

southeastern



Caroline Pidgeon AM
Greater London Assembly
City Hall
Queens Walk
London SE1 2AA

11 June 2015

Dear Caroline

Re: GLA Transport Committee 9 June

Thank you for giving Southeastern the opportunity to appear before the committee last Tuesday.

It was a relatively short session and particularly in light of your concern over our performance figures, we would like to give more detail about what we are doing to improve the passenger experience.

We have continued to focus on the top five priorities identified by Transport Focus in their October 2014 report into passenger priorities for the UK's rail industry:

1. Price of train ticket offers better value for money;
2. Passengers always able to get a seat on the train;
3. Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel;
4. More trains arrive on time than happens now; and
5. Train company keeps passengers informed about delays.

1. Price of train ticket offers better value for money

Advance fares for leisure travellers, were successfully rolled out in May.

We have signed a Deed of Amendment with the Department for the introduction of smartcards on our network by January 2017 and we are working hard with TfL to accelerate the extension of Oyster PAYG to Dartford and Swanley, and, along with CPAY, as a means of payment between Stratford International and St Pancras.

In May, we presented our response to the Department's RfP for Wi-Fi on Southeastern services and have sought DfT support for early mobilisation of the Wi-Fi project, which would enable the first fitted unit to enter service within 9 months of signature.

We have continued our "surprise and delight" campaign, aimed at thanking our passengers for travelling with us in a range of thoughtful and unexpected ways, including free Easter eggs, free coffees, and a book giveaway. These initiatives continue to generate positive feedback on social media, particularly on Twitter.

"The human side of @Se_Railway, made me smile".

"Wow! Thanks @Se_Railway! Happy Friday to you too!"

For the Easter break, we ran value for money campaigns such as 'kids for a quid', 2 for 1 offers and 20% off for Off Peak travel. We



have also run various competitions giving passengers the opportunity to win tickets to attractions in Kent and London.

Looking forward, we will be rolling out our commuter benefit scheme from June, which will give regular exclusive offers to Gold Card holders.

2. Passengers always able to get a seat on the train

We made a number of changes to our timetable in March to ease crowding on our busiest services, however despite having more units in traffic than ever before, as you are aware, capacity remains a major issue for our passengers and stakeholders.



Passenger numbers have increased by around 30% since Southeastern took over in 2006 and we have had no new rolling stock on our network since 2009. (Those introduced in 2009 are the high speed trains serving St. Pancras from Kent and we appreciate that these do not directly benefit commuters in the Greater London area).

I'm not sure if you are aware of this but we have the second highest number of passengers standing into London. Aside from those of our trains in maintenance, (which is now the fewest it has ever been), all trains are currently deployed in passenger service and the only way any individual train can be lengthened is by taking units off a more lightly used service; an avenue which we have now exhausted.

As explained, we submitted a report to DfT in February which showed the severity of the current overcrowding problem, and how this will get progressively worse, such that by the end of the current Franchise this will undoubtedly be *the* defining issue for Southeastern. Analysis has shown that the only possible short term solution is for the redeployment of Class 319 trains as they are released off contract from GTR as part of the overall Thameslink Programme.

We are working closely with both GTR and DfT to present a costed proposal to DfT that would allow a decision to be made in terms of funding and timescales. We also remain convinced of the necessity, in addition to the 319s described above, for DfT to exercise the Priced Option present in our Franchise Agreement which would see a further 25 Class 377 units for use by Southeastern sub-leased from GTR, albeit to commence service in late 2017.

The timescales required for enhancements to stabling facilities for these initiatives mean that decisions on these issues will need to be made soon so as not to import delays where units are potentially spare, but not able to operate in traffic as there is nowhere to place them when not in service.

We would welcome any support you are able to provide in securing much-needed additional capacity for our passengers, and representations to the Rail Minister would be welcome and we would be happy to take you through the issues should you wish

We understand our passengers' frustration at overcrowding on their services and in the absence of extra units, we have tried to help people find more lightly loaded trains by launching a traffic light system on our website in March, which has identified which Peak trains are busiest and which may have some seat availability.

However, we appreciate that many of our passengers may not be able to alter their travel plans due to work or domestic commitments, so, whilst this facility is worthwhile, it can never be anything other than a very partial mitigation. (www.southeasternrailway.co.uk/your-journey/how-busy-is-your-train)

3. Trains sufficiently frequent at the times I wish to travel

Following the introduction of the January 15 timetable, our biggest timetable change for five years, we conducted market research using a specialist agency to identify what worked well and what lessons we could learn for the next significant timetable change in August 16. Research showed that Southeastern's actions had a significant impact on awareness of the London Bridge project and associated changes for passengers, with posters and announcements rated the most effective communication tools.

