

LONDON BOROUGH OF CROYDON  
PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON PANEL

Meeting held on Tuesday 24 February 2015

Present: London Borough of Croydon  
Councillor Robert Canning (Chair)  
Councillor Paul Scott  
Councillor Chris Wright  
Ian Plowright  
John Osborne  
Ilona Kytomaa (Clerk)

TfL  
Stuart Foster (Borough Engagement)  
L Cabana (London buses)  
Aidan Daly (London buses)

East Surrey Transport Committee  
Charlie King

Mobility Forum  
Stephen Aselford

Arriva London  
Bob Pennyfather

Epsom Coaches  
Huw Barrington

Go Ahead London  
Jason Tann

Tram Operations Ltd  
Danny Stephen

Southern Railway  
Yvonne Leslie  
James Harris

GOVIA Thameslink Railway (GTR)  
Larry Heyman

British Transport Police  
Mohammad Mahmud

01/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND INTRODUCTIONS (Agenda Item 1)

Apologies were received from Ayse Hodgkinson (TfL) and Sam Russell (LOROL).

02/15 DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST (Agenda Item 2)

Cllr Paul Scott declared that he had been involved in the London Bridge redevelopment project.

03/15 NOTES OF PUBLIC TRANSPORT LIAISON PANEL MEETING HELD ON 7 OCTOBER 2014 AND MATTERS ARISING (Agenda Item 3)

The notes were signed as an accurate record.

Panel members raised a number of queries in relation to progress made on some of the matters arising.

In answer to a query, Southern and Thameslink representatives stated that the results of the consultation on the new timetable should be available relatively soon.

On facilities to replace stolen Oyster cards, Panel members observed that the Mayor had given assurances in September 2014 that these would come on stream *imminently*, and yet they were still not available to Croydon residents. Panel members were advised that the machinery was in place but that some security issues were delaying the introduction of this service.

A request was made for a route test for the 412 bus service for an alternative terminal site in Purley to address issues arising from the heavy congestion in the vicinity of the Purley Oaks recycling centre. TfL representatives concurred that the impact of the congestion in that area on the 412 bus services needed to be addressed.

Panel members also heard that route tests had been carried out to test a possible diversion during Crystal Palace football match days, as a result of which it had been decided that journeys on the 130 bus route would be diverted to Norwood Junction on match days. It was noted that difficulties had been experienced regarding publicity on affected bus stops.

04/15 PRESENTATION ON THE REBUILDING OF LONDON BRIDGE STATION AND ITS IMPACT ON SERVICES TO AND FROM CROYDON

The Panel were given a presentation by Southern Railways which included the following elements:

- the vision for 2018, which would eventually offer longer trains, nine 'through' platforms enabling more cross-London journeys
- the Christmas blockade which ran from 20 December 2014 to 4 January 2015 and during which there were no Southern or Thameslink services to or from London Bridge
- Issues experienced when London Bridge station reopened on 5 January 2015
- The Joint Improvement Plan initiated on 2 February 2015.

Councillors stated that they had received significant numbers of complaints regarding the poor train services to and from London Bridge at the beginning of the year, which were compounded by the rise in railway fares.

Councillors felt that not enough research had been conducted into traffic movements to ensure that passenger needs would be met and sought assurances that this situation would not recur next Christmas. They added that there had been a lack of understanding and care for passengers and a lack of resources to deal with emerging problems. In addition, a lot of frustration had been experienced regarding the lack of information on changes to services and options available. It was suggested that this could be addressed in part by providing a sufficient number of "floor walkers" at the station.

Panel members also highlighted the delays in moving passengers along platforms swiftly because of hoardings cluttering up the area.

Panel members highlighted the fact that the serious travel issues faced by train passengers had resulted in a shift to travelling by car with all the associated impacts on traffic and air quality.

It was observed that the Redhill corridor had been hit particularly severely by the problems experienced from 5 January onwards and a plea was made to reinstate at least some of the services to London Bridge which had been withdrawn. Concern was also expressed regarding the removal of the Tattenham Corner shuttle in the middle of the day and a request was made for this service to be reinstated.

Representatives of rail services commented that floor walkers had been introduced at London Bridge to address the queries and concerns of rail passengers, and added that it had been difficult to balance the need to make provision for the rebuilding of the station and the needs of passengers.

In addition, they observed that the modelling of passenger movements had not taken into account local factors such as the presence of hoardings, which it was acknowledged slowed down the loading and unloading of passengers.

Panel members enquired whether any further major works were planned for the short and medium term and were advised that all major work had now been completed and that the number of tracks open for railway services was scheduled to increase from three to four from January 2017, which would enable railway companies to reinstate one or two services.

