

Aspirations for Rail Franchise Replacement & Renegotiation

May 2010

Draft Version



London TravelWatch is the official body set up by Parliament to provide a voice for London's travelling public.

Our role is to:

- Speak up for transport users in discussions with policy-makers and the media;
- Consult with the transport industry, its regulators and funders on matters affecting users;
- Investigate complaints users have been unable to resolve with service providers, and;
- Monitor trends in service quality.

Our aim is to press in all that we do for a better travel experience all those living, working or visiting London and its surrounding region.

Table 1 - Document Revisions

Issue	Date	Changes
1	21/03/2000	First issue
2	12/06/2001	Minor update and revision
3	28/11/2003	Title amended, new paragraphs added & minor updating revisions
4	05/01/2004	Minor amendments
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Contents

1 Introduction1
2 Train Services2
3 Trains7
4 Integrated Transport 10
5 Stations 11
6 Information 15
7 Tickets 16
8 Fares 17
9 Customer Service 21
Appendix – References 22

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1 Introduction

This paper sets out the improvements in National Rail services which London TravelWatch wishes to see achieved through the franchise replacement process undertaken by the Department for Transport. London TravelWatch's aspirations seek to address the immediate and urgent need for the National Railway network. Our aspirations also seek to address the implications of the long term needs of transport users and the consequent need to secure investment which will so transform the National Railways.

1.1.1 Prioritisation of London TravelWatch's aspirations

Each aspiration is allocated a priority rating and these have the following meanings:

High priority – aspirations which require management action but no more than modest investment and should therefore be achievable within the first two years of a new franchise. We would expect many high priority items to be achievable within one year or less.

Medium term priority – aspirations which require investment on a scale which should be achievable (or on which substantial progress should be made) within two to five years.

Long term priority – aspirations requiring complex and large scale investments which will take more than five years to complete. In some cases, e.g. application of new standards to station design, we would expect to see progress in less than five years whilst accepting that nationwide implementation will take longer.

In some instances we ask for major policy reviews or for investment projects to be appraised. In these cases, although implementation may be a medium or long term matter, we specify that the review or appraisal should be accorded high priority.

2 Train Services

2.1.1 Train Timetables

All aspects of train service provision to be enhanced in accordance with London TravelWatch's "Requirements for Train Services – Principles" (May 2010 – see link www.londontravelwatch.org.uk). **Long term priority**

For all services, Monday-Friday off-peak frequencies and service patterns also to apply during evenings and Saturdays. **Medium term priority**

For all services, Saturday frequencies and service patterns also to apply on Sundays (7-day railway concept). The intent of this aspiration is to cater for the social changes which are making Sundays increasingly like Saturdays. A later start of service may be appropriate on Sundays but train operators must be ready to respond to any further changes which emerge during their franchise terms. This aspiration is given a long term priority in recognition of the major changes in rail industry maintenance practices which it will require. **Long term priority**

Principles to be adopted for timetable development are as follows:

- a) Repetitive hourly patterns.
- b) Within each hour, run as many trains as possible and schedule them at even intervals.
- c) Connections should be scheduled to provide the same journey time in both directions.
- d) Whilst in general existing links should not be jeopardised, and proposals for new links should always be carefully considered, the preference is for avoiding schemes which add to the complexity of existing services because of the penalty in terms of reliability and frequency that over-complex routing patterns typically incur. The essential corollary to this is that interchange should be as convenient and straightforward as possible and supported by high quality facilities.
- e) Peak service timetables should be constructed so that off-peak patterns apply all day and that peak services are made up by adding extra trains to the basic off-peak pattern. This will avoid two of the major shortcomings of many existing timetables, such that inner area stations often have less frequent services in the peak than in the off-peak, and that important 'non Central London' links are broken in the peak. This aspiration is given a medium term priority as it is likely that it may require significant

infrastructure changes in some locations. However we would expect to see substantial progress within two years.

