



Department for
Transport

From the Parliamentary
Under Secretary of State

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As you know, in 1999 applications were made under the Railways Act 1993 (the 1993 Act) for a number of statutory closures in connection with the Thameslink 2000 project. Your Committee¹ duly prepared reports on the proposals as required under section 43 of the 1993 Act and submitted these in 2000. It is the intention of the Secretary of State for Transport to make decisions on these closure proposals simultaneously with decisions yet to be made on other applications (including those under the Transport and Works Act) in connection with the Thameslink 2000 project.

The public inquiry into the TWA and planning applications is to be re-opened on 6 September, following the submission by Network Rail of fresh proposals to address issues identified at the earlier inquiry. We expect that by the time the Secretary of State and ODPM are in a position to determine the TWA and planning applications, LTUC's earlier reports on the closures will be at least 6 years old.

Making a decision on the proposed closures while having regard only to objections from passengers and LTUC's reports from over 6 years ago would, in our view, be highly unsatisfactory. There would, for example, be no way of taking into account of the views of rail users likely to be affected who did not use the services, stations and networks concerned at the time of the original proposals.

To help address these concerns and to provide an improved basis for the Secretary of State's decision making on the closure applications, I would be grateful if LTUC could investigate again the passenger hardship likely to arise from the changes to railway passenger services and station services

¹London Transport Users Committee, the London Regional Passengers Committee

which will result from the proposed closures associated with the Thameslink project, and prepare a supplementary report in relation to this. For the purposes of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, I am referring this matter to the Committee under section 252B(1)(b).

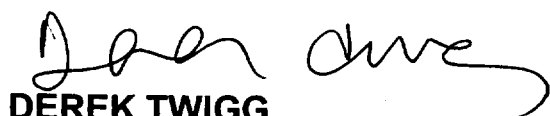
The Department will take appropriate steps to re-publicise the closure proposals, and to enable current rail users and other interested parties to lodge objections over an 8 week period. We expect to issue public notices to this effect in September, and shall of course provide a copy of such notices to you. We will provide for objections to be lodged with us, and all objections received will be forwarded to LTUC. Your Committee may wish to hold public hearings to help in preparing its reports, which should be delivered to the Secretary of State no later than 14 weeks after the date which we shall specify in the public notice as the date by which objections should be lodged, unless agreed otherwise. I have also asked for a revised statement of reasons to be produced, so that any information in the original statement of reasons which has fallen out-of-date can be made accurate. Both the original and revised statements of reasons shall be made available to interested parties (and to the Committee).

The above approach is not part of the formal statutory closure procedures set out in the 1993 Act although it is influenced by them. It is in my view a transparent and appropriate means of providing refreshed, up-to-date information to assist in making the decision on the Thameslink 2000 closure applications.

It is my intention to consider your supplementary report, any new objections and the revised statement of reasons, along with those from 1999 and 2000, when making a decision on whether or not to allow the proposed closures.

For the purposes of section 252D(3) and (4) of the Greater London Authority Act 1999, I require the Committee to publish its supplementary report. The Committee may publish the report in any manner which it considers appropriate.

I am copying this letter to John Armit, Network Rail, Mark Causebrook, Thameslink Rail, Nick Newton, SRA and Roger Evans, Chair of London Assembly Transport Committee. A copy will be also placed on the DfT website.



DEREK TWIGG