

# MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday 12 September 2017 at 7pm

Present: Cllrs Liam Curran (Chair), Suzannah Clarke, Joyce Jacca, Paul Bell, Roy Kennedy, James-J Walsh, Simon Moss (Transport Policy and Development Manager), Sarah Assibey (Committee Support Officer)

Also Present: Michael Abrahams (Forest Hill Society), Barry Milton (Sydenham Society), Geoffrey Thurley (Ladywell Society), Michael Woodhead (Cinderella Line Campaign), Richard Holland (Downham Assembly), Conrad Bunyen (Borough Engagement Manager, Stagecoach), Neil Benson (TfL), Larry Heyman (GTP/Great Northern)

## 1. Minutes

The minutes of the last meeting be amended to include a question from Geoffrey Thurley regarding the mitigation of noise from Catford Station due to the cutting down of trees

## 2. Declarations of Interest

None Declared.

## 3. Questions Regarding Rail Issues and Responses

The committee discussed the questions and responses regarding rail issues. The following points and actions were made:

- 3.1. In response to the answer provided by TfL to question 1, Michael Abrahams stated that no timescale has been provided by TfL regarding the works of the Overground system on the Crystal Palace route. He added that they had informed that some work was to be carried out in 2018 as part of the restricting of train timetables, however, from the response it does not appear that the changes will take place within the timescale of the next year if funding is yet to be secured

**Action >> For TfL to confirm when the plans to increase the number of services will take place, if at all.**

- 3.2. Neil Benson, explained that whilst there are no plans for a specific review of any changes in demand of night buses, if it becomes apparent that there is continuous demand for an increase of night buses then TfL would look to implement this. Members voiced concerns that it is easy to get stuck at London Bridge and other London hub stations where there are not a lot of options via train or bus to reach home at early hours of the morning.

**Action>> for the Committee to write to TfL to take this action further**

- 3.3. Councillor Walsh, on behalf of Councillor Kennedy questioned under what forum and mechanisms was the decision to proceed with the work on the Bakerloo line (Phase 1 and 2) *and* which parts of the GLA and TfL as well as senior staff and politician has taken up the position for it to go ahead.

Simon Moss added that the overall cost (to take the extension further) and the politics around Bromley, of which the borough is not very supportive of the decision, may have been determining factors which pushed this decision, adding that the question should perhaps be restated to the GLA.

Michael Abrahams asked if LBL has an official position in terms of potentially wanting to see it go beyond Lewisham. If so, LBL should advocate for the extension to go further.

Councillor Walsh agreed that the advocating should happen sooner rather than later, when the works become official. It should be argued that Lewisham is a key area for development and need the infrastructure to support the development size as well as the existing buildings and housing. Commuters are doubling but transport is not developing to match the numbers of people. Councillor Bell added that not having the extension is a lost opportunity and the committee should ask the Mayor to intervene as this is the centre of civic life.

**Action>> the question will be restated to GLA in a formal letter and the endorsing of the extension should be communicated with Bromley also.**

- 3.4. Barry Milton pointed out that there have been a vast amount of complaints from Croydon Council, Heads and Deputy Heads of schools whose pupils travel to school in the south of Croydon, due to the severe cuts to the Thameslink/Southern services. The times of the current trains are enabling children to arrive to school late-the cut is very major from the borough to Croydon. This a direct route which plenty of people find completely necessary to use

Larry Heyman responded that the responses to the consultation of Phase 1 and 2 are currently being reviewed. These should be cascaded to the committee. Thameslink empathise that the changes to the timetable greatly impact the usage of Southern and Southeastern. They level of usage will be assessed as it is of course one of the drivers for the timetable, and it will be taken into consideration. If the usage is thin, that would mark support for a reduction of services.

Michael Abrahams asked if there would be a higher ticket charge as under the new timetable, commuters in Lewisham would have to travel to London Bridge then catch a train toward Brighton just to get to Gatwick or further. Typically, they could travel through Norwood Junction, but this would no longer be possible during morning peak hours. Larry Heyman stated that is it is a point to point journey, the likelihood is that commuters would not be charged more, as if the ticket shows a specific route that is no longer available, it would need to be revisited.

Norwood Junction has very narrow steps, no lifts and with these changes, more people will be using the station to transit to connecting trains- it is in great need of improvement, Barry Milton argued. He continued that the infrastructure outlined in the response for GTR cannot possibly go ahead with the new timetable changes.

Larry Heyman stated that the Strategic Train Planning team at GTR had added that late evening trains are still under negotiation with Network Rail and will be subject to further consultation once Network Rail's aspirations to engineering access are understood.

**Action >> The Committee suggested that a meeting is held with the Strategic Planning Team representative with Councillors to give the Chair, other members and potentially members from the Amenities Society an opportunity to meet and discuss this further to receive more explanation of the proposed timetable and consultation.**

- 3.5. Regarding the current temporary Thameslink services via Penge East, the response from Thameslink says that this service is due to end in 2018 because it is temporary. Larry Heyman stated that these services were not included in the service specification that was outlined in the 2012 for the original Thameslink/Southern/Great Northern franchise bid, nor were they included on the subsequent revision issued by the DfT in 2013- both of which were circulated to all London boroughs.

Over the Christmas period, the infrastructure work at London Bridge is going to be completed which means the routes through London Bridge will be available. There are 300 drivers who need to be trained on route knowledge so the Bedford train through London Bridge will begin after the New Year. Until the May 2018 timetable change, trains will still be timetabled to run through Herne Hill and Tulse Hill but as drivers complete their training, some trains will be running through London Bridge so that those drivers who have had the training can maintain that by May 2018 the trains running from Croydon and Brighton will start coming through London Bridge.

#### **4. Question Regarding Bus Issues and Responses**

The committee discussed the questions and responses regarding bus issues. The following points and actions were made:

- 4.1. In regards to the written answer provided by TfL, Neil Benson added that the usage of bus 176 are under review, still awaiting the data has been received for September when schools are back in session to get more accurate results.
- 4.2. Suzannah Clarke responded to the answers and suggestions provided by TfL stating that the need to use more than one bus from Grove Park to Blackheath is a concern for many local residents, as the two towns are close enough to have to only catch one bus to reach either side. The transport infrastructure is not at its best in that area. She clarified that the areas that are most inconvenienced are Downham and Whitefoot areas as opposed to Grove Park

town centre where there is the bus 202 which goes directly into Blackheath. She asked if there is a possibility that these transport links will become available to which Neil Benson responded that in the short term, it would not be possible. However, long term, once funding becomes available and the route is justified based on the level of demand then it is a greater possibility. The demand is calculated looking at nearby routes and oyster data looking at people who are interchanging at particular points in their journey.

## **5. Whitefoot and Downham Bus Update**

The regularity of the bus 225 these areas was discussed by the Committee as well as the update report provided by TfL.

Complaints were raised that during peak hours of the day and late at night the bus can come as late as half an hour which is often raised as a complaint by local residents.

Neil Benson responded that some infrequencies are caused by incomplete journeys. The incomplete journeys are necessary to allow frequency of the bus route, which is understandably inconvenient for those travelling beyond those areas. He agreed to pass on these issues to the operator to see what can be done. The routes will be looked at independently of this extension to see how they can be made more reliable.

RESOLVED the report was noted.

The meeting finished at 8.25p.m