

Public Transport Liaison Panel

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 16 October 2018 at 2.00 pm in Council Chamber - Town Hall

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Muhammad Ali (Chair);
Councillor Nina Degrad (Vice-Chair);
Ian Plowright (Planning and Strategic Transport)
John Osborne (Planning and Strategic Transport)
Richard Lancaster (Planning and Strategic Transport)
Nadine Knight (Stakeholder Engagement)
Thomas Downs (Clerk)

East Surrey Transport Committee

John Rapp

Mobility Forum

Stephen Aselford

Tram Operations Ltd

Helen London

Arriva London

Richard Simmons

Abellio

Emmanuel Ajibode

Transport for London

Michelle Wildish

London Trams

Mark Davis

Govia Thameslink Railway

Yvonne Leslie

Go Ahead London

Allan White

Also

Present: Lindsay Williams (Resident), Malcolm Claridge (Quality Line), Nick Bland (Arriva), Hainsley Forbes (Tram Operations Ltd)

Apologies: Councillor Ian Parker, Muhammed Mashud (TfL), Jackie Townsend (First Group), Charles King (East Surrey Transport Committee)

PART A

29/18 Introductions

The Chair welcomed participants to the meeting and those present introduced themselves.

30/18 Disclosures of interests

There were none.

31/18 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 June 2018 were agreed as an accurate record.

32/18 Any other business

There was none.

33/18 Growth Zone Update

The Stakeholder Engagement Manager gave an update to the Panel on the Croydon Growth Zone, beginning with the pedestrianisation of the High Street. The officer summarised that the pedestrianisation had been implemented in September 2017 as a 12 month trial. During the course of this time stakeholders had been engaged in working out any issues that had arisen. A minimal number of complaints had been received from residents, and no complaints had been received from Transport for London (TfL) or the Greater London Authority (GLA).

The Panel learned that a report was being written to assess the success of the trial and to decide the future of the scheme. The report would also consider over 40 activities which had taken place on the pedestrianised High Street, and which had received good attendance.

The representative from the Mobility Forum raised concern that where bus stops had been moved to accommodate the road closure, stops for the same route in opposite directions were no longer opposite in the surrounding streets, which could be confusing for some residents as well as people not familiar with the Town Centre. The officer noted the point and agreed to feed this back to the council.

The Chair requested confirmation that the pedestrianisation of the High Street was a pilot scheme, and the officer confirmed that it would be until April 2019, but the decision on whether the scheme would be permanently implemented would be taken in February 2019. The officer also informed the Panel that the placement of surrounding bus stops would be revisited.

34/18

Buses

a) Bus services in the Town Centre

The representative of the Mobility Forum began this item with a discussion of planned changes to the 75 bus by TfL, with the bus no longer stopping at Fairfield Halls, and instead stopping at West Croydon Bus Station from April 2019. The representative was concerned about residents who had formerly used this bus to access the Fairfield Halls, Croydon College and East Croydon. The representative also queried where coaches park when Fairfield Halls reopened, and suggested the possibility of using College Road.

The Head of Transport shared concerns over the 75 bus and informed the Panel that the council was in discussions with TfL to minimise the impact of bus route changes as redevelopment in the Town Centre progressed. The officer also explained that the council was conscious of the current lack of viable coach parking, but confirmed that several sites were being considered to accommodate this.

The TfL representative informed the Panel that work on the Croydon Bus Consultation had begun, but that it had not yet reached the stage of public consultation. The Panel were told that this would begin in Mid-November 2018 and that both the Chair and Head of Transport had been engaged as part of the process. The representative highlighted that the Consultation was looking to meet future demand, and looked at the idea of terminating buses on either side of the Town Centre. The buses being considered for changes were the 50, 75, 109, 154, 197, 250, 264, 403, 405, 412 and 433.

The Chair enquired as to whether TfL had looked into the accessibility for certain passengers who may need to transfer across the Town Centre, such as students and those visiting Croydon University Hospital. The Chair also asked about the commercial viability of the proposed changes, and whether this would increase or decrease ridership across different routes. The Panel heard that TfL were still looking at how best to maintain hospital access and that it was eager to hear public views; the representative agreed that they would take back the question about commercial viability to TfL.

The Head of Transport agreed broadly with the TfL representative, acknowledging the rationale behind the TfL propositions. The officer added that only a small number of passengers would need to make

interchanges across the Town Centre, and that this could be revisited following the completion of works on Wellesley Road.

The East Surrey Transport Committee representative submitted a document to the Chair outlining proposed amended bus services for the Town Centre during the planned redevelopment works.

The Chair queried if there was an opportunity for greater public realm with the absence of buses across the Town Centre; the officer responded that this would largely be delivered by the construction of the East-West walk by Westfield, but that cars were the greatest barrier to increased public realm.

