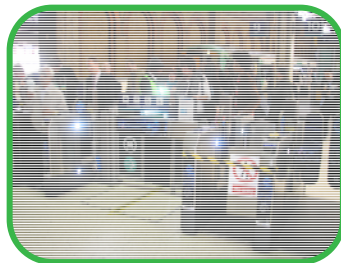


London TravelWatch Response to the Network Route Utilisation Strategy (Stations) – Draft for Consultation

July 2011



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

Published by:

London TravelWatch
6 Middle Street
London EC1A 7JA

Phone: 020 7505 9000
Fax: 020 7505 9003

Contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Executive Summary | 1 |
| 1 Introduction | 2 |
| 1.1 London TravelWatch Casework..... | 3 |
| 2 London Stations | 5 |
| 2.1 Key facts about London passengers..... | 5 |
| 2.2 Passenger Provision for Improvements at London Stations | 6 |
| 3 Tackling Congestion at Stations in London | 9 |
| 4 Gaps and Options | 10 |
| 4.1 Information at and about Stations | 10 |
| 4.2 Congestion at Stations..... | 10 |
| 5 Conclusion | 12 |
| Appendix A – Additional List of Congested Stations | 13 |
| Appendix B – References | 16 |

Executive Summary

London's rail stations are the vital organs in London's body of transport, and ensuring that they can operate with maximum efficiency and without undue congestion is essential if London is to continue to function effectively as a city.

We welcome

This draft strategy for stations, and the emphasis it places on managing passenger congestion and improving the flow of information to passengers.

We recommend

- The coordination of the investment and management in stations if passengers are to see improvements in their services.
- That the standards for facilities set out in the Department for Transport's 'Better Rail Stations' should be adopted on a wider basis.
- That a single standard for signage and communications with passengers on stations should be established and adopted.
- That Network Rail should set up an agreement with the Department for Transport to ensure that people with mobility difficulties do not 'fall down the gaps' because of the complex nature of the management of 'joint' stations, especially at interchanges London Underground services
- The further extension of the use of Oyster and other smartcard technologies on the rail network.
- That as a minimum, all stations in the London Oyster area should have a means of ticket purchase either by cash or card at all hours of train service operation.
- That the development of the London wide strategy for the installation of ticket barriers, to help improve safety and security on stations, and reduce ticket fraud.
- The extension of the 'Information zone' approach to signage on stations pioneered by Southern to be extended to other operators.

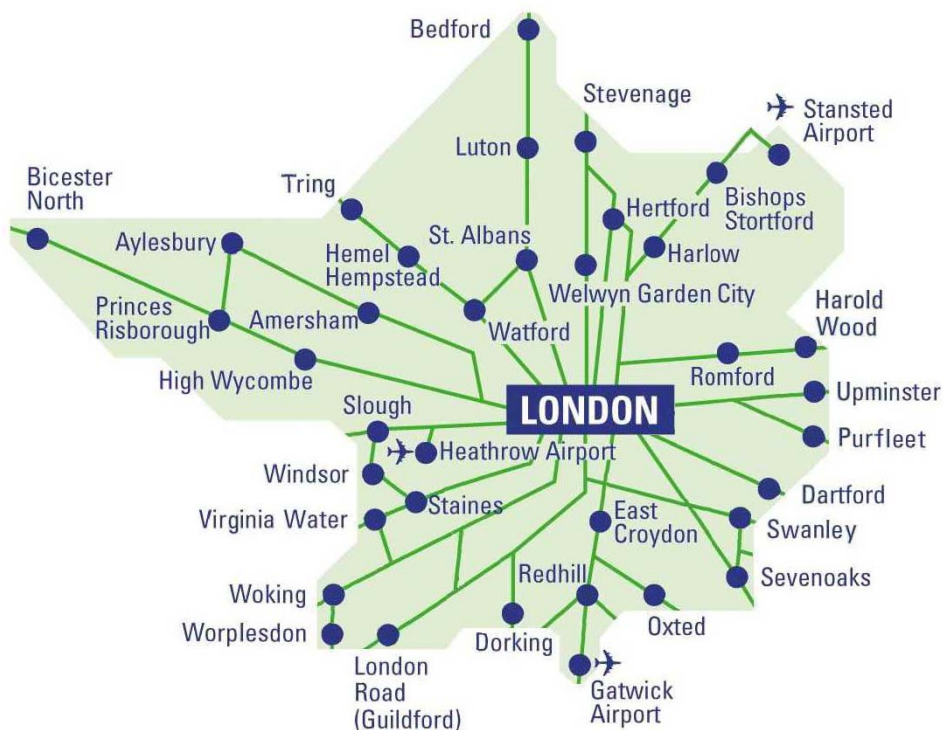
Finally, we restate our long held desire for the improvement of toilet facilities at stations.

