



Our ref: S11-NA-LA-HS-002

Caroline Pidgeon AM
Chair of the Transport Committee
London Assembly
City Hall, The Queen's Walk
London SE1 2AA

31st May 2011



Dear Caroline

Re: Proposed changes to rail services in London during the 2012 Games

The ODA has worked with National Rail over the last two years to develop a timetable which will deliver spectators to the Games-time venues but also protect background demand and allow for business as usual. At the outset it was agreed within the industry that rewriting the complete timetable across the UK would not be feasible during Games-time but the answer was to enhance services by offering longer formations on existing services and later night services

In formulating the proposals, therefore, the major alteration to the timetables has been the introduction of later trains in order to get spectators home after events finishing at Olympic venues.

In delivering the agreed train service specification each Train Operator has formulated their own plans to minimise the effect on background demand and provide greater journey opportunities for spectators.

Southeastern has been the Train Operator most affected by London 2012 Games and as such has had to make some difficult decisions in balancing the need to provide additional capacity to Olympic Venues and protect their core business and the operational performance of the Rail Services.

Greenwich Park is a key Olympic Venue with between 20,000 and 60,000 spectators travelling to the venue by rail through Greenwich and Blackheath: this has necessitated changes to Southeastern's normal timetable to allow for the extended dwell times required at both stations for boarding and alighting to ensure the safety of passengers.



MAYOR OF LONDON

These decisions have not been taken lightly, but they are in the best interests, not just of Olympic spectators, but of the 200,000 passengers who use Southeastern services every day, and irrespective of the Games, will still require a punctual service to get them to and from their place of work.

Safely embarking and disembarking large numbers of spectators from stations significantly increases the dwell time. This has a knock-on impact on timekeeping and the evidence we have from events such as the London marathon when unusually large numbers of passengers embark and disembark at stations, confirms this has serious performance implications. Given that much larger numbers of spectators are expected at the Games, unless measures such as skipping stops at selected stations are taken, there will be significant disruption for regular passengers, not just on the Greenwich Line, but, given the inter-connected nature of the Southeastern network, across much of south London and Kent as well, affecting up to 200,000 passengers.

Following consultation Southeastern has considered request for amendments in detail and the most compelling case that could be operationally accommodated was to reinstate the Charlton stops on the Charing Cross to Gillingham service. Other proposed changes remain as follows:

Proposal

Deptford – service reduced to two trains per hour in each direction. These services will offer sufficient capacity for the current users of the station to reach all normal destinations.

Reason

To allow for the additional dwell time to ensure safety at Greenwich, Woolwich Arsenal and Charlton on event days.

Proposal

Maze Hill no trains call from London direction between 06:13 and 12:13 and no trains to London from 12:14 and 21:45.

Reason

Maze Hill station is not configured to handle movement of large crowds of people which will be associated with the Games and thus Greenwich has been specified as the Venue Station for activity in Greenwich Park. In order to ensure that spectators do not alight at Maze Hill it has been agreed with all agencies that the withdrawal of the stop is the safest option. This proposal maintains the normal peak flows and is designed to offer business as usual to regular commuters.

Proposal

Westcombe Park – service reduced to two trains per hour in each direction. These services will offer sufficient capacity for the current users of the station to reach all normal destinations.

Reason

To allow for the additional dwell time to ensure safety at Greenwich, Woolwich Arsenal and Charlton on event days.

Proposal

Woolwich Dockyard to close the station during Games-time. This station has one of the lowest throughputs and is no more than 0.8 mile from the adjacent station at Woolwich Arsenal which offers improved journey opportunities. The general usage of the station is seven times less than Woolwich Arsenal and it is well connected by local bus services.

Reason

The main reason for the closure of Woolwich Dockyard is to allow for a longer dwell time at Greenwich to ensure safety of passengers embarking and disembarking.

Proposal

Kidbrooke service reduced to four trains per hour, with no direct services to and from Dartford. The predominant flow from Kidbrooke is to London and this is being preserved under this proposal. Journey opportunities to Dartford are still available from nearby Eltham station which has bus connections from Kidbrooke.

Reason

To allow for increased dwell times at Blackheath to ensure safety.

The consultation of the timetable has followed normal industry practice with Southeastern presenting to their stakeholders through the established forums, and where possible, the ODA has supported this process. This is also the case for all other Train Operators, but as stated, it is Southeastern who has been most affected by the changes required to deliver their Games-time responsibility.

In terms of passenger compensation for any disruption to Season Ticket Holders this is a matter for Southeastern as the ODA is not responsible for the commercial operations of Train Operators.

The ODA is aware that the proposed changes will inconvenience some users, but believes that the offering from Southeastern will deliver the best and safest solution for the vast majority of users. Please assure your Members that we understand the issues and that while recognising our responsibility for ensuring adequate provision for spectators, the ODA and Southeastern are doing everything we can to mitigate the impact on local rail services.

It is worth remembering these changes are for only 10 working days and come into effect during what is traditionally the rail industry's quietest period as commuters take their summer holiday: in Games-time hopefully everyone will convert from "Suits to shorts".

Our colleagues at TfL will be able to update the Assembly Members on any proposed changes to bus routes during Games-time and the mitigation measures which will be introduced to minimise the impact on existing passengers.

The need to balance the conflicting requirements of both business as usual and Olympic Demand has resulted in these changes being made to Southeastern services, and the ODA hope that the London Assembly will be able to support these measures.

If you would like a briefing, please ask your office to contact Hazel Peacock, Stakeholder Relations Manager on email: hazel.peacock@london2012.com and on 0203 023 6214 and we will be happy to arrange one at a time of your convenience.

Yours sincerely



Hugh Sumner

Director of Transport

Cc: Peter Hendy, Transport Commissioner, TfL
Charles Horton, Managing Director, Southeastern
Hazel Peacock, ODA
Lauren Warren, LA