Medium term priority

Bidders should provide specimen timetables to enable passenger representatives to fully understand the likely impact of their proposals. **High priority**

2.1.2 Improved first, last and night services

See London TravelWatch's "Requirements for Train Services – Principles" (May 2010 – see link www.londontravelwatch.org.uk). We accept that aspirations for all-night services may need to take account of maintenance practice changes required to achieve the "7 day railway". **High priority**

2.1.3 Public Holiday Services

Saturday services should operate on all Bank Holidays except Christmas Day and Boxing Day. Sunday services should operate on Boxing Day. Airport services geared to flight times should operate on Christmas Day. Saturday services should operate between Boxing Day and New Year, with peak enhancements as required and agreed (after consultation) with DfT each year. It is essential that consistency be applied across all train operators, so as to avoid the present unacceptable situation whereby connections are lost where one operator runs a Saturday services and another runs a Sunday service. **High priority**

All operators should provide leaflets or booklets for Bank Holiday period services so that passengers who wish to do so can plan their journeys (and make short notice or en route changes to their plans) without reference to website or telephone enquiry services. **High priority**

2.1.4 Measures to ease overcrowding

Overcrowding on commuter routes in London is the single most important issue to be tackled in franchise replacement. In the short term commuter TOCs must take action to improve compliance with passengers in excess of capacity standards. **High priority**

Beyond this, the train crowding regime must be tightened as present allowances for standing passengers will not be acceptable over a twenty minute period. At the same time the crowding regime also needs to be modified to ensure that train operators cannot pursue crowding compliance by reducing service levels at inner London stations. This vital aspiration, particularly when taken in conjunction with that for improvements in services for journeys within London, points to a need for improvements in both infrastructure capacity and standards of operational performance. **Medium term priority**

Full length trains to operate off-peak whenever needed to ensure that all passengers have a seat. The intent of this aspiration is to address the present situation whereby, in particular, evening and Sunday trains on London routes have standing passengers due to use of 2, 3 or 4 car trains where longer trains are needed. **Long term priority**

2.1.5 Unplanned service disruption – Connections Policy

A connections policy (with London TravelWatch and Passenger Focus consultation) should be established for each interchange station. Where trains are held in accordance with a connections policy and in other cases where it is in the interests of passengers to do so, train operators should not be penalised by Network Rail or by the DfT performance regimes for consequent late running. Likewise, train operators should not be penalised for arranging additional stops where the purpose is to mitigate the effects of earlier delays or cancellations.

High priority

2.1.6 Planned service disruption

London TravelWatch wants to see far greater industry emphasis on reducing the impact of planned disruption on rail passengers. Over the past ten years considerable effort has been put into address unplanned disruption and while there is still a longer way to go, passengers have seen the benefits. The next hurdle is therefore planned disruption particularly with the delivery of projects such as Crossrail. The industry has to be able to find a way of keeping the railway 'open-for-business' throughout the week. This means the wholesale replacement of services at the weekends by buses is not acceptable.

There is a hierarchy of decision making which is required when mitigating the impact of engineering work on the passenger. There are two stages which must be considered before a full bus substitution is considered:

1. Diversion of trains or a reduced service making use of single line working
2. Partial bus replacement to intermediate locations for example to different main line routes or Underground lines.
3. Full bus replacement but this must be of a quality that is sufficiently high

London TravelWatch has received a number of appeals about the quality of bus replacement services provided by the current franchisee focusing on the information provision to passengers. Where bus substitution is required due to engineering work the London TravelWatch would like bidders to following code of practice:

- Adequate and prominent publicity to be disseminated at least ten days in advance and on the day, both on the route and on lines connecting with it

(even if the latter are run by a different operator e.g. other train companies or London Underground)

- A weekly network wide map of engineering disruption
- The equivalent London Underground notice should be displayed at 'Network' stations and the 'Network' map at Underground stations
- Low-floor fully accessible buses to be used (except for long journeys where coaches are required, in which case special arrangements should be made to assist disabled and luggage laden passengers)
- Adequate facilities for luggage, buggies and cycles to be provided
- Temporarily closed stations to be clearly identified as such, with the replacement bus timetable clearly displayed with clear directions to the bus stops;
- Bus stopping points to be clearly marked by temporary bus stop signs, so that passengers and drivers alike know where these are and to prevent disputes
- Buses to display destinations and intermediate calling points clearly on the front of the vehicle
- Adequate staff to be provided at all affected stations to direct passengers to buses and trains, and
- Where interchange between buses and trains takes place at stations with automatic ticket gates, the gates either to be powered down or configured to ensure that all tickets are returned to the passengers. If gates are not powered down, adequate staff to be provided at the gate line to direct and assist passengers with luggage etc. to use the manual gate
- Only reputable bus companies to be used, with drivers who have the necessary local knowledge and ability to follow the route.

