

Public Transport Liaison Panel

Meeting of held on Tuesday, 11 February 2020 at 10.00 am in F10, Town Hall, Katharine Street,
Croydon CR0 1NX

MINUTES

Present: Councillor Muhammad Ali (Chair);

Councillor Simon Hoar

Apologies: Councillor Nina Degrad

PART A

1/20 Introductions

The Chair opened the meeting and asked those present to introduce themselves.

2/20 Minute Silence in Memorial for Stephen Aselford

The Chair initiated a one-minute silence for the late Stephen Aselford who represented the Mobility Forum at the Public Transport Liaison Panel.

The Chair told the Panel that Stephen was an inspiring and compassionate campaigner for social justice, disabilities and championed accessible transport.

3/20 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Michelle Wildish, Transport for London (TfL), and Yvonne Leslie, Govia Thameslink Railway (GTR).

4/20 Disclosures of interests

There were none.

5/20 Minutes of the previous meeting

The minutes of the meeting held on 1 October 2019 were agreed as an accurate record.

a) Update on Phipps Bridge London Trams derailment - Mark Davis (London Trams)

The London Trams Representative stated that the British Transport Police had closed the investigation because there had been no evidence gathered from the appeal for information and there were no further avenues to explore.

Black Horse Lane would re-open, after a four-year closure, on 25 February and an event was scheduled to mark the occasion in commemoration. In response to the Chair asking if there would be any further upgrades on the premises for the re-opening, the London Trams representative said that there was an improvement notice served because a hole in the fence was identified. There was a risk assessment currently in process where the fieldwork was being completed and there would be independent report published in late February to highlight what improvements could be made to the network.

In response to the Chair asking for an update on the tram improvements at a future meeting, the London Trams representative stated that they would present the immediate improvements and future plans for the network and there was already funding to secure new additional trams for the network.

a) Update on the Bus services in the Town Centre

The TfL Representatives introduced the update. The main route changes saw manoeuvring issues therefore adjustments were made after accepting feedback following the changes; notably an introduction of temporary stops on routes 405, 412 and 433. Currently there was not sufficient data to assess the substantive impact of any changes, however TfL asked spectators to be patient until the data was reliable. TfL recognised that dissatisfaction with the changes existed among some and there would be continued review.

In response to the Chair asking how residents felt about the changes so far from monitoring the feedback received so far, a TfL representative said that they did not have that data and would find a response from Michelle Wildish.

The ESTC representatives raised the following points:

- There could have been more changes made to improve the bus network
- There were issues outside Fairfield Halls whereby on occasion there were no spaces for incoming busses to stop due to route timings and terminals

405 and 412

- There were issues with buses terminating at inconvenient and isolated areas without other links, Katherine street should be utilised as a location

- Improving the connections did not necessarily need more buses introduced to the network, just a re-shuffle
- There were issues with empty busses following the changes
- Buses did not service stop where demand was
- There were issues with residents needing to change busses and then finding that the next connection was too overcrowded to board

434

- The planned route extension to Old Town could be implemented with ease immediately and did not need to wait for the Liverpool Street expenditure

264

- The 264 was the only bus from North West Croydon that stopped in west Croydon and the changes had meant that passengers now had to make two changes to reach central Croydon. Residents from the outskirts of Croydon should have to make two changes

The TfL representatives provide updates on the following bus route changes:

405 and 412

- They would investigate the data and see what possible changes were available to fit with a business case, where if justification was found there would be an opportunity for change

433

- They were happy to extend the route and they were currently working with LBC to find locations to safely operate

409

- Fell Road had been closed for 12 months so the route had been manoeuvred to Katherine Street

264

- The spare capacity redeployed from the route change had allowed savings, in excess of £5 million, which could be reinvested in higher demand areas
- They accepted that it could be hard for residents when additional changes were added to their journey

