

External meeting report

Author : Jerry Gold

Southeastern December 2009 draft timetable

1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 The meeting was held to progress issues raised by London TravelWatch in correspondence with Southeastern, following publication of the draft of the major timetable restructure for introduction in December 2009. Full details of the correspondence are attached in the Annex.
- 1.2 Issues dealt with at the meeting are based on the contents of column 3 of the Annex.

2 Information

- 2.1 The meeting took place on 29 July 2009 at Southeastern's offices at Friars Court, London, SE1 and attendees included

Mike Gibson (MG)	Public Affairs Manager, Southeastern Trains
Brian Rowley (BR)	Head of Service Specification, Southeastern Trains
Jerry Gold (JG)	Rail & Underground Policy Officer, London TravelWatch

Apologies were received from Daniel Francis.

3 Meeting content

- 3.1 Southeastern reply to submission from Blackheath Society and Blackheath Village Residents Group (supplied to London TravelWatch on 28 July)

MG said this had been sent to the society in mid-June. Although this appeared to have triggered correspondence from individual members, there had been no further submission from the society.

- 3.2 How does Southeastern assess – and how will they deal with – the crowding implications of the 0% cut in Blackheath – Cannon St. am peak services?

BR said that it was not possible to be certain how crowding levels would change, as all trains through Blackheath would run to new timings and it could not be known how passengers would shift their journey times in response to this. One feature which should help was that two 8-car Charing Cross trains (which presently run non-stop from Kidbrooke to Waterloo and are relatively under-loaded) will now call additionally at Blackheath and London Bridge and be lengthened to 10-cars.

A full loading census of the new timetable would be carried out in January 2010. The results of this would be used to fine tune the timetable (where possible) and review train lengths.

- 3.3 How does Southeastern assess – and how will they deal with – the crowding implications of the 50% cut in Charing Cross to Blackheath services between 1800 and 1900?

BR said the January loading census would be used to review this issue.

- 3.4 Withdrawal of direct link (peaks) Woolwich line to Blackheath / Lewisham

- a) Lewisham passengers. Request that Southeastern should identify the individual passengers affected and – on a personal basis – offer a special fare arrangement to ensure they are not out of pocket.

JG made clear that this would only apply to existing passengers who could demonstrate that they regularly travel on this route. He suggested one way of providing the protection could be to issue special tickets to named individuals allowing them to use the DLR between Greenwich and Lewisham at the same total fare as they now pay for the direct train. An alternative might be to issue them with a PAYG oyster card for use between Greenwich and Lewisham, with Southeastern arranging auto top-up to cover the cost of these journeys.

MG felt that the cost to Southeastern of such a scheme was unlikely to be a problem, but he was concerned at the practicalities of identifying the passengers and then administering the scheme. He would discuss it with his commercial department and respond within about three weeks.

Action : MG

- b) Blackheath passengers. Request that Southeastern should identify the individual passengers affected, provide them with personally tailored alternative travel advice and – on a personal basis – offer a special fare arrangement to ensure they are not out of pocket.

JG said these passengers were in an even worse position than the Lewisham passengers, as they would face very much slower journeys, as well as increased costs. It might also be difficult for them to work out their best alternative routes, and these would vary according to the precise home to work journey being made; hence the request that they be offered personal advice. He felt the workload for Southeastern would not be great, as the total number of affected passengers should be less than 100. It would be easy to identify and communicate with them, as all that would be needed would be to hand out a leaflet to passengers leaving Blackheath station in the morning from the six trains concerned, and to those waiting to board the equivalent trains in the evening.

MG expressed a similar view as for Lewisham passengers, and would consider the request in the same way.

Action : MG

- 3.5 Bromley North shuttles

- a) For December 2009, to re-phase the service to connect at Grove Park with Cannon St. via Lewisham trains

BR felt strongly that the link with Charing Cross reflected passenger demand, and that this pattern satisfies the representations made over the years by the local user group and other stakeholders. He was not willing to upset this arrangement to meet what he regarded as a minority interest in having a quick connection for Lewisham. He would of course be willing to reconsider on the basis of passenger feedback after the timetable was introduced.

