

**LEWISHAM PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON COMMITTEE
QUESTIONS FROM THE TELEGRAPH HILL SOCIETY**

(NB The questions are from the Society's committee or have been collated from questions raised with the Society on its Facebook page.)

These are the questions asked by us at the 1 November 2022. The operators' written responses are given in the square boxes together with our further comments in red.

Note that we were not able to give these comments to, or question directly, Network Rail and Southern Rail as they did not attend the meeting despite being invited.

If any local resident would like to help the Telegraph Society take these, or any other transport issues further, please contact us via of website: <http://www.TelegraphHillSociety.co.uk> We would be grateful of any help you can give.

Southern Rail

1. Can you please let us know when you anticipate restoring a full pre-COVID timetable on the Croydon- London Bridge line?

As one example of many problems, the reduction of the rush hour service (the 8:19 weekday service in particular) is causing severe overcrowding at Brockley and New Cross Gate on the 8:22 TfL service.

Not only are journey times increased by the reduced service, the reduction in service is creating additional problems at Canada Water TfL station as passengers wanting to reach London Bridge, are being forced to use the TfL services and causing overcrowding at the escalators and then on Jubilee line services. More generally, the level of overcrowding on TfL services caused by the reduction in Southern Rail services, is surely creating a situation where transmission of Covid and 'flu will increase once again.

RESPONSE: Current train loadings for London Victoria to London Bridge services indicate that the service at Brockley at 8:33 and New Cross Gate at 8:36 towards London Bridge runs at around 60% of passenger capacity.

In the future, as passengers return to rail, then we want to see more services operating, building a thriving railway and we know the changes introduced in September will have been a disappointment to some customers on this route.

We will continue to review feedback from rail users and will make changes and improvements where we are in a position to be able to do so with the resources available to us.

(THS comment: the loadings will remain low, because the poor service means that everybody crowds on to the more frequent TfL services. Improve the frequency and loadings will improve.) NB When TfL were asked about the overcrowding on the Overground services, their response was:

"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.”

The issue will come back to the committee at a future meeting after discussions by the operators.

2. Is there any possibility having the Croydon-London Bridge route re-established as it was previously, terminating at East Croydon. The need to change at Norwood Junction is time-consuming and difficult as there is no step free route to change for East Croydon and Gatwick bound passengers. TfL Overground services service Norwood Junction and West Croydon, so the replacement of the East Croydon service would be of considerable help to passengers.

RESPONSE: The reason we made this change was that it allowed us to double capacity for customers on the Sydenham to London Bridge section with eight and ten carriage trains, replacing the five carriage service into London Bridge which was operating prior to the September timetable.

This service also caters for journeys towards Clapham Junction, and because it is running between the two terminus stations, provides more peak time capacity into and out of London Victoria for stations to the west of Crystal Palace, as well as capacity into London Bridge from stations such as Forest Hill.

However, this change does mean that stations along this route no longer have a direct service to East Croydon. One option for those travelling to East Croydon or other destinations further south is to need to change from a London Overground service at Norwood Junction.

(THS explanation of the response - So basically: “No”. We don’t actually need a smaller number of longer trains, we need a more frequent service. Nor is the provision of a long round-about journey to Victoria via Crystal Palace of much relevance to us: we travel into London Bridge.)

3. **(and Lewisham Council)** Prior to the re-development of London Bridge station, the Croydon line ran through to Charing Cross outside rush-hour, giving residents a quick direct service for the West End. When this service was removed the then Transport Minister, Lord Adonis, promised users it could be re-established once the new cross-overs were in place. This has not happened. The need to change at London Bridge can mean that journey times are hugely extended. (For example the journey from Charing Cross to New Cross Gate was 16 minutes is now an average of 30 minutes and potentially 45 minutes).

We appreciate this cannot be amended until franchises are changed but will Southern Rail

(with the help of Lewisham Council) commit to lobby for and negotiate a return to the services we had prior to “modernisation”? The route through London Bridge is available (as used by Thameslink services which run through our stations non-stop). It would provide additional revenue for Southern Rail (as faster and more convenient than the 30 minute route via TfL and Whitechapel) and would give a boost to the West End.

(NB if one goes to the National Rail enquiries website and search for trains from Charing Cross to New Cross gate, it only provides you with the route using TfL services changing at Whitechapel, and does not show the National Rail route at all changing at London Bridge at all.)

RESPONSE: We do not have any plans to reintroduce these services.

The easiest routes for passengers from Charing Cross to New Cross Gate will be either via a London Overground service from Whitechapel or via a National Rail service from London Bridge. The National Rail Journey Planner will recommend either route option depending on which is quicker at the time of enquiry. It is possible to travel on a customer’s preferred route by using the “via” option in the journey planner.

The station upgrades at London Bridge have made it easier for passengers making this connection to change between Southern and Southeastern services, with accessible lifts to every platform.

(THS Explanation of the response: Lump it: put up with the significantly longer journey times. PS The station upgrades at London Bridge have made it considerably more difficult to change between Southern and Southeastern services for the majority of people by virtue of the longer distances to walk and the lack of a footbridge. And the reduced frequency of trains adds to the inconvenience.

