



HOUSE OF COMMONS

LONDON SW1A 0AA

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18 October 2017

As you may be aware, passengers in south east London have experienced an appalling service on the Orpington line over the last ten days, with a considerable number of delays, cancellations and short formed trains since 9 October. In the large majority of cases, no explanation as to the cause of this disruption has been forthcoming.

I have taken the liberty of enclosing a letter I have sent to David Statham, the Managing Director of Southeastern, which sets out the problems I and many other commuters have faced, as well as a precis of the complaints I have been copied into on Twitter over the past seven days. I should stress that this forms just a small portion of the comments I see every day, but I hope it will give you a sense of the frustration felt by passengers, their lack of confidence in the ability of either Southeastern or Network Rail to properly manage the route, and, on some occasions, the utter disbelief at the level of incompetence on display.

Situations like last week, where after a number of cancellations a train was sent the wrong way by a signaller, or this morning when it was announced, with no explanation, that 76 trains will be short formed during the course of the day, are frankly inexcusable. Given that a high percentage of the local population travels up to central London on a daily basis for work, and the lack of alternative travel routes on offer, I would also suggest that these continuing problems on the network do real damage to the Government's reputation locally.

Talking to passengers at stations and on my commute, there is a genuine anxiety that Southeastern's contract will be renewed in December 2018, something the majority of passengers in Bromley and Chislehurst, including myself, would be completely opposed to unless significant improvements are made over the coming months. On that basis, I would be grateful to know if there is an estimate of when your Department will be publishing the findings of the consultation on the future of South Eastern rail services, which ran earlier this year.

With an amended, 'leaf-fall' timetable in place for the rest of the working week, passengers face more disruption over the coming days. I would welcome your thoughts on the above, as well as an opportunity to discuss this with you further, perhaps with other MPs whose constituencies are similarly served by Southeastern.

Bob Neill MP