

Council: Tuesday, 21 January 2014

Opposition Business Item: Councillor Geof Cooke

Rail Services in Barnet

Council is strongly in favour of improved rail services in the borough.

Council believes that the successful applicant in the Government Department for Transport's Thameslink, Southern and Great Northern tender, due to be awarded in May 2014, should be required to provide:

- a long overdue improvement in the train frequency on the Great Northern service from New Barnet, Oakleigh Park and New Southgate stations to a minimum of 4 trains per hour in each direction all day, every day and at least that frequency on the Thameslink line serving Mill Hill Broadway, Hendon and Cricklewood stations to implement the Mayor of London's aspiration for Metro frequency services on all lines in Greater London;
- a service linking the Great Northern line stations in Barnet with the Thameslink line at St Pancras as soon as the new tunnels are available;
- for journeys within London full alignment of ticketing with Transport for London Tube services including all zone-to-zone fares, all-day Freedom Pass usage and free travel for primary school aged children.

Council notes and welcomes the huge improvement in service standards and passenger numbers when national rail services in other boroughs have been put under the control of TfL as London Overground and the planned expansion of London Overground into West Anglia lines in north east London.

Council believes similar improvements should be made in Barnet services, and in particular:

- Cricklewood and Hendon stations should remain open and not be closed when the proposed new station is opened on the Thameslink line as part of the Brent Cross/Cricklewood development.
- All stations in Barnet should be made step-free as soon as practicable with improvements in signage and customer information.
- Much-needed orbital rail links should be investigated, routes safeguarded and included in financial planning (making full use of s106 contributions from planning permissions) with particular reference to;
 - a. light rail proposals,
 - b. linkage to the proposed Old Oak Common HS2/Crossrail hub station using existing lines
 - c. possible westward extension of Crossrail 2 from Alexandra Palace and
 - d. reopening the Highgate-Finsbury Park line

Council also believes that National Rail services in London should run 24 hours on weekends as the London Underground is proposed to do.

Council welcomes the planned improvement in speed and frequency on the Northern Underground line, but opposes the closure of Underground ticket offices in Barnet.

Council believes that fair, affordable rail fares, good connectivity and fast comfortable services are essential to reduce road congestion, minimise air pollution and stimulate the local economy so Britain's high fares and subsidies from Barnet taxpayers to private rail operators and to foreign publicly-owned rail operators are undermining Barnet's local economy and worsening the cost-of-living crisis.

Council asks the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Transport to communicate these views as soon as possible with copies to Mayor Boris Johnson (as leader of TfL), Theresa Villiers MP, Matthew Offord MP, Mike Freer MP and Assembly Member Andrew Dismore and to take every opportunity to lobby DfT, the Mayor and TfL to make these and other improvements to National Rail and Underground services in Barnet.