- b) For December 2010, review present operating practices so that a 4 tph 'turn-up-and-go' service can be provided connecting with both Cannon St. and Charing Cross trains

BR said that 4 tph could be operated, but there would be issues of cost (extra drivers because of very short turnrounds), lack of recovery from delays, less good connections than with the 2 tph service, and possible transition problems between peak and off-peak services and when Cannon St. closes mid-evening. He would be willing to investigate all these matters in detail and report back, but this work could not start until October at the earliest.

Action : BR – for December 2010 timetable

3.6 Bromley South fast trains

- a) Why are some peak fast Victoria trains overtaken and generally significantly slower than now? What are the trade-off benefits?

BR explained that some fast trains run close together, with the first being via the slower Catford route and thus overtaken by the second running via Herne Hill. The trade-off benefit was for the Orpington to Victoria metro where the present irregular peak service would be replaced by a regular 4 tph service.

- b) Can the Sunday service pattern be introduced on weekday evenings, as this provides a more even spread of trains?

BR agreed to look at this for December 2010. There would be a crew cost impact as the Sunday pattern runs more trains.

Action : BR – for December 2010 timetable

3.7 St. Mary Cray fast trains

- a) Uneven intervals between off-peak trains (11 / 40 to Victoria, 21 / 39 from Victoria). Can Maidstone fast trains call to provide maximum interval of 30 minutes?

BR said this would add 2 mins. to the Maidstone line running times, and would likely have an adverse revenue effect. In addition there was a real issue on this route with mounting stakeholder and passenger concern at the withdrawal of the Cannon St. trains. Re-timing of these trains might also be a problem in relation to freight paths. He would therefore not agree to this request.

He had checked the alternative of taking the xx24 Sevenoaks to Thameslink train and changing to the fast Maidstone to Victoria train at Bromley South, and confirmed that this interchange was scheduled to be on the same platform. He would check if there was a similar connection from Victoria. Special posters would be displayed at St. Mary Cray to draw attention to this facility.

Action : BR

b) 43 mins. gap 0826 – 0909

BR confirmed the offer of an additional call (0858) in the 0747 ex Ashford

c) 27 mins. gap 1637 –1704 ex Victoria

BR said that London TravelWatch's enquiry about resources for an additional train to serve the St. Mary Cray to Rochester corridor had fallen at the first hurdle, as there was no path into Rochester and nowhere short of Rochester where such a train could terminate.

d) 45 mins. gaps 2107 – 2152 & 2207 – 2252 x Victoria

BR said this could be looked at in conjunction with his offer (see Bromley South item 3.6b) above) to examine the evening service pattern.

Action : BR – for December 2010 timetable

3.8 Swanley fast trains

a) 32 mins. gap 0822 – 0854

BR agreed that the 0706 ex Ramsgate could be timed earlier to enable a Swanley call to be added. However a sample check showed only about 50 passengers boarding the present equivalent train (0816 ex Rochester, arr. Victoria 0915). Weighing this number against the fact that the North Kent via Medway to Victoria fast service was the major loser from the introduction of the HS1 trains, he did not wish to degrade this service any further.

b) 27 mins. gap 1637 –1704 ex Victoria

Same issue and response as St. Mary Cray item c)

c) 45 mins. gaps 2107 – 2152 & 2207 – 2252 x Victoria

Same issue and response as St. Mary Cray item d)

3.9 New Cross – request for all metro trains using the platform lines to call

BR said he could investigate this for possible adoption in December 2010. However he was concerned that any improvements introduced then might have a very short life, due to the emerging Thameslink Programme strategy for rebuilding the lines on the approach to London Bridge highlighting the reductions in Southeastern services when the Thameslink Key Output 1 (KO1) timetable was introduced in October 2012, possibly affecting the ability of trains to call at New Cross. He would therefore prefer to treat this request as an aspiration to be taken into account for KO1.

Action : BR – for Thameslink KO1 timetable October 2012

3.10 St. Johns - request for all metro trains using the platform lines to call

BR said it was likely that a call could be added to the Barnehurst to Cannon St. trains. He did not think the Thameslink KO1 issue would affect this as severely as it might affect New Cross, so would look at this for December 2010.

Action : BR – for December 2010 timetable

3.11 Improved Sunday and evening off-peak services (4 tph)

BR pointed out that Southeastern had reversed cuts in these services dating from the Connex era. He would note that London TravelWatch aspires to see weekday daytime off-peak frequencies applied throughout the day, seven days per week. However in the present economic situation he saw no prospect of this being commercially viable.

