London Bridge via Sydenham stopping service. The reason we made this change was that it allowed us to double capacity for customers in the Sydenham to London Bridge section with eight and ten carriage trains, replacing the five carriage service into London Bridge which used to operate.

We fully recognise that passengers would prefer to have both services in operation to provide the additional journey options of a service to London Victoria and to East Croydon, but unfortunately with the pressure the network continues to face on funding and revenue, we have needed to make difficult decisions on how we best use the resources available to us.

We have looked into all the available options and believe the current London Victoria to London Bridge via Sydenham service provides the most benefit to customers of the options available in the round of considering all Southern customers in the London Bridge / London Victoria areas.

Direct services between London Bridge and East Croydon are also available from East Dulwich station and the line through Tulse Hill, which does offer an alternative option.

Individual Transport Questions

Southeastern:

9. What plans are there to reopen the access on platform 4 (rampway) at Lewisham Station and what are the timescales? (Councillor Huynh)
10. Will South Eastern Railway provide an update on their performance this year to date? (Councillor Hall)
11. SouthEastern are aware from Petitions and hundreds of individual letters and emails of the anger at the withdrawal of off peak and weekend services to Charing Cross. SouthEastern's Managing Director has conceded many times, on the record, that passenger demand is for services to Charing Cross, not to Cannon Street (for which there is almost no demand).

While SouthEastern have in their May timetable added an hourly service to Charing Cross this is a token response to passengers' anger as it fails to meet the needs of Metro passengers.

SouthEastern have stated that there is capacity at the Lewisham Junction Cross Over for an additional service to and from Blackheath (and services up the line) but that an additional service needs to be cost justified.

Why can a Charing Cross service not be introduced immediately by transferring off peak and weekend services from Cannon Street to Charing Cross. Such a change would be at no extra cost? Future consultation on timetables has been promised by the Rail Minister in Parliamentary Debate and in Meetings. Before the next December timetable review will SouthEastern carry out a public consultation, for which there is ample time, on passengers' needs on the Bexleyheath line, as was done in 2017? (Public question)

12. Can Southeastern please report on how delays and punctuality have been affected by the December timetable change to the Bexleyheath line including in relation to historical benchmarks, and identify what processes are underway to consider whether or not to redistribute trains between the Cannon Street and Charing Cross lines? (Councillor Warner)
13. At a previous meeting (where Southeastern were not present) we asked the following question:
Given the current poor service from Southern Rail into Charing Cross, residents using New Cross Gate station would sometimes walk to New Cross station (6 to 10 minutes) in order to make their journey or, on the reverse journey take a train from Charing Cross to New Cross and walk. However all New Cross services now run to Cannon Street. All Charing Cross services now seem to run fast to Deptford or Lewisham creating significant inconvenience to those living in the New Cross/New Cross Gate area. Is there a possibility that Southeastern services through to Charing Cross, stopping at New Cross, will be restored?

The question was not answered. The written reply simply stated the current position. Can we have an answer please?

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

Network Rail:

15. 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)
16. Can you give us a specific date as to when we can expect the lifts at Catford Station to be operational? (Councillor Walsh)
17. 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)
18. 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)

TfL

19. There is a 7.5 tonne weight restriction on Kidbrooke Park Road. It no longer needs to be in place as the bridge has now been repaired. When will Kidbrooke Park Road be reopened? (Councillor Royston)
20. Does TfL have any update on the schedule to build a station at Surrey Canal Road? What is the funding available for this? (Councillor Hall)
21. Are there any plans to consult on bus frequencies and timetabling across Lewisham? (Councillor Hall)
22. Residents regularly raise concerns regarding the use of Sangley Road by buses. Many on the doorstep raise speeding and a suspicion of wing mirror clipping. There are often I'm told stand offs between road users

along this stretch. What more can you do to monitor and ameliorate these issues and give confidence to residents that TfL is doing it's fair part?
(Councillor Walsh)