The Mobility Forum representative raised concerns about the planned closure of the subway under Wellesley Road that linked directly to the Whitgift Centre. The Head of Transport informed the Panel that the impact of this would be reduced by the closure of the bus stops here, and that the council had secured crossings be put in place at other points on the road before the subway was closed. It was further added that a crossing would be added here with the remodelling of Wellesley Road.

Action Point – For TfL to report back on the commercial viability of the proposed bus route changes in the Town Centre.

b) 412 Bus Service Cuts

The TfL representative highlighted that all bus routes were under constant review to ensure that capacity matched demand. It was stated that the frequency change for this route took place in September 2018, and that there was not yet enough data to inform any conclusions about future changes that should be made to the route.

Action Point – For TfL to report back to the Panel once more data on this route had been collated.

c) Diversion of Bus Route 130

The Panel learned that there had been requests for the 130 bus to serve King Henry's Drive from Vulcan Way. It was explained that this had been trialled and found not to be viable as it would have meant that the bus skipped Fieldway, with the knock on effect of overcrowding on the 64 bus.

The Access Officer expressed concern over the number of residents who were impacted by this service not including King Henry's Drive in the route, and informed the Panel of repeated complaints to Ward Councillors from residents on the issue. The officer elaborated that the

current route of the 130 was already served by other routes, and therefore diverting it should cause minimal disruption.

The Chair expressed that he was keen for an evidence based solution from TfL, and that this should be reported back at the next meeting.

Action Point – For TfL to report back with progress toward an evidence based solution for the 130 bus route.

d) 410 Capacity Issues along Davidson Road

The TfL representative informed the Panel that the route was under review, and solutions such as removing 'double runners' on Davidson Road were being considered. The representative expressed that TfL were eager to work with the Council on a solution to this issue as they did not want to reduce frequency, but that larger vehicles could not be used on this route due to tight turns.

Action Point – For TfL to work with the council toward a solution to 410 Capacity Issues along Davidson Road.

e) 468 Service Reduction

The Panel learned that the 468 had a service reduction in September 2018 following a review that had evidenced a fall in demand. The TfL representative explained that the service could be reviewed again should demand change, and that the route was still being monitored.

In response to enquiries by the Chair, the TfL representative stated that they would take the question on the length of time monitoring would take place back to TfL for an answer.

Action Point – For TfL to inform the Panel how long it intends to monitor the 468 bus route for service demand.

f) Thornton Heath bus garage (Update)

The Chair introduced this item by reminding the Panel that this was a repeat item, and introduced Lindsay Williams (Resident) who had completed detailed timetables concerning the bus garage, and had written to Arriva, the garage and TfL. The resident informed the Panel that she had recently been disturbed 12 times in a single night, with most of this owing to the 64 bus route. The resident highlighted the issues of engine revving from the garage, and of the street outside being used as an extension to the garage.

The Arriva Garage Manager addressed the Panel and gave some general information on the current operation. The first bus left at 3:30am and the last arrived at 2:12am, with up to 80 buses passing through the garage during peak hours. It was explained that Arriva worked closely with the cleaning contractors at the garage to avoid nuisances, and that strict penalties could be brought if the speed and noise of cleaning were not within permitted parameters. It was stated that night observations were being undertaken by supervisors to ensure engines were not being revved when building up air for brakes, or any other activities which may cause disturbances for residents. The Garage Manager stated that he had spoken directly to all staff at the garage, and awareness was high about the importance of being a 'good neighbour'. The Panel learned that work was being undertaken to see if staggering the arrivals of night buses finishing their routes could yield positive results for residents.

The Chair asked if this was a capacity issue, and one that could not be solved without a reduction in the number of buses using the garage, or until the entire fleet were electric. The Garage Manager explained that the garage was at full capacity as this was most efficient, but that land had been secured on Beddington Farm Road, with the view to expand. The Garage Manager elaborated that despite this more investigation needed to be done to find out if this was a viable solution.

Action Point – for Arriva to continue to work directly with local residents to address outstanding issues with the Bus Garage.

35/18 Rail

a) Timetable Update & Winter Timetable Update

The Govia Thameslink Railway representative began by updating the Panel on the Summer timetable, which had had the best performance since the start of the Southern contract for the end of the period. It was explained that there were no additional timetable changes planned until the next national timetable change.

For Thameslink and Great Northern, the interim timetable had been introduced from the 15 July 2018; more services had been running, but still not at the level that had been proposed in the initial timetable. The Panel were informed that 85% of trains had been running within five minutes of scheduled times and that most peak services had been reintroduced during September 2018.

The representative elaborated that there were no big changes planned for the Winter timetable and that services would carry on being introduced with the aim of meeting the original timetable. It was further stated that the PDF of the timetable would be available at the end of October 2018.

