



Valerie Shawcross

Save the South London Line!

The South London Line is the half hourly train service which runs between Victoria and London Bridge via Battersea Park, Wandsworth Rd, Clapham High Street, Denmark Hill, Peckham Rye, Queens Road and South Bermondsey. The service provides vital links for South London to central London as well as to key health facilities at Kings College, Guys' and South London and Maudsely Hospitals.

In April this year it came to light that Transport for London (TfL) and the Department for Transport (DfT) had agreed a deal to withdraw the South London Line and transfer the funding to the East London Line phase 2 extension which will not serve central London stations directly when it begins running in early 2012.

More trains—not less!

Immediately passengers, community groups, elected representatives and hospitals began highlighting the threat to this important service and there have been a number of activities - a launch, a petition, letter writing and leafleting to try to persuade TfL and DfT to change their minds. The funding being moved is £2.4million per year - a lot less than the cost of many bus routes! In my view South London needs more train services— including both the South London Line AND extended East London Line.

The Office of the Rail Regulator has not been supportive, but Transport Secretary Lord Adonis has agreed to meet local MPs Harriet Harman and Tessa Jowell along with other representatives including myself. A reply to a request



Val joins the effort to save the SLL at Denmark Hill (below) and Peckham Rye.

The South London Line campaign has highlighted the need for good transport links to hospitals in the area. If you or someone you know has difficulty getting to hospital due to a lack of transport links, then I want to hear from you—please get in touch!

Decent Homes for Hawkstone...?

Early this year, I toured the Hawkstone Estate with representatives from the tenants and residents' association to look at the poor state of repair of many of the flats and blocks. (You can watch a video of my visit at www.valshawcross.com)

Continued uncertainty about the future of the estate and whether or not it would be demolished and rebuilt or refurbished has led to ongoing neglect of the buildings.

Decent Homes

I can now report however, that the Southwark Council Executive have taken a decision not to demolish the Hawkstone and are considering whether to refurbish the estate to full Decent Homes standard. I hope some improvements will be apparent very soon.



Val on her visit to Hawkstone Estate

...but jumbo delays at Elephant

Unfortunately, no such decision has been forthcoming from the council on long awaited regeneration works at Elephant and Castle.

Deadlines for signing the regeneration deal with contractors Lend Lease have repeatedly passed, leading to an anxious uncertainty for residents and businesses alike.

Roundabout

Mayor Johnson eventually agreed to cycle to Elephant and Castle with myself and fellow Assembly Members Jenny Jones and Caroline Pidgeon to see the difficulties posed to the project by the indecision over the replacement of the south roundabout with a simpler junction. I also pressed for faster action to replace the Northern roundabout, at the Bakerloo line entrance to the tube station.

Concerns

My main concern is to prevent any further deterioration of the Elephant and Castle area while discussions on the future of the area are taking place.

Metropolitan Police has also set up a specialist 'status dogs' unit which you may have seen were involved in seizing a number of animals in Lambeth recently.

Criminal

Most dog owners are responsible and care well for their pets. Sadly a minority of cruel individuals abuse their animals and use them to facilitate criminal behaviour, intimidate people and commit generally anti-social acts.

I will continue to monitor this issue and am in contact with the Deputy Mayor for Policing regarding the ongoing operations in Lambeth.

Surrey Docks Mobile Farm comes to City Hall!

I am proud to be a staunch supporter of **Surrey Docks Farm**—a fantastic working City Farm in the heart of Rotherhithe. The Farm gives thousands of local people and school children the opportunity to experience farm work and learn about farming and animal husbandry under the fantastic leadership of Kath Whittam.

Animals

Earlier this year, I was delighted to recommend that Surrey Docks mobile farm come and visit Potters' Fields, adjacent to City Hall. The visit took place earlier in the summer and was a great success, giving local people—and of course, visitors, the chance to see real farm animals and learn more about farming. I was very pleased to meet some friendly goats!

You can find out more about the farm and its work, see where the mobile farm will be, book the mobile farm for events—and support it with a donation by visiting

www.surreydocksfarm.org.uk



Val makes a new friend on Potters' Fields!

Dangerous Dogs

Last year, after concerns about the anti-social use of so called 'status dogs' were raised with me by the Kennington Oval and Vauxhall Forum, I asked the Mayor questions about how he intended to tackle this issue.

Weapons

As a result, the London Dangerous Dogs Forum (LDDF) has been set up involving police, London boroughs and animal welfare organisations to look at ways to reduce the use of dogs as weapons. The

Get in touch:

Here's what I think about:

If you do not wish to be kept informed about Val's work at the London Assembly, please tick here.

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On *Your* train

Surrey Canal Road station plan shelved by Transport for London

South London commuters are set to lose out on yet another important travel link, as TfL state that the promised new station on the East London Line extension phase two at Surrey Canal Road - near Millwall FC—is to be shelved.

Bargain

TfL claim that the new station is not cost effective and that the project will be revisited at a later date—after the rest of the line is in operation. However, the government has put aside £7million of funding for the station and since reducing project costs during the economic downturn now mean the project would cost TfL just £2million—a bargain in terms of transport infrastructure!