A Panel Member stated that the route changes affecting Croydon were retrograde because service provision and quality was reduced, despite residents having a desire to use bus services, which were particularly bad for elderly residents in the south of the borough trying to visit the hospital with the newly increased changes. The Panel Member stated that Route 412 was the only bus service to run through the Riddlesdown area, which had hilly topography and wooded land. The service had been reduced by 25% when the real drop in use stood at 10% and that did not equivocate the change in passenger frequency. Residents should not be hindered in ability to visit the city centre via public transport, leaving their most viable option as driving, so

TfL needed to reevaluate the frequency of the service. The TfL representative replied that they would look into Route 412 to investigate any adjustments that implemented to match the frequency to demand and added that the south of Croydon was expected to increase in demand in the coming years. The Panel Member responded that they understood usage needed to be measured however there had to be practical considerations that allowed passenger flexibility to use and therefore maintain services.

The ESTC representatives made the following points:

- Business cases did not capture the passenger experience
- Most of the changes were made to services in the north and south of the borough
- Shifted resources were mainly aimed to help school children
- Bus services needed to be made more attractive to residents to use and as it stood people were now often left to stay at home if they did not have the option of using a car
- Increased car use would reduce air quality which conflicted with the environmental agenda
- There should be local hubs for easier bus changes

The TfL representatives replied that their roles primarily managed strategic plans; however, they would pass the comments on to TfL colleagues who managed daily customer experience. The TfL representative stated that any increase in car use was an unintended consequence and service reductions were a response to TfL financial constraints. TfL would be happy to attend local forums to learn about bus service areas that would improve the passenger experience.

The Chair thanked the TfL representatives for their useful feedback and stated that they should return to the next meeting for the Panel to consider their data review. The Chair said that Croydon was not seeing an adjustment of spending, as seen in more central boroughs, and it needed at least double the current level of investment into services. In terms of long terms targets, investment needed to be secured in public transport – the business case needed to be revaluated because regardless of financial constraints, residents wanted better public transport.

A resident told the Panel that in many areas of Croydon there was limited public transport provision and in some cases, such as Kenley, the walking journey could be 18 minutes to reach transport hubs in order to access the town centre and up to 25 minutes returning home due to steep hills. Residents wanted improved links from the area because outskirts of Croydon were secluded, with poor lighting and wooded areas, meaning many were forced to use their cars. It was understood that increasing blocks of flats were being developed in the area so that parking would become more of an issue and would leave people with all-round greater challenges. The resident asked TfL what the results were from the Route 434 trial.

The TfL representatives replied they were looking to introduce additional services, which took into account the housing developments, and they were pursuing consultation. They were looking whether to extend Route 434 to Whiteleaf. The LBC representative commended the TfL bus trial and stated that Croydon had previously applied to TfL to bid for a bus service in Kenley, however unfortunately they were unsuccessful in the bid. LBC had commissioned a desktop study to look at the economic demand for the Kenley area. The LBC representative stated that there would be winners and losing in extending Route 434 to Whiteleaf because this would reduce some Kenley journey stops.

The ESTC representatives made the following comments:

- Concern was raised over extending Route 434 to Whiteleaf because there not perceived demand
- An additional bus was needed in Kenley
- There should be caution in removing Route 434 from Crawford Avenue because this was close to care homes
- Despite Route 403 having increased frequency, the number of busses had not increased and the service had worsened
- There should be a circular route for Routes 433 and 404

The Chair thanked residents for their feedback and stated that formal consultation should lead to passenger improvements.

b) Noise at Thornton Heath bus garage

The Chair stated that there had been a meeting with Michelle Williams (TfL) and local residents to discuss and decide actions to improve the current situation and asked if there were any minutes from that meeting. A resident replied that the meeting did take place; however, there were no conclusions or decisions made and added that the issues of roadblocks, noise pollution and parking were still apparent. The Chair said that a solution to satisfy all stakeholders needed to be found and these forums should support that.

A TfL representative stated that there had been actions agreed at the meeting however Nick Bland (TfL) who was present at that meeting was not in attendance to currently respond. They had agreed to do what they could to minimise the effects to residents and since the meeting they had been spot-checked by the council and environmental health which found that issues raised by residents were deemed compliant needing no further action.

