

## Valerie Shawcross AM

London Assembly Member for Lambeth & Southwark

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### **Southeastern rail franchise consultation**

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**Our ref:** VS/ai

**Your ref:**

**Date:** 12 September 2012

*By email*

Dear Sir or Madam

### **Southeastern rail franchise consultation**

This letter sets out my response to the consultation currently underway regarding the specifications of the new Southeastern rail franchise. Southeastern services are key to public transport in my constituency, which, for the most part, is not served by underground services. Unfortunately I believe, along with many colleagues, that South London is about to be hit by a number of service changes which will be detrimental to many of my constituents. I hope that the renewal of this franchise will be grasped and used as the opportunity which it is, to address and improve the lot of South and South East London rail fare payers.

### **Victoria services from Denmark Hill & Peckham Rye**

Despite a long running cross-party campaign, the South London Line (SLL) service from London Bridge to Victoria via Denmark Hill is to be withdrawn in December 2012 and the previously proposed mitigation measure of a part replacement service between Victoria and Bellingham via a number of former SLL stations is not currently funded.

In addition, those Thameslink services which were on diversion to Victoria during the rebuild of Blackfriars have now been re-directed back to Blackfriars, which was always assumed. However, with the demise of the SLL this now means that the only services serving Victoria from Peckham Rye and Denmark Hill, post December 2012, will be the Dartford – Victoria via Nunhead and Lewisham services. This is currently only a two tph service and services do not run after around 7.30pm during the week and not at all on Sundays. This is clearly a huge service gap, and deeply unsatisfactory situation. I am aware that Southeastern have made a number of suggestions for how these services could be modified, to run later in the evenings and on Sundays but that these suggestions were not acted on by ministers.

I also understand that Southeastern have made suggestions for how the loss of the SLL services to Victoria from Peckham Rye and Denmark Hill in peak times could be mitigated with little impact on journey times, by proposing that a small number of longer distance Kent services call additionally at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye. This would go some way to improving the situation for commuters. However, unfortunately I further understand that the minister at the time did not accept these proposals. I would urge the new franchisee and the DfT to reconsider

this situation and consider proposals to run services later in the evenings and on Sundays and to allow some longer distance Kent services to call additionally at Denmark Hill and Peckham Rye during peak periods. This would be of enormous benefit to a large number of commuters in the South London area, with minimal impact on other passenger groups.

### **London Bridge station redevelopment**

I warmly welcome and support the redevelopment of London Bridge and look forward to the huge improvements that this work will bring about. However, such a large scheme will inevitably cause a great deal of disruption while works are taking place. This cannot be helped, however, I would expect the new franchisee as a partner in this process to work to minimise disruption to passengers and keep the necessary service restrictions, such as those between London Bridge and Charing Cross/Cannon Street, to a minimum. I would also expect every effort to communicate with passengers about this issue and clear information to be readily available on alternative travel options while the work is in progress.

### **Station Staffing & Improvements**

I would expect the new franchisee to ensure that stations are staffed at all times while train services are running. This is of great value to passengers in terms of health and safety, personal security and is vital to assist less mobile passengers.

I would also expect the new franchisee to undertake improvement works to station buildings and facilities. Clearly rebranding work may be necessary and beyond this I would expect efforts to be made to make stations as clean and safe as possible with good signage and information and security systems in place. I would expect the franchisee to lobby and engage with local stakeholders to secure monies to improve accessibility at their stations from relevant funders.

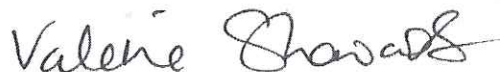
### **Summary**

In summary, I would like the following key points addressed:

- Every effort must be made to improve links between Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye and Victoria, during peak and off peak times.
- Station rebuild disruption at London Bridge must be kept to a minimum and good information must be available to passengers.
- Stations to be staffed while trains are running, clean and safe, with good signage and information and every effort made to improve accessibility.

I look forward to a favourable outcome of this consultation and hope that my points above will all be acted upon by the new franchisee.

Yours sincerely



**Valerie Shawcross AM**  
**London Assembly, Lambeth & Southwark**