Annex

Southeastern December 2009 draft timetable

LTW comments & Southeastern replies

Note for meeting with Southeastern on 29 July

This table shows the comments sent to Southeastern, Southeastern's replies, and London TravelWatch further comments.

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
Blackheath		
Blackheath Society and the Blackheath Village Residents Group submissions – request for Southeastern replies to be supplied to London TravelWatch.	Not yet received.	Please supply.
How you assess – and how you will deal – with the crowding implications of the 50% reduction in Cannon Street services in the morning peak.	<p>Looking at the number of trains serving Blackheath on a typical Monday to Friday, this will be 260 compared to 219 which call at the stations today.</p> <p>During the peak period timetable currently there are 12 trains to Cannon Street and this will fall to 9 from December 2009 not a 50% drop as stated</p>	<p>This increase in total trains per day is because the off-peak service is increased. This is welcome, but not relevant to crowding in the am peak.</p> <p>The current figure is actually 13 for the full peak as defined by DfT – i.e. arrive London between 0600 and 0959; the actual spread is between 0647 and 0921.</p> <p>The draft new timetable actually has 10, spread between 0648 and 0945.</p> <p>However for most of the peak (approx. 0740 to 0920 at Cannon St.), the present service provides 2 trains in each 20 minute period, 3 mins. apart departing from Blackheath. One is from Woolwich, followed by one from Bexleyheath.</p>

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments						
		<p>The draft new timetable diverts the Woolwich line trains to run via Greenwich, thus ceasing to serve Blackheath and halving the latter's service to Cannon St. The Blackheath to Cannon St. service is therefore left solely to the Bexleyheath line trains. Through the busiest period these are already at the maximum 10-car length and formed of high-capacity class 376 stock, so there will be no way of increasing their capacity to absorb the Blackheath passengers displaced from the present Woolwich line trains.</p> <p>Our question – “How you assess – and how you will deal – with the crowding implications of the 50% reduction in Cannon Street services in the morning peak” – is therefore a valid one, and Southeastern has not yet answered it.</p>						
<p>How you assess – and how you will deal – with the crowding implications of the 50% reduction in Charing Cross services in the evening peak between 1800 and 1900.</p>	<p>Charing Cross trains during the evening peak currently there are 14 trains and this will fall to 12, although as LTW state between 1800 and 1900 the number of trains falls from 6 to 3</p>	<p>Here Southeastern acknowledges our point, but again has not yet answered it.</p>						
<p>With regard to the withdrawal of the Woolwich line – Blackheath / Lewisham link in both peaks, please tell me:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the number of passengers affected • what action you will take to identify these passengers and offer them personal help to re-plan their journeys • what action you will take to prevent them suffering financial loss as a result of having to take new routes 	<p>Looking at the peak time link off the Woolwich line to Blackheath/ Lewisham</p> <p>The current service pattern is as follows with an estimate as to the use being made of these trains</p> <table border="0" data-bbox="772 1244 1494 1361"> <tr> <td data-bbox="772 1244 1086 1276"><u>Blackheath</u></td> <td data-bbox="1198 1244 1494 1276"><u>Lewisham</u></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="772 1300 1086 1332">0710 ex Woolwich Arsenal</td> <td data-bbox="1198 1300 1494 1332"></td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="772 1332 1086 1361">2 alighted</td> <td data-bbox="1198 1332 1494 1361">41 alighted</td> </tr> </table>	<u>Blackheath</u>	<u>Lewisham</u>	0710 ex Woolwich Arsenal		2 alighted	41 alighted	<p>These estimated figures are a little lower than actual counts taken by London TravelWatch at Blackheath on Tuesday 6th June. Our count was of passengers who alighted at Blackheath and actually left the station – as distinct from interchanging to travel to Lewisham.</p> <p>Not counted</p>
<u>Blackheath</u>	<u>Lewisham</u>							
0710 ex Woolwich Arsenal								
2 alighted	41 alighted							