1 Introduction

London TravelWatch provides this written submission to the Network Route Utilisation Strategy: Stations (draft for consultation) as the independent statutory watchdog representing transport users of all modes in London and rails users in its surrounding areas.

There are over 2,500 stations on the National Rail network, 462 of which are within London TravelWatch’s remit. These 462 stations account for 2.6 billion passenger exits, interchanges and entries per year, which approximately is 70% of the national total¹. The map below shows London TravelWatch’s areas of National Rail responsibility.

Diagram 1 – London TravelWatch Rail Remit



London TravelWatch has been part of Network Rail’s Stakeholder Management Group; therefore London TravelWatch has had the opportunity to influence the development of this RUS in conjunction with a range of stakeholders from a network-wide perspective.

¹ 2009/10 National Station Usage Data – Office of Rail Regulation

London TravelWatch welcomes the draft Network Stations RUS because it addresses the two main issues which we believe needs to be tackled at stations, these are:

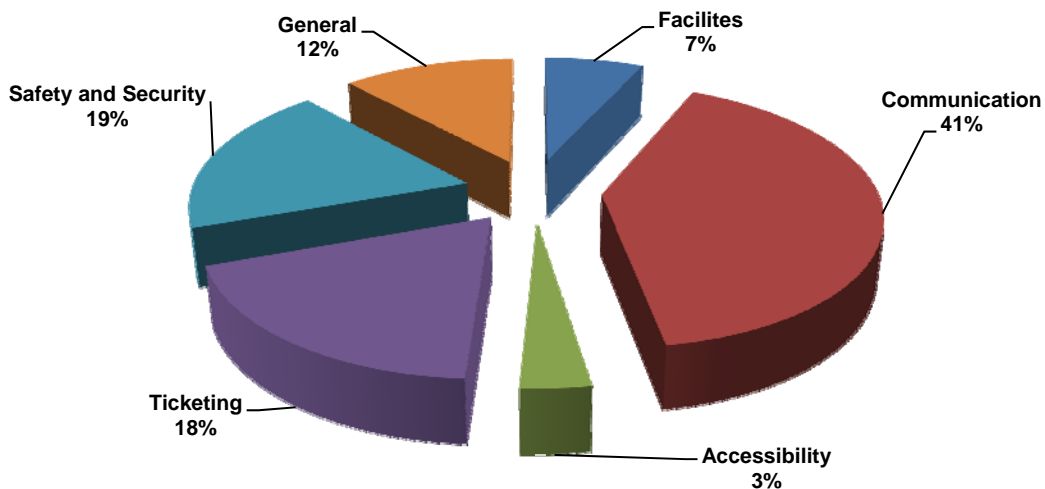
- 1) managing passenger congestion
- 2) displaying and sharing information to passengers (especially during disruption)

London TravelWatch is pleased that these are the two main issues which are investigated in detail in chapter 4 (Gaps and Options).

1.1 London TravelWatch Casework

London TravelWatch is the statutory body to which transport users appeal if they are not satisfied by the response of the transport operator’s complaints process. In relation to this consultation a comparison has been made by the overall National Rail appeals that have been received in the last 18 months.

Graph 1: London TravelWatch National Rail Appeals by Station Category January 2010 to June 2011²



Graph 1 shows the breakdown of appeals by station category about National Rail stations which have been received by London TravelWatch. Each of the categories in graph 1 above includes the following complaint issues related to National Rail stations.