High priority

Further details can be found in London TravelWatch's report, 'When is a train not a train? - A study of rail replacement bus services' (2004)

<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/1354/get>.

Possession disruption index for passengers – the disruption to passengers by possessions can be very significant, particularly at the weekends. Publication by route would allow passengers to see the availability of the network at a level which is meaningful to their usage of the railways. London TravelWatch would

also wish to see publication of the statistics for bus replacements as a percentage of scheduled services for each route broken down by weekday, Saturdays and Sundays. **High priority**

2.1.7 Carriage of Bicycles

All new rolling stock to have cycle provision. **Medium term priority**

A minimum of 6 turn up & go cycle spaces should be provided on off-peak services – also on peak services where stock has cycle spaces which do not reduce passenger space. **Long term priority**

2.1.8 Other developments

It is imperative that the level of service offered to people travelling wholly within Greater London is improved. Cost-benefit analysis should be used to appraise the necessary investment and service levels, applying the same formulae as on the London Underground in order to eliminate the long-standing disparity of service between the National Railways and the Underground. If the cost of any worthwhile project is greater than the rail industry will finance, funding of the gap is the proper role of Government. **Long term priority**

Bidders should provide clear plans showing how they intend to deal with overcrowding and unreliability. **High priority**

A major culture change is required so that passengers see all aspects of public transport as a co-ordinated network. **High priority**

All aspects of train service provision to be enhanced in the short term in accordance with London TravelWatch's paper 'Requirements for Train Services – Principles' (May 2010 – see link www.londontravelwatch.org.uk). **High priority**

In the short term 'Metro' services should be developed, as a minimum, in accordance with the standards of the London Overground network. Bidders for other London franchises should indicate how they would apply the same principles in their areas and submit implementation plans. **High priority**

Train operators should cease the practice of stabling rolling stock in terminal platforms, thus requiring service trains to be 'called on' into the platform and giving passengers a long walk to the concourse. The calling-on procedure should only be used where:

- a) One train is required to couple to another to form an outgoing service, or
- b) It is necessary during peak periods to maximise use of platform capacity.

High priority

3 Trains

3.1.1 New Trains

London TravelWatch supports finding of the research into passengers priorities for new rolling stock from the “Thameslink Rolling Stock Qualitative research,” report prepared jointly for Passenger Focus, the DfT and London TravelWatch in 2008 (<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=1872>). In addition we wish new rolling stock to include the following features:

- a) Emergency communication. For instances where staff cannot reply to a call at once, there should a ‘staff aware’ sign and an indication of what is likely to happen next.
- b) Heating and ventilation. Some degree of manual control (such as aircraft type swivel ventilators) should be provided where feasible.
- c) Seating. Although some face-to-back seats should be provided so as to offer choice, seats should be predominantly face-to-face. Tip-up seats should be included in vestibules, space permitting.
- d) Communications. A simple means of on-board communication with conductor (possibly via telephones), which should be fully accessible and clearly distinguishable from any communication system designed solely for emergency use.
- e) Layout. A proportion of compartment stock to be provided where research shows passengers prefer this. Aspiration specifically relevant for longer-distance trains (i.e. where passengers are regularly expected to travel for more than 1 hour.)
- f) Seating. Minimum 30” (76 cm) leg-room. Design points:
 - Adjustable headrests and back rests, suitable for a range of passenger heights
 - Tip-up seats in vestibule for use only when all other seats are taken
 - Reversible or swivel seats
 - Folding tables at any seats not provided with fixed tables