The plea to examine passenger needs in the Redhill corridor was reiterated and it was suggested that changes of train should take place at the Gatwick Airport or Haywards Heath station rather than East Croydon, which was becoming very congested. Railway representatives undertook to do so in time to make any changes for the December 2015 timetable.

The Chair closed the item by emphasising the need for railway companies to learn the lessons from the challenges faced at London Bridge station from 5 January 2015 onwards.

04/15 ISSUES RELATING TO NORWOOD JUNCTION STATION  
(Agenda item 4)

Panel members were advised that a study to assess disabled access to Norwood Junction station would cost approximately £100,000 and that a bid to obtain funding for such a study had been unsuccessful in December 2014. It was suggested that the relevant minister be approached to lobby for such a study. Panel members suggested that a “light touch” and less costly study be undertaken focusing on whether or not lifts can be made to fit on current platforms within existing guidelines. Officers undertook to take this matter to the access officer.

It was also noted that a “derogation” had been achieved at Denmark Hill station, which had similar issues and that this approach might also be adopted at Norwood Junction station. It was acknowledged that access to Norwood Junction station was difficult for wheelchair users and that all possible avenues should be explored to improve this.

Panel members enquired about the reasons for turning down plans for improvements in a feasibility study carried out in 2007. Cllr Scott observed that it had been part of a bigger programme and that it had been turned down because of its level of complexity. Officers commented that footfall had increased significantly since the opening of the London Overground line and that the need for improvements had consequently increased. They undertook to locate the 2007 study and to look at all possible options for improving disabled access to the station’s platforms.

Panel members agreed not to pursue the suggestion to rename the station unless clear opportunities to do so presented themselves in future, and to focus on improving disabled access.

05/15 OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO RAILWAY SERVICES (Agenda item 5)

➤ **Purley blockade**

A request was made for the Purley blockade to be implemented in two stages to minimise inconvenience for passengers. Panel members expressed concerns that replacement bus journeys might be very lengthy in view of congestion and very slow bus exits from the East Croydon roundabout, and heavy traffic along north south routes in the borough. Railway company representatives stated that they were still in discussions on how best to manage this blockade.

Panel members emphasised the need for good signalling on the location of alternative bus provision and suggestions for alternative forms of transport during the blockade.

- **34% increase** on price of Off-peak Travelcard & **38% increase** in Oyster off-peak cap

The Panel was advised that a letter had been sent by one of its members to the Mayor requesting a reversal of the price increase. The Mayor had indicated that price increases might be reversed for Oyster but not for Travelcards, which include travelling on TfL as well as Network Rail services.

- **Availability of One Day Travelcards as a cheaper option** than a return fare in the off-peak on Ticket machines as required by the DfT.

It was observed that making such One Day Travelcards available could become an electoral issue in the run-up to the next Mayoral Elections.

- **British Transport Police Update**

The Panel were given an overview of current crime trends. They were advised that there had been a 40% reduction in tram and rail crime compared to the previous year. The Panel were also advised of a counter-terrorism table-top exercise focusing on tackling a possible terrorist incident at East Croydon station, carried out in response to the current “severe” UK terror threat level. The British Transport Police were planning to hold such an event on a yearly basis.

07/15      **INCREASING CAPACITY AND CONNECTIVITY ON TRAMS (Agenda item 7)**

The Panel discussed plans for an additional loop in the town centre running along Dingwall Road, for which funding has been secured. They were advised that consultation on the impact on buses was still ongoing and that works in Dingwall Road would commence in 2016. Officers also explained that they were hoping to obtain funding for public realm adaptations in the area and that there was some confidence that this could be delivered.

As regards extensions to new areas, officers stated that an extension to Crystal Palace remained the priority for the borough. The challenge for the borough would be to find match-funding to resource the project.

08/15      **OTHER ISSUES RELATING TO TRAMS (Agenda item 8)**

There were no further issues.

09/15      **WEST CROYDON BUS SERVICES (Agenda item 9)**

Officers provided an update and advised the Panel that demolition works at the station had been completed ahead of schedule. Site clearance and a ground investigation were due to follow, after which

civil engineering works would commence. The Panel were advised that, because of this preparatory work, it would be a while before construction works would start being “visible”. The full project would include West Croydon station, Poplar Walk and Station Road, as well as the junction with London Road.

10/15 UPDATE ON THE PROGRAMME OF ACCESSIBLE BUS STOP WORKS (Agenda item 10)

Panel members were advised that the Mayor’s target of making all bus stop DDA compliant by 2018 was being actively pursued.