The Chair stated that there was a role for TfL in finding a solution through their responsibility as the operator and the situation was not unique to the Thornton Heath bus garage, therefore lessons could be learnt from other cases across London. The Chair stated that LBC should write to the Performance Manager and Customer Services at TfL to make progression towards a solution. Currently there was no urgency demonstrated from TfL and Arriva to solve the issues. TfL should return to a future Panel to explain

the next stage and actions to reaching improvement. The Chair stated that it was a shame that no real ground had been achieved from the meeting and it was not appropriate to continually return to the Panel because this was a long-term ongoing issue now requiring resolution elsewhere.

c) Update on Route 130 - Neil Benson (TfL)

The TfL representative presented the background and business case for Route 130. The TfL business case was a strategic approach to bus services to achieve optimum coverage, to maintain an enhanced network, to ensure as many residents were of five minutes or less from a service link, to enable faster connections, to improve bus stop locations and to reallocate resources to the best possible use in outer London. The economic approach was to maximise the value for money whilst managing the financial constraints of TfL, in line with DfT, taking into account passenger journey, waiting and walking times balanced with changes in revenue generated and associated costs. In the case of Route 130, there were currently significant gaps between stops, particularly in Thornton Heath where there is one 400m above the guillotine standard. There was ongoing work to explore the options of either altering the route, which was based on balancing the optimum measurement between stops or adding an additional bus stop; however, there had been challenges to identify a safe location.

An ESTC representative replied that there were stages of Route 130 that clearly needed a stop, where elderly residents relied upon parts of this route, and there was potential to alter the route during off-peak times in order to flexibly cater for passenger's needs. A TfL representative replied that the benefits and costs of possible options had been considered and that TfL had limited resources available, therefore they had to follow an evidence based resourcing distribution and they would provide funding where there was sufficient justification.

The Chair agreed with the ESTC representative in terms of raising the profile of passenger benefit to the business case, in addition for the monetisation of measures and financial incentives to scope to health factors including air quality. The TfL representative replied that passenger benefits were taken in to account but they would take this feedback to the strategy and planning team at TfL to explore different ways of looking at business cases appropriately, separately considering marginally decided cases.

d) Update on Norwood Junction - Neil Benson (TfL)

The TfL representative told the Panel that a survey had been conducted, primarily to Route 130, to find justification to increase bus service capacity to the area. Findings showed that no passengers were left behind at the stop. A ESTC representative replied that Route 410 did have an issue.

e) Update Vision Zero - West Croydon Station

A TfL representative stated that Station Road had been identified as a dangerous hotspot and needed to be made safer for pedestrians. The Mayor wanted bold action to put forth a strategy to improve safety. There was ongoing work from TfL and London Trams teams to improve the area, short and long term; this focussed on safe speeds, prohibiting types of vehicles and improved behaviours from road users as a systematic response.

The Chair stated that the area was high risk due to bus stops and West Croydon Station therefore improvements needed to be actively found.

The Head of Transport told the Panel that they were expecting a report from TfL to find a definitive answer to improve the area. Ten years ago the West Croydon Masterplan was published between LBC and TfL. There had been designs to install a crossing in this area however this did not materialise due to changes. Something needed to be implemented but at this stage there was no clear timeline. The Chair responded that clarity needed to be found on this issue and there was a definite case for a pedestrian crossing. The TfL representative agreed that action should be taken and they would feedback to a future meeting after speaking to Michelle Wildish (TfL).

The Chair stated that signage was still required at the car park on site. The LBC representative replied that due to changes in operators the issue was displaced and would be picked up soon. The signage needed to be installed for clarify platform changes and for the safety of passengers.

f) Route 433 Mid-Croydon terminus/publicity (also routes 405/412)

In response to an ESTC representative asking when the routes could be extended back to West Croydon via Old Town, the LBC representative stated they could focus on this issue when there was more capacity and this was something that could be implemented earlier than the whole improvement scheme.

8/20

Trains

a) Update on Rebuilding Norwood Junction Station from the Chair - (Network Rail)

The Chair stated that the written update from Network would be circulated to the Panel after the meeting and Included within the minutes.