- Footrests, where seats are arranged face-to-back this aspiration is specifically relevant for longer-distance trains (i.e. where passengers are regularly expected to travel for more than 1 hour).
- g) Luggage space High levels of luggage space. A secure holding facility for luggage (e.g. coin-operated lockers). Aspiration specifically relevant for longer-distance trains (i.e. where passengers are regularly expected to travel for more than 1 hour).
- h) Seat reservations. LED or similar display for showing seat reservations, on edge of luggage rack. Display to be adjustable during journey to facilitate reservations after train has started its journey, subject to suitable procedures to ensure that the occupant of an unreserved seat is not required to vacate it during his journey. Aspiration specifically relevant for longer-distance trains (i.e. where passengers are regularly expected to travel for more than 1 hour).
- i) Lighting. Some degree of individual control over lighting levels. Aspiration specifically relevant for longer-distance trains (i.e. where passengers are regularly expected to travel for more than 1 hour).

Medium term priority

3.1.2 Refurbishment of existing vehicles

Toilets to Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) requirements to be provided on all stock. **Long term priority**

Refurbished stock should generally correspond to new stock so far as is reasonably practical. **Medium term priority**

When considering new or refurbished rolling stock, London TravelWatch is willing to discuss with operators the possibility that toilets need not be provided on metro trains. Assurances would be required regarding the availability of toilets at stations, and that only in agreed circumstances would such trains normally operate on services extending beyond the London 'metro' area.

3.1.3 Accessibility and suitability for users with special needs (mobility/sight/hearing)

Seats associated with wheelchair spaces should be bookable by those with a disability which necessitates them needing more space - not reserved only for those travelling with a wheelchair passenger. **High priority**

A core network of accessible stations to be developed. Bidders to submit proposals. **Medium term priority**

London Underground 'hump' concept for unaided wheelchair access to trains at core network stations to be developed, if practical for national railways operation.
Medium term priority

3.1.4 On-train announcements

Consistency of driver/conductor announcements, i.e. they should all be required to announce stops, not given the option. **High priority**

Information to be given of any delays affecting onward connections at interchange stations, including information about disruption on London Underground and major disruption on services from other London terminals.
High priority

3.1.5 Rolling stock cleaning programme

Train operators to submit plans to the DfT to demonstrate that they have rolling stock cleaning programmes which will ensure that all trains are cleaned internally each night and externally at such intervals as necessary to ensure clean windows at all times. This aspiration includes the need to ensure that train windows are properly cleaned during cold weather and not, as hitherto, allowed to become encrusted because of problems with carriage washing machines.
High priority

All trains should be 'litter picked' and have toilets checked and serviced as necessary. **High priority**

3.1.6 'Quiet Carriage' concept

Support 'no mobile phones' carriages, with prominent notices to aid enforcement.
Medium term priority

Support 'family carriage' on longer distance trains, provided it does not compromise space available for non-family passengers. **High priority**

3.1.7 Selective Door Opening

All rolling stock should be fitted with selective door opening facilities. The intent of this aspiration is to ensure that trains can call at any station even if the train is longer than the platform. **Medium term priority**

4 Integrated Transport

4.1.1 Joint and inter-available ticketing schemes

Through booking rail and bus where bus is required to reach places remote from a station. London TravelWatch encourages train operators to be innovative in deliver greater integration of the public transport network.

High priority

4.1.2 Bus links and connections policy

Bus times should be co-ordinated with first and last trains and with all trains at times when the train service operates on a frequency of less than six trains per hour. **Medium term priority**

4.1.3 Co-ordination of timetables

Any station served by more than one route should display both alphabetical and line of route timetables. **High priority**

Where a route is served by more than one train operator, line of route timetables should show all trains irrespective of operator. **High priority**

4.1.4 Intermodal Interchange at stations

Existing subsidiary entrances should be retained, particularly where they are the most convenient route to bus stops, car parks, etc. **High priority**

Bus interchange should be configured (in co-operation with bus operators and local authorities) so that bus stops are as close as possible to the station entrance and conform to best practice for use by low-floor buses. Shelters should be provided at pick-up stops. Real-time bus running information should be provided on platforms, in waiting rooms, in the station exit area and at the bus stops. The purpose of providing real-time bus running information on platforms and in station waiting rooms is to enable passengers to go to, and wait, in comfortable surroundings if there is a significant time to wait for their bus.