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
		<p>On fares, we accept that travelcard holders will not be disadvantaged. However this will not generally be true of passengers who use point-to-point tickets. The latter will pay the same fare to Greenwich that they now pay to Lewisham, and then have to pay extra for the DLR element.</p> <p>Although London TravelWatch accepts that neither timetables nor routes can be cast in tablets of stone, it is very rare that regular passengers are faced with both a worse journey and a more expensive one. We believe it is wrong for the rail industry to impose such a “double whammy” . We therefore request that <u>Southeastern should identify the individual passengers affected and – on a personal basis – offer them a special fare arrangement to ensure they are not out of pocket.</u></p> <p><u>Blackheath passengers</u> from the Woolwich line will be faced with a much worse journey than now. They will either have to use a bus for all or part of their journey, or make a double interchange (via Greenwich, DLR and Lewisham) or may find it quicker (but much slower than now) to go into London Bridge, change trains and come out again.</p> <p>The least bad option is likely to vary with the precise journey being made, and there may be some passengers who find it difficult to work out their best option. Given the small numbers involved, London TravelWatch considers it reasonable that <u>Southeastern should identify them individually, provide them with personally tailored travel advice, and on a personal basis give them a special fare arrangement to ensure they are not out of pocket.</u></p>

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
Bromley North shuttles		
<p>In the off-peak in both directions these connect with the Orpington – Charing X trains, which don't call at Lewisham. The current timetable gives good connections between Bromley and Lewisham, for which there was a long-standing aspiration from local stakeholders. Can the shuttle be re-phased to connect with the Cannon St. trains, which do call at Lewisham?</p>	<p>We have had a look at our data for the current service to estimate the demand off the branch for Lewisham of trains departing from Bromley North from 0915 to 1215, the data shows that loadings from Bromley range between 36 to 12 with the numbers alighting at Lewisham is in single figures highest being 8 off the first train and 3 on the last train. Therefore we have concluded that as only 20% of the branch users require Lewisham and that the majority require London, the timings will remain the same and continue to connect in and out from the Sevenoaks to Charing Cross service which runs fast from Hither Green to London Bridge</p>	<p>The most important point about this response is that it reveals the dreadfully low off-peak usage of the Bromley North branch. Even allowing for the fact that Bromley's main station at Bromley South provides fast and frequent direct trains to the West End, it really should be possible to do better than this.</p> <p>The logic of Southeastern's conclusion is that they are content to jettison 20% of the existing traffic. We would argue that with such low figures, every effort should be made to retain what you have and then work to publicise the line and the connections it offers in order to improve the usage..</p> <p>London TravelWatch therefore proposes a two stage plan for the off-peak timetable –</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Re-phase the service in December 2009 to connect at Grove Park with the Cannon St. via Lewisham trains. As these will be calling at New Cross, this will add a London Overground East London Line connection when this opens in May 2010. 2. Review the present operating practices so that a 4 tph 'turn-up-and-go' service can be introduced in December 2010, connecting with both the Cannon St. and the Charing Cross trains at Grove Park.
Bromley South fast trains		

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
We welcome the restoration, compared with the original SLC2 specification, of the present number of peak non-stop trains to Victoria. However we note that some of these are now overtaken, and that generally they are significantly slower than now. Why is this, and what are the trade-off benefits?	Questions not answered	Please answer.
In the evening peak there is a 20 mins gap between 1637 and 1657 ex Victoria, which seems excessive.	The 1657 from Victoria could have departed at 1652 as it runs fast between Bromley South and the Medway Towns but it cannot run earlier throughout due to pathing issues over the two track railway from Rochester Bridge Junction to Gillingham therefore we took the decision to depart the train at 1657 and offer a faster journey time for our longer distance passengers	Understood.
The 3 tph evening off-peak service perpetuates the present uneven intervals with gaps of 30 mins. This is regrettable.	We note your comments about the spread of evening departures , to do what you suggest would mean a recast of the evening standard pattern of service along the lines of what we do on a Sunday as this would mean quite a change to the timetable structure it the implications need to be understood and left for a future timetable.	The Sunday service pattern is certainly better so far as balanced intervals between Bromley South fast trains are concerned. We therefore request that this be considered for adoption on weekday evenings, with a target date of May 2010.
St. Mary Cray fast trains		
The up off-peak fast service to London is badly uneven at xx58 & xx09. This is not acceptable.	The off-peak pattern towards London is uneven as noted this has occurred as the stations is served by two different service groups which come together at Swanley, over the routes they serve they do provide an interval service and it's a consequence of this that when they join together they are close together. We cannot swap these trains over due to the connections they offer at either Ashford fro Canterbury and that the Gillingham service is constrained by the operability of the Medway corridor from Rochester Bridge junction.	Our hope was that a St. Mary Cray call could be added to the up Maidstone semi-fast trains, which would be around xx28. We see that this would only add 1 minute to the overall journey time. We do understand that there is some sensitivity in that these trains replace the present 'fast' trains from Maidstone to Cannon St. However we – like Southeastern – know that most of the latter are very little used. Also, the journey time to Victoria – even with a St. Mary Cray stop – would only be 57 mins., which is no longer than the present Cannon St. timing

