

My flat,
On the road we're on,
Limehouse,
London, E14
Tel: xxxxx xxxxxx

Customer Service Centre,
London Underground,
55 Broadway,
London, SW1H 0BD

Wednesday March 26, 2008

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to complain about the engineering works scheduled to take place in the Bank/Monument complex from March 31, 2008 until August 2009, and the manner in which this work has been planned and announced.

Bank/Monument is the most important interchange station for DLR passengers traveling into central London, such as myself. With the simultaneous closure of Tower Gateway and shutting down of virtually all interchange at Bank/Monument, customers served by the DLR are effectively cut off from direct access to central London and the main underground network, massively increasing journey times and inconvenience. That this closure was announced only eleven days before it was due to take effect (the information appeared on the TfL website on March 20) is nothing short of disgraceful.

As you are aware, the escalators on the interchange between the Bank DLR platforms and the Central Line have been the subject of engineering works since the summer of 2007, which in itself caused significant discomfort and inconvenience for travelers. This work was finished less than a fortnight ago – as such, it is truly baffling that they need to be shut down again, less than a month later, as your literature indicates they will be.

To undertake engineering works with such a major negative effect on your customers, at such incredibly short notice, requires at the very least a more open and comprehensive explanation than the vague, confusing and easily-overlooked announcements made so far. On that basis, I have a number of questions about the planning and implementation of the engineering work, for which I would appreciate full answers.

With regards to the planning of the work: Firstly, for how long has this work been planned? If it has been planned for a significant amount of time, then why has only eleven days notice been given? Furthermore, why were the DLR-Central Line escalators taken out of commission for over six months if this work was already planned? If the work has not been planned significantly in advance, why is the work required so urgently that it could not be scheduled so as to avoid coinciding with the closure of Tower Gateway?

With regards to the work itself: Is the work limited to the replacement of escalators? Is the work intended to do anything that will increase the capacity or ease of flow through the (already overcrowded) Bank/Monument complex? Why could it not be staggered so as to maintain some level of interchange, rather than shutting all interchange routes (save between the DLR and Northern Line) simultaneously?

And with regards to your plans to help customers affected by the works: Do you propose to

compensate DLR customers for the lack of service the combined closure of Tower Gateway and interchange at Bank/Monument will cause? Additionally, are there plans to provide additional buses on routes connecting DLR stations to central London, to help ease the overcrowding?

I fully appreciate the need to maintain and improve the existing Underground and DLR infrastructure, and I applaud the ongoing efforts to do so. However, I am extremely disappointed over the manner in which this work has been planned, implemented and communicated to the public, in which no consideration seems to have been given to the effect it will have on your passengers.

In the interests of full disclosure, I should tell you that I plan to publish this correspondence and any replies received on my personal website (www.flashboy.org/blog/). A copy of this letter has been sent to Transport for London, London Underground and the Docklands Light Railway. I thank you in advance for your time in dealing with this matter.

Yours faithfully,

Tom Phillips