



## RESPONSE TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSED TIMETABLE FROM JANUARY 2015

1. The comments below from the Greenwich Line Users' Group are restricted to matters affecting rail travellers using the Greenwich Line, and we have not sought to comment on any other proposed timetable changes.

### Long term loss of Charing Cross services

2. This timetable covers the first part of the planned three-year disruption to services caused by the rebuilding of London Bridge. It reflects the removal of the Spa Road junction, resulting in the loss of services from the Greenwich line to Waterloo East and Charing Cross, after some 150 years. It remains the position of the Greenwich Line Users' Group that, as part of the Thameslink Programme, a new junction should be installed at North Kent East, to allow the restoration of at least the present level of direct services to and, particularly in the evening peak, from Charing Cross once the London Bridge work is complete.

3. We do not accept the argument that one train every 20 minutes at peak times, or one train every 30 minutes in each direction in the evening and on Sundays, will cause the amount of delay and disruption that has been alleged by Network Rail. Many other flat junctions along the line, particularly the throat at Lewisham station, have significantly more potential to cause delay and disruption, yet there are no plans to separate those lines. Any services, as now, would have timetabled slots and there is no evidence that the Spa Road junction is a significant cause of delays and disruption to current services. There is no reason to suppose that a new junction would be any different.

### Timetable from January 2015

4. Turning now to the specific proposals for January 2015, the consultation lacks any detail on measures to help minimise disruption for passengers travelling to and from Waterloo East and Charing Cross. 6.4million passengers a year, including regular commuters, tourists and leisure travellers, use the four stations on the Greenwich line. Alone amongst the Metro lines, they will be unable to reach two of the main stations on the Southeastern network. Measures should be put in place to ensure they can still do so at no extra cost, and our proposals on this are set out at paragraphs 17 – 29 below.

5. The starting point for Greenwich Line users' is that the current level of services must be maintained. We welcome the recognition in the summary that:

***“the existing services from the North Kent Line via Greenwich operating to/from Charing Cross in the peaks, via Spa Road Junction, are very busy and must continue to operate albeit diverted into Cannon Street as an alternative”***

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6. The current timetable has the following number of direct Charing Cross services:

*Into Charing Cross:*

9 services in the morning Monday to Friday  
6 services in the evening off-peak Monday to Friday  
4 services in the morning Saturday  
7 services in the evening Saturday  
33 services Sunday

*From Charing Cross:*

4 services in the morning Monday to Friday  
6 services in the evening peak Monday to Friday  
6 services in the evening off-peak Monday to Friday  
6 services in the morning Saturday  
9 services in the evening Saturday  
33 services Sunday

7. The loss of these direct services is a concern. The summary quoted above gives a clear commitment that existing services to/from Charing Cross must continue to operate, yet the detailed changes do not appear to reflect this commitment. There is a clear contradiction between the summary and the detailed changes, which we highlight in paragraph 10 below.

8. With the significant housing developments taking place around Deptford and Greenwich, and the increasing tourism in Greenwich, it is essential that the existing service and capacity on the line is maintained, with timings broadly equivalent to today. In our response to the consultation on the Direct Award contract, we identified seven projects currently underway that are creating 5,535 new homes in the vicinity of at least one of the four stations. Housing developments further down the line, particularly at Woolwich, will also have an impact on Greenwich Line users as they will add to the total number of daily commuters using Greenwich Line trains.

9. From personal experience, members of the Users' Group can testify that the Monday to Friday morning and evening peak Charing Cross trains are all crowded. Many of the evening peak trains are full and standing on departure from Charing Cross. It would be disastrous if, in addition to losing the direct Charing Cross link, the service level was reduced. The existing peak services from Cannon Street are all crowded and would be unable to absorb the additional passengers.

10. The detailed changes shown in the consultation document fail to mention the following Monday to Friday services on the Greenwich Line:

05.01/05.31/06.01/06.31 DFD – CHX  
04.50/05.20/05.52/06.52 CHX – DFD  
17.29/17.50/18.12 ex CHX

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The 17.06 ex CHX is worryingly described as “starting from Crayford”. This implies it will not be diverted to Cannon Street, and will be of little use to passengers travelling from London. We seek a firm commitment that **all** these services will be maintained, albeit starting/terminating at Cannon Street, as is stated in the summary. If this is not the case, then an absurd position would be created of Deptford, Maze Hill and Westcombe Park stations having 6 trains per hour (tph) during the daytime off-peak, but only 3tph in the evening peak! Such a situation is untenable.