² Sample size – 59 station related appeals received by London TravelWatch (between January 2010 to June 2011)

| | |
|----------------------------|---|
| Facilities | Seating, waiting rooms, canopies, toilets, litter bins, parking, cycle parking and retail. |
| Communication | Information (help points and information points), real-time travel information, station staff assistance, station signage and branding (includes way finding signage) and customer service. |
| Accessibility | Step free access, lifts and ramps. |
| Ticketing | Ticket purchasing at stations, ticket availability, interavailability of tickets and Oyster/smart card ticketing. |
| Safety and Security | Staffing, policing, incidents, first aid, passenger overcrowding, lighting, CCTV and automated gate lines. |
| General | Ambience of stations, cleanliness and graffiti. |

Whilst the sample size is small it is clear that the major issue in terms of appeals is communication. The main complaints passengers make in relation to communication is the customer service they receive from station staff and information (this includes real-time train service disruption information, information points and signage).

Safety and security at stations is also a significant issue for passengers and a number of safety related complaints were received about passenger overcrowding at stations as well as specific incidents.

2 London Stations

London's stations are part of the travel experience of over 70% of travellers on the National Rail network. This means that getting the right facilities provided at these stations is fundamental to the travelling experience of these passengers. They deserve and expect a high quality, safe and easy to use station at the start, end and/or interchange point during their journey.

Stations, especially within the London area fall into a very complex contractual matrix on the National Rail network. There are multiple parties involved and these are often distorted lines of responsibility. The consequence for transport users is that there has not been sufficient co-ordination of effort in management and investment of stations. Instead, there is a huge variety of practice and levels of facilities, and many stations fall below passenger expectations.

Each organisation in London's transport industry (Department for Transport, Transport for London, local authorities, Train Operating Companies and Network Rail) that has programmes to improve the travel experience for passengers has them set up to individual organisational specifications.

London TravelWatch Recommends: There needs to be more attention on stations and this should result in both co-ordinated management and investment to the benefit of passengers.

2.1 Key facts about London passengers

Passengers travelling within London make up the largest proportion of users for the stations in the London and south east; our recommendations in this response are significant because we represent these passengers. The key facts to note about London passengers are as follows:

1. London passengers account for over 70% of users on the National Rail network.
2. London passengers are representative of the London population as a whole in their frequency and use of National Rail stations. London's population uses public transport as their main means of travel to a far greater extent than elsewhere in the UK.
3. Over 50% of all passengers in London walk to and from their station and fewer than 15% access their station by car.
4. Satisfaction levels with stations in London are lower overall than with other parts of Great Britain, according to the latest National Passenger Survey results (Spring 2011).

2.2 Passenger Provision for Improvements at London Stations

We conducted an audit of joint London Underground and National Rail stations to assess the standards and facilities at station in 2004 and again in 2009 to identify any improvements.

We welcome the policy consideration on stations and the financial support for information zoning at National Rail stations.

Based on the categories which have been identified through the casework in Graph 1, the main priorities for improvement at London stations from a passenger perspective are as follows:

2.2.1 Facilities

From the research and audits which we have conducted over the years the facility priority areas are seating, waiting facilities and toilets.

London TravelWatch Recommends: The adoption of the minimum stations standards for station facilities from the Department for Transport's 'Better Rail Stations' report. Toilets should be provided at stations by rail operators and relevant local authorities to encourage and provide a coordinated approach to the provision and management of toilets.

2.2.2 Communication

The majority of station related appeals we receive are about the communication in and around stations, especially sharing information to passengers.

London TravelWatch Recommends: A single standard for signage and communication should be adopted across the railway industry. Real-time train service information which is announced at station must be consistent and clear across the station – This is particularly vital during morning and evening peak hours on weekdays.

2.2.3 Accessibility

We believe that improving the physical accessibility of stations to people with mobility impairments also has the secondary but nonetheless important benefit of increasing capacity and reducing congestion for all passengers. Ensuring that the policies and procedures of transport operators, along with training staff, also take account of the needs of people with mobility impairments enhances and adds value to the investment made in physical infrastructure. This is very important, especially during peak times when stations can get very busy and stations get overcrowded by passengers. We support the Disabled Peoples Protection

Policies (DPPPs) for assisting the disabled and elderly who wish to use National Rail services.