The following written update was provided by Network Rail:

“Following the public engagement last year, the feedback has been collated and a press release has gone out summarising the responses. This can also be viewed on the Network Rail website:

<https://www.networkrail.co.uk/news/overwhelming-support-for-proposals-to-upgrade-norwood-junction-station>

The designs for Norwood have not substantially progressed over the past six months as the team have been focusing on other elements of CARS”

b) Update on Unblocking the Croydon Bottleneck from the Chair - (Network Rail)

The Chair stated that the written update from Network would be circulated to the Panel after the meeting and Included within the minutes.

The following written update was provided by Network Rail:

“The design team have been progressing well and substantial progress has been made since the last public consultation back in November 2018.

We plan to consult again with the public in June 2020 and are currently beginning engagement with statutory stakeholders in advance of this.

In view of the above we feel it would be inappropriate to provide any further detail to this forum, at this time.

It may be more appropriate to attend a meeting later in the year, however we do not want to pre-empt the upcoming public consultation”

c) Update on Rebuilding Gatwick Airport Station – Paul Codd (Stakeholder Manager, GTR)

The GTR representative introduced the Gatwick Airport Upgrade 2020-2023 presentation. The presentation covered the purpose and what the project would deliver, the timescales of the project and the effects to train services during works. The project was being delivered through a partnership approach between DfT, Network Rail, GTR, GWR, Gatwick Airport and Coast to Capital. The GTR representative ask for any questions form the Panel and agreed for the presentation to be circulated after the meeting.

The following comments were made:

- An ESTC representative said the presentation was informative and well received,
- An ESTC representative raised concern over Platform 7 closing
- An ESTC representative stated that good signage around the station was necessary during the works
- The GTR representative stated that the was a dedicated page on the Network Rail website that covered the project, including a specialised ‘Plan your journey’ section
- An ESTC representative asked whether the workforce upgrading Gatwick Airport Station could be fed into other projects as they were ready and available with the skills in the locality

- An ESTC representative stated that passengers should be advised by training companies to make journey connections outside of East Croydon Station to relieve capacity

d) Update on West Croydon Station redevelopment - Neil Benson (TfL)

The TfL representative stated that the redevelopment would mean improved accessibility and platform capacity. Arriva would be improving the signage at the rear of the car park. Currently TfL was in the process of presenting a strategy to LBC.

The LBC representative stated that Croydon Council were working with TfL to make improvements. A key component of the West Croydon Masterplan was the redevelopment of West Croydon Station and the feasibility was looking positive. Network Rail were looking at the possibility of having three tracks in future.

An ESTC representative stated from a passenger point of view, during any works to take place they would rather the station remained open as to not reduce mobility through that period and maintain access to the tram and bus station.

e) Update on Replacement of Sanderstead Railway Bridge – Paula Williams (Network Rail)

An ESTC representative told the Panel that Sanderstead Road was closed for two months and there had not been sufficient notice. An ESTC representative stated that the work had been completed to a good standard. The construction assembly was finished within the work area meaning other areas were not negatively impacted. Network Rail provided a shuttle bus during the works which was a success. The Chair thanked the representatives for their feedback which could be incorporated into a future project.

9/20 Any other business

An ESTC representative asked for an update on the Passenger Benefit Fund and the amount of funds allocated to from TfL for passenger improvements, referring to Item 6b from the previous meeting on 1 October 2019. The Chair replied that they would ask for a response from TfL to a future meeting.

10/20 Items for next meeting

The following items were suggested to be discussed at the next meeting of the Panel:

1. Update from London Trams on proposed improvements to the trams to increase capacity including extra platform at Elmers End.

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2. The replacement of Selsdon Road Rail Bridge and the effect on bus services 403 and 412.
 3. Report on the GTR Passenger Benefit proposals for Croydon Stations.

11/20 **Dates of future meetings**

- 16 June 2020
- 29 September 2020

The meeting ended at 12.00pm

Signed:

Date:

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