

## Briefing note for Vicky Foxcroft MP and Crofton Park Transport Users Group

*Unfortunately we are unable to attend the meeting on Saturday 6 February so we have put together the below information to give an overview of recent performance challenges affecting Crofton Park and what we are doing to resolve these. We are very keen to receive the feedback and comments raised at this meeting.*

*Passengers across all of our routes have experienced poor punctuality of services and we understand that this hasn't been good enough.*

### Network Rail infrastructure failings

The network has been subject to multiple infrastructure failures causing delays many of which are outside of our control. These include major signal failures at Purley, Haywards Heath, Tulse Hill and Luton; additionally lorries keep hitting one particular low railway bridge in Tulse Hill on average twice a month which has a devastating effect on Thameslink services.

### Shortage of available train crew

Regrettably, due to a temporary shortage of available train crew, we also had to cancel some services over the Christmas period. We are running the UK's biggest driver recruitment and training programme to address this. It takes over a year to train a driver to the high safety standards expected in the industry – that's a minimum of 240 hours in practical training and an additional 840 hours learning theory – and we cannot train the large number of drivers we need all at once so there is a rolling programme. Also, while we are recruiting and training, existing drivers retire and leave for personal reasons.

There are also new fleets of trains coming on stream next year on both Thameslink and Great Northern which we will be training drivers to use. Both Thameslink and Great Northern will have a new improved timetable in December which requires more drivers to provide additional overnight services on Thameslink and later services weekdays and weekend services into Moorgate on Great Northern.

As a result, there continues to be a risk of cancellations, in particular during periods of high annual leave – but we are steadily overcoming this. In the meantime we will continue to keep you informed of any possible cancellations via our station screens, app and website.

### Thameslink programme

We are going through a period of great investment and improvement work through the Thameslink Programme which will deliver enormous benefits for our passengers. However while this is going on, the congested Brighton Mainline is far more susceptible to delays and at times, is taking up to four times longer to recover during disruption. Part of that investment is to rebuild London Bridge and the surrounding track, which has removed one of the four routes into that station. Cross-London Thameslink trains now have only one route to use (through Tulse Hill) and Southern have had to divert many of their trains into Victoria which now has even busier platforms. Even before this vital work began we had more services than ever before on the Brighton Mainline as the industry sought to keep up with the ever-increasing popularity of the railway: 32% more people are travelling with Southern now than they did five years ago and 40% on Thameslink.

### What are we doing about it?

Services will get steadily better as we deliver improvements but we have to look forward to the end of the Thameslink Programme in December 2018 for the transformed service to be delivered when London Bridge redevelopment is finished and we have the full 24 trains per hour service across central London.

We are working together to increase punctuality, with Network Rail making track, signalling and other systems more dependable and GTR bringing in new, more reliable trains this spring and still more drivers. We are also bringing in more drivers with the UK's biggest recruitment and training programme. Last year across the franchise we brought in 146 new drivers and there are 275 more in training with even more to follow.

**We are committed to improving the service for our passengers.**