London TravelWatch Recommends: Network Rail should set up an agreement with the Department for Transport to ensure that the DPPP process reflects the complex natures of National Rail management in London and the station is part of an interchange with another operator such as London Underground.

2.2.4 Ticketing

We have supported the extension of Oyster Pay As You Go on the National Railway network, and will continue to support the further expansion of Oyster and other smartcard technologies for the benefit of London's passengers (both in line coverage and retailing). However, we would draw attention to the recommendations of our recent research report on 'Oyster Incomplete Journeys' which can be found at:-

(<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964/get>)

This report makes specific recommendations for improvements at London stations to reduce the number of such journeys where passengers are charged a maximum fare and also for generic smartcard schemes elsewhere.

London TravelWatch believes that in the London Oyster area all stations should have at least one means of ticket purchase available at all times of train service operation. This should include the ability to pay by either cash or debit / credit card.

London TravelWatch Recommends:

The extension of Oyster card retailing to cover all stations across the National Rail network within the London Oyster area.

Ticket vending machines to be installed at stations within the London metro service area.

2.2.5 Safety and Security

We support the installation of automated gate lines at every London rail station which has at least one million passengers per year. In the London TravelWatch area, a total of 134 stations on the National Rail network are fully gated and a further five are partially gated.

London TravelWatch Recommends: There should be an integrated gating strategy involving all transport operators for stations in London.

2.2.6 Interchange

London's transport users tend to use more than one form of transport, and the vast majority of rail passengers interchange between modes at its rail stations. It is therefore important that consideration is given to interchange issues at stations. The most important issues is that passengers must be provided with accurate and timely information about the onward mode of travel and that there is adequate signage to enable them to navigate the interchange .

London TravelWatch Recommends: Signage should be improved at interchange stations utilising the information zoning approach which has been pioneered by train operators such as Southern. We recommend that the operators of other modes of transport, for example London Underground or bus companies, should be actively involved in this process to ensure it meets all passengers' needs.

London TravelWatch also recommends that Network Rail should set up an agreement with the Department for Transport to ensure that people with mobility difficulties do not 'fall down the gaps' because of the complex nature of the management of interchange stations, especially with London Underground.

3 Tackling Congestion at Stations in London

In addition to the specific schemes listed in the draft RUS, at London terminals, congestion at exit gatelines can sometimes slow the rate at which passengers alight. In extreme cases, such congestion can cause knock-on delays for passengers alighting from successive arrivals.

This issue must be reviewed where it is planned to operate more trains or higher capacity trains, or where improved operating methods enable terminal dwell times (i.e. reversing time) to be reduced.

We support the introduction and retention of gatelines to reduce ticket fraud, crime and anti-social behaviour on stations and trains, but where congestion does occur, such as at Liverpool Street operators should seek to find means of alleviating this, if necessary by installing more gates and/or exits.

4 Gaps and Options

4.1 Information at and about Stations

London TravelWatch supports the use of station master planning as a framework for collecting station usage information, and also for mapping out potential routes to improving the flow of information to passengers and users of stations. The use of automatic footfall counting devices both on trains and at stations would be extremely beneficial in working out how and where information needs to be provided, but also about how passengers use stations in the course of their journeys.

Pedestrian modelling of larger stations, and those with congestion problems at specific times, could also be used to pinpoint additional measures such as side entrances which could be used to alleviate these.

This also has relevance to the issue of station travel planning. This concept, originally conceived by London TravelWatch in 2006 in its 'Getting to the Station' report (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/12087/get>) is a well proven process for not only managing existing means of access to stations (by car, walking, cycling or public transport), but is also an effective tool in managing growth and congestion. We would therefore support the expansion of this process across the rail network.