Southeastern Rail

1. 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?

No answer. The response simply explained the current position.

So basically the answer is: forget it!

Network Rail

1. **(and Lewisham Council)** Can we have an update on the feasibility of re-opening Brockley Lane station? This is long overdue, especially with the increased usage of the East London Overground line through Brockley.

SUMMARY RESPONSE: There is no funding for this at present, but Network Rail would like to work with TfL and LB Lewisham to explore options to progress a business case.

See: <https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s103678/Network%20Rail%20-%20Response.pdf>

The recently published South London Rail Strategy can be found at:

<https://sacuksprodnrdigital0001.blob.core.windows.net/regional-long-term-planning/Southern/South%20London%20Rail%20Strategy%20Report%202022.pdf>

THS Comment: at least it isn't lost cause. Yet.

2. 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.)

Not answered.

TfL – Buses

1. Is it possible that a bus shelter could be installed at the bottom of Jerningham Road at the start of the 343 bus route? Passengers often have to wait in the cold for some time whilst the bus is prepared for use.

In the past TfL have looked at installing a shelter at the bottom of Jerningham Road but concerns have been raised about the potential of someone using the shelter to climb over the wall on to the adjacent school grounds; for this reason, the proposal was not taken forward

TfL's Asset Operations colleagues would be happy to look at other locations suggested by Lewisham Council; however, all new shelters would have to be paid for by Lewisham

THS Comment: "That's a no" then.

2. More generally, can the policy of keeping the bus doors closed when the bus is stopped at the bus stop but the driver is on board be reconsidered during the cold winter weather? This applies to a number of stops not only just at the end of Jerningham Road but, for example, at London Bridge where passengers have to wait in a queue at the bus stop in the cold, whilst the bus is there, with the driver in it, available to provide shelter for passengers, but not doing so. It would be of considerable help to the more elderly and infirm passengers in particular.

When a bus has reached the end of the road and is on the stand, the driver has the opportunity to take a short break of a few minutes to check the bus, collect their thoughts and prepare for their next journey

While some drivers may feel comfortable allowing customers to board while the bus is on the stand during colder weather, we do not insist or make it policy that drivers permit it

Ensuring drivers have the time they need to undertake checks and have a break is ... (answer not finished)

THS Comment: "That's another no" then since there seems little evidence that drivers do it optionally. Still not sure why they don't permit it. If a driver is comfortable with allowing passengers on the bus when the bus is in operation, it is difficult to see how the driver can feel uncomfortable when it isn't. Passengers, of course, are allowed to be uncomfortable.

We have an undertaking now that TfL will get back to us on this issue after investigating the current policy further.

TfL Underground

1. Could we have an update on the status of the Bakerloo Line Extension proposals please?

Response:

The coronavirus pandemic has had a huge impact on our network and finances. We remain committed to delivering the Bakerloo line extension; however this still depends on a viable funding package being put together

We will continue discussions with the Government, while being realistic about the funding London could contribute to building an extension over the coming years

The Secretary of State for Transport has issued directions to safeguard land needed to build the proposed Bakerloo line extension. Safeguarding is a formal process done by the Department for Transport to protect land above and below ground from conflicting future development.

THS comment: So, not a lost cause but certainly pushed out into the future. It is still in the Lewisham Local Plan as an aim.

2. The link at Whitechapel between the East London Line and the Underground is increasing well used with the advent of the Elizabeth Line however the train indicator system does not provide adequate passenger information. Passengers will now have, for a number of journeys, to use either the Hammersmith and City Line or the Elizabeth Line. There is no way of telling however at Whitechapel station, which is likely to be the best option.

Conversely, for example at Moorgate, the new entrances show the next Elizabeth line train, but not the next H&C line train; on the H&C line platform, the indicators may tell you that the next train is for Aldgate, the one after a Circle Line, the one after that (there is a maximum of 3 shown) another Aldgate train: what passengers need to know is how long the

next train on their line will be, but often for H&C trains, that information is not available at all.

Can the passenger information be upgraded to provide decision-useful information for passengers?

(This issue was raised during the refurbishment of the Moorgate, Liverpool Street and Whitechapel when the Elizabeth line was being constructed, but has not been dealt with).

Response:

Decisions on where to provide customer information signs within stations are based on the options available to customers and at what point in a journey we expect a decision on those options to be made (before a customer enters the ticket barrier or within the station when interchange is likely based on the line options at each station)

THS Comment: this doesn't really answer the question since the decision clearly hasn't been made on that basis, as the question points out. The position has not been re-examined since the redevelopment of the two stations and whilst it might provide customer information it does not provide decision sensible information.

London Underground are continually assessing customer feedback as the Elizabeth Line shapes journeys across London and if more customer information is required it will be delivered. We are happy to set up a meeting with the London Underground customer information team so these concerns can be discussed

THS: Comment; We would be happy to be involved. The TfL representative will put in a request for TfL to contact the Society directly in order to discuss this issue.