To further enhance our timetable, we made changes in March and May in response to passenger feedback and to cater for increased seasonal traffic to the Kent coast.

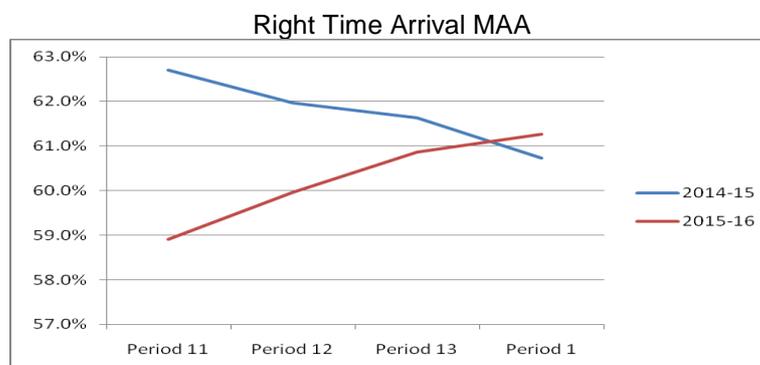
These included moving carriages from less busy trains to those most in need of extra space to ease crowding; 14 trains were lengthened and seven stops were added in response to passenger demand.

We have actively sought feedback from passengers and stakeholders to inform changes and recently made available on our website the draft August 16 timetable inviting comments.

4. More trains arrive on time than happens now

We are now seeing, on average, over 90 percent of our 2,000 daily services running on time and performance across our network is the best it has been for two years. Southeastern has continued to work hard with colleagues at Network Rail to identify performance risks and minimise disruption for our passengers, through developing robust timetables and a comprehensive Joint Performance Improvement Plan. We have prepared a passenger focused version of the JPIP which we published this month.

Performance since the start of the year has improved both in terms of PPM and Right Time arrival at stations, with both showing year on year increases, even with the challenges presented by the Thameslink works. The graph below shows the improvement in Right Time arrival MAA across periods 1511-1601, as a year on year comparison. The Right Time MAA has increased by 3% since January 2015, from 58.3% to 61.3% at the end of Period 1.



Over the same period, our PPM MAA has increased by 1.3% from 88.1% to 89.4%.

At the committee you cited performance figures for Southeastern metro services which I did not recognise and may have been for another operator?

The table below shows the PPM figures for our metro routes, beginning with those from the turn of the year on the left. While there is still a long way to go before we, or our passengers will be satisfied, I hope you'll agree that the trend is in the right direction.

London to Dartford via Bexleyheath	88.0%	88.5%	91.0%	92.5%	90.5%	91.5%
London to Orpington via Bromley South	86.0%	88.6%	90.5%	92.0%	94.2%	94.3%
London to Hayes	85.0%	87.0%	89.0%	91.0%	91.3%	91.5%
London to Orpington and Sevenoaks via Grove Park	88.0%	90.0%	90.5%	91.4%	93.6%	93.7%
London to Sevenoaks via Catford	85.0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
London to Dartford via Sidcup	84.5%	85.5%	88.0%	91.0%	90.4%	91.1%
London to Dartford and Gillingham via Charlton & Lewisham	85.0%	88.0%	85.0%	90.0%	90.9%	91.6%

5. Train company keeps passengers informed about delays

We have now completed the installation of 21 new operational information screens, against a franchise commitment of 20.

We continue to deliver the enhancement of passenger information systems, not only ahead of schedule but over and above our franchise commitment, with an additional 19 stations.



To further improve information via our CIS and PA systems, from June we will be upgrading sound systems at 11 stations and 8 of these locations will receive mobile microphones for real time information to be communicated to passengers.

Our programme to provide front line staff with tablets is progressing well, with 539 issued to date and the remaining 836 on target to be rolled out in June and July.

We look forward to receiving the latest set of results for the National Rail Passenger Survey later this month and based on the results we will develop action plans to continue to improve in the areas which are most important to our passengers.