4.2 Congestion at Stations

London TravelWatch welcomes the emphasis given in this document to the need to provide congestion relief at many stations in the London area. However, we do not necessarily believe that the list of congested stations in the document is exhaustive. We also consider that in a number of cases congestion relief at major stations may be possible by undertaking improvement works at other stations. For example, improving Elephant & Castle (Thameslink) station and its environment, information, staffing and connectivity to the nearby London Underground stations would have a potential beneficial effect on London Bridge, Charing Cross, Waterloo and Waterloo East stations by diverting passengers who would have used Elephant & Castle but are put off from doing so by its poor facilities, lack of ticket barriers, low staffing levels, poor security and inconvenient routes to and from the Underground. Similarly Maryland, with its close proximity to Stratford Broadway has potential to relieve the main Stratford regional station if the station and signage to and from the main retail/business area in Stratford was improved. Similarly we believe a new Chiltern railway line platform at West Hampstead would have significant benefits in terms of reduced congestion at London Marylebone station.

London TravelWatch's comments on individual stations in the area listed in Table 5.4 are listed in appendix A.

5 Conclusion

London's stations have enjoyed a sustained level of investment, rightly, given the large numbers of passengers that use them and their facilities on a daily basis. This draft document sets out a strategy for continuing and justifying that investment.

London TravelWatch believes that getting stations 'right' for the passenger is a key component of improving passengers' overall satisfaction with rail journeys. In this respect, attention to detail is the underlying message, whether this is in relation to how tickets are sold, the standards of signage and communication, or how accessible the station is to those of restricted or reduced mobility. In addition, the importance of managing how passengers reach the station through travel plans, improving security through effective gating and control of access and easy interchange cannot be stressed enough.

We recommend the co-ordination of the investment and management in stations if passengers are to see improvements in their services. To do this we recommend that the standards for facilities set out in the Department for Transport's 'Better Rail Stations' should be adopted on a wider basis.

We recommend that a single standard for signage and communications with passengers on station should be established and adopted.

We recommend extending the use of Oyster and other smartcard technologies on the rail network.

We recommend that as a minimum all stations in the London Oyster area should have a means of ticket purchase either by cash or card at all hours of train service operation.

We recommend the development of a London-wide strategy for the installation of ticket barriers, to help improve safety and security on stations, and reduce ticket fraud.

We recommend the extension of the 'Information zone' approach to signage on stations pioneered by Southern to be extended to other operators.

Finally, we restate our long-held desire for the improvement of toilet facilities at stations.

Appendix A – Additional List of Congested Stations

Table of additional comments on stations included in Table 5.4 – the list of congested stations

| Station | Comment |
|----------------------|--|
| Clapham Junction | Please see our extensive work on passenger priorities for improvement at this station. (http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839/get) |
| Lewisham | Congestion at this station could be considerably eased and access improved if the current platform 4 entrance were to be replaced by a new entrance directly into the Tesco's car park. This is a relatively easy and inexpensive solution. |
| London Bridge | As mentioned above, congestion relief at this station, especially during the Thameslink upgrade programme, could be achieved by upgrading and improving Elephant & Castle station and the interchange there with London Underground as an alternative route for passengers travelling to and from central London. |
| London Cannon Street | Provision needs to be made to provide step free access to the eastbound District line. |
| London Victoria | Upgrading and improving Elephant & Castle station and the interchange there with London Underground as an alternative route for passengers travelling to and from central London, would give some potential relief to London Victoria. |
| Twickenham | We recommend that an additional track should be provided reusing the formation of the currently disused bay platforms. |
| Bromley South | We recommend that an additional entrance be created at the eastern end of the station to give access to and from Kentish Way. |
| London Marylebone | This station and the Chiltern line in general suffer from poor connectivity to other parts of London. We believe that this could be overcome by provision of a Chiltern line (and Metropolitan line) station and platforms at West Hampstead, which would provide Chiltern passengers with an interchange with Thameslink, North London and Jubilee lines. |
| London Paddington | We believe that the accessibility of this station to and from the surrounding neighbourhood could be substantially improved at very modest cost. Please see our forthcoming Interchange and Walking report (due for publication in August 2011). |