23. Speeding buses are causing severe vibration of houses along Sandhurst Road; many complaints have recently ben submitted to Councillor Burgess. An FOI has shown that Lewisham Council and TfL have never communicated about this problem; but TfL's head of operations Rosie Trew recently promised to open an investigation. Can Lewisham Council be raise the matter with TfL in an attempt to solve the issue? (Public question)

24. Are all buses in the area now ULEZ compliant? (Forest Hill)

25. Are there any plans for the 63 bus route to be extended as far as Honor Oak Park station in order to support public travel to the station from the Peckham Rye Park area to reduce car usage and local parking (in support of the Sustainable Streets Initiative)? (Forest Hill Society)

26. This morning (11th May 2023) I had to cycle across that junction and was very nearly knocked down by a white van which had gone straight through the red light travelling west-east on New Cross road. My light (travelling south from Avonley Road) had turned green and if I'd been quicker off the mark he would have hit me.

I know you said that the enforcement team have been made aware that drivers jump reds at this junction but it needs more action. I've thought of some immediate and longer term goals for this junction:

Immediate asks:

- 1) Visible enforcement at the traffic lights, either through patrols or through cameras and more signage about cameras
- 2) Add 3 seconds to the "green man" crossing phase to support pedestrians
- 3) Adjust the lights to include the "green man" pedestrian phase in every cycle, rather than only if the button is pressed (this would save a lot of people on foot a lot of waiting time on a polluted roadside)

Medium term asks

- 1) additional pedestrian light and painted crossing from outside Hong Kong City restaurant to Kender Street - ie a crossing on the 4th side of the junction. Hundreds of people already cross here daily so we should make it safer for them.

Long term asks

- 1) new pedestrian friendly junction redesign that enables diagonal crossing and cycle priority

2) protected 2-way cycle lane on New Cross Road (A2) like the one on Jamaica Road and Blackfriars Bridge Road (Councillor Shrivastava on behalf of resident)

27. At the last meeting we sought to explain our concerns over the inadequate passenger information at Whitechapel and certain other stations. The TfL represent said he would put in a request for TfL to contact the Society directly in order to discuss the issue.

As we said, we would be happy to meet at Whitechapel with a member of TfL staff to explain those concerns (contact via our website at www.telegraphhillsociety.co.uk or direct at ths@baccma.co.uk) but, as yet, have heard nothing. Can this be followed up please?

Thameslink

28. Catford Station was recently voted worst in SE London. Apart from the DfT/Network Rail Access for all funded lift investment and the monies you were fined as a rail operator that were to be invested in station upgrades, could you detail what investment you have optionally made as a business in the last five years and what you plan to make in the next 3? (Councillor Walsh)

[At Catford, Network Rail has invested in two new lifts, a link bridge between platforms, and CCTV. These improvements are now complete.](#)

29. 2 trains an hour from London Bridge to Forest Hill is not enough, particularly in the evening. 30 minute service gaps (and cancellations / fast running) make this too risky an option to use for passengers, leading to overcrowding on the Overground Service. Can this service be extended back to 4 trains, ideally including services that connect to East Croydon directly (as we had before cancellation) as this also has many other benefits for Lewisham residents. (Forest Hill Society)

[We recognise that services can be very busy, particularly in the peak periods. Unfortunately, we are unable to increase frequencies at the present time as we do not have the level of funding available that we would need to make the change. In terms of cancellations, reliability has improved considerably. In period 2, only 0.7 per cent of services were cancelled.](#)

30. There are massive gaps (15 mins) in the Thameslink timetable between London Bridge and Farringdon including morning peaks. Thameslink from London Bridge should be running every 4 minutes at peak times to encourage more use of trains and avoid Overground overcrowding. (Forest Hill Society)

Our timetable has been amended during periods of industrial action to provide greater certainty to customers about train times and frequencies, with the aim of avoiding last minute cancellations due to the overtime ban.