Medium term priority

4.1.5 Display of multi-mode timetables and maps at stations

Bus timetables and bus maps for all routes serving (or running near) the station, together with bus stop location maps, should be displayed in the exit area of all stations. **High priority**

5 Stations

London TravelWatch is currently undertaking research into Station Standards in London. This research is covering both the London Underground and National Rail network. This report is intended to give a London specific view of station requirements and to influence the policy initiatives that are currently ongoing for stations nationally.

One of the major issues that needs to be addressed in relation to stations is the fragmented responsibilities for their upkeep. A considerable issue that London TravelWatch has campaigned to resolve is the responsibility for the cleaning of litter. This is split variously between the station facility owner (train company), Network Rail and Local Authorities. This complex interaction is mirrored in many areas relating to stations. London TravelWatch recommends that the Franchise Agreement emphasises the Franchisee's role in the station it is environment to attempt to counter the confusing relationships. **High priority**

5.1.1 Minimum Station Standards

All bidders should be required to adopt, as a minimum, the standards proposed in the 'Better Rail Stations' report. London TravelWatch believes that it is essential that Minimum Standards and not a passenger perception approach is used to monitor station quality and facility provision. This is because perceptions can vary very substantially over time and by area for reasons that are unconnected with the standard of service. There are also absolute requirements in terms of facilities which are not easily reflected in peoples' perception. London TravelWatch therefore strongly favours the approach taken by TfL in the London Rail Concession. The London Overground has very explicit Minimum Standards to adhere to. **High Priority**

The cost of bring up the standards of stations may be large, but compared to, say new rolling stock, relatively small investments can have large impacts on passengers. For this reason it should be possible for the bidder to innovate and find ways of generating revenue from stations which can be used in part to pay for improvements in facilities and staffing at stations. We recognise that this is a priority which may take some time to achieve. London TravelWatch would wish to see bidders submit a plan for the timescales for investment in stations to deliver minimum station standards. **Long term Priority**

Franchisee to adopt signing rules and standards similar to those used by London Underground and implement them throughout the network. The intent of this aspiration is to standardise good practice for the layout and disposition of signs. It is not suggested that Train Operators should suppress their own identities, although it would be appropriate for them all to use a standard typeface for information signs. Running-in boards should continue to be provided at stations

where some trains non-stop, displayed at an angle for easy viewing from passing trains. **Medium term priority**

Platform staffing – staff should where the level of demand is sufficient be available and visible at platform level at least from 0630 to 2130. Bidders should submit a programme showing when this would be achieved for each station and platform. It should not be achieved by reducing staff coverage at any station which already exceeds this standard. **High priority**

Where there are sufficient passenger numbers, staff should be available and visible at platform level from first train until after departure of the last train. Bidders should submit a programme showing when this would be achieved for each station and platform. **Medium term priority**

At least 20 cycle racks should be provided at all stations. These should be covered, secure and highly visible. **High priority**

Defective lights, if a safety hazard, to be repaired before the next dark period. Graffiti to be removed within 48 hours. Other lighting defects and vandalism to be repaired within 5 days. **High priority**

Bidders to submit plans to the DfT to demonstrate that they have station maintenance programmes to keep all structures in good external and interior repair and which will achieve the required outputs in terms of reliability of all equipment which affects the quality of passenger service. **High priority**

Ticket Vending Machines to be supplied at all stations particular those which are not staffed. These should be able to retail Oyster products, the full range of ticket types and railcard discounts. **High priority**

5.1.2 Secure Stations accreditation

Train operators should be required to achieve accreditation for all stations, provide an implementation plan and commit to reviewing the accreditation criteria at least every five years to take account of advances in technology. **High priority**

5.1.3 Secure Car Parks accreditation

Train operators should be required to achieve accreditation for all car parks, provide an implementation plan and commit to reviewing the accreditation criteria at least every five years to take account of advances in technology. **High priority**