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
	<p>However on the opposite half hour passengers can use a stopping service at 24 to Bromley South and there connect into a fast train to Victoria arrive at 31 and depart at 34</p>	<p>and only 4 mins. slower than to London Bridge.</p> <p>This could only be a second best solution. If this is the best that can be done, London TravelWatch would seek assurances that the interchange at Bromley South will be 'same platform' and that the facility will be well publicised to St. Mary Cray passengers.</p>
<p>The 43 mins. am peak gap between 0826 and 0909 is even worse.</p>	<p>Regarding the gap in the morning peak between 0826 to 0909 we looked at this and can see a way for the 0747 From Ashford to Victoria to make an additional call without any undue ripple effect the train will be at St Mary Cray at 0858.</p>	<p>This is still a longer gap than applies in the present peak service, but is better than the draft timetable.</p> <p>Please go ahead and implement your proposal.</p>
<p>The down off-peak service at xx37 & xx58 ex Victoria is on the margin of acceptability for a 2 tph service, and should be an early candidate for improvement.</p>	<p>Question not answered</p>	<p>Please answer.</p> <p>If the answer is along the same lines as that for the off-peak up service, then we would suggest the same solution – add a St. Mary Cray call to the semi-fast Maidstone train at xx07 from Victoria.</p>
<p>In the pm peak the 27 mins. gap 1637 – 1704 ex Victoria is excessive.</p>	<p>Looking at the evening gap 1637 to 1704 the only train available would be the fast service to Ashford at 1658; this train is a fast service today and does not call at St Mary Cray or Swanley and we don't wish this to slow the train down by making additional calls, particularly as trains using this route are limited to 6 coaches.</p>	<p>Studying the draft timetable closely, this period around 1630 – 1700 ex Victoria seems to be a particular victim of the reductions on the Chatham line required by DfT as a quid pro quo for the St. Pancras high speed service. Although they are not London TravelWatch's responsibility, we imagine there must be some pressure from the stations between Farningham Road and Sole St. about this.</p> <p>We would therefore ask whether, if we and others could persuade DfT to allow it, Southeastern could resource and path an additional train to serve all stations St. Mary Cray – Rochester?</p>
<p>Late evening gaps ex Victoria 2107 – 2152 and 2207 – 2252 are unacceptable.</p>	<p>The late evening issues would require a recast of the timetable and we need to see how the proposed timetable settles in</p>	<p>We would look for an assurance that this be examined with a view to improving things in May 2010.</p>