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| London Waterloo East | We believe it is essential that this station is fully gated, and that an additional exit is provided to give access to and from Greet Street / The Cut. |
| Wimbledon | Growth of usage of London Tramlink and the introduction of confusing arrangements for Oyster Pay As You Go customers who use the tram, have contributed to the congestion arising in this station. Consideration should be made of providing a separate platform for Tramlink services and returning the existing Thameslink bay platform to use as a through line. |
| Barking | Please see our extensive work on passenger priorities for improvement at this station. (http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839/get). Priority should be given to improving real time passenger information on London Underground services at the concourse level. |
| Ealing Broadway | We would like consideration to be given to re-opening the original District Railway entrance at this station to reduce congestion at the existing entrance. |
| East Croydon | We support the proposed redevelopment of this station with additional entrances. |
| Finsbury Park | This station is in desperate need of redevelopment to provide better accessibility to both National Rail and London Underground services. The station should be provided with step free access, full gating at its entrances rather than at platform level, and alternative pedestrian routes between the east and west sides of the station for people not travelling by rail. Some congestion relief could be provided at weekends and late evenings by diverting local First Capital Connect trains to the Moorgate branch instead of Kings Cross, as this would enable passengers to change to the Victoria line at Highbury & Islington instead of at Finsbury Park, or to use Drayton Park station. |
| Herne Hill | This station has the highest numbers of passenger journeys in Greater London through an ungated station. We recommend that urgent consideration be given to gating the station. We also believe that improving nearby Brixton station with better security and ticket vending machines would help mitigate issues at Herne Hill. |
| Kings Cross | Congestion at weekends and late evenings at this station could be relieved if First Capital Connect local services were diverted to Moorgate in line with the daytime service offering. |
| Seven Sisters | This station (which is often used by diverted Stansted Express trains) offers very poor facilities for the volumes of |

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| | <p>people using it. We would therefore support any move to improve ticketing, information and staffing levels here. Consideration should be given to the London Underground ticket office being transferred to the Greater Anglia franchise. This reflects the balance in tickets which are sold at this station.</p> |
| Tottenham Hale | <p>This station only offers partial step free access and is only partially gated. Yet it is a major interchange for passengers travelling from Stansted Airport into Central London. Priority should be given to providing full step free access and provision of full ticket barriers. Improvements at Tottenham Hale could reduce congestion at Liverpool Street.</p> |
| Stratford | <p>As noted above, congestion relief here could be aided by improving the facilities, signage and environment of Maryland station which is close to the Stratford Broadway business and retail area.</p> |
| Wembley Stadium | <p>We would advocate the introduction of permanent staffing and a gate line to this stadium as well as improvements to the provision of ticketing here such as the installation of ticket vending machines, an additional oyster reader and improvement of existing pedestrian accessibility.</p> |
| Walthamstow Central | <p>The National Rail platforms here are ungated. We recommend developing a scheme here to introduce ticket barriers. Completion of the pedestrian link to Walthamstow Queens Road station would also improve interchange between the rail routes in this area.</p> |

Appendix B – References

Department for Transport

- Chris Green & Sir Peter Hall for the DfT, 'Better Rail Stations' (Nov 2009) <http://www.dft.gov.uk/pgr/rail/passenger/stations/beterrailstations/pdf/report.pdf>

London TravelWatch

- Good riddance to bad rubbish – A guide to getting litter cleared from railway land (London TravelWatch and RPC network, December 2002) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/488/get>
- Where am I? – Street name signs in London (London TravelWatch, May 2003) http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/view_event.php?id=163
- When is a train not a train? A study of rail replacement bus services (2004) <http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/1354>
- Getting to the station – Report on access to Rail and Underground Stations (2006) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/2319/get>)
- Whose station are you? – A survey of joint Underground/National Rail stations in London (2004) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/1513/get>)
- Standards at London's Rail Stations (September 2010) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13839/get>)
- Incomplete Oyster Pay As You Go journeys (June 2011) (<http://www.londontravelwatch.org.uk/document/13964/get>)

London Underground

- 2008 Station Exits and Entries <http://www.tfl.gov.uk/assets/downloads/businessandpartners/passenger-numbers-at-underground-stations.pdf>

Office of Rail Regulation

- National Rail Stations usage 2008/9 http://www.rail-reg.gov.uk/upload/xls/station_usage_0809.xls

Passenger Focus

- Passenger Priorities for Improvement at Stations