5.1.4 Platform staffing

Where demand is sufficient, staff should be available and visible at platform level at least from 0630 to 2130. Train operators should submit a programme showing when this would be achieved for each station and platform. It should not be

achieved by reducing staff coverage at any station which already exceeds this standard. **High priority**

Any station which is scheduled to be unstaffed for any period during operating hours, however brief, should have a minimum level of facilities, ticketing vending possibilities, security and also help points to allow passengers to contact staff. **High priority**

Where demand is sufficient, staff should be available and visible at platform level from first train until after departure of the last train. Bidders should submit a programme showing when this would be achieved for each station and platform.

Medium term priority

5.1.5 Access and information for passengers with special needs (mobility/sight/hearing etc.)

Telephone information services for disabled people to be accessed by separate telephone number giving direct access to an operator, i.e. not to be part of a menu selection system. **High priority**

All rail staff should undertake disability awareness training with training packages submitted to DPTAC for approval. **High priority**

5.1.6 Cycle facilities

Cycle racks should be provided at all stations. These should be covered, secure and highly visible. **High priority**

5.1.7 Station facilities

All toilets should be cleaned regularly, be secure, be available for passengers and maintained to a high standard. Bidders should supply a programme for implementation. **High priority**

All platforms should have a canopy to provide a covered route from a covered waiting area to the train. This canopy should be at least 20m long (one carriage length) and should be located with regard to the stopping position of the shortest train using the platform. The canopied area should include seats. The intent is that once passengers arrive on a platform they can sit down and remain sheltered from rain until they are inside a carriage. **Medium term priority**

For maximum passenger comfort, Inter-City platforms should be canopied for the entire train length. **Medium term priority**

For maximum passenger comfort, Inter-City operators should provide fully enclosed and heated waiting accommodation for all passengers and fully

enclosed routes between such accommodation and all train doors. **Long term priority**

On London commuter lines, for passenger comfort and to encourage rapid station stops and full utilisation of train length, London-bound platforms should have platform canopies extending the entire length of the longest train operated. **Medium term priority**

Where a station is close to a well-used road but the entrance and booking hall is in a side street, it should be reconstructed to provide direct access from the well-used road, with lift and escalator access to platforms as necessary. The intent of this aspiration is to address the situation (common in the London area) where stations are poorly used because they are hidden away in side streets even though a main road crosses the line nearby. **Long term priority**

5.1.8 Business Lounges/Meeting Points

Business and First Class lounges may be provided, but only as an addition to, not instead of, comfortable enclosed and heated waiting facilities for standard class passengers. **Medium term priority**

5.1.9 Litter around stations

One of the major issues that needs to be addressed in relation to stations is the fragmented responsibilities for their upkeep. A considerable issue that London TravelWatch has campaigned to resolve is the responsibility for the cleaning of litter. This is split variously between the station facility owner (train company), Network Rail and local authorities. This complex interaction is mirrored in many areas relating to stations. London TravelWatch recommends that the Franchise Agreement emphasises the franchisee's role in the station it is environment to attempt to counter the confusing relationships. **High priority**

5.1.10 Station Travel Plans

London TravelWatch supports the concept of station travel plans outlined in our report, 'Getting to the Station' (2006) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/2319/get>. In recent years planning requirements for new developments have increasingly required the use of 'travel plans' to reduce the impact of developments on local roads and transport by encouraging the use where possible of sustainable transport. London TravelWatch has been pleased by their inclusion in recent franchises for stations, or groups of stations. The travel plan can take account of the needs and demand at particular stations or groups of stations to tailor the provision of car parking, cycle parking, walking access and public transport provision to access the station. London TravelWatch aspires to see the inclusion of travel plans in all future franchises. **High priority**

6 Information

6.1.1 Real-time train performance information

Train operators should submit a plan, with timescales, showing how they will ensure that high quality information will be given to passengers (including at unstaffed stations) when their own or other operators' services are delayed or disrupted. **High priority**

6.1.2 Multi-modal' one stop shop' information access (timetables/fares for non-rail modes)

Introduce national public transport information service providing fully integrated transport information across all modes of transport. This could build upon the Transport for London integrated transport information for London and the National Rail Enquiries website nationally. **Medium term priority**

6.1.3 Passenger information during disruption

Consistently in surveys of passenger priorities a major area for improvement is the information available during disruption. This is both in reference to its availability and its quality. London TravelWatch is aware that there are a number of industry initiatives to improve the quality of information provision during disruption and urges the railway industry to follow through these programmes to the full benefit of passengers. **Medium term priority**

6.1.4 Information about planned disruption to the railway

See section on bus replacement section 2.1.6.

