

PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE

Report Title	Rail Related Questions		
Key Decision	No		
Ward	All		
Contributors			
Class	Part 1	Date: 20 January 2022	

1. When will a 20 minute frequency service be restored between New Cross Gate and London Bridge?

As you know during the COVID lockdowns, the 20 minute service on this Southern route were cut to a 30 minutes frequency. Whilst I appreciate that the customer levels are not back to pre-pandemic levels, this reduction in service significantly increases travel time on what is a very short journey. As one cannot, in the evenings, especially late evenings, rely exactly on when one might reach London Bridge, it is easy to find oneself having to wait 25 minutes for a train journey of no more than 8 minutes.

The alternative of travelling via TfL Overground Services through Canada Water is little faster. Many people who would otherwise use the Southern Services now find themselves forced to use the TfL services, which services are relatively crowded and involve a longer journey time, thus increasing the risk of COVID transmission.

The return to the pre-pandemic service frequency is now overdue. (Telegraph Society)

2. Through journeys to Charing Cross. Are there ever going to be plans to reinstate these?

You will recall that prior to the redevelopment of London Bridge, there were direct off-peak services to Charing Cross. When these were cancelled I had a meeting with Lord Adonis, who was transport minister at the time, who explained that the congestion outside London Bridge made this impossible, but the reconfiguration of the tracks into London Bridge including the flyover would alleviate this problem. The work, including the flyover, has been long done, but there seems no intention of re-introducing services through to Charing Cross despite what Lord Adonis told us.

The lack of those services creates a huge inconvenience and dis-incentivises people from our area traveling by train into the West End. Given both the need to get people out of cars and on to public transport and the Mayor of London's emphasis on rebuilding the economy of the theatre district, this seems much like an own goal.

To put the issue into context, I have a 1954 timetable for our services. The average journey times for services to and from Charing Cross then was 20 minutes during the peak periods with a change at London Bridge, 12 minutes during the off-peak periods with direct trains. The average time according to the current time timetables is just over 30 minutes and can be longer coming back in the late evenings if one just misses a train at London Bridge (this is an average speed of around 10mph for the journey. Add walking times at either end and it can take 50 minutes door to door, or around 7mph)

This can hardly be said to be an improvement in 67 years. Add to this the new London Bridge station, unlike the old, has no toilet facilities on the platforms or, indeed, anywhere once one is through the barriers, that the Southern Lines are highly exposed to bad weather in the winters and that there are no old-fashioned waiting rooms in which one can shelter for these extended waits, and it is easy to see why leisure travellers would prefer the car.

I might also add that whilst Southeast services direct from Charing Cross once also stopped at New Cross, so there was at least one other alternative route home - albeit with an additional 10 minute walk - all those services are now fast to Lewisham as well. (Telegraph Society)

3. Is there any intention to increase the number of services from Ladywell to Charing Cross?
There are only two trains an hour, off peak from/to Crofton Park, and then only to/from Blackfriars and not beyond as previously. This is contrary to what Thameslink had said would happen. Is this covid-related, and when can an uplift in service be expected? (Ladywell Society)
4. Can an update on step free access to Bellingham and Beckenham Hill stations be provided? (Councillor Hall)
5. Are there any studies or proposals to ease network congestion at Lewisham station? (Councillor Hall)
6. Lewisham station has been very busy in the past. What is being considered to increase passenger capacity within the station and improve safety for all? (Councillor Hall)
7. Will Transport for London provide an update on its funding in relation to capital projects within the London Borough of Lewisham including the BLE, LIP and bus timetables? (Councillor Hall)