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
	before embarking upon such changes.	
Swanley fast trains		
The am peak 32 mins. gap 0822 – 0854 is unacceptable.	The gap highlighted 0822 to 0854 has come about as a result of a different train service pattern which will apply along to the two track section between Gillingham and Rochester Bridge junction which has meant that the existing 0816 Rochester to Victoria cannot operate. The only train remaining between the times mentioned is the 0706 from Ramsgate to Victoria and it cannot make an additional call as it would need to be back timed through the Medway which would mean that the train would not be Rules of the Plan compliant through the Medway Towns.	We realise that the line through the Medway Towns is heavily utilised during the peak, but we wonder if a further look could be taken at adding a Swanley call to the 0706 from Ramsgate. This train is 0815 ex Gillingham, and as far as we can see the preceding train is the 0808 Gillingham to Charing Cross. This gives a headway of 7 mins., whereas the Rules of the Plan (as shown on the Network Rail website) quotes a 3 mins. headway through the Medway Towns. On the face of it, therefore, the 0706 Ramsgate could run 2 mins. earlier to allow a Swanley call.
In the evening peak the 27 mins. gap 1637 – 1704 ex Victoria is excessive.	The evening gap which is the same as to what you highlighted for St Mary Cray the answer is the same.	And our response is the same.
Late evening gaps ex Victoria 2107 – 2152 and 2207 – 2252 are unacceptable.	Likewise the late evening service comments again are the same as stated for St Mary Cray.	And our response is the same.
New Cross		
As the interchange for the shortly to be rejuvenated and extended East London Line, and also as the station for Goldsmiths College, the guiding principle – at all times of day - should be that all metro trains using the platform lines here should call.	Looking at the proposed service pattern for New Cross 6 trains per hour is retained with a better interval between trains. Overall New Cross will be served by 291 trains on a normal Monday to Friday compared with 248 which applies today. The calling of all metro trains which pass through the station on the slow lines might be a desirable aspiration but with such a high usage of the track, could mean that the trains would not be Rules of the Plan compliant and would have an impact upon their presentation at key junctions. As these are all on the flat, this would have an adverse impact upon the operations of the timetable.	We understand the points made, and that simply adding New Cross calls to the draft timetable at this stage is unlikely to be practicable. However we do believe that the aspiration is a legitimate one and would like it to be investigated in more detail. We would therefore ask that Southeastern – say within the next six months – studies and reports back to us

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
		on the feasibility and implications of all trains calling (looking separately at peak and off-peak) at New Cross. This should include, if necessary, consideration of adjusting the Rules of the Plan.
St. Johns		
The improved off-peak service (6 tph, evenly spaced) is very welcome.		
The peak service is OK for commuting into London. However St. Johns is also an inbound commuting destination for Lewisham College, so it would be desirable for all metro trains using the platform lines here should call.	We realise that the station is used by passengers who are going to Lewisham college. Unfortunately, to call at all stations would have the same effect as to the position outlined above for New Cross.	This should be reviewed as part of the New Cross study requested above.
Evening off-peak frequencies		
<p>London TravelWatch has long been critical of the sharp reduction in frequencies (generally to 2 tph on each line) of Southeastern's metro services in the evenings. We acknowledge that an early action during the franchise was to reverse Connex's policy of bringing the time of reduction forward to around 1900. Also we welcome that in the December 2009 draft timetable the recently introduced 4 tph Victoria – Orpington service will be extended through to about 2030.</p> <p>However things have moved on since the Southeastern franchise was specified. We understand that the new Southern franchise specifies daytime metro frequencies up to around 2300, and several other TOCs have adopted a similar policy – generally on their own commercial account.</p> <p>We see no reason why residents of south east London should receive a lower level of service than elsewhere, so we would ask Southeastern to take this on board as an</p>	<p>We note your aspirations and what is taking place elsewhere but I'm afraid that changes of this nature will have to rest with the DfT when they consider the next round of re franchising.</p>	<p>This is a disappointing response, given that the present franchise will not expire until March 2012 at the earliest, and probably not until March 2014. This is a long time for passengers to have to wait for improved service standards which have been the norm on London Underground for many years, and which were introduced on other franchises (e.g. National Express East Anglia) in the mid-2000s.</p> <p>Is Southeastern really of the view that demand in it's London metro area is so weak that improved evening services would not cover their marginal costs?</p>

London TravelWatch comments	Southeastern reply	Further London TravelWatch comments
early priority for the further development of their services.		
Sunday services		
<p>We are no less concerned about the low frequencies presently provided on Sundays, which are an historical anomaly from the days when Sunday travel habits were very different from today. Nowadays, as is well known, there is substantial demand for travel around London. As an illustration of the change, twenty or so years ago Sunday frequencies on London Underground were around half of the weekday off-peak; today the two are almost identical. The situation is similar on London Buses, including in the area served by Southeastern.</p> <p>We think it is now time that train operators around London brought Sunday rail services into the 21st century.</p>	<p>18 months ago we restored half hourly frequencies on many metro routes for the early mornings and late evenings but going beyond this, will be a matter for the DfT when they consider the service specification at the next round of franchising</p>	<p>As with evening off-peak frequencies, the negative nature of this response is very disappointing.</p> <p>We thought that the 'Sunday problem' on national rail was primarily about Network Rail's conservative attitude to engineering maintenance access to the tracks, but it would seem from this that the underlying issue is lack of interest from train operators.</p>