7 Tickets

7.1.1 Enhanced retailing hours at stations

All stations in the London TravelWatch area should have ticket machines, plus permit to travel machines for use whenever no other ticket sales facility is available and also when normal ticket sales facilities are degraded or there are abnormal queues. **High priority**

Where demand is sufficient, all stations should have a ticket office open from 0630 (or 10 minutes before the first train if this is later) to 2130. **High priority**

Where demand is sufficient, all stations should have a ticket office open from 10 minutes before the first train until the last train has departed. **Medium term priority**

7.1.2 Ticket purchase methods

Train operators to submit plans for ticket purchase arrangements such that queuing times for turn up and go travellers shall not be excessive. **High priority**

7.1.3 Gating

London TravelWatch supports the principals of gating where it improves the security and reduces the incidence of ticketless travel on the railway network. **Medium term priority**

8 Fares

8.1.1 Penalty fares and revenue protection

Rules on use of all tickets should be clearly published and be available at all stations and ticket sales points. **High priority**

Penalty fares are the main source of appeals to London TravelWatch. One issue that can be addressed to simplify the regime would be the harmonisation of the TfL's Conditions of Carriage with those of the National Rail Network. At the moment the usage of pay as you go on the National Railway network falls between both TfL and National Rail Conditions of Carriage. This situation is confusing for passengers. **High Priority**

8.1.2 Level of fares

There is no objectively "correct" level for rail fares, taken in isolation. They are a tool for pursuing any of a number of commercial or policy purposes, for example:

- In the simplest terms, maximising revenue generation to fund all or part of the railways' operating and/or investment costs,
- Setting price signals to influence users' modal choice and travel behaviour in order to serve wider economic or environmental objectives,
- Setting price signals to match demand more closely with available capacity, for example between peak and off-peak, or with and contra-peak,
- Targeting different market segments such as business and leisure travellers.
- Setting price signals to encourage brand loyalty, for example season tickets and railcards, or
- Subsidising travel by particular categories of user, such as retired people, children and job seekers, as a tool for achieving wider social policy goals.

It is only possible to say whether any fares are too high or too low once these purposes have been clearly identified and agreed, and the effects of the current fares levels and structures have been analysed in relation to them.

The question alludes to the fact that the levels of fares may also be specific to the characteristics of market segments. There is clearly potentially a large

number of market segments served by the rail industry but in high level terms they can be split into three groups:

1. Commuters,
2. Business travellers, and
3. Leisure travellers.

Passenger Focus's research into 'Passengers' Priorities for Improvements in Rail Services' (<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=1132>), found that the passengers viewed improving the value for money of the ticket as the top priority in every region of the UK. Commuters and leisure travellers ranked value for money ticket price first in order of priority for improvement, whereas business travellers ranked it second. However, when looked at in terms of market segment by average expectation the results were more varied:

- Commuters – on average, perceived value for money of tickets based on their expectations to be far worse than other market segments. This is probably because they have the least ability to vary the mode or time of day of their journey and therefore have little choice but to pay peak prices. They are more likely to encounter crowding and as frequent users they are more likely to have experienced (and remembered) service failures.
- Business travellers – were in the middle between commuters and leisure travellers in terms of their perception of ticket value for money. However, they are as a group a relatively inelastic market as they are often not paying for their own tickets. This is partly reflected in the ranking of ticket value for money second in their ordering of priority for improvement. Business travellers may also have the choice of alternative modes, principally air or car.
- Leisure travellers – while on average their expectations of value for money of ticket prices were not met, they were far less negative about ticket price than commuters. This probably reflects the greater flexibility of leisure travellers who can take advantage of advanced fares, off-peak fares and railcard discounts. They are also often able to make the choice of travelling on an alternative mode, such as the bus, coach or private car.