At peak times, there are 12 trains per hour in the timetable through the core from London Bridge to Farringdon. Clearly there may be times when this is not achieved – eg. when there is unplanned disruption to the service.

31. Will train operators consider running services earlier and later to East Croydon from Brockley, Honor Oak Park, Forest Hill & Sydenham stations to provide a convenient public transport link to London Gatwick Airport? (Councillor Hall)

Please see response to Q29

32. The previous meeting queried the response of Southern Rail (who were not at the meeting) and who stated that the full services from West Croydon/Crystal Palace into London Bridge would not be restored at present as the loading was low. It was pointed out that the loading was low because of the infrequent service and that travellers were being forced to take the more frequent TfL services instead which was leading to overcrowding of those services and at Canada Water station where travellers were having to change to the Jubilee line to continue their journey.

TfL stated: “The reduction in service frequencies on Southern during peak periods has caused an increase in crowding levels on this route on Overground services, specifically East London services running via Forest Hill Trains are currently very crowded by the time they reach New Cross Gate at the height of the morning peak period.

“We have spoken informally to Southern about this through our operator (Arriva Rail London) to see if they can reinstate some services to alleviate the situation, but there is no guarantee that they will be able to do so. Our view is that National Rail services should be maintained broadly at pre-Pandemic levels to support the ongoing recovery from the Pandemic and encourage the use of the public transport network; that is what we have done on the Overground network.” In the light of this can Southern Rail please reconsider their response. The TfL representative (who was at the meeting) said that they would continue to seek talks with Southern Rail. Can Southern Rail please indicate how far those talks have got and, if they have not progressed, why not. (Telegraph Hill)

33. At the last meeting, the written response of South Rail to our question on the re-establishment of a service to East Croydon was that did not have any plans to restore the service and sought to justify that by providing journeys into Crystal Palace, Clapham Junction and Victoria. There is no

demand for trains to Crystal as this is served by the TfL service. For the northern section (including New Cross Gate and Brockley) there are faster services to Clapham Junction and Victoria either via central London or via TfL. There is no direct route any longer to East Croydon as neither Southern nor TfL services call there. Can we have statistics showing (a) how many passengers now have to change at Norwood Junction compared with those who would, if the previous service was re-introduced, need to change at Crystal Palace for Clapham Junction and Victoria? (Telegraph Hill)

34. If Southern is determined to keep the current services, when the additional missing trains are re-introduced (see q above) could those be routed to go to East Croydon, thereby satisfying both objectives? (Telegraph Hill)

35. The question asked at the last meeting about running trains off-peak through to Charing Cross was not answered. We were told in the written reply that there were no (current) plans do so. However the question asked was whether, when the franchises came up for renewal, they would consider doing so. If not, why not? This was not explained. We were only told that we had to live with the inconvenience and extended travel time without giving any explanation as to why we would have to. (Incidentally we were also told that the station upgrade at London Bridge has made it easier to change at London Bridge. For disabled passengers, this is true. For all other passengers, the removal of the bridge between lines has meant that the time required to change platforms is now considerably more than it used to be. Furthermore, even if it were easier, that is not a reason for doubling journey times to the West End.) (Telegraph Hill)

The current National Rail Contract awarded to Govia Thameslink Railway does not include the provision of train services into Charing Cross station. Should the DfT wish to include this route into a future contract, we would be happy to consider providing a service.

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

A representative attended from GTR (Govia Thameslink Railway), of which Southern is a brand within the company, along with Thameslink, Great Northern and Gatwick Express.

Stagecoach

37. There is a no smoking sign at Grove Park bus Station, yet bus drivers ignore this, why should public obey this notice? (Public question)

38. When Drivers pull out, on number occasions they pull out, without picking up passengers at the official bus stop. (Public question)

Lewisham Council

39. There are proposals for hundreds of new (car free) apartments in Bell Green. What upgrades has Lewisham requested to the bus services between Bell Green and Forest Hill / Catford / Sydenham to meet demand, or are existing services sufficient? (Forest Hill)