Action Point – for Govia Thameslink Railway to report back on the progress of reintroducing services to meet the full timetable.

b) Off-peak services

The Govia Thameslink Railway representative explained that off-peak services were being slowly reintroduced, but that peak services had been the priority.

Both the Head of Transport and the Mobility Forum representative raised concerns regarding trains running through Norwood Junction; the Govia Thameslink Railway representative answered that if services were not on the base timetable, they may be still be added.

Action Point – for Govia Thameslink Railway to report back on the progress of reintroduction of off-peak services.

c) Gatwick Service from Purley

The Govia Thameslink Railway representative informed the Panel that this service had only been removed as part of the interim timetable and would be reintroduced.

d) East Croydon to Blackfriars and St Pancras Service Increase

The Govia Thameslink Railway representative informed the Panel that this service had only decreased as part of the interim timetable and would be increased starting with peak services and then moving to off-peak services.

e) Access for All – West Croydon, Norwood Junction, Reedham & Waddon

The Govia Thameslink Railway representative informed the Panel that assessments were being done on all of their stations based on the criteria from the Department for Transport (DfT) and Network Rail in order to prioritise the stations most in need. The Head of Transport thanked the representative for engaging the Council in this process; it was also noted that TfL had not done this and no Croydon stations had featured on their list of priorities despite having worked closely together over West Croydon Station.

The TfL representative explained that West Croydon Station was not a priority for TfL as there were stations on their network with zero step free access. It was also stated that Norwood Junction had not been considered as implementing step free access was not considered

feasible, but that the bid was still in draft form and had not yet been submitted to DfT.

The Head of Transport challenged this assertion, stating that Network Rail had provided multiple step free solutions to the Council when consulted. The TfL representative explained that they had not had access to this information and it was agreed the Head of Transport would share it after the meeting.

Action Point – for Govia Thameslink Railway and TfL to update the Panel on the state of the Access for All bids at the next meeting.

Action Point – for the Head of Transport to share the Network Rail accessibility assessment with TfL.

f) London Overground Performance Update

The TfL representative updated the Panel with the Overground performance at West Croydon Station. During September to July 2018 there had been a slight dip in performance with 85% of trains arriving within five minutes of their scheduled time; however, this had recovered by July 2018 where the level had returned to 93%.

The Head of Transport stated that he had noticed the dip in performance but was pleased that the service had recovered. The London Trams representative explained that Network Rail assets (such as signals) had contributed to this performance dip, but that this had improved. The Panel also learned of efforts from TfL to gain priority on certain track over other operators from Network Rail.

The Access Officer enquired as to if returning the Overground platform back to the one it had originally been would improve the situation at all. The London Trams representative informed the Panel that suggestions were being taken to the Alliance Board to see what improvements could be made, but that it should be noted that the Overground was still the best performing operator.

36/18 **Trams**

a) Tram Operations Limited - Safety and Ops Directors Report

The London Trams representative outlined some points from the report highlighting the focus on reducing delays, especially those of 20 minutes and longer. A car accident on the 3 October 2018 which had blocked tracks and firefighting equipment blocking the tracks on 8 October 2018 (when there had been a fire on George Street) had both caused significant delays. The representative explained this had shown that

there was work to be done engaging with the Metropolitan Police and the Fire Brigade to avoid repeated instances.

Customer satisfaction had been good, with a one percent drop in performance down to 90%; feedback had been that this was due to poor cleanliness on trams and at stops, as well as unreliable air conditioning in the summer. The representative informed the Panel that both of these issues were now being looked into, and that checks were being undertaken on heating systems before the winter began. In contrast to this, there had been the lowest number of complaints for the period since records began.

The Panel also heard that driver vigilance devices had been added to all trams which ensured drivers were paying attention and not sleeping. Work was being done to secure auto-braking systems to all trams, but this had not yet been achieved.

The Mobility Forum representative suggested information should be displayed at tram stops, in a similar style to underground maps, to help users better navigate the service. The London Trams representative agreed and explained that a review of posters and signage had already been launched, with new signage planned by the end of the year.

The Head of Transport identified that a recent Scrutiny Recommendation, which had passed through Cabinet, stated that:

“That Croydon Council ensure that it holds to account Tram and Bus Operators on their safety measures.”

The Officer asked who at TfL would be best to write to on the matter and it was identified to be Jill Collis by the London Trams representative, but also that they would be happy to do it themselves.

Action Point – for TfL and the relevant operators to report back annually on Bus and Tram safety.

b) Elmers End Branch – Second Platform

The London Trams representative informed the Panel that an extra track would be added to Elmers End tram stop, which would improve the whole network by speeding up journeys, improving capacity and increasing reliability. The Panel learned the works would start at the beginning of 2019.

The Chair invited the Panel to submit any items they would like discussed before the Agenda deadline for the next meeting.

38/18 **Dates of future meetings**

26 February 2019

The meeting ended at 3.38 pm

Signed:

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Date:

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