It is not surprising that passengers, when asked, say that their expectations of value for money are not being met. This does not in itself indicate that the actual ticket is poor value for money, since to make that judgement requires a point of relative comparison and a clear understanding of the objectives of the pricing policy for fares.

In order to do this, it is necessary to establish a coherent multi-modal pricing policy including National Rail as a key element in the transport strategy for London and its region as a whole. The Mayor has power to do this, but has not exercised it except in the case of the London Overground concession.

The consultation draft of the Mayor's revised Transport Strategy offers no definite view of pricing, merely stating that "The Mayor, and TfL will ... subsidise services at appropriate levels ... while reviewing fares levels to provide, if required, a residual means of achieving the goals of this transport strategy."¹

Another reason why fares policy in London lacks coherence is that (other than briefly, in the era of "Fares Fair") fares changes have usually been made incrementally, in response to short-term budgetary or electoral pressures, rather than as part of a consistent long-term strategy. A review of fares policy, from first principles, is overdue. As part of such a review, it would be useful to discover the reasons which cause the cost of rail travel to the user in most other comparable cities to be markedly lower than in London and the corresponding cost to society as a whole, through taxation, to be higher. **High priority**

8.1.3 Car Park charges

Train operators should submit a statement of policy on car park charges. **High priority**

Where high car park charges are applied to deter non-rail users from using a station car park, for example a partial refund given on purchasing a rail ticket could be consider. **High priority**

8.1.4 Fares regulation

On TfL's railways, fares are set by the Mayor. Some operating and/or maintenance functions are outsourced, and the suppliers of these bear the cost and delivery risk, but their revenue is predetermined by the terms of their contracts. The vast majority of the rail operators' revenue growth is driven by factors external to their control, notably the vitality of London's economy.

The relative advantages of gross- and net- cost contracts in relation to revenue risk depend in part upon the market served. For London based franchises or concessions, London TravelWatch suggests that as most of the drivers of revenue are outside of the control of the franchisee/concessionaire it is more appropriate for the competent authority to retain revenue risk. So it makes sense for franchises or concessions to be let on a gross-cost basis, and for pricing to be a matter for political decision, not commercial calculation. The principle of contracts should be that the risk is retained with the party best able to handle or

¹ Source: Page 296, Policy 31, Mayor's Transport Strategy, 2009, <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/corporate/mts09-complete.pdf>

influence the risk. Given that the private sector operator has limited impact on the revenue drivers in London it would appear more appropriate for most of it to be retained by the public sector (London Overground does have limited exposure, to incentivise its performance, but has no discretion to set or vary fares).

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9 Customer Service

9.1.1 Equality of access to complaints processes

Train Operators to monitor the demographics of their complainants and promote customer complaints procedures amongst all passengers but particularly for those underrepresented in complainant statistics. **High Priority**

London TravelWatch appreciates that there is a tension in an operator encouraging complaints as this may make the complaints figures appear worse as there are likely to be more complaints. This likely impact should be recognised in the contract and the bidders should be encouraged to enable customers to express their views on the train service. As long as customer complaints are dealt with in a responsive and professional manner the operator can learn from the views fed back by its customers.

Appendix – References

London TravelWatch

- Requirements for Train Services – Principles (May 2010)
<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk>
- Good riddance to bad rubbish – A guide to getting litter cleared from railway land (London TravelWatch and RPC network, December 2002)
- Reaching the Skies – Policies for surface access to London’s airports (London TravelWatch, February 2002)
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- Getting to the station – Report on access to Rail and Underground Stations (2006) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/2319/get>)
- “Thameslink Rolling Stock Qualitative research,” report prepared jointly for Passenger Focus, the DfT and London TravelWatch (August 2008) (<http://www.passengerfocus.org.uk/news-and-publications/document-search/document.asp?dsid=1872>)