11. The intention to open Cannon Street seven days a week is welcome and absolutely essential, but can we be assured that it will be open for the whole day? Cannon Street should mirror the existing operating hours at Charing Cross, **and the Underground station should be open for the same times.**

12. A further point of clarification is also required, concerning the services starting/terminating at London Bridge on Monday to Saturday evenings and Sundays. Restricted platform availability at London Bridge may make this operationally difficult. At present, they operate into and out of Platform 3, but we are unsure whether that platform will still be available. It is important to maintain these services, as they provide for the 4 trains per hour frequency on the line at these times. Without these trains, the service would revert to half-hourly, which would not meet demand in the evenings and Sundays. If it is not possible to start and terminate at London Bridge, these trains should continue to run, extended to Cannon Street.

13. The inability of services from Charing Cross to stop at London Bridge will also cause some connection problems for passengers from the Greenwich Line, who change there for other Metro and Main Line services. This has been an issue raised with the Users’ Group by a number of concerned passengers. To address this, we welcome the proposed transfer of some Main Line services from Charing Cross to Cannon Street, enabling a London Bridge stop and maintaining Main Line connections for Greenwich Line passengers to Orpington, Sevenoaks and Tonbridge.

14. Although not part of this specific consultation, the Users’ Group wishes to impress upon DfT the need for Southern to run fast services from London Bridge to Gatwick to maintain the easy airport connection for all Metro passengers when the Thameslink trains are withdrawn.

15. We note that the Sunday timetable is “in development”. Four trains per hour during the day, as at present, is the minimum we would wish to see. The key for Greenwich Line passengers is a service that can be relied upon. We understand that engineering work can mean Sunday service cancellations, but our concern is if engineering work at London Bridge and/or Cannon Street means that all Greenwich Line services are cancelled. Unlike other Metro lines, we lose all services in these circumstances as we do not have the Charing Cross or Victoria option. Would a shuttle Deptford – Plumstead service be possible in these circumstances? It would avoid replacement buses along the route (which are never popular) and would maintain connections for services into Kent, and provide for connections at Charlton for services back to Charing Cross. The present turnback facility at Plumstead could

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be used, so the only additional provision required would be a cross-over at Deptford. A replacement bus from Deptford to Lewisham would be the only other requirement. We will comment further on Sunday services once the timetable has been developed.

16. Some passengers from Maze Hill and Westcombe Park will choose to travel to/from Waterloo East and Charing Cross via Charlton (assuming that the level of service through Blackheath remains the same). The timetable should provide for reasonable connections at Charlton to assist in such journeys. Charlton is in the same Travelcard Zone (3), but for point-to-point tickets and Oyster cards, travel via Charlton should be recognised as a reasonable route and not incur an extra charge.

### **A Cannon Street to Waterloo East and Charing Cross shuttle service**

17. The consultation document fails to mention any measures to mitigate the impact of the loss of connections to Waterloo East and Charing Cross. As stated above, Greenwich Line passengers are the only Metro passengers on this group of lines in south east London not to be able to reach these two main Southeastern stations, with their access to the West End and connections at Waterloo to south west London, Surrey and Hampshire.

18. A shuttle train service from Cannon Street, using the chord to Metropolitan Junction, would maintain relatively easy access to Waterloo East and Charing Cross. This would be the easiest alternative option for passengers, has the advantage of being entirely within Southeastern's control, and would avoid the need for other mitigating measures during the period of disruption. This chord is currently used during engineering works, but we propose a permanent timetabled shuttle train service as the preferred option for maintaining access to Waterloo and Charing Cross stations. As a minimum, this should be provided off-peak when there are no capacity issues.

### **Alternative travel**

19. If alternative services (eg bus or underground) have to be used to reach destinations that can currently be reached by Southeastern trains within the ticket price, this will add time to the journey and be more inconvenient. It is important that there should not be an additional cost as well. It should not be assumed that the Underground is always an alternative, as there are many travellers who, for whatever reason, are unable to use the Underground even where it is fully accessible.

