

ROYAL BOROUGH OF GREENWICH

REGENERATION, TRANSPORT & CULTURE SCRUTINY PANEL

THURSDAY 28TH OCTOBER 2021 AT 7:00 PM

MINUTES

PRESENT:

Members:

Councillor Gary Parker (Chair), Councillors Matt Clare, Ann-Marie Cousins, Aidan Smith, David Gardner, John Fahy, Clare Burke-McDonald and Charlie Davis.

Officers

Scrutiny Officer.

Others in attendance

Councillor Sarah Merrill (Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport), Abbas Raza (Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement – Transport for London), Ami Ibitson (Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships – Transport for London), Andrew Chillingsworth (Community Engagement Officer – Govia Thameslink), Angeline Verrillo (Road Performance Manager- Go-Ahead London) and Jackie Reagan (Area Network Controller (Road) - Stagecoach London).

The Chair welcomed members and proceeded to the agenda items.

Item

No.

1 Apologies for Absence.

Apologies received from Network Rail and Southeastern Railway.

2 Urgent Business.

There was no urgent business.

3 Declaration of Interest.

Resolved -

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies be noted.

4 Minutes.

Resolved -

That the Minutes of the meeting of the Panel held on 13th October 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

5 Annual Transport Scrutiny Meeting.

Transport for London

The Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement and Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships gave a presentation to the Panel. The Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement stated that the pandemic has had a catastrophic effect on TfL finances and that majority of their revenue came from fares income. He stated that they had been able to keep the network operational through a series of short-term funding settlements with the latest of these expiring on 11th December 2021.

He stated that until ridership stabilises, they would require some level of government subsidy to continue operating. He added that they would like to partner with Government and move to a predictable and efficient system of multi-year investment control periods similar to the system enjoyed by Network Rail. He stated that the situation has meant difficulty in long-term planning and strategy and in how they have been able to provide funding to boroughs for proposals.

The Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement gave ridership figures for the week commencing 18th October 2021 to 24th October 2021. He stated that weekday tube ridership reached 60 per cent of pre-pandemic levels whereas weekday bus ridership reached 73 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. He further stated that weekend tube ridership reached 80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels whereas weekend bus ridership reached 80 per cent of pre-pandemic levels. He added that this was a steady increase in figures

from earlier in the spring and summer and emphasised that they were continuing to monitor and assess how factors such as increased home working may affect commuting patterns and demand going into the “new normal”. He stated that for areas like North Greenwich Ridership has tended to be higher at weekends due to the O2.

The Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships gave some updates on Greenwich services. She stated that Crossrail remains on track to open the Elizabeth line in the first half of 2022 when passenger services commence between Paddington and Abbey Wood. She stated that when the Elizabeth line opens in the first half of 2022, customers travelling between Reading, Heathrow and central London will still initially have to change at Paddington National Rail station and those coming in from Shenfield will need to change at Liverpool Street National Rail station to use Elizabeth line services. She further stated that full end to end services will be timetabled to commence soon but no later than May 2023. She stated that trial running of trains through the central tunnels was well underway as part of the major railway trials taking place throughout this year. She added that trains are now regularly running at 12 trains per hour through the central section.

The Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships stated that the manufacturing of the new Docklands Light Railway (DLR) trains for the DLR fleet was well under way and two months ahead of schedule. She stated that initial run of 20-car bodies for trains 1 to 4, was in production and that the first train is now assembled and ready to commence static testing. She revealed that they were on track to start introducing the new trains and enhanced capacity for the Lewisham and Woolwich lines into service as planned in early 2024.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships stated that demand had not returned to pandemic levels. She reassured the Panel that the frequency of buses was not being reduced however transport planners usually investigate and adjust the service if anything is noticed in terms of demand.

Responding to further questions from the Panel, the Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships stated while bringing things back to normality, Jubilee will be running as late as possible. She also stated that it was possible to introduce more Santander docking stations. The

Responding to further questions from the Panel, the Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships stated that with regards to DLR extensions

Thamesmead will be prioritised since Abbey Wood is getting Crossrail. The Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement stated that Elizabeth Line is scheduled to launch first half next year.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Engagement Manager for Stakeholder Advocacy and Engagement and the Engagement Officer for Local Communities & Partnerships stated that the Creek Road Bridge project will be happening however they need to sort out permits and would hopefully begin by the end of the year. They stated that there are plans to run a transformative scheme at the Angerstein roundabout and area to make it safer and comfortable for cyclists. They added that the scheme is currently on hold due to effects of the covid-19 pandemic.

Govia Thameslink

The Community Engagement Officer for Govia Thameslink highlighted some key areas of the update. He informed the Panel that work was being done to enhance health and safety and added that Samaritans had been introduced on site due to increase in suicide. The Community Engagement Officer stated that one of the main challenges being faced was cancellations due to train driver challenges. He revealed that 41% of cancellations was due to lack of train drivers.

In response to questions from the Panel, the Community Engagement Officer stated that work was being done to make their timetable more resilient to reduce cancellations. He stated that patrols were being done to increase train safety. The Community Engagement Officer reassured the Panel that CCTVs are installed on all trains and that many stations had CCTVs installed.

Responding to a question, the Community Engagement Officer stated that services alerts in the form of twitter announcements and update emails are available to customers.

In response to a question from the Panel, the Community Engagement Officer stated that they are investing in solar panels to help reduce power consumption. He added that installation of Electric Vehicle charging points was underway at many of their stations. He revealed that thirty-four charging point were installed last year making it the highest for any railway station.

Go-Ahead and Stagecoach

The Road Performance Manager for Go-Ahead and the Area Network Controller for Stagecoach London introduced themselves and gave a summary of some of their operations in the borough.

In response to a question about the introduction of an express 161 bus service, the Road Performance Manager for Go-Ahead and the Area Network Controller for Stagecoach London stated that a proposal would have to be submitted as a borough to TfL who would then look at it and advise accordingly.

Responding to a question from the Panel, the Road Performance Manager for Go-Ahead and the Area Network Controller for Stagecoach London stated that they work closely with TfL to ensure that services run smoothly. They stated that they provide feedback in the form of complaints and suggestions to TfL and also support with the safety elements involved with the service.

In response to a question from the Panel, the Road Performance Manager for Go-Ahead and the Area Network Controller for Stagecoach London stated that in order to avoid confrontation and delay of service, enforcement of facemasks is limited to automated announcements. They added that another challenge faced was that bus drivers with Heavy Good Vehicle (HGV) licenses were leaving for HGV jobs.

The Panel

Resolved -

That the updates presented at the Annual Transport Scrutiny meeting be noted.

6 Action Monitoring.

Resolved -

That the status of actions from previous meetings be noted.

7 Commissioning of Future Reports

The Chair informed the Panel of the items coming to the 9th December 2021 meeting.

The Panel

Resolved -

That the items coming to the 9th December 2021 meeting of the Panel be noted.

The meeting closed at 9:36 pm.