Officers explained that good progress had been made since May 2013, when a little over 55% of Croydon’s bus stops were DDA compliant. The percentage stood at 77.7% in February 2015 and should reach 80% by the end of the financial year. While 100% DDA compliance was desirable, officers admitted that some bus stops could never become DDA compliant but stressed that every effort would be made to get as close to 100% as possible.

A plea was made for temporary bus stops while works were ongoing. Panel members heard that two consecutive stops on the 466 bus route had been upgraded in two-three days and removed during the works, forcing passengers who usually used them to walk a long distance to the next usable bus stop. Officers explained that TfL were notified of the programme of works and *did* arrange for temporary stops to be provided. However, they undertook to follow up this request and investigate omissions in this provision.

Panel members discussed the new style bus stops which included cycle racks. Officers expressed the view that these could present a danger as people crossed cycle lanes to get to bus stops. A request was made to add an item to the next PTLP agenda on the advantages and disadvantages of “pay and ride”.

11/15 UPDATE ON TfL REVIEW AND CONSULTATION ON BUS SERVICES IN NEW ADDINGTON

Panel members were advised that consultation had taken place before Christmas and that nearly 1000 responses had been received.

12/15 REVIEW OF BUS ROUTES AND NEW CONTRACTS (Agenda item 12)

Officers advised Panel members that contracts were awarded in five to seven year cycles but that changes could be made during contracts too. Panel members were encouraged to contribute ideas on possible improvements to bus services. Officers also explained that TfL was moving towards *area reviews* of transport needs to secure more strategic changes to services. It was explained that while bus contracts were awarded singly, they could be negotiated as a group, taking the needs of an area into account. For instance, it was highlighted that many schools in the south had “bulge classes”,

including two in Chipstead Valley Road, with many pupils coming from outside the area, leading to a significant increase in the use of public transport to Coulsdon.

Officers stated that following recruitment last year, TfL had held meetings with the Council to examine demographic trends and housing and school building plans in order to determine future public transport needs. Officers were due to have a follow-up in March to the December 2014 meeting.

#### 13/15 LOCAL BUS ISSUES (Agenda item 13)

➤ 130 bus route: Panel members were advised that the South Norwood bus stand had been removed although the stop still existed, due to lack of space. It was acknowledged that the stop was not particularly “passenger-friendly”. Panel members enquired why the route could not go up South Norwood Hill during Crystal Palace home matches, but officers explained that a route test had shown that, at the junction of Whitehorse Lane and South Norwood Hill, the bus needed to swerve to the right to ensure it had enough space to turn left, which could present a risk to other motorists.

➤ 154 and 157 bus routes: Panel members were advised that these routes had been given a few additional night-time and early morning journeys.

➤ Tollers Lane, Coulsdon: Panel members were advised that a bus test had been conducted and that a report was due to be circulated soon.

➤ 60 and 466 bus routes: Panel members were advised that a meeting had been held with TfL to discuss issues affecting these routes. They were informed that 15% of buses on these routes never reached Old Coulsdon, leading to numerous complaints. Prior to Christmas, there had been an improvement in the percentage of buses reaching the terminus, but performance had dipped again after the festive season.

➤ 455 and 463 bus routes: It was reported that these were working well at the moment. Thanks were given for the diversion to the 455 route during bridge repair works to keep the service operational. It was suggested that the 463 route be split into two before retender to minimise delays at the southern end.

➤ 166 bus route: During the day on Monday to Friday, this route extends from Banstead and Epsom Hospital, a center for hip and knee operations for patients living in the south of London. It is the only through bus route from Croydon to Epsom. Panel members heard that there was a rumour that Surrey County Council, who part-fund the route, were considering making savings through changes or reductions to the service. However, TfL officers in attendance at this meeting gave assurances that this well used service was not in danger of being withdrawn.

➤ New one day Tram & bus pass : Panel members were advised that the Tram & bus passes had been introduced in January 2015 with no publicity whatsoever. Officers undertook to make enquiries and to report back to the June meeting of the Panel.

14/15 ANY OTHER BUSINESS (Agenda item 14)

Panel members reported overcrowding on the 412 bus route and a plea was made for joint work between TfL and local schools to plan for adequate September bus services.

15/14 TOPICS SUGGESTIONS FOR THE NEXT MEETING  
(Agenda item 15)

The following items were suggested:

- Update on flooding affecting train services in January 2015
- Lessons learnt from the Christmas blockade and action taken in the light of these
- The Purley blockade
- Lessons learnt from the Purley blockade (October 2015 meeting)
- Advantages and disadvantages of "hail and ride"
- New one day bus pass & Tram pass

The meeting ended at 12.29 pm.