20. An easy and simple solution to assist passengers is to automatically include Zone 1 travel in any ticket from Westcombe Park, Maze Hill, Greenwich and Deptford to London Termini, at no extra cost. Whilst this would extend free travel beyond the Charing Cross/Waterloo area, it would be easy to administer, would avoid extensive briefing of gate line and revenue protection staff, and would add a measure of compensation to passengers for their journey disruption. For Oyster card users, a similar arrangement could be programmed into the system

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so that passengers who “touch in” at one of the four stations and “touch out” in Zone 1 would only be charged for the cost of a journey to London Termini.

21. An alternative would be to program the Oyster system so that the charge is the same if the passenger touches in at Westcombe Park, Maze Hill, Greenwich or Deptford and then uses the underground to access Waterloo, Charing Cross, Blackfriars, City Thameslink, Farringdon or St Pancras, as the charge would be if they had touched out at London Bridge or London Cannon Street. In addition no additional Oyster charge should be made for using an underground connection to access Thameslink or Southeastern stations that are currently reachable out of London Bridge or South West services out of Waterloo.

22. If this is not done, then individual alternative options need to be considered. We propose that, for the period January 2015 – August 2016, the following travel options should be free for Southeastern ticket holders:

- DLR: Greenwich and Deptford Bridge to Lewisham
- Underground: Waterloo & City Line  
District/Circle Line Cannon Street to Embankment; and  
Bakerloo/Northern Line Embankment to Waterloo  
Jubilee Line London Bridge – Westminster
- Bus: 47 Deptford to Lewisham  
386 Greenwich to Blackheath  
199 Greenwich to Lewisham  
180 Maze Hill to Lewisham  
108 Westcombe Park to Blackheath  
RV1/381 London Bridge to Waterloo  
15 Cannon Street to Charing Cross
- Thames Clipper: London Bridge pier to Embankment and Waterloo piers

This list is not meant to be exhaustive, as there may be other alternatives we have not identified. Our approach is that passengers should be able to reach Waterloo and Charing Cross by either getting to a nearby station that retains services to these stations, or travelling on from London Bridge or Waterloo.

23. In the absence of a rail shuttle service, connection from Cannon Street to Waterloo is particularly difficult. This is an important link, not just for leisure and business travel, but also for patients going to St Thomas’s Hospital for treatment. The Waterloo & City line is a good option, if its operating hours could be extended, as Bank station is only a short walk from Cannon Street. This connection is not well known, and it needs to be publicised and the route signposted, as well as showing Bank as an interchange for Cannon Street on rail maps. The other Underground route involves a change at Embankment.

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24. The only bus route takes a circuitous route via Holborn, and does not run at all times. Consideration should be given to a free shuttle bus service from Cannon Street to Waterloo, using a direct and less congested route via Blackfriars Bridge and Stamford Street. Alternatively, could the 388 route, which currently terminates at Blackfriars be diverted along Cannon Street and extended to Waterloo?

25. Alternative routes should be publicised in the timetable and at Greenwich Line stations to help passengers who want to go to Waterloo or Charing Cross.

26. We recognise that all this requires the co-operation of TfL and the operators of the DLR and Thames Clippers. We understand that a Group has been established with all interested parties represented, and we ask that our proposals are given serious consideration.

27. Greenwich is a major tourism centre for London, with Royal Museums Greenwich, The Greenwich Foundation and the Royal Park all situated within a World Heritage site. Tourism is key to small business growth for SE10.

28. Greenwich and adjacent suburbs are experiencing major population growth with substantial medium rise housing developments at Greenwich Quay, The Heart of East Greenwich, Creek Road and Greenwich High Road, with impact on Deptford, Greenwich and Maze Hill stations. Plans are also underway to redevelop the Enderby's wharf site in East Greenwich for housing, hotel and cruise liner terminal. Many of these developments will come on stream over the next 4 years and will impact significantly on the local infrastructure and transport, particularly the Jubilee Line and bus routes as well as the Metro services. This means that any loss of Southeastern capacity will put pressure on already heavily used alternative transport systems.

29. Effective and efficient transport links must be maintained during the London Bridge redevelopment to ensure that Southeastern can maintain its franchise commitments and delivery of services to meet local demands.

**Mike Sparham**  
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**7 February 2014**

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