Disruption

It would cost far more to construct a station after the line opens, and Len Duvall AM and I are working together to get a better deal for our constituents on the Southwark/Lewisham border. After all they have patiently put up with construction noise and disturbance on East London Line phase 1 without reaping any of the benefits of the new service—this needs to be redressed!



Cllrs Barrie Hargrove and Richard Livingstone at Surrey Canal Road.

First Capital Connect see sense on ticket offices

I am delighted to report that train operator First Capital Connect have had a rethink on their plans to cut back on opening hours at their stations—including at Elephant & Castle and Loughborough Junction.

Victory

Having conducted a residents' survey on station safety at Loughborough Junction in the past, I know how important it is for passengers to know that an actual human being is present at the station in case of any incident. I am happy to say that the wholly

inappropriate proposal to reduce opening hours at Loughborough Junction and Elephant & Castle has been dropped.



Val defends ticket office opening hours with colleague Joanne McCartney AM.

In *Committee*

Having held the position of Chair of the London Assembly Transport Committee for the year 2008-9, this year I am the committee's Deputy Chair, while continuing in my role as the Labour Group's transport spokesperson.

The Committee's role is to investigate issues that affect London's transport and transport users, so if you have any issues on your daily commute that you think we should look at, please let me know!

Here's a taste of some of the things the committee has been looking at.

- **The new Mayor's Transport Strategy**—the committee raised questions about the robustness and value for money of Mayor Johnson's strategy.

- **Dial-a-ride**—I chaired a lively session where the committee heard from Dial-a-ride users about their concerns with the service. TfL have promised improvements.

- **Rail overcrowding**—the committee looked at overcrowding on the overground network and sought to get train companies to increase capacity at the worst hit spots.

- **Snow!** - The committee's work on TfL's response to February's heavy snow (which saw the total shutdown of the bus network) was covered as far afield as New York! Sadly though, TfL refused to give travelcard holders a refund for the day they were unable to use their cards—despite the train operating companies agreeing to do so.

Up your *Street*

Cross about crossings

The Mayor's manifesto famously included a pledge to 'smooth traffic' by re-phasing traffic lights to make the green phase for cars longer. What this has meant in practice is that at some light-controlled pedestrian crossings the 'green man' phase, when pedestrians can safely cross the road has been made shorter!

with young children, and it clearly prioritises car drivers over pedestrians. At a time when London is supposed to be reducing its emissions this move does not encourage walking instead of driving.

Increased traffic?

Although many of the 150 sets of lights reviewed initially were not re-phased, in 41 cases the pedestrian's crossing time was reduced and in 25 of these cases the pedestrian waiting time has increased. This does not bode well for the rest of the traffic light review—pedestrians are getting the raw end of the deal. If you notice issues at your local crossing, let me know.

Safety questions

This obviously raises serious safety concerns for pedestrians—



Val and Cllrs Andrew Pakes & Mary Foulkes at Old Kent Road.

especially people with mobility problems or parents

Guide Dogs' concern for street safety

We were joined for June's Mayor's Question Time meeting by a huge number of guide dogs and their owners, who were calling for a moratorium on 'shared streets' schemes. Shared streets have no kerbstones, which are used by blind and partially sighted people as a key navigation cue for crossing roads and Guide Dogs for the Blind want their obvious safety concerns addressed before more schemes get the go-ahead.

This is a reasonable request and as well as meeting guide dog Fay, I also called on the Mayor to meet Guide Dogs for the Blind to discuss their concerns.



On the *Buses*

Bus services, as ever, are a regular feature of my postbag! Here is a round up of the latest news:

Route 1—I did my own monitoring of this bus through Bermondsey following complaints about overcrowding on the service. I saw the problems first hand and TfL have promised improvements.

Route 78—This service is being reviewed as part of TfL's re-tendering service for the contract to run the route. My response to TfL's consultation reflected what I saw when I monitored the Grange Road stop in SE1—namely overcrowding. At the other end of the route, Nunhead residents are suffering when the bus

is regularly terminated at Peckham Rye.

Route 343—This route is also due for re-tendering and I have reiterated longstanding complaints about the 343 to TfL. Issues with long delays and 'bunching' (several buses arriving together, before another long wait) in the Southampton Way area continue. Speeding in Ivydale Road is also a concern.

Route G1—I'm very disappointed to report that the campaign to extend route G1 along Streatham Vale has been unsuccessful. Despite being presented with a 500 signature strong petition from the Streatham Vale Property Owners Association

(SVPOA), TfL have concluded that extending the service would make the route too long and impact on reliability.

Bye-bye bendy—Mayor Johnson is pressing ahead with his costly plans to withdraw the articulated 'bendy' buses from service. This began recently with the removal of 'bendies' on Red Arrow commuter routes 507 and 521 and route 38 (Victoria to Hackney).

We estimate that the cost of replacing vehicles on all 11 'bendy' routes will end up costing an additional £28million PER YEAR—for a worse bus service!