

Transport, Highways and Road Safety update to Environment and Community Services PDS Committee November 16th 2023

Public Transport Forum

Another Transport Forum was held on October 10th and a wide range of representatives attended including; Network Rail, Southeastern, Thameslink, Stagecoach, GoAhead, TfL and Licensed Taxis. In follow up correspondence I raised with Southeastern better connectivity for the trains on the Bromley North branch line with trains at Grove Park. Southeastern have stated that:

“It is possible to change the schedule to provide more minutes before connections at Grove Park to Charing Cross, for example, but this would impact travellers coming in the other direction.

For example, if we have a train arriving 5 minutes earlier to provide an additional cushion for connection, we would then need this shuttle service to depart 5 minutes earlier to travel back to Bromley North, meaning some passengers heading via Grove Park to Bromley North would face a very tight connection or would miss it entirely and then have a very long wait.

In essence we can provide a service in one direction with plenty of cushioning for connection, or we can accommodate both directions with tighter connection times, which is what we do now

If there is substantive feedback which suggests that a good majority of local passengers would prefer us to prioritise the Grove Park direction in the morning (for example), then we would be happy to consider it, but it would come with a trade-off for those travelling into Bromley at that same time of day”.

As this largely affects constituents in the Bickley and Sundridge, Plastow and Bromley Town Wards I have circulated the reply to them for their observations.

TfL bus planning meeting

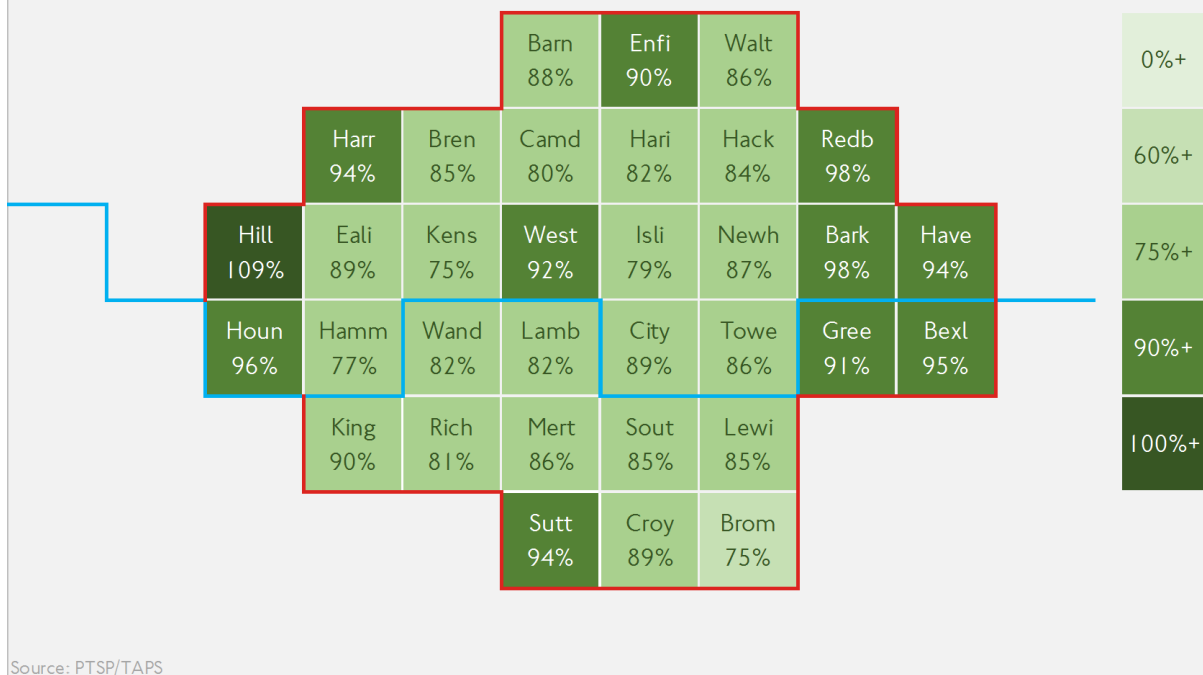
I, with the Assistant Director for Transport, Angus Culverwell and David Bond, Senior Principal Transport Projects Manager met TfL representatives on November 2nd

TfL have agreed to review our ideas for the Superloop network i.e. extending SL4 to Bromley North from Grove Park and routing SL5 via West Wickham. We also raised the reliability of route 320 with a focus on the curtailments at Biggin Hill airport. We have suggested that given the alternative link to Catford on the 208 from Bromley that the 320 could be cut back to Bromley North to improve reliability in Biggin Hill where it is the key route to Bromley.

We discussed bus ridership recovery after COVID and this is the latest available data.

Weekday (0-24h) bus boarders by local authority

[w/c 16/10/23 versus w/c 14/10/19]



Source: PTSP/TAPS

TfL raised with us the problem of operating a double deck SL5 along South Eden Park Road because of the overhanging trees, at the moment they are considering using single deck buses which would reduce capacity. Both the Council and TfL wish to use double deck buses and they have asked us to facilitate a meeting between TfL, the borough transport team and arboriculture staff to see if a solution can be found.

We raise a number of other matters

Faster and more reliable links from Biggin Hill to Bromley TC and Orpington TC.

- . Borough east- north west connectivity
- . West Wickham to Princess Royal Hospital links
- . Links to Greenwich and Blackheath
- . Cross GLA boundary services to Kent

Obviously, all proposals are subject to the available funding and there may be opportunities to consolidate some routes to allow for more high frequency services.

We also discussed the capacity at the Bromley North stand and have suggested that TfL discuss with Network Rail leasing the northern section of their car park which is little used.

Southeastern Trains stakeholders Forum

I attended the Forum on November 13th in Canterbury. Representatives of the management, operating and customer services together with Network Rail gave a series of presentations on building a more sustainable and economic railway.

Passenger levels have increased since Covid but are still below 2019 and consequently the taxpayer subsidy is still required.

Separately Network Rail have announced a ten-day closure of between Herne Hill, Brixton and London Victoria, with Southeastern services being diverted into either Blackfriars, Cannon Street or Charing Cross.



The line closure will take place for 10 days, from Saturday 23 December to Monday 1 January, as well as several weekends before and after.

This will also enable the installation of a new signalling system on the lines from Herne Hill and Nunhead into London Victoria. The new system will replace the existing 1980s signalling and will come into use over Christmas next year. This work follows recent upgrades between East Croydon and London Victoria which has seen delays slashed in half.

Drainage repairs, track maintenance and inspections will also be carried out during this time to maximise the amount of work that can be completed while the railway is closed.

Trailing new technology for pothole repairs

Following last winter's pothole problems in which we brought in a second contractor at addition cost to the budget I have looked at various ways in which we can increase productivity and repair potholes more quickly. There are a number of machines on the market which repair potholes in a matter of minutes. They are not a magic bullet and the process and the material used by some them, whilst possibly suitable for lightly used rural roads may not be appropriate on busy urban roads. I have asked officers to discuss with other boroughs their experience of using the machines and to procure for trials a number of alternative machines for comparison trials as part of the Council's Transformation policy.

**Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP,
Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety**