6 Improvements to train and station environment

Over the next three years, Southeastern is investing over £70million in improving the passenger experience, including better information for passengers, improving the interior

and cleanliness of trains and refreshing the look of stations. £5.7million will be invested in trains and stations by 31 October 2016 delivering an enhancement to the travelling environment for our customers.

We are well over half way through our station deep clean programme, with over 100 stations complete to date. We believe the impact of these deep cleans is starting to show in our customer satisfaction survey results and passenger feedback.

Bickley (before)
Bickley (after)



Spring clean

It's getting warmer, lighter, brighter, greener and fresher.

Things are changing round here.

- A tidy-up
- A lick of paint
- Energy-saving LED lights
- A new floor
- Ceramic wall tiles
- Decorative wall panelling
- Better heating for when you with you'd stuck to long sleeves.

We're giving your station a makeover.

It's just a small part of our programme of initiatives designed to make your journey better.

Thanks for your understanding during this spring time.
Here's to moving forwards.

southeastern

f t g y

Our station improvements programme started in May, having conducted asset condition surveys at stations to identify the required works, with 3 stations now complete and a further 4 underway.

Over and above our committed obligations, one third of our entire train fleet is undergoing a major mid-life refresh to make carriages lighter, brighter and more comfortable for passengers.

Also as a direct result of passenger feedback, we have launched a project to relocate heating thermostats onboard to improve temperature regulation and circulated a notice to our drivers informing them that heating should be switched off onboard during the peak on 465 units.

Both the station and the rolling stock cleaning projects were promoted to passengers through a “spring clean” campaign which we launched in May.

We will launch our “improvements” campaign in June to promote the improvement works at stations, better information systems and communication channels.

Additional funding has also been secured for new lifts at 4 of our stations and further station enhancements, such as waiting shelters at 3 more locations. A bid for SCPF funding was also submitted to the Department last month for much needed car parking provision at 7 of our stations.

7 Further passenger benefits

In addition to the above improvements, we have made changes to our policy on charging customers an administration fee, meaning we will no longer charge an administration fee in a number of areas we formerly did.

From June we will be introducing Priority Seating cards and the roll out of visible signage identifying seats for those who require priority seating has already begun. Customers meeting the criteria will be issued with a card free of charge, which they can show to fellow passengers to allow them to easily obtain a seat without having to explain their need for it.

Our 'Priority Seats' are being made more visible by using additional prominent signage, which has already been placed on most of our 375, 376 and 395 units. Signage will be added to 465/466 units after they have been upgraded to incorporate wheelchair spaces and accessible toilets.

In May, we launched our Baby on Board badges to make travelling by train easier for pregnant passengers.

The Baby on Board badge is free on request and aims to help other passengers spot expectant mothers more easily so they can offer their seat.

Last month, we also ran a project to improve customer understanding of the types of tickets which are available from TVMs and those which are not. We have attached clear guidance stickers on all Southeastern TVMs and created a new screensaver which also presents this information clearly.

Baby on board!
southeastern

Available here	Not available here
✓ Day Singles and Day Returns	✗ Advance tickets
✓ Return tickets valid to return within one month	✗ GroupSave discounts
✓ 7 day Season tickets	✗ Selected sales promotions
✓ Child (half price) tickets (age 5-15)	✗ Day Rangers
✓ Railcard discounts	✗ Rovers
✓ Collect tickets that were bought online	✗ Child flat fares
✓ Tickets for different train operators	

Visit southeasternrailway.co.uk or your local staffed station for full range

southeastern

Also at stations, we have started installing energy-saving LED lights following a successful trial at Chatham. Our plan is to install these at 11 stations and 5 depots to create a safe, well-lit environment for passengers, which is environmentally friendly and delivers financial savings which can be reinvested in improving our network.

Whilst we are starting to see the positive impact of our actions on feedback from customers, stakeholders and in customer satisfaction surveys, we know that the key concern for our

passengers remains the issue of overcrowding. As stated previously in the letter, this is a major and worsening problem for the passengers of Southeastern, and can only be addressed through the provision of additional units. We continue to work very closely with the Department to assess options and funding requirements, but believe that without timely action this will become *the* defining problem for the Southeastern Franchise, and one which cannot be left to be resolved in the next Franchise.

I hope this is helpful and if you would like a meeting with our MD David Statham to discuss any of these issues in more detail, please ask your office to contact his PA, Angela Steel on angela.steel@southeasternrailway.co.uk

Yours sincerely

Mike Gibson
Public Affairs Manager