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The Combined Franchise Replacement Sponsor
Department for Transport
Zone 3/15
Great Minster House
33 Horseferry Road
London
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To The Rt. Hon. Justine Greening

Re: Consultation on the combined, Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern Franchises

I am writing in response to your consultation on the combined Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern franchises on behalf of Londoners who are concerned about some of the proposed changes to the Thameslink franchise, many of whom have been in touch over several months.

Consultation question 10

Wimbledon Loop

The method by which people travel to work has a huge impact on individuals' lives. Many passengers have bought homes and put down roots in local communities based on the existing train services. I urge you to consider carefully the points below and do everything you can to minimise the impact on existing passengers, and improve services.

The first and most important request from passengers is that the through service from Mitcham, Hackbridge, Carshalton Sutton, West Sutton, Sutton Common, St Helier, Morden South South Merton, Wimbledon Chase, Wimbledon, Haydons Road, Tooting through Streatham, Tulse Hill, Herne Hill, Loughborough Junction, Elephant & Castle, London Blackfriars and City Thameslink Farringdon through to St Pancras be maintained.

As an example currently the service from Sutton Common to Farringdon takes fifty two minutes. Once you add on travel to and from the station this gives a total commute of just over an hour. If commuters are forced to change at Blackfriars total commute time could be increased to between one and a half hours and two hours. As you can imagine this increased journey time both to and from work will have a significant impact on individuals. I strongly urge you to preserve the through service especially as this line serves important interchanges such as St Pancras International and Luton Airport.

Of additional concern to passengers is the lack of information about connection times at Blackfriars. I would urge you to ensure that connections in and out of Blackfriars are as seamless as possible. Timetabling needs to ensure that passengers have time to connect between arriving and departing trains and that the gap between the two services is as short as possible.

Finally thought needs to be given to how much capacity will be available on the departing trains. If a connecting train is filled to capacity when it reaches Blackfriars then it is of little use to

connecting customers. Detailed and careful thought needs to be carried out to ensure that connections at Blackfriars meet passengers' needs.

Residents of Sutton, Streatham, Wimbledon and the surrounding areas are reliant on the Wimbledon loop rail service. Unlike many other parts of London there are few public transport alternatives to this line. Currently the Wimbledon loop has a two trains per hour service. It is vital that this is upgraded to four trains per hour, as part of this new franchise.

A particular problem that needs to be rectified is the service from Blackfriars to Carshalton which currently does not run after 9pm. The new franchise needs to rectify this anomaly.

South London Line

A decision on the Thameslink Franchise needs to be taken with regard to other changes to rail services that are happening in the area. The South London Line linking London Bridge and Victoria is soon to be closed. This severs a vital link between many communities and key transport hubs. As part of this consultation I am urging you to consider whether the South London Line can be maintained. If you decide not, what steps can be taken to maintain a good service for the communities around Wandsworth Road, Clapham High Street, Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye, Queen's Road Peckham and South Bermondsey stations. These communities need to have a high standard of rail service maintained and I would urge you to explore all available options to achieve this.

It is my understanding that through services from the Lewisham area are not likely to face significant changes. However, residents from the Brockley Rise area are particularly keen to ensure that their through service from Crofton Park is maintained. For Londoners' peace of mind it would be helpful if your response could confirm those services that will not be changing.

Consultation Question 13

Harringay

Threats to current service levels

Two separate changes to the railway are underway which will affect services to Harringay and Hornsey stations - the new Thameslink franchise and the segregation of Hertford Loop services. It is essential that any changes to service patterns maintain, at a minimum, the current level of train services to Harringay and Hornsey stations. Ideally, we would like to see these stations receiving an increase in direct trains at both peak and off peak times and guarantees that at least 4 Thameslink trains stop each hour.

This proposed increase in service is perfectly possible with some additional work such as platform lengthening for 8 car trains at Hornsey and Harringay, alongside the current track work between Alexandra Palace and Finsbury Park. Any future franchise should also create an evening and weekend service to Moorgate.

Consultation question 27

Service Standards

As you will be aware the bar for rail service standards has been set very high by the London Overground Franchise. The new franchises in this consultation offer a unique opportunity to raise the standards of service for passengers on these lines. As the London Overground

experience has shown when you implement high standards passenger demand follows. With this in mind I urge you to adopt the following principles in the franchise specification:

- Stations should be staffed from first to last train.
- Train frequencies should allow for a turn up and go service.
- Stations should be deep cleaned and facilities upgraded to ensure they are welcoming to passengers.
- Where new rolling stock is required trains should have toilets onboard.
- Stations should meet accessibility standards.
- Good quality cycle storage facilities must be provided.

This new franchise is a real opportunity to improve and increase train services for Londoners. I hope you will take on board my comments and I look forward to your positive response.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Caroline Pidgeon', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Caroline Pidgeon AM

Chair, Transport Committee

Leader, London